**ND Cares Coalition Meeting Minutes**

**May 5, 2022**

Shelly Sizer opened the meeting with a welcome and a roll call of coalition members present. There were 24 people on the call.

**Presentation**

Moriah Opp, Suicide Prevention Coordinator of the ND Behavioral Health Division gave an update on planning for the 988 Crisis Line transition taking place on July 16, 2022. The line will continue to be answered by FirstLink. A stakeholder planning coalition met from April to September. The state received an implementation grant of $250,000 what will go to FirstLink to build their capacity for a chat feature. SAMSHA is creating the marketing materials. There is a state-created landing page for information. 211 will still exist for resources and referrals. The 1800 number will still work as well. Both 988 and the 1800 will be answered by first link. For veterans, press 1.

**Coalition Member Updates**

ND Job Service: Jerome Billups reported that the Extended Rural Outreach Program is going well. The Workforce Innovation Grant is being used to perform outreach into communities as opposed to people coming into the local offices. On veterans’ unemployment numbers, ND is doing phenomenally. The is 2.5% unemployment which is the second lowest in the nation. The Department of Labor has noticed and asked ND to explain what we’re doing. Jerome said that he can’t see anything special other than his staff serves veterans very well – the first time. Veterans are enjoying long-lasting relationships with employers making them less likely to job-hop.

Survivor Outreach Program: Sara Blazek reported that the support weekend for survivor families is at the end July that is paid for by the National Guard. Although the families connect with one another on social media or on the phone but it’s very important to in-person connection. Shelly Sizer volunteered to assist in any way she could.

ND Suicide Prevention Coalition: Kora Dockter reported that the NDSPC is getting their committees back together for planning purposes. She also stated that the NDSPC is helping with the BHD’s Zero Suicide initiative and testified about its importance to the legislative Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee.

Fargo VA – Summer Hanson was not on the call, but Michelle reported for her that the Post-911 to VA program saw a large increase enrollees last month and her team was able to reach out to 160 of them. Many of them were in Afghanistan for the withdrawal.

Fargo VA – Paul Heitmann stated that the VA added some additional presumptive conditions for veterans who have environmental exposures and so we encourage those veterans to apply for benefits. They are staffing up to accommodate the claims. They expect to grow another 15-20% at the Fargo Regional Processing Center. Additionally, the VA is looking for military sexual trauma markers. Some of their mental health conditions could be related to sexual trauma even though service members may not have reported the incident during their service – both female and male.

FirstLink – Jennifer Illich reported that about 200 people attended their 13th annual breakfast where the focus was how to talk to our kids about suicide. Their first ever Youth Film Festival turned out well. High school and college-age your made films about behavioral health issues such as stress prevention and suicide prevention. The films will be released via social media to the public. Along with getting ready for 988, FirstLink is also looking for new office space that is larger and more secure. Overnight staff are running into unauthorized people in the hallway bathrooms. Even though the rent will increase dramatically in a new building, from $20K per year to $60K+ per year, they have to move.

Fargo VA Community Engagement & Partnerships: Sarah Kemp-Tabbut reported that she spoke before the acute psychiatric treatment committee about the VA’s best practices to fight veteran suicide. The information is publicly available. She is currently working with a group of service providers to create an online toolkit where they and find answers to questions when their patient is a veteran, including direct lines to the VA for assistance. This is also part of the Governor’ Challenge priorities.

Military Outreach: Nikki Frohlich reported that her biggest project right now is planning for the Central Dakota Stand Down on August 25th at the AMVETS in Bismarck. A stand down is a one-stop-shop for information on a variety of topics such as financial, legal, benefits, housing, etc. She will also provide information at a retirement seminar for full- time National Guard employees. Other than that, it’s business as usual. Shelly Size complemented Nikki on a wonderful military culture training to Sparling Construction last week.

Protection & Advocacy: Pam Mack reported that they have several new staff. P&A is very committed to ensuring that veterans with disabilities have their rights protected and if there's any abuse and exploitation. They are working extensively in conjunction and collaboration with vulnerable adult Protective Services staff to address those situations. They are trying to target some groups that are related to traumatic brain injury and the need to pursue assistive technology.

Military OneSource: Cassie Roness reported on the Love Everyday app which is a flexible online evidence-based tool that gives military couples the choice to work on their own or with a coach to help strengthen their relationship. It is free for all active-duty guard and reserve members. They can work on communication and conflict, emotional distance, love, trust. They can work through the program on their own or with a coach.

Fargo VA – Brenda Schneider filled in for Dr. Weintraub and reported the VA completed a market analysis of mental health services across our North Dakota market to identify where gaps are and strategically figuring out how they plan to grow and structure our mental health team. They are working on replacement leases for Fergus Falls and Grand Fork for fiscal year 22. They will be replacing Bismarck, Devils Lake, and the Jamestown CBOCs in fiscal year 24, and working on contract renewals for Williston and Dickinson. For the Fisher House, the VA has awarded a contract for a formal land study to a secure property.

Behavioral Health Division – Pam Sagness talked about available training May 11 this is 988 specific and shared a link for children and families coping with COVID. The Behavioral Health Conference October 11 – 13 in Fargo in person and virtually. They are also working recommendation that were just announced at the acute psychiatric committee meeting: building a new state hospital, ensuring enough residential beds across the state in the right location, and some no eject, no reject policy changes. Here is a [link](https://www.ndlegis.gov/files/committees/67-2021/23_5150_02000presentation1300report.pdf) to the report.

Military Outreach: Kelli Weiand reported that she is attending the Williston MAC meeting on May 9th and briefing the National American Legion president on her program on the 10th. There are two events coming up in Newtown and a Salute to Seniors in Minot, where she will have an information booth.

Co-Chairman: Cindy Whitesell stated that the Minot AFB is doing a lot of outreach on the subject of violence prevention while doing less resilience training. The community support coordinator is out for surgery so Cindy will catch up with him later. Cindy has been accompanying Kelli on some outreach activities.

NDNG – MAJ Michele Thomsen reported that she is waiting for approval to include the resilience checklist, for soldiers that are facing legal actions, into the NDNG’s Command Guidance. Reports show that upwards of 25% of our soldiers and airmen that die by suicide have some form of legal action going on in their life at the time of their death - child custody, divorce, criminal, etc.

NDDVA – Lonnie Wangen stated that the Veteran’s Court is being approved and hoping to be functional in July. On transportation issues there is a new pilot program that is expanding the Highly Rural transportation benefits to people who live in a rural area in a county with a big city. They are getting good participate right now, so hopefully at the end of the pilot the VA will make it permanent. The Fox suicide prevention grant has become available and we’re trying to schedule a meeting the Moriah Opp, Joyal and Michelle to discuss it. He reminded everyone that the VA’s S.A.V.E. training is being offered May 11 and August 3rd. On the topic of staffing Lonnie reported that he is still looking for a part-time employee (no benefits).

Grand Forks AFB – Andrea Peters reported that base is having difficulty hiring licensed credentialed counselors. According to contract rules they must have a ND license, but there may be a military spouse were eligible however they have an out of state license. Their federal contractor is trying to fill the open positions, but it’s been difficult. The positions can be licensed LPC, MFT, LCSW as long as they can practice independently. The child and youth behavioral health specialist position has been open for nearly a year now. Denae Grove stated that she is in the Community Support Coordinator role at the AFB and works with Andrea.

Mental Health America – Carlotta McCleary stated mental health advocacy network is working on a series of podcasts to inform people about what happening around ND regarding services. The first in the series Dr. Rosalee Etherington talking about the state hospital. Another pod cast will be about what is available at the Humans Service Centers and crisis response services. The host will ask questions about how things work such as “if somebody's in the state hospital, can they just decide to leave if they want to go home”?

**Administrative Report**

Michelle Panos talking about the presentation to Sparling Construction and showed photos of Nikki Frohlich conducting military culture training – she did a fabulous job. The presentation for the Healing Center will be at the NDDVA offices. On budget and donations Michelle reported that very little of the ND Cares budget was spent this quarter and there have been no new donations. She also went over the ND Broadcaster Association contract and given the number of spots we receive for the $4000 per month it is still a good value. For the Governor’s Challenge Michelle talked about the core team and the two-day meeting in May to start the strategic planning process. June 7-9 we will meet again to start working on logic models for the three priority areas. About Tricare, two items of the several items the Working Group asked for were completed. We received a spreadsheet of Tricare domestic violence and sexual trauma treatment providers in the state in two categories – those who had openings within two weeks and others with no openings in that time period or those who were not taking on addition Tricare patients. The latter list was larger. Second, we received information that for those providers who submitted claims correctly they were paid on-time. Working Group continues to dialogue with Tricare to break down the other barriers to provides joining the network. We will also update the Lieutenant Governor's Task Force MIND, which is a task force for military issues in North Dakota. Members of the congressional delegation staff attend this meeting. Lastly, the strategic plan update is this year Nikki and Michelle will work on a military culture brochure and the next issue of the Partner Update will go out shortly.

**Events**

Events were discussed as listed in the agenda.

**Next Meetings**

The next Coalition meeting will be on August 4, 2022, and the next Executive Committee meeting is June 2, 2022.

**Closing**

Shelly ended the meeting at approximately 3:00 pm.