 **ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting**

**May 6, 2021**

**Attendees:** Connie Sprynczynatyk (virtual), Pam Sagness (Virtual), Dr. Weintraub (Virtual), Davina French (virtual), Joyal Myer (Virtual), David Becker (Virtual), BG Jackie Huber, (Virtual), Michelle Panos.

**Absent:** Lonnie Wangen, Cindy Whitesell, Brian Watters

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

**2. Minutes.** Minutes from the April 1, 2021 meeting where accepted as written.

**3. Presentation**

* Kodi Pinks, Director of Non-Infectious Disease Surveillance and Data Management, Office of the State Epidemiologist, ND Dept. of Health. Discusses the newest ND Juvenile Suicide Statistics and information and updated veteran suicide statistics.

**4. Old Business:**

* Michelle announced that the City of Sheldon was the newest ND Cares community.
* Michelle also reported on her experience at the ND League of Cities workshop with Nikki Frohlich of Military Outreach and her reconnection with the city of Bottineau and new contacts with several other cities.

**5. New Business**

* For the strategic plan update, Michelle discussed the draft Communication Plan to Address Sigma. It consists of several components directed at existing service members, veterans, and the public (through ND Cares communities and business partners). The radio public education piece with Chief Miller will continue for the rest of the year. Newsletters to communities and businesses will resume and included an articles addressing stigma. The Military Reference Guide will be updated to include two pages of military culture and a more comprehensive list of resources. The guide will focus on the strength of character and work ethic of current and former service members to reinforce the positive aspects of military. Lastly, in-person or virtual military culture training will be promoted to communities and business, including working with the Behavior Health Division to offer another round of training to providers.
* **Executive Committee Updates**
  + **VA Fargo –** Dr. Weintraub reported they are still on essential travel only and doing limited outreach events. The VA has satisfied the large demand for Covid-19 vaccines. Since demand has slowed, the VA is careful not to waste doses if there is insufficient demand in a single day. As of today, only two doses of the Pfizer vaccine should be sufficient for effective protection until more is known about virus variants. The Fargo VA did not use the Pfizer vaccine but other VA areas did.
  + **ND Dept. of Health –** Joyal stated that the new director, Dr. Nizar Wehbi (Nee-zar Wee-bee) started this week and that the Dept. of Health and Dept. of Human Services will merge September 2022.
  + **Behavioral Health -** Pam stated that merge discussions have begun focused on streamlining the delivery of services. Representation on this committee will likely not change in the short-term. The budget increased funding for Substance Use Disorder Voucher. Century Code will be developed and revised to include ‘person-first’ language as an anti-stigma effort. Funding for mobile crisis services will continue. An additional position was added to assist with grant funding. Pam will forward a summary of budget and policy actions when completed.
  + **NDNG –** BG Huber reported that the NDNG is still supporting Covid efforts with a gradual wind down as well as fire suppression efforts in and out of state. Air Defense Artillery in Grand Forks will deploy as group in June and another hundred individual deployments across the force. The Resiliency Council will have a quarterly meeting upcoming. The Memorial Day event at the veteran’s cemetery will be a hybrid, live and virtual event.
  + **Army Reserve –** Dave will attend the Reserve Conference in May and will distribute Military Data books and discuss the coalition’s efforts.

**6. Upcoming Events**

1. **DOD/VA Biennial Suicide Prevention Conference:** (Virtual) May 17-20
2. **Veterans Memorial Celebration, Bonanzaville:** May 27th

**Memorial Day Ceremony:** May 31 Heritage Museum, Bismarck /Veterans Cemetery Mandan

1. **TAPS Peer Mentor Training:** May 28, Washington DC
2. **Behavioral Health Peer Support Training:** In Person – June 28-July 2, Bismarck, Grand Forks, Minot, Bismarck, Fargo (apply online)
3. **Veterans Outdoor Adventures** 
   1. **Prairie Dog Hunt:** June 11, Flasher
   2. **Salmon Fishing (Lake Superior):** May 31 to June 1, Fargo

**7. Next Meeting Dates**

**a.** ND Cares Coalition Meeting, June 2, 2021

**b.** ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting, July 8, 2021.