Susan Anderson - NAGE

Denise Biaggi-Ayer - VHA

Cathy Bililter - NNU

MJ Burke - AFGE

Regan Crump VHA

Robert Callahan - VHA

Emily Wilson - VBA

Alberta Franklin - AFGE

Janice Jacobs - VBA

James Williams -

Leroy Bauer - SEIU

Walt Hall - OGC

Cathy Rick - ONS

Alma Lee - AFGE

Leslie Wiggins - LMR

Janice Perry - NFFE

Tracey Spencer - NFFE

Vivieca Wright - VHA

Juan Morales - VHA

Irma Westmoreland - NNU

Anitra Jones - LMR

Ryan Fulcher - LMR

Claudia Moore – NAGE

Leslie discussed people contacting the National LMR Forum and discussing VA issues. This requires quite a bit of follow up on VA LMR’s behalf and Leslie’s behalf. She wants to review the national data prior to sending the forum metrics in to OPM to ensure that labor has input. The chairs at the local level should have signed off on the data. We need to validate this information before sending it in. LMR should have put more emphasis on receiving both signatures.

Leslie asked for volunteers. Irma Westmoreland and Anita Hanson, Denise Biaggi-Ayer, Claudia Moore, Bill Wetmore volunteered.

Leslie also mentioned that San Antonio was important because it is the site of joint ventures between VA and DOD and the new position.

Leslie also spoke about the scrutiny all travel is under and that although burdensome it is necessary. There is also specific legislation that puts VA under the microscope and requires additional reporting requirements.

**Regan Crump-VHA Strategic Plan**

Mr. Regan Crump gave the first presentation for VHA’s Strategic Plan, bringing focus and alignment into VHA. Mr. Crump discussed the VA Strategic Imperatives that VA must be to be successful in the future. Reviewed VHA Strategic goals for the next 5 years. Denise discussed the new mandatory requirements for all performance plans. Bill asked if all PDs will now have this language. Denise clarified that this will be captured in their performance plans and not in the PDs. MJ asked when it was going to change. She cited the potential change that would require notice. Denise was unsure of when this new language would be reflected in the performance plans. MJ asked if this was required for non BUE for this year or next year? Denise just received this information and was unsure. Vivieca replied that non BUE staff already have this in their performance plans. Leslie clarified that it was being brought before NPC before going through the formal process. Leslie asked when it would be in the plans. Robert Callaghan stated that the memo to change the performance plan for supervisory and non-supervisory was issued two and a half weeks ago. Leslie stated that a bargaining obligation is there for performance plans. Bill Wetmore stated that there will be a meeting between employees and supervisors but that you don’t necessarily need to have a standard if one is not agreed to. Vivieca stated that the memo was issued as guidance and not as mandatory. Denise will find out specifically what the expectation is and with the call coming up they can be walked through what the expectations will be. Bill wants to know what happens if the current performance standards are not in line with the strategic plan. Mr. Crump resumed his presentation and stated that most of his staff have performance standards that are covered. Susan Anderson asked what incentives could be expected? Mr. Crump stated that this would be things such as time-off award, recognition but that he would find out what exactly is captured as an incentive. Ms. Anderson stated that time-off awards are capped and that public recognition is not an incentive. Leslie asked what she is suggesting as an incentive and that leadership should be creative in coming up with new incentives. MJ suggested as an action item that normally the union does not receive the Directors performance measures but thinks they should, especially with VHA. Specialty care in terms of consistency is the nurse staffing methodology directive. When you’re losing unique in certain areas, it requires the big 1A facilities to have reduced costs by some percentage, so a staffing methodology plan for what VA does best, mental health. MJ suggested research based protocols that ensure personalized care that is linked to cost. Do family members know what VA covers and what it does not? Vivieca stated that we have a core package of what is supposed to be delivered, but healthcare is local and VA does not want it stymied. MJ stated that if there is the staffing methodology, how you come up with the cost of what goes into providing that kind of care. MJ wants a staffing methodology for all other staff, such as with nursing. Susan asked when the 100 days will start. Mr. Crump responded that they hope to start in March by the time the plan and all the tools are completed. Bill Wetmore asked if this is the PACT model being applied to the rest of the hospital. Bill asked if they plan on expanding care. That is a conversation of expanding veterans enrolled by 1 million. Additionally, through partnerships between VA and DOD there may be additional joint ventures. Bill asked how limited travel dollars will affect partnership and Mr. Crump stated that they are exploring virtual options. Irma suggested an increase in AVT used by the Department.

**Kate McPhaul-NPC Support Draft Statement Employee Vaccinations**

Ms. Kate McPhaul spoke to NPC about flu vaccinations form the Office of Occupational Health. The challenge for VHA is to reach higher % rates per VISN without mandating vaccines. The number of employees vaccinated is only reflective of those vaccinated onsite. Only a manual capacity exists for offsite capture. Contractors and volunteers are not captured in the % rate. Cathy Billiter recommended administering the flu shot earlier to keep in line with the private sector. Irma suggested an electronic self certification process. Suggestions were made for allowing walk in flu shots for employees and allowing more employees to administer the shots. Ms. McPhaul stated that she appreciated NPC’s endorsement for the past several years. MJ brought up the fact that not all. Copy of Memo for NPC endorsement will be provided.

**Maureen McCarthy-Interagency Care Coordination**

Ms. Maureen McCarthy called in to discuss the Interagency Care Coordination Initiative. Also joining the presentation were Peggy Kennedy and Jennifer Perez.

Will start at the Walter Reed Hospital, Richmond VAMC and Washington, DC VAMC. We have trained over 850 individuals. The key point is to provide a single POC. The lead coordinator can transition from one lead coordinator to another. The LC will be the single POC. Ways to hand out the Lead Coordinator Fact Sheet . Irma asked about the nearly 900 people trained, that only 3 weeks ago Leslie was stating this was an emergency and it couldn’t go through the normal process. But it appears that you can train nearly 900 people with two face-to-faces. Ms. Kennedy answered that no travel was involved that it occurred at the DC VAMC. Irma asks if it occurred without proper notification and that it should have been coordinated with Irma and her locals in DC. Irma said next time there is some leeway it will not happen. Leslie agreed that Irma should be concerned and that she was unaware that 900 people were being trained simultaneously as Leslie informed the Unions that post implementation bargaining was taking place. Leslie will follow up with and the partners will schedule a call to figure out a timeline and get additional information. LMR will contact Ms. McCarthy for a follow-up call. The Caregiver support coordinators are the champions and not case managers.

**Kate McPhaul – Preventing Workplace Violence in VHA Sexual Assault Prevention Directive**

VHA has a long history of publishing results regarding VHA workplace violence. Bill Wetmore asked how you identify potential people that would be a problem? Ms. McPhaul stated that people with a history of disruptive behavior would be one of those potential people. There was general discussion on the challenges faced with workplace violence and how to properly define what types of responses are necessary in particular circumstances.

**NCOD Presentation – Dee Ramsel (NCOD Director) and Jill Draime (Supervisory Psychologist)**

Ms. Ramsel introduced herself as the new Director of NCOD. Mr. Callahan asked if there was any thought that went into making the AES biannual to allow facilities more time to address concerns and improve. Currently, the plan is to keep the survey annually. Ms. Ramsel will provide “which ones came out.” Irma discussed employees reporting problems should feel safe and protected. There was additional discussion about releasing the actual comments of the AES. The VA Team Assessment is for individual teams and is available through request. Typically this format is recommended for smaller team sizes where it is more effective. Change Reports are used for opening a new CBOC or when a facility is taking on a systems redesign project. Ms. Draime discussed the national facilitator training which will be rolled out at the VISN level first. Bill asked about the whether NCOD would be able to get 15 volunteers at each VISN with the skills required by NCOD. Whether every employee should have the ability to volunteer as a facilitator was discussed as well, or whether volunteer should be nominated. Leslie asked if Maureen was going to cover the.

**Terry Chandler – SRA**

Terry provided a synopsis on the training requests that have been filled for the intervention training. Leslie noted that Central Western Massachusetts would be visited by the Deputy Secretary while Minneapolis will have a leader from VHA attend. Leslie also mentioned that

**Maureen Cash - NCOD**

Discussed the national survey results for the forum and metrics. There was a very even distribution between the both labor and management responses, with Directors responding at 209 and Union presidents responding at 200. The current percentage of forums at VA facilities is 86%. NCA had the highest positive relationship rating. Anita was concerns with the response rate in NCA from their labor partners. Anita inquired as to what the process was for reaching out to all locals. There was one phone call attempt with a message, call again in several days and leave a message. An email follow up was then sent if there was not a response. Reaching non-VA employee reps was difficult. At NCA there were 34 Directors and 15 Union President responses. In particular, on slide 18, the question is a little unusual because VA management should be going through the labor union reps, not employees, for predecisional involvement. Bill Wetmore asked to define what ‘frequency’ means in relation to one of the questions and forum meeting cancellations. Slide 73 prompted Leslie to say that more predecisional involvement needs to take place and NPC needs to do more to show people how they change the way they’ve done business. Leslie also mentioned that a greater importance will be played upon VA’s compliance on the EO in the future, with OPM and OMB looking over. When there are issues with the EO and VA is called to defend themselves after people have gone to OPM and OMB, who have no validated information and are unaware of everything in place to help forums. There is concern that OMB and OPM will look into these instances and I have not seen any other Department go through these rigors. There is concern that the VA is painting a rosier picture. All the data we have shows that things are improving and there is clear data to show that.

NPC heard from the local Union and Management leaders and discussed some of the successes and challenges faced.

Mr. Ralph Torres called in to the NPC at 8:30 to introduce himself as the acting Assistant Secretary for HR&A. He stated that VA leadership is still committed to investing in human capital despite the circumstances surrounding the VA HR Conference that brought Mr. Torres into his position. There will be a continued emphasis in these areas. Between now and 2015, a entirely new electronic system will be used for all HR functions, from on boarding to benefits. Additionally, looking at cost savings on space is what the dept is looking at. Alma asked if Ralph was going to keep the LMR Conference room. Mr. Torres stated that he is committed to providing space for the Unions and LMR but is not entirely sure where that will be. Sacrifices are being made everywhere and employees are being put in smaller and smaller places. Looking at more options for telework will be what is examined for this reason. Susan Anderson asked where the new emphasis on space was coming from. Ralph responded that it was driven by law and guidance from GSA and that he would follow up with Leslie in providing those documents. Cathy Rick asked more about the tools that are becoming available for HR management and recommended that NPC schedule a future meeting to review them all but that processing transactions and putting everything into an integrated system is important. Leslie agreed and mentioned that getting Roy Herndon available for comments on the space would be a good idea as well.

Discussing the tour of the METC DOD training site, Cathy mentioned that the pilot is just starting for Intermediate Care Technicians and will begin with Corpsmen and Medics. As of now, ONS has the lead for the pilot. About 40 have been hired already. Each hire will also have a Veteran mentor and each site will retain their hire. The workgroup that was assembled was Dept wide and included DOD members. Mr. Morales asked about ways in which we could partner with DOD for other positions. Cathy responded that this pilot was the beginning of that idea.

**AFGE Update – Alma Lee**

Alma asked if the VISNs have been given $25,000 for safety training. Cathy mentioned that they were looking at ways to minimize travel training and that it would be different for the basic and intermediate. Alma stated that Employee Wellness is all over the map so maybe it should go through each facilities forum. Leslie suggested getting an inventory on what Wellness is doing. Alma asked where we are with the downgrades. Leslie responded that with Ms. Tonya Deanes going to VHA that there has been a lag in getting everything back to normal and that the subgroup that was put together will continue on. MJ mentioned that she is concerned with where the subgroup will be going. Leslie reassured everyone that there will likely be a call meeting for the NPC in the next couple of weeks with Esra and Ralph. The Legislative Conference is next week in Washington, DC. AFGE is also setting up a new President’s training to emphasize

**VHA Update – William Schoenhard**

Increasing access, eliminating homelessness and assisting VBA and DOD partners with the backlog is where VHA is focusing. From serving the increasing number of females to increasing access through tele-health, a variety of things coming from the President’ EO and the scrutiny in which we are reviewed by the HVAC. VA has the best mental health system in the country and VA’s credibility is on the table with how we overcome barriers with access and having sufficient space and staff. 2014 with the Accountable Healthcare Act, Veterans will have more choices and our customer service is so important. An engaged workforce that feels it has the capacity to be heard, which can be accomplished through things like forums, an engaged workforce improves customer service. The best organizations have the most engaged workforce. The private sector is going to be competing, it’s a game of numbers. They are working on scripting, customer service and how people are meeting the patient. Mr. Schoenhard was extremely proud of the culture shift that took place in St. Louis and jeopardized reputation before patient safety. Susan asked about a memo on a four part survey on occupational health. One component was voluntarily. There was no predecisional information. AFGE mentioned that they saw it went out and sent a message that it was not endorsed. Bill Wetmore asked about whether there were continued plans to expand to serve Veterans closer to home to expand access of care. Mr. Schoenhard stated that the CBOCs play a big part of that with their expansion. Vivieca also mentioned that with telehealth, at times it is better to bring patients to the facility and that moving away from a lot of the contracts with the clinics. Mr. Morales stated that you look at things like workflow before making a determination of moving a clinic, which is difficult in a rural setting logistically. Bill asked about putting equipment in Veterans houses through home care. Mr. Callahan stated that he has expanded home care greatly. Susan asked about My Healthy Vet and Veteran access. That is expanding and Cathy mentioned that Open Notes is about granting open access to notes. Susan stated that employees are concerns about this. Mr. Schoenhard said that it was an area where VA needs to continue moving forward.

**Susan Anderson – NAGE Update**

NAGE is getting ready for their Master Agreement negotiations and the first face-to-face in May. Aubrey Weekes is the author and speaks directly about working conditions. It can also contradict with MOUs that are local. Also, in VISN 1 there is an issue that an LR Specialist telling people that are out on FMLA cannot be contacted. Susan also wanted to mention that OIT has not been present at the NPC, despite having two seats.

**Anita Hanson – NCA Update**

NCA will include 10 additional occupations in the GEAR pilot for 2013 and will continue engaging labor partners. More than 100 additional employees will be included in the pilot and the 4 remaining MISNs will be receiving 1,200 employees by 2014. The feedback from employees has been positive thus far. NCA tracks safety closely. NCA showed positive improvements of 44 of 50 components and an increase and is highest in all of the Administrations. This is physical safety. Apprenticeship program for homeless Veterans. Training consists of extensive training and CO will conduct a survey for feedback. The first quarterly training meeting is in March 2013. First class will graduate in October 2013 and 24 new apprentices have started. The issues that occurred in Arlington National Cemetery prompted NCA to review. Findings have been developed and NCA is in a notification process now. Most issues discovered were from decades ago and those issues are being fixed now. Regular and recurring internal reviews are ongoing.

**Janice Jacobs – VBA Update**

AFGE mid-term team has been active with 15 MOUs signed. Challenge training in Baltimore was partially virtual for travel dollars and was successful and may serve as a model for the future. Rules Based Processing is where VBA is heading. E-benefits have more than 2 million participants with links to over 117 benefits and it is updated monthly. Joining forces initiative is something Janice is involved in and to have legal help for claims. get VSO more fully developed claims in the process. The American Legion is looking at putting things in the FDC which is an expedited process. FDC is turbo tax. Each office has an unofficial contest to see what their FDC rate will be, which is data and not a form. Tap briefing is a transitional briefing that discusses DOL DOD and VA benefits that are available prior to leaving DOD and entering VA. They cannot leave the military until choosing one of several tracks. There are several hundred people that VBA is hiring to fill these briefing roles. BOW is the name of this program VEI which is Veterans Employment Initiative. Cathy asked about a way to tap into the track the separating service members list and their selection. This is a White House driven initiative. Emily Wilson mentioned that the IT systems and the paperless system. VA Medical centers associated with these paperless ROs have to go into the system to access information. MJ asked about lanes and currently all training for a RVSR is the same and not central to a particular lane you may work, you still need to know how to do everything. Janice mentioned that the ability to adjust your resources into different lanes. 51 of 56 offices are applying lanes and the rest of the ROs will soon be using lanes. Labor has been huge in the VBMS development. Testing occurs weekly and labor has been a big part of that. Bill Wetmore asked a question about issues of claims. Emily mentioned that for each issue have sub-issues. Bill read in paper one Regional office doing at 139 days and another over 300 days. A lot comes with ratio of trainees. Some is how strong division management is in directing workload and also the ratio of FTE. The VBA National Partnership Council will attend Columbia and Louisville to address ask Leslie.

**James Williams – SEIU Update**

Albany is having a difficult time, beginning about a year ago and folks being able to take SL. Some of the labor partners wanted to withdraw from partnership. SEIU has contacted a Congressman regarding denials in congressional law rights. 3 ULPs and 4 arbitrations are pending. We are asking for an intervention. Leslie let it be known that there is a form for intervention that council members can access online. Leslie mentioned that if the grievances at a local are accelerating, this can be because of lack of communication between management and labor but we need to continue working together through some form of partnership to advance the mission. I think that it is somewhat different from the grievance process. Bill asked if it was court leave or AL that was denied? James was unaware of which type of leave was requested and Mr. Wetmore stated that it can be a factor. Leslie mentioned that not knowing the ins and outs shows there is a lack of communication on that end.

**Irma Westmoreland – NNU Update**

NNU has had quite a bit of turnover in some of our facilities recently. We have a new director in Albany, Denver, Brooklyn and Washington, DC, all due to retirements. We’ve been doing quarterly training and one that I did in Las Vegas was about qualification standards. I have some folks that are chairs of boards that are doing the training and we also did some training on worker’s comp. Our next training will be in April in DC and train them on ProClarity I would ask HRs support in that. We have our signing in two weeks for the Contract. The following week we will begin our joint training material meeting. I know I told you I was elected as a Vice President for NNU so I have a little more responsibility on the national level. April 19 we have our legislative effort in DC and we have support for ratios by the DC council. That won’t affect the VA but it’s a good step. I do have a question about PL 111-163 and they don’t know when that reimbursement is going to happen going back to 2010. Some facilities were supposed to be getting paid now. As of 8/2012 it has been fixed in the system to catch and this was supposed to be and I know I’ve asked you about the backpay many times. Leslie stated that they have bumped up the meeting to the Deputy and that the system was never originally built to take all these changes in the law. The resources may change for our fiscal service. Leslie stated that many of the changes should be automatic. I have it in writing that HR is blaming the Unions for some of these backpay issues.

**Cathy Rick – ONS**

ICT is the 640 series. I want to talk about a workgroup that began two years ago and I’m briefing the Nurse Exec Council soon. Cathy Rick discussed changing Nurse levels without going through the Peer Review process. Irma stated that her director stated that Ms. Rick told her to not give waivers. If evidence is in the written documentation that comes forward our boards will overturn them. These are just recommendations from the workgroup. There would be a financial impact on the organization if this were approved. There is a lot of implications for these possible recommendations including legislation. I would be supportive of a possible pilot. It’s possible that some recommendations would be fast tracked while others, that will take longer to implement, will be addressed later. Irma stated that all Unions have expressed complaint against the BSN education waiver requirement. Irma sated that non BSNs are not being hired in Augusta and that it is being advertised as such. Mr. Schoenhard wanted to clarify that this was unrelated to the waiver question. Cathy Billiter spoke about Augusta having problems staying competitive with other facilities.

Next NPC Meeting: May 20th is the tentative week for the next NPC. The venue selection is too hard to discuss right now. Everyone can send in suggestions as to where we go.