ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting



September 3, 2020

**Attendees:** Connie Sprynczynatyk (virtual), Cindy Whitesell (virtual), Davina French (telephone), Brian Waters (virtual), LtCol Shawn Flemmer (virtual) BG Jackie Huber, Michelle Panos

**Absent:** Dr. Breton Weintraub, Pam Sagness, Joyal Meyer, Lonnie Wangen, David Becker

**1. Opening.** Connie briefly opened the meeting then turned it over to Co-Chair, Cindy Whitesell.

**2. Minutes.** Minutes from the August 6, 2019 meeting where accepted as written.

**3. Old Business**

* Michelle reported that the number of ND Cares businesses and communities remains 19 and 48.
* During the Community Reconnect Update, Michelle reported she visited the town of Jud and Wishek and Service Dogs of America in Jud. Both communities are doing well but activities have slowed down due to COVID-10. ND Cares Jud committee member Darryl Pfaff is also on the board of directors for Service Dogs of America, which has temporarily stopped placing dogs with owners for the protection of staff and dogs. Service dogs are a medical device as is a wheelchair, crutch or eye glasses. Dogs are trained for PTSD, mobility/stability, diabetic episode and seizure alerts, but not as seeing-eye dogs. Michelle offered to distribute service dog information at ND Cares events, stand downs and other events. Director Jenny Brodkorb provided Michelle with several informational and business cards. In the town on Wishek, Michelle reported that Mayor Les Otto would like to do more military/veterans events but he needs to look for another funding source. Mayor Otto paid for the last event himself as the town’s bylaws do not allow use of town funds for this purpose. Perhaps in some circumstances ND Cares funds from the ND Foundation account could be used to assist these education-type events.
* The FirstLink update is complete except for any changes to the Behaviors Health Division’s list of licensed providers.
* Kora Docktor and Michelle met virtually with Kodi Pinks of the State Epidemiologists office and Together with Veterans (TWV) to discuss examining 2019 North Dakota Suicide numbers for the purpose of determining if the community eligibility map provided by TWV is still accurate with the addition of the 2019 numbers. The next step is to hold a meeting with pertinent partners to make a final recommendation to TWV.
* On the topic of coalition change in membership Michelle reported that she reached out to Kora Docktor of the Suicide Prevention Coalition who agreed to become a member. Michelle also reached out to Darrell Nitschke of Congressman Armstrong’s office and invited him or another from this office to participate regularly.
* As an update of the Anti-stigma campaign, Michelle reported that the National Guard Joint Public Affairs recently produced a series of videos for Suicide Prevention Month. The most recent is posted on the NG and ND Cares social media pages and features Gen. Huber and Sgt.Maj. Heck discussing the services available to service members. ND Cares will look at all the video produced to see if there are snippets we could use for the Coalition’s radio and TV spots. If not, Lt.Col. Flemmer gave the name Chief Jeff Miller, who overcame ideations of suicide, to talk about stigma in a 30-sec or shorter spot.
* Michelle reported part of the $2500 grant from the Bob Woodruff Foundation was used to purchase masks and hand sanitizers to keep veterans and their families’ safe during the ND Cares Berthold event and the North Center Stand Down in Minot. The remainder will go the NG Emergency Relief Fund to assist service members who experience COVID-19 related hardships. The Woodruff foundation granted ND Cares an extension until October 1 to report on the use of funds.
* To promote the new TRICARE and Regional Human Service Center relationship, Michelle stated that she is working with the Public Affairs Office of the Dept. of Human Services on an article for the next quarterly Guardian and a possible press release.
* For potential topics during the next ND Cares Coalition meeting, Connie recommended a facilitated discussion among coalition members concerning Anti-Stigma efforts. Michelle will reach out to a few members of the Executive Committee to formulate a plan to accomplish this.
* Each committee member provided an update.

6. **Upcoming Events**

* There is no further information on the Gold Star Mother event in Minot.

7. **Closing:** Cindy closed the meeting at 11:22 a.m.