

ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting
December 3, 2020



Attendees: Connie Sprynczynatyk (virtual), Cindy Whitesell (virtual), Joyal Meyer (virtual), Brian Watters (Virtual) LTC Shawn Flemmer (virtual), BG Jackie Huber (virtual), Davina French (virtual), David Becker (virtual), Breton Weintraub (virtual) Michelle Panos

Absent: Pam Sagness

1. **Opening.** Connie briefly opened the meeting.

2. **Minutes.** Minutes from the October 1, 2020 meeting were accepted as written.

3. **Old Business**

- Michelle reviewed conversation she had with Connie and FirstLink. When a veteran calls FirstLink, there is a warm handoff to the services needed if the veterans request it. First Link also identified a gap in anti-stigma messaging in that there needs to be more training by law enforcement, elected officials, and municipalities on how to talk about mental health/suicide and the use of a suicide screening tool training. Connie added that FirstLink also discussed how promoting telehealth also helps to reduce stigma by providing a level of privacy or anonymity within the community. Perhaps a series of 50-minute trainings/webinars could be created consisting of mental health, available resources, suicide, and the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) screening tool. ND Cares will likely receive a proposal from First Link with an outline on how the Coalition can be of assistance.
- During the Anti-Stigma discussion, Connie posed a question to the committee about their thoughts on other gaps that may exist and ideas on how to address them. Brian Watters suggested an inventory of what the VA has to offer. Davina commented that not enough is being done with survivors and that we need a communication plan to deal with the stigma of losing a loved-one. All survivors should be invited to all survivor events. Joyal added that survivor families of suicide can look to other survivor families for support and know that they should not be embarrassed. A mentorship program would be helpful. BG Huber mentioned that Sara Blazek works with survivors for the Army Guard. LTC Flemmer offered to bring Sara into the conversation so we can learn more about her program.
- Connie suggested a small group meeting on December 8, 2020 at 1:00 pm to wordsmith the strategic plan and realign goal/objectives in light of the information gathered from this meeting and the Coalition Meeting. The group will consist of Connie, Breton, Joyal, Brian, Michelle. Michelle will forward three items for the meeting:
 - Strategic plan for 2020-2021
 - Jam Board document from Coalition meeting showing three identified gaps.
 - Notes from the today's Executive Committee meeting.

4. **Upcoming Events:** The Holiday Event for the Lisbon Veterans Home on December 6 is still on but will be largely virtual. NDANG will deliver gifts for veterans including T-shirts corresponding to their branch of service.

5. **Next meetings:** The next executive meeting is Jan. 7 and the Coalition meeting will be later in January for updates on legislative issues relevant to our mission. Davina asked if Military Day at the Legislature is still on. BG Huber had not heard of anything, but MAJ Sheldon may know. Connie recommended that we skip it this year. Davina recommended planning now for the next session.