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Letter from the Advisory Committee Chair

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

    I am appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV).

    Reflecting on the unique circumstances placed upon the Advisory Committee due to COVID-19, we were compelled to search and navigate a different way to communicate and complete our committee responsibilities.

    The Director and staff of the Center for Minority Veterans provided excellent leadership and positive guidance, along with enormous efforts to support our commitment to our Veterans. We conducted national meetings and off-site visits using virtual platforms. Our virtual visits to Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida (2021) and Phoenix, Arizona (2022) provided opportunities to hear new and ongoing concerns from minority Veterans as well as VA staff.

    The enclosed 2022 Biennial report includes specific recommendations for your consideration.

    The ACMV is very thankful for your leadership and guidance. We are encouraged with the positive direction and ongoing progress to enhance access to VA services for all Veterans.

    On behalf of the ACMV, please allow me to express my sincere appreciation for allowing me and my Cohorts to serve the VA and our minority Veterans. Our research, our dedication and our collective abilities will help all Veterans.

Sincerely,

Robert V. “Bobby” McDonald
Chair, Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
Part I. Executive Summary

The 2022 Biennial Report of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV) provides the Committee’s observations, recommendations and rationales that address the effectiveness of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) delivery of benefits and services to minority Veterans.

The ACMV fulfilled its requirement to conduct a minimum of two meetings during fiscal year (FY) 2022 in accordance with P.L. 103-446 and the ACMV charter dated March 25, 2022. The ACMV also fulfilled its requirement to conduct a minimum of two meetings during FY 2021. In FY 2021, ACMV met virtually on December 8 - 10, 2020, at VA Central Office (VACO) in Washington, DC and conducted a virtual site visit in Tampa/Saint Petersburg, Florida on April 20 - 22, 2021. Specifically in FY 2022, ACMV met virtually on December 7 - 9, 2021, at VACO in Washington, DC and conducted a virtual site visit in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 3 – 5, 2022.

The meetings at VACO, included briefings from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and select Staff Offices. Ex Officio members from the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Labor (DOL) also provided briefings on their respective missions and services provided to minority Veterans at these meetings.

During the Tampa/Saint Petersburg virtual site visit, the ACMV received briefings from VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), James A. Haley VA Medical Center (VAMC), Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (HCS), Saint Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery. On the afternoon of April 21, 2021, the ACMV and representatives from the James A. Haley VAMC, Bay Pines HCS, Saint Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery, responded to questions from minority Veterans and provided updates on current VA initiatives during a virtual town hall meeting.

During the Phoenix virtual site visit, the ACMV received briefings from the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 22), Phoenix HCS, Phoenix Regional Office, National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona and Vet Center. On the afternoon of May 5, 2022, ACMV and representatives from the Phoenix HCS, Phoenix Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona responded to questions from minority Veterans and provided updates on current VA initiatives during a virtual town hall meeting.
Part II. Summary of 2022 Recommendations

The ACMV reviewed information received during meetings with VA officials through document reviews and from direct communications with minority Veterans. The Committee strongly believes that if implemented, the three 2022 recommendations will significantly enhance VA’s ability to strategically address the needs of minority Veterans as the Veterans population become more diverse. These recommendations and rationales address the following issues:

- Recommend that VA capture race/ethnic and service branch metrics in all Military Sexual Trauma (MST) tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.

- Improve diversity within the VA workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS, 13, 14, 15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.

- Require VA to expand the Veteran Legacy Memorial to include Veterans of the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery. By 2nd quarter FY 2025.
Part III. ACMV 2022 Recommendations, Rationales and VA Responses

**Recommendation 1:** That VA capture race/ethnic and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders.

**Rationale:** Current data are only broken down by gender. Additional metrics would provide data to track minority trends/experiences and allow VA to adapt as needed to better serve and support Veterans more accurately.

**VA Responses:** Concur in principle.

Regarding the first part of this recommendation, VHA strongly agrees with the value of examining MST related data by race/ethnicity and will take steps to expand its work in this area including potentially including data aggregated by race/ethnicity in annual reporting. Examining data by service branch may have less value for program planning and improvement and thus be a lower priority; however, VHA sees potential value in examining data by reserve component former Service member versus active-duty former Service member and will explore this possibility further. Availability and quality of data may be an issue for these latter efforts, however and constrain the work.

Regarding the second part of this recommendation, VHA already requires that all former Service members seen for care are screened for MST and, as a best practice, recommends that questions about MST are included in all mental health intakes. VHA will explore the value and feasibility of strengthening the latter recommendation to a requirement.

**VHA Action Plan:**

**Recommendation 1:** That VA capture race/ethnicity and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps to Implement</th>
<th>Lead Office</th>
<th>Other Offices</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of June 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Convene internal discussions to determine pros/cons and feasibility. -Identify and implement appropriate action steps.</td>
<td>11 Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (MHSP)</td>
<td>11MHSP will consult with VHA Office of Health Equity (OHE) and other</td>
<td>-Convene internal discussions to determine pros/cons and feasibility. -Identify and implement appropriate action steps</td>
<td>End of 1st Quarter FY 2025</td>
<td>Initiated</td>
<td>11MHSP Action Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Office of Health Equity (OHE) Action Plan:

**Recommendation 1:** That VA capture race/ethnicity and service branch metrics in all MST tracking, specifically in annual MST reports and include MST questions in all mental health intakes for all genders by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

**Steps to Implement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Office</th>
<th>Other Offices</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of June 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per discussion, deferred to 11MSHP</td>
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</table>

**Recommendation 2:** That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14,15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

**Rationale:** Increasing diversity within these positions of responsibility aligns with Executive Order 14035 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce and other Federal Government initiatives and programs.

**VA Responses:** Concur.

Enhancing the diversity reflected within the GS 13, 14, 15 and SES positions would require two pathways: (1) creating and supporting new VHA-wide resources that any VHA employee could access to gain career experiences in their journey to higher-grade GS positions such as access to experiential development opportunities, career pathing and supervisor career conversations and (2) enhancing current practices around VHA leadership pool development (GS 13 to SES), including talent entry/identification/selection and expectations of talent skill/work experiences at higher leadership levels.

For all VHA employees, movement through one’s career or leadership pathway requires the ability to access, discuss and build more complex career skills and work experiences, such as through committee/project work, stretch assignments, detail/acting opportunities, mentorship and career conversations. Access to these experience-based opportunities lacks transparency and supportive resources in VHA, as well as equity by relying on interpersonal connections to locally accessible activities. Collating experience-based activities through a unified, VHA-wide, online system would enhance equity. Success of this tool is dependent on local-to-national leader support to submit contributions and system-wide marketing. Additional options include local-to-national
investment in career pathing resources to assist employees in exploring future growth options, which could be coupled with the soon-to-pilot Supervisor Coordinator Program directed at equipping supervisors to have career and development discussions with staff.

For VHA leadership talent pools (GS 13 to SES), this group is also dependent on access to experiential opportunities to build their leadership skills, but further limiting factors may be the equity in how these talent pools are identified or selected into leadership paths and leadership programming. To address this inequity, VHA uses a Universal Application with standard items for its competitive leadership programming. Rating/selection is then customized by grouped grade levels and program audience (supervisor versus senior leader) to ensure competitive selection is equitable across grades since leaders are needed at all organizational levels. VHA also uses career aspiration surveys and broad marketing systems to identify aspiring leaders for its leadership programming; practices that enhance equity and minimize unconscious bias associated with nomination processes. A new practice expected in FY 2024 will include a leadership potential assessment tool open to any VHA employee that can be mined to identify talent with previously untapped leadership skills or interest. Also, in progress is a checklist of general leadership traits, skills and experiences that VHA Hiring Officials seek of VHA manager and senior leader talent. This checklist allows greater transparency in the selection process and provides a benchmark for talent to inform their leadership development journey.

VHA Action Plan:
**Recommendation 2:** That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14, 15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps to Implement</th>
<th>Lead Office</th>
<th>Other Offices</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of June 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Experience-Based Resource System</td>
<td>Institute for Learning Education and Development (ILEAD)</td>
<td>Workforce Management and Consulting Office (WMC) VISNs</td>
<td>Build platform and work with WMC and VISNs to submit experience-based opportunities</td>
<td>FY 2024 - 2025</td>
<td>N/A – New Program</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Pathing</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Design Road Maps for Career Growth Market Road Maps for Transparent and Broad Access</td>
<td>FY 2024 - 2025</td>
<td>N/A – New Service Area</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Coordinator Development Pilot</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>Pilot program in Nine Facilities and VACO</td>
<td>FY 2023 - 2024</td>
<td>N/A – New Program</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Application</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>Revise current version</td>
<td>FY 2023 - 2024</td>
<td>Implemented and used for Healthcare Leadership Development Program</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Aspiration Survey</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>Explore expansion and access to survey at lower grade levels</td>
<td>FY 2023 - 2024</td>
<td>Ongoing; used to identify aspiring leader talent pools</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Potential Assessment Tool</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>National Center for Organization Development</td>
<td>Build and pilot a VHA-owned leadership potential tool</td>
<td>FY 2024</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Attribute Checklist</td>
<td>ILEAD</td>
<td>WMC VISNs</td>
<td>Identify leadership traits sought by VHA Hiring Officials</td>
<td>FY 2023 - 2024</td>
<td>N/A – New Resource</td>
<td>Kelley Caramelli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ORMDI Action Plan:** Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) will conduct a barrier analysis to identify specific policies, procedures or practices that could be causing this lack of diversity.

**Recommendation 2:** That VA improve diversity within the Department’s workforce. Specifically, the diversity reflected within the GS 13,14, 15 and SES positions by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

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<tr>
<th>Steps to Implement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA will conduct a thorough investigation of relevant policies, procedures and practices to determine the causes of this lack of diversity.</td>
<td>ORMDI</td>
<td>VHA VBA NCA Office of Chief Human Capital Officer</td>
<td>- Conduct data analysis on workforce and applicant data - Review and analyze various VA policies and procedures</td>
<td>June 30, 2022</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Ryan Pugh, Director of Workforce Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA will create an action plan to eliminate identified barriers.</td>
<td>ORMDI</td>
<td>VHA</td>
<td>VBA</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>OCHCO</td>
<td>CSEMO</td>
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**Recommendation 3:** Require VA to expand the Veteran Legacy Memorial to include Veterans of the COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery.

**Rationale:** To ensure that Veterans interred outside the United States are included.

**VA Responses:** Concur.

As part of the VLM Strategic Roadmap, NCA plans to bring these Veterans and others similarly situated Veterans into VLM by 4th Quarter FY 2026. Office of Information Technology (OIT), Memorial Benefits Services (MBS) is communicating with NCA to expand VLM to include COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands. NCA will be responsible for communicating its Action Plan and business requirements to OIT. Upon receipt OIT/MBS will review and implement NCA’s outlined requirements.
**NCA Action Plan:**

**Recommendation 3:** That VA expand the VLM to include Veterans of COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

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<tr>
<th>Steps to Implement</th>
<th>Lead Office</th>
<th>Other Offices</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of July 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>NCA (OEMI)</td>
<td>OIT Benefits Appeals and Memorials</td>
<td>IT development work to add interment records to VLM</td>
<td>September 30, 2026</td>
<td>Not Started</td>
<td>James LaPaglia William Rodgers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OIT Action Plan:** There has been no research to date from OIT concerning this subset of Veteran data, or if any data resides in any database. Once an NCA Business Requirement has been communicated, MBS/OIT will be the team to implement the change.

**Recommendation 3:** That VA expand the VLM to include Veterans of the COFA Nations, Palau, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia and U.S. Territories American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands as they are without a U.S. National Cemetery by the 2nd Quarter FY 2025.

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<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of July 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine location of data. Determine proper method of ingesting data into VLM, such as through use of an Application Programming Interface (API).</td>
<td>OIT/ MBS</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Add Veterans to VLM database</td>
<td>Under NCA Review</td>
<td>Not Implemented</td>
<td>William Rodgers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part IV. Agenda: 2020 Virtual Washington, DC Departmental Briefings

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)
December 8 - 10, 2020

Adobe Connect: https://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/acmv/

AGENDA

Tuesday - December 8, 2020 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 1:10 a.m. Opening Remarks/Review Agenda
Stephen B. Dillard, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:10 a.m. - 11:25 a.m. VA Advisory Committee Management
Jeffrey Moragne
Advisory Committee Management Officer

11:25 a.m. - 11:40 a.m. Center for Minority Veterans
Dennis May, Deputy Director

11:40 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. VA Remarks (5-minute Video)
The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary

11:50 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. National Cemetery Administration
Glenn Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations

Topics:
- Native American Cemetery Grant Program Review
- Update on Outreach Activities
- Update on state/territory flag installations

12:20 p.m. - 12:50 p.m. Veterans Experience Office
Dr. Lynda Davis, Chief, Veterans Experience Officer
Topics:

- Roles & Responsibilities of VEO
- Brief on the Veterans’ Family, Caregiver and Survivor Advisory Committee
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys - minority Veterans

12:50 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Break

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
Melissa Chiu, Director, Statistics and Analytics Service
Tamara Denise Lee Statistician

Topics:

- Provide an update on latest Minority Veterans Report

1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office of Tribal Government Relations
Stephanie Birdwell, Director

Topics:

- Update on OTGR’s Outreach Activities
- Update on OTGR’s Government to Government Consultation Initiatives

2:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m. Veterans Benefits Administration
Cheryl Rawls, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary, Office of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement, Office of Field Operations

Topics:

- Update on Transformation Initiatives
- Review/update on the Native American Direct Home Loan Program
- Update on Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans
- Provide an update on the Annual Benefits Report by State

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Wrap Up/Adjourn
Robert McDonald, Chairman
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY VETERANS (ACMV)
December 8 - 10, 2020

Adobe Connect: https://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/acmv/
VANTS: 800-767-1750, Moderator Code: 45228#

AGENDA

Wednesday - December 9, 2020 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m. Opening & Review Agenda Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m. Board of Veterans’ Appeals Cheryl Mason, Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals

Topics:
- Provide the status of the Veterans Appeals Improvement & Modernization Act
- Provide data, broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. Veterans’ Health Administration Dr. Kameron Matthews, VHA Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services

Topics:
- 15-minute prepared video “VHA: Responding to COVID-19”
- 5-minute Remarks

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m. Center for Women Veterans Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd, Executive Director

Topic:
- Provide an Overview/Update on the Center for Women Veterans

12:40 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. Mental Health Dr. Clifford Smith, Director Field Support & Analytics, Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
Topics

- Provide an update on mental health initiatives
- Provide a brief on staffing & recruitment
- Provide a brief on any trends noted when treating minority Veterans

1:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.  Break

1:25 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.  Office of Telehealth  Dr. Leonie Heyworth
                      Director, Synchronous Telehealth

Topics

- Provide an update on current legislation
- Provide an update on Telehealth/Telemedicine

1:55 p.m. - 2:25 p.m.  Office of Rural Health  Dr. Thomas Klobucar
                      Executive Director

Topics:

- Provide an update on access to insular areas
- Provide an update on outreach efforts in tribal areas

2:25 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.  Office of Health Equity  Dr. Ernest M. Moy
                       Executive Director

Topics:

- Provide introductions of new office staff
- Provide informational OHE's Mission Act
- Provide an update on the Electronic Health Record
- Provide a brief on the Patient Advocate Office

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Wrap-up/Adjourn  Robert McDonald,
                       Chairman
AGENDA

Thursday - December 10, 2020 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.     Opening Remarks/Review Agenda       Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.     Office of Diversity & Inclusion       Ryan Pugh Management Analyst, HRA

Topics:

- Provide a review of minorities in Senior Grades
- Provide VA Employee Demographics
- Applicant Flow Analysis

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.     Women’s Health Services       Dr. Donna L. Washington, MPH, Attending Physician VHA

Topic:

- Provide an Overview of Racial/Ethnic Minority Women’s Health in VA

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.     Million Veteran Program       Dr. Jennifer Moser, MVP Scientific Program Manager

Topics:

- Provide an overview and goal of the program
- Provide an update on the data collection results

12:40 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.     Ex-Officio Update

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**Topics:**

- Update on departmental initiatives effecting minority Veterans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:10 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.</td>
<td>Public Comments</td>
<td>Open to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Leadership Exit Briefing</td>
<td>VHA–Ms. Law, VBA–Ms. Rawls NCA–Glenn Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee After Action</td>
<td>Robert McDonald, Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.</td>
<td>Administrative Paperwork</td>
<td>Juanita Mullen, CMV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Wrap Up/Adjourn</td>
<td>Robert McDonald, Chairman</td>
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AGENDA

Tuesday - April 20, 2021

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Briefings
   Dennis May, DFO
   Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. VISN 8: VA Sunshine Briefing
   Dr. Miguel H. LaPuz,
   Healthcare Network Director

   140 Fountain Parkway, Ste. 600
   St. Petersburg, FL  33716

Topic:
   • Network Director Introduction

11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. James A. Haley VAMC Briefing
   David VanMeter,
   Interim Director
   Paul Murray, MVPC

Topics:
   • Provide Overview VAMC
   • Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Bay Pines VA HCS Briefing
   Paul Russo
   Director,
   Obed Muniz, MVPC
Topics:

- Suicide Prevention
- Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)
- Women & Homeless Veterans
- Leadership Training Programs
- Mission Act/Rural Health Initiatives

1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Break
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Bay Pines VA HCS Briefing
2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn
AGENDA

Wednesday - April 21, 2021

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.  Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Briefings  
Dennis May, DFO  
Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  St. Petersburg Regional Office Briefing  
Julianna Boor, Director  
Gregory Gales, MVPC

Topics:
- Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)
- Women & Homeless/Incarcerated Veterans
- Leadership Training Programs
- Intake Sites
- Claims Processing
- Home Loan Program/NA Direct Home Loan Program

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.  Break

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  St. Petersburg Regional Office Briefing continued

1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.  Break

1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.  Bay Pines National Cemetery Briefing  
Douglas Maddox, Assistant Director

Topics:
- Provide an overview
- Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn  
Robert McDonald, Chairman
Department of Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida Site Visit 2021

WebEx Events Link: https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/onstage/g.php?PRID=722998c44b7a890eb0272d75c1107023

AGENDA

Thursday - April 22, 2021

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.  Opening remarks & Prepare for Tampa/St. Petersburg area Virtual Townhall  Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  Virtual Townhall  ACMV Committee

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.  Break

1:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.  Committee after Action Review & Sub-committee Notes  Dennis May, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman

1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  Public Comments

2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.  Conduct Exit Briefing

2:45 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.  Administrative Paperwork

2:50 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Committee Wrap-Up  Robert McDonald, Chairman

3:00 p.m.  Adjourn Meeting
Part VI. Town Hall Meeting – Tampa/Saint Petersburg, Florida

ACMV hosted a virtual Veterans town hall meeting. The meeting provided Veterans a forum to share issues of concern and to obtain answers to questions from ACMV members related to VA benefits and services. There were approximately 41 attendees. Local VA officials from the James A. Haley VAMC, Bay Pines HCS, St. Petersburg Regional Office and the Bay Pines National Cemetery served as panel members during the meeting. Numerous questions were raised regarding the following issues:

- Data on MST for underserved populations especially for African American women Veterans.
- Data on rejection rates for posttraumatic stress disorder/MST for Black and Hispanic Women Veterans.
- Lack of shelters for women Veterans with families in Pinellas and Hillsborough.
- Veteran utilization rate among minority Veterans specific mental health reference suicides among the Asian/Pacific Islander populations.

During the town hall, the ACMV heard from Veterans who had great experiences with VA.
Part VII. Exit Briefing with St. Petersburg Regional Office, Bay Pines Healthcare System, James A. Haley VA Medical Center and Bay Pines National Cemetery

Julianna Boor, Director, St. Petersburg Regional Office:
- Seminole Tribe of Florida has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VA.
- VBA understands that there has to be trust building.
- VBA does not have a Native American Liaison on their staff.
- Data is collected by the claims.

Paul Russo, Director Bay Pines VA Healthcare System:
- VHA has a Strategic Plan – COVID19 is a priority/main focus, and their focus has moved to vaccinations.
  - Since the pandemic, VHA hasn’t really looked at their Strategic Plan since their efforts is focused on the pandemic.
- Reference COVID-19, a question was asked on VHA having a specific targeted message.
  - It’s a moving target and they work with Public Affairs/VACO Public Affairs.
  - It’s a case-by-case situation and they are constantly adjusting

Dr. Elamin M. Elamin, Chief of Staff, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System:
- Reference MST tracking and asking Veterans coming into the facility – do not have specific numbers.
- Reference vaccines started with restrictions – asked Veterans if they received a vaccine – primarily use the Moderna vaccine.
- Do what the customer wants (via telephone, face-to-face, video) – do what it takes to maximize the distribution of the vaccine.
- Purchased a mobile trailer to hit areas – to target hard to get to Veterans.
  - Working with Lowes in their parking areas.
  - 50% homeless Veterans.
- Waiting for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to be cleared.
- Making phone calls to Veterans.
- Don’t have access to Florida shots database.
- COVID-19 – need to take the vaccine.

David VanMeter, Interim Director, James A. Haley VA Medical Center:
- The James Haley has a Welcome Space for women Veterans.

Douglas Maddox, Assistant Director, Bay Pines National Cemetery:
- Planning Your Legacy tool used at cemeteries.
AGENDA

Tuesday - December 7, 2021 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.  Opening Remarks/Review Agenda  
James Albino, DFO  
Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:05 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.  VA Advisory Committee Management  
Jeffrey Moragne, Advisory Committee Management Officer

11:25 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.  Center for Minority Veterans  
Dennis May, Deputy Director

11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  VA Remarks  
The Honorable Donald M. Remy, Deputy Secretary

12:15 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.  National Cemetery Administration  
Glenn R. Powers, Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations

Topics:

• Native American Cemetery Grant Program Review.
• Update on Outreach Activities.
• Update on state/territory flag installations.

12:35 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.  Lunch Break

1:05 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.  Veterans Experience Office  
John Boerstler  
Chief Veterans Experience Officer

Topics:

• Roles & Responsibilities of VEO.
• Brief on the Veterans’ Family, Caregiver and Survivor Advisory Committee.
• Customer Satisfaction Surveys – minority Veterans.

1:25 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
Eddie Thomas, Director, National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics
Tamara Denise Lee, Team Lead, Analytic, National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics

Topic:
• Provide an update on latest Minority Veterans Report

1:45 p.m. - 1:55 p.m. Break

1:55 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. Office of Tribal Government Relations
Stephanie Birdwell
Director

Topics:
• Update on OTGR’s Outreach Activities
• Update on OTGR’s Government to Government Consultation Initiatives

2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Veterans Benefits Administration
Thomas Murphy, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits

Topics:
• Update on Transformation Initiatives
• Review/update on the Native American Direct Home Loan Program
• Update on Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans
• Provide an update on the Annual Benefits Report by State

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Wrap Up/Adjourn
Robert McDonald, Chairman
AGENDA

Wednesday - December 8, 2021 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.          Opening & Review Agenda
   Robert McDonald,
   Chairman

11:05 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.         Board of Veterans Appeals
   Cheryl Mason,
   Chairman
   Board of Veterans
   Appeals

Topics:

• Provide the status of the Veterans Appeals Improvement & Modernization Act
• Provide data, broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

11:35 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.         Veterans Health Administration
   Dr. Jane Kim, NCP
   Chief Consultant for Preventive Medicine

Topics:

• Provide the status of the VHA response to COVID-19
• Provide VA COVID-19 vaccine data broken down by race/ethnicity on minority Veterans

12:05 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.        Center for Women Veterans
   Lourdes Tiglao,
   Director

Topic:

• Provide an Overview/Update on the Center for Women Veterans

12:35 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.         Lunch Break

1:05 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.          Mental Health
   Dr. David Carroll,
   Executive Director,
**Topics**

- Provide an update on mental health initiatives
- Provide a brief on staffing & recruitment
- Provide a brief on any trends noted when treating minority Veterans

1:35 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.  IDEA Task Force  
James L. Anderson  
Special Assistant/Deputy White House Liaison, Office of the Secretary

**Topics**

- Provide an Overview/Update on the IDEA Taskforce Program

1:55 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.  Break

2:05 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  Office of Rural Health  
Dr. Thomas Klobucar  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide an update on access to insular areas
- Provide an update on outreach efforts in tribal areas
- Provide an update on VHA/IHS MOU and Programs

2:30 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.  Office of Health Equity  
Dr. Ernest M. Moy  
Executive Director

**Topics:**

- Provide introductions of new office staff
- Provide informational OHE’s Mission Act
• Provide an update on the Electronic Health Record
• Provide a brief on the Patient Advocate Office

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Wrap-up/Adjourn  Robert McDonald, Chairman
AGENDA

Thursday - December 9, 2021 (Virtual)

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.      Opening Remarks/Review Agenda
  Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:10 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.      Office of Diversity & Inclusion
  Ryan Pugh, Director, Workforce Analysis, ORMDI
  Harvey Johnson, DAS ORMDI

Topics:

- Provide a review of minorities in Senior Grades
- Provide VA Employee Demographics
- Applicant Flow Analysis.

11:40 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.      Asian/Pacific Islander Initiatives
  Vivian Hutson, FACHE
  Senior Advisor for Pacific Strategy

Topic:

- Provide an Overview/Update.

12:10 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.      Lunch Break

12:40 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.       Ex-Officio Update
  DOL – Mr. Kwok
  HHS – Captain Wu

Topics:

- Update on departmental initiatives effecting minority Veterans

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.       Public Comments
  Open to the public

1:15 p.m.- 2:05 p.m.       Leadership Exit Briefing
  VHA – Dr. Kim,
  VBA – Ms. Rawls
2:05 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.  Break
2:15 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.  Committee After Action  Robert McDonald, Chairman
2:50 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.  Administrative Paperwork  Dwayne Campbell, CMV
2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Wrap Up/Adjourn  Robert McDonald Chairman
Part IX. Agenda: Phoenix Virtual Site Visit

Department of Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
Phoenix, AZ Virtual Site Visit 2022
MS Teams: [Click here to join the meeting]

Eastern Standard Time

Tuesday - May 3, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Opening remarks &amp; prepare for Phoenix Area Briefing</td>
<td>James Albino, DFO Robert McDonald, Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>VISN 22: Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Briefing</td>
<td>Pamela Westbrook, Acting Deputy Network Director</td>
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**Topics:**

- Network Director Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Phoenix Health Care System Overview</td>
<td>Alyshia W. Smith, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Outreach to Minority Veterans (MVPC)</td>
<td>Shawndin Tracy, MVPC</td>
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<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:10 p.m.</td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>Diana Dybal</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:10 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Military Sexual Trauma (MST)</td>
<td>Nadejda Alexandrova</td>
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<td>12:20 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Women Health</td>
<td>Kristen Nordquist</td>
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<td>12:30 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Homeless Veterans</td>
<td>Melody Boyet</td>
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<td>12:40 p.m. - 12:55 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>12:55 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.</td>
<td>Telehealth</td>
<td>Maricel Bobadilla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:05 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Rural Health Initiatives</td>
<td>Shawndin Tracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.</td>
<td>Community Care</td>
<td>Ann Wilford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.</td>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>Daniel Blackman</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:35 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Vet Center</td>
<td>Dr. James Sardo</td>
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<td>2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn</td>
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</table>
Department of Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
Phoenix, AZ, Virtual Site Visit 2022
MS Teams: Click here to join the meeting
Eastern Standard Time

Wednesday - May 4, 2022

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Opening remarks & Prepare for Phoenix Area Briefing
James Albino, DFO
Robert McDonald, Chairman

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Phoenix Regional Office Briefing Overview
Chris Norton, Director

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Veterans Service Center/Special Missions/Intake Sites Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)
Austin Steveson, Michael Watson

12:00 p.m. - 12:15 p.m. Veteran Readiness & Employment (VRE)
Walter Strong

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Break

12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Loan Guaranty/Native American Direct Loan Program
Amy Berumen

1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. Regional Contact Center
Jill Rufener

1:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Question and Answers

1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Break

1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona Briefing Overview
Randy L. Heard, Director, Marco Cortez, MVPC

Topics:

- Provide Overview of Cemetery
- Overview of Catchment Area Demographics
- Veterans Legacy Memorial
• Outreach Activities to Minority Veterans (MVPC)

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Committee Wrap-Up/Adjourn Robert McDonald, Chairman
Department of Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
Phoenix, AZ Virtual Site Visit 2022
MS Teams: Click here to join the meeting
Eastern Standard Time

Thursday - May 5, 2022

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Opening Remarks & Prepare for Phoenix Virtual Townhall James Albino, DFO
Chairman

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Committee After Action Review & Sub-committee Notes James Albino, DFO
Chairman

12:15 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Public Comments

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Virtual Townhall ACMV Committee

2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Conduct Exit Briefing
VHA Leadership - Alyshia W. Smith, Director
VBA Leadership - Chris Norton, Director
NCA Leadership - Randy L. Heard, Director

2:45 p.m. - 2:50 p.m. Administrative Paperwork

2:50 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Committee Wrap-Up Robert McDonald, Chairman

3:00 p.m. Adjourn Meeting
Part X. Phoenix Virtual Town Hall Meeting Summary

ACMV hosted a virtual Veterans town hall meeting. The meeting provided Veterans a forum to share issues of concern and to obtain answers to questions from ACMV members related to VA benefits and services. There were approximately 40 attendees. Local VA officials from the Phoenix Healthcare System, Phoenix Regional Office and the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona served as panel members during the meeting. Numerous questions were raised regarding the following issues:

- How does the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona determine its Veterans utilization rate?
- The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in funerals being conducted without families’ presences. Is there a discussion to allow families impacted to hold memorial services?
- A question was asked how families and friends would be informed of memorial services?
- A question was asked regarding increasing participation of minority Veterans in the VA home loan program?
- An attendee asked a question regarding Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.
- A question was asked on what VA’s efforts in creating a resource that enhance service animals available to Veterans and ensuring Veterans know how to access this resource.
- An attendee asked a question regarding Arlington National Cemetery

During the town hall, the ACMV heard from Veterans who had great experiences with VA. An attendee commended VISN 22 for being among the Top 5 networks in the Nation.
Part XI. Exit Briefing: Phoenix Healthcare System, Phoenix Regional Office, and National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona

Alyshia W. Smith, Director, Phoenix Healthcare System (PVAHCS) and Michael Welsh, Deputy Director:

- Renaming ceremony of VA’s Southeast Clinic in Gilbert, AZ, to the Staff Sergeant Alexander Conrad Community Based Outpatient Clinic.
- Reference MST, tracking and asking Veterans coming into the facility – do not have specific numbers.
- Reference Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures coming into PVAHCS staff is working with a VHA team tasked with developing an enterprise-wide tool to better screen Burn Pit Veterans.
- Reference Fisher House – PVAHCS has been approved by the Fisher House Foundation for a Fisher House.
- Reference Fisher House – PVAHCS currently working with Fisher House Foundation to acquire land for the project.
- Reference Travel Reimbursement – are Veterans able to process at their primary care clinic? – Veterans will now use a new VA online portal known as the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System to process travel reimbursement.

Chris Norton, Director, Phoenix Regional Benefits Office:

- Reference Phoenix Regional Office leadership race/ethnicity demographics.
- Reference does the Regional Office have the correct number of full-time employees at its intake sites.
- Reference VBA current reliance on technology, is it going to sustain itself post pandemic?
- Reference older Veteran’s familiarity with VBA various technology platforms
- Reference VA partnering with the private sector to provide internet access to rural and Native American Veterans.
- Reference Regional Office compensation claims processing production rate.
- Reference to Regional Office workload.
- Reference Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program.

Randy L. Heard, Director, National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona (NMCAZ):

- Reference to outreach efforts to African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander Veterans.
- Reference lag time in scheduling services.
APPENDIX A: Action Plan Follow Up

Roll Up of Open ACMV Reports Action Plans 2020 Update Spreadsheets

**Recommendation 2:** That VA track and report on the impact of COVID-19 on minority Veterans. Specifically identify and address racial/ethnic health disparities and will further categorize the impact of COVID-19 on minority Veterans by the era served.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VHA Action Plan Recommendation 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps to Implement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add race and ethnicity to VA COVID-19 National Summary, by known cases, convalescent cases and known deaths nationally. (State-level reporting of minority status will not be included for privacy reasons, due to low counts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop quarterly report for the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) on race and ethnicity of Veterans COVID-19 cases and deaths with breakdowns by military era.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add risk factors as they relate to race and ethnicity in the next version of the Response Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop more intense and deliberate messaging to minority Veteran populations in a culturally sensitive manner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
manner regarding the risks of COVID19 on their health.

Recommendation 3: That VA require NCA to establish a minimum of four working agreements among institutions that serve the minority Veteran population. NCA should complete this recommendation by December 31, 2021, with annual reports starting December 31, 2022. NCA should publish results annually starting January 1, 2023.

VA Response: Concur in principle.

NCA’s Office of Engagement and Memorial Innovation (OEMI) manages the Veterans Legacy Grant Program. On November 26, 2021, the final rule went into effect allowing NCA to issue grants that encourage students and teachers around the country at the University and K-12 levels to immerse themselves in the rich historical resources found within VA’s National Cemeteries and VA Grant funded cemeteries. This first round of grants will specifically fund research and provide a tangible report using the stories of those interred in VA’s National Cemeteries and VA Grant Funded cemeteries with a focus on underrepresented Veterans and Service Members to include and not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, identity and Veterans from LGBTQ+ communities. The final reports or products produced can include, books, films, graphic novels, educational manuals, as well as electronic database resource materials. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in particular, are well suited to respond to this call for grant proposals. Here are examples:

1) Langston University is the only HBCU in Oklahoma. Fort Gibson National Cemetery (NC) plans to implement a Historical Legacy program based on the university’s input and direction regarding any potential areas of emphasis. Examples include but are not limited to: African American Veteran’s contributions and history of the Civil War to present; Choctaw and Cherokee Freedmen and Freedmen Veteran burial sites; and U.S. Colored Troops Veterans’ burial sites at National, State or Tribal cemeteries.

2) Long Island NC plans on building a partnership with the local HBCU Reserve Officer’ Training Corps (ROTC) program. This may involve the ROTC in ceremonies for Memorial Day, National Wreaths Across America Day and the National Day of Volunteerism. Building this partnership will open the door for additional opportunities to work on professional and career programs as well as outreach opportunities with HBCUs.
3) Texas Southern University & Prairie View A&M University Offices of Veterans Affairs have outreach events and activities scheduled throughout the year with Houston NC.

4) Alabama NC is planning at least one event this fiscal year with a local HBCU to promote career opportunities and VA benefits.

The mission of the Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) is to memorialize Veterans interred in NCA cemeteries through educational outreach. To that end, VLP has executed its mission successfully, which includes actively producing educational outreach materials that celebrate the service and sacrifice of the fullest diversity of the Veterans community. Examples of this can be found on NCA’s Page 11 of 44 internet website under the History, Education and Legacy tab. NCA has performed outreach to various institutions that serve the minority Veteran population. Annually, the NCA VLP posts public solicitations for institutions and non-profit organizations to submit proposals to share our mission via a contract, wholly in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). The FAR specifically prohibits us from targeting specific institutions or vendors for contract award. The OEMI and VLP staff work to build awareness amongst all institutions of higher learning of VLP contract solicitations, including in person visits to HBCUs such as Howard University. To date, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPSI) have applied (as noted below), but no HBCUs. NCA is not able to control who submits proposals or to target specific groups to respond to a public solicitation. NCA regularly reports to the Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials (ACCM) on outreach efforts to minority and underserved communities.

During FY 2020, VLP has awarded contracts with institutions in the following categories:

- AANAPSI: San Francisco State University and University of Hawaii-Manoa.
- HSI: Texas A&M University; University of California-Riverside and San Francisco State University.

While NCA does not currently have any working group agreements with any specific Native American Serving Institutions, NCA is a member of a consortium with the National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian) and the National Indian Education Association that is creating educational outreach materials in support of the dedication of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.
## NCA Action Plan

### Recommendation 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps to Implement</th>
<th>Lead Office</th>
<th>Other Office</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Current Status as of June 2022</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand partnerships through Legacy Program.</td>
<td>OEMI</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contracts with HSI; AANAPSI; Native American Serving Institutions; and HBCUs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed six contracts awarded for FY 2020; Four with minority serving institutions.</td>
<td>Timothy Nosal, Deputy Director, OEMI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the products created by other institutions that work with VLP have memorialized the service of Veterans from diverse backgrounds. Information on VLP can be found at [https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/](https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/).

Expanding engagement with minority communities is in the long-term interests of NCA. For example, the Public Affairs and Outreach Team has been collaborating with other program offices in NCA to expand NCA’s tribal outreach. NCA regularly participates with other offices in VA (e.g., the Office of Tribal Government Relations, the Center for Minority Veterans and the Office of Rural Health) toward accomplishing this goal.

OEMI’s Public Affairs staff regularly publishes social media content telling the story of minority Veterans. All social media posts can be found by the public on Facebook and Twitter. Social media content is often pulled from VLP for social media posts, or the content is developed by NCA historians working with the public affairs team. (e.g., NCA has profiled the stories on stories associated with Navajo Code Talkers, Buffalo Soldiers and other Veterans).

Last year, NCA released the VLM, which is an online memorial space. VLM serves as a portal to celebrate and remember those Veterans interred VA’s national cemeteries. Recently, NCA enhanced the capability of the VLM platform with the capability of allowing families and friends to leave tributes to Veterans.

An example of such tribute can be found at the following link: [https://www.vlm.cem.va.gov/1234/ROBERTEUGENEGARTZKE/011B2A2/](https://www.vlm.cem.va.gov/1234/ROBERTEUGENEGARTZKE/011B2A2/). Since NCA has four working agreements with institutions that serve the minority Veteran population through fiscal years 2020 and 2021, NCA suggests closure of this recommendation.

### Department of Veterans Affairs

**October 2022**
APPENDIX B: Advisory Committee Biographies

Charles E. Allen, M.D., CFI, Major,
U.S. Air Force (Retired)
African American

Dr. Charles E. Allen is a retired Air Force Officer, (Major, KC 135 Tanker Pilot, 23 combat flights during the Gulf War), a retired family practice physician and former project director for University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) Veterans Upward Bound. He currently is an associate lecturer of chemistry-biochemistry at UWM and national director of education, training and mental health for the National Association for Black Veterans.

Dr. Allen earned his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry/Biochemistry from Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Montana; his Master of Science in Health Services administration from Central Michigan University and his MD from Maria Dehostos School of Medicine, Dominican Republic.

Salvador J. Castillo,
U.S. Air Force
Hispanic

Mr. Salvador J. Castillo is an U.S. Air Force Veteran. He was assigned to the 43 SFS Squadron in Pope Airfield, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina in support of the 82nd Airborne Division from 1998-2002 as Security Forces Member. In July of 2006-2008, he joined the 36 Infantry Division unit as an Intel Analyst. Mr. Castillo has been involved in various intergovernmental projects such as the development of the Cameron County Veteran’s Court and have been the President of the South Texas Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Association.

Mr. Castillo earned his master’s in Public Administration from the University of Texas Pan-American.

Irma Hagans Cooper, Colonel,
U.S. Army (Retired)
African American

Colonel Irma Hagans Cooper is a 30-year Veteran of the U.S. Army. She has held three Commands ranging from Company to a Medical Group including one command in Iraq. Colonel Cooper has distinguished herself by exceptional meritorious conduct in a myriad of assignments with the Army Nurse Corps. In all her positions, she has demonstrated inspiring leadership, tireless energy and total dedication to the spirit and mission of the Army Nurse Corps and the U.S. Army Reserves.

She is a graduate of the Army War College with a Master of Science in Strategic Studies.
William “Bill” Cundiff, Chief Master Sergeant,  
U.S. Air Force (Retired)  
Pacific Islander

Chief Master Sergeant Bill Cundiff is a proud Chamorro son from the southern village of Agat. In 1991, after 24 years of service with the U.S. Air Force, his military career culminated with his retirement at the rank of Chief Master Sergeant (E-9). His diverse career experiences include Supply Computer Systems Analyst, Professional Military Education Instructor and Manager, First Sergeant (Resource Management Superintendent), Family Support Center Deputy Director and Director. Mr. Cundiff was awarded the Civilian Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding service.

He earned college degrees from both Guam Community College and University of Guam.

Lisa Carrington Firmin, Colonel,  
U.S. Air Force (Retired)  
Hispanic

Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin is the Military Liaison and Associate Vice President for Veteran and Military Affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio. As the founding leader for Veteran and Military Affairs, she oversaw the consolidation and realignment of all Veteran support services on campus and the creation of the Center for Military Affiliated Students to better support and serve Veterans and military affiliated students.

During her military service, Colonel Carrington Firmin held a multitude of leadership roles and received numerous awards including, but not limited to, the Legion of Merit Medal with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

Ronald Garcia,  
U.S. Navy  
Hispanic

Mr. Ronald Garcia is a Veteran of the U.S. Navy, where he completed two tours of duty in Vietnam. He is retired from Fannie Mae where he held the position of Senior Deputy Director. Mr. Garcia is a past member of the Orange County Division, League of California Cities Advocacy Committee and has previously held positions that include serving as Chair & Vice Chair of the Brea Planning Commission and Chair of the Brea Investment Advisory Committee and Board of Directors for the Neighborhood Housing Services of Orange County.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a minor in Finance, from the University of Redlands.
Margaret G. “Muggs” Garvin,
U.S. Navy
Native American

Ms. Margaret G. “Muggs” Garvin is the Veterans Service Officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN) and serves as the Division Manager of HCN Veterans Affairs. She was previously the County Veterans Service Officer for Monroe and Jackson Counties in Wisconsin. She as served three terms as Secretary of the County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin. Ms. Garvin is a member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Ms. Garvin has education within Supervisory Management and Human Services.

Warren A. Jones, M.D., FAAFP, Captain,
U.S. Navy (Retired)
African American

Dr. Warren A. Jones, FAAFP retired as a Captain in the US Navy after serving 22 years of service. Dr. Jones also has over 30 years’ experience in health care. Notably, he founded and established the Mississippi Institute for Improvement of Geographic Minority Health and Health Disparities (MIGMH) at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Over the course of his tenure there, Dr. Jones secured approximately $38 million for MIGMH and its constituent programs. Dr. Jones’ other professional experience includes directing the State of Mississippi’s Medicaid Program. He was recognized as Outstanding Minority Educator in the State of Mississippi and was elected the first and only African American President of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Dr. Jones is a 1978 graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans.

Robert V. “Bobby” McDonald,
U.S. Navy
African American

Mr. McDonald serves as President and Executive Director of the Black Chamber of Commerce of Orange County. Under his leadership, the Black Chamber has consistently partnered with minority business associations, local chambers and legislators to provide support and advocate for the county’s many small-business owners. Mr. McDonald developed the chamber’s educational outreach programs and has established the chamber’s Veteran’s business network programs. He has served as member of PBS Southern California board of Trustees, California Cultural Historical Endowment Board and the 17-member State Board of Governors of the California Community College System. He is a member of the 9th and 10th (Horse) Calvary Association-Buffalo Soldiers.
He earned his degrees from Los Angeles Harbor College and California State University, Fullerton.

Rebecca C. Samson, Colonel,
U.S. Army (Retired)
Asian American

Colonel Samson immigrated from the Philippines to the United States at the age of 13. Upon college graduation she enlisted in the U.S. Army, and went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia where she was commissioned as an Ordnance Officer in 1982. She served on active duty for 27 years both as an officer in the Regular Army and in the Active Guard Reserve. Committed to serve her community, she is a founding member of the Pan Pacific American Leaders and Mentors, a non-profit mentorship program connecting mentees (active and reserve military, Veterans and Department of Defense Civilians) with experienced professionals who have achieved personal, professional and career success.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from San Diego State University and a Master’s in Public Administration with emphasis in Human Resource Management from National University.

Major General Linda Lee Singh,
U.S. Army Reserve National Guard
African American

Major General Linda Lee Singh was Maryland’s first African American and first woman Adjutant General. She is a senior advisor to the governor. She was responsible for the readiness, administration and training of more than 6,700 members of the military department with an annual budget of more than $314 million. As the adjutant general, she served as the official channel of communication between the governor and the National Guard Bureau and serves as a governor’s cabinet member, according to her biography in the Maryland Archives.

Major General Singh is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College, where she received a master’s degree in Strategic Studies. She holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Columbia Union College, a master's degree in business administration, military management from Touro International University.

Nathan A. Tilton, Sergeant First Class,
U.S. Army (Retired)
Pacific Islander

Mr. Tilton, a disabled Veteran, serves as an independent researcher. He was responsible for collecting, organizing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to explore current issues, predict trends and develop solutions. These projects draw on
different disciplines such as sociology, medicine, psychology and other fields. In addition to his work as an independent researcher, Nathan works with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, by advocating for people with disabilities to receive disability benefits while acting as a part of congressional briefing team. He addressed systemic barriers facing people with disabilities by building and implementing innovative and high-impact advocacy plans.

His education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, and he is working to complete his Master of Arts in Medical Anthropology in 2022.

Beth A. Townsend, Lieutenant Colonel,
U.S. Air Force Reserve (Retired)
Native American

Lieutenant Colonel Beth A. Townsend was appointed by Governor Terry Branstad and confirmed by Iowa Senate unanimously as director of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) in 2015. She has general supervision over the various services IWD provides to Iowans. Lieutenant Colonel. Townsend also serves as the chair of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies Veterans Affairs Committee. She previously served as the Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

She is a graduate of Kearney State College, Kearney, Nebraska, and the University of Nebraska Law School. She is a member of the Nebraska and Iowa State Bar.

Michael J. Yaguchi, Lieutenant Colonel,
U.S. Air Force (Retired)
Asian American

Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Yaguchi is an Air Force Veteran; the former Director of VA Programs for CSRA International, Inc., and Managing Director of Yaguchi & Associates, LLC. He retired from the USAF in 2006. In 2009, he assumed duties as the Director, Nuclear Policy in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. In 2018, he started Yaguchi & Associates, LLC and launched his inaugural project in late 2018. He also served on the Board of Directors for many non-profit organizations, including, but not limited to, The Alzheimer Association (Northeast); the Go for Broke National Education Center; and serves on the advisory board with the National Veterans Network.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Washington, and a Master of Arts in Air and Space Operations, Air Command and Staff College.