 **ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**November 17, 2021**

Attendees Connie Sprynczynatyk, Lonnie Wangen, Brenda Schneider (for Dr. Weintraub), BG Jackie Huber, Joyal Meyer, David Becker, Shelly Sizer, Michelle Panos. (all virtual)

Absent, Cindy Whitesell, Pam Sagness, Davina French, LTC Shawn Flemmer

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

**2. Minutes.** Minutes from the September 16, 2021, meeting were accepted as written.

**3.** **Presentation:** Shelly Sizer the new, North Dakota Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army introduced herself, reviewed her civilian military careers and related the history of her involvement with Inter-service Family Assistance Committee which is the original group that created ND Cares.

**4. Old Business**

* Michelle announced the addition of the City of Columbus as the 50th ND Cares Partner Community with a sign presentation yet to be determined.
* For the strategic plan update Michelle reviewed the improved ND Cares newsletter format that is now called the ND Cares Partner update. The format resembles the NDNG’s weekly e-publication the Tagline. Future editions of the update will not only include recent events of ND Cares and partners but will also highlight coalition member events/announcements as appropriate. Topics for feature article could include lethal means storage, TAPS, 211, Fisher House, and suggested activities that cities/business could engage in to show support. Lastly Michelle reported that over 1000 entities were transferred to FirstLink in the completed 2021 resource update.
* **Executive Committee Updates**
  + **Army Reserve Ambassador:** David Becker reported that the Wounded Warrior Project is starting up again and recently had an event Bismarck. David will forward the coordinator’s information so we can get him involved in ND Cares or other organizations around the state.
  + **NDNG:** BG HuberReported that the NDNG is converting to a new email system, “army.mil”, so please be patient if there is a delay in responding. For deployments the 957th in Bismarck is on the southwest border, the 188th is in the capitol region, and about 100 plus Air Guard folks deployed around the world are starting to come back now. COVID support to the state has been extended to March 2022. Along those lines, the Air Guard has until December 2nd to be vaccinated and the Army has until June 2022. Leadership is working through exemption requests has they come in. On the subject of mental health, the NDNG participated in Recovery Reinvented with the addition of Nathan Griffin as a featured speaker. He was a great example how one can be in uniform, receive help for a mental health issue and still have a great career. The Guard has started a new alcohol misuse prevention program called My Prime and is looking to possibly bring on a licensed addiction counselor. Lastly BG Huber briefly described the Guards CR2C program for Shelly’s benefit.
  + **ND Dept. of Health:** Joyal Meyer reported that the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference will be February 16 at the Bismarck Career Academy from 8:30 to 3:00 but the agenda and times are still being finalized. Kodi Pinks will present updated suicide data. Joyal will send a “save the date”. This will be an in-person meeting with hopefully an accompanying live stream. They are looking for a lunch sponsor. The DHS and DoH merger is still on track for Sept. 2022.
  + **Fargo VA:** Brenda Schneider, filling in for Dr. Weintraub, reported that the VA’s Suicide Prevention Team is still working on building relationships within the Fargo catchment area with hospitals and outpatient providers for care coordination and suicide attempts. They offer the SAVE suicide prevention gatekeeper training free of charge to any city both in person and virtually. They have seen a slight increase in referrals from the veterans’ crisis line to the suicide prevention team. They're expecting that number to go up even more as their transitioning from the 1-800-237-8255 number to the 988 number and it’s more publicized.
  + **ND Dept. of Veterans Affairs:** Lonnie Wangen reported that the NDVA received $500,000 for Fisher House and $147,000 for veteran’s transportation out of the ARPA funds the state received. $4M has been raised for the Fisher House so far. The Veterans Court should be up and running in June of 2022. There is a stand down happening today at the VA and Lonnie will check to see how it went. Regarding service dogs, the NDVA recently received four applications. He hopes Service Dogs of America in Jud will be able to participate in the pilot program contained in federal PAWS legislation. Lonnie also reported that the veterans’ home will potentially lose 40 staff members due to the vaccine mandate, which would be devastating for the residents. Lonnie hopes there is something that could be done with waivers. Lastly, Lonnie notified the committee about a missing former National Guardsman and veteran who lives in Fargo but was last seen in Bismarck. He requested that we disseminate the information widely in the hopes of locating him.

**5. Upcoming Events**

* **UPCOMING EVENTS**

1. **Homeless Veterans Stand Down:** Nov 17, Fargo VA
2. **VA COVID Vaccination Event:** Nov 17, RJB Armory, Bismarck
3. **ACOVA Meeting:** Nov. 18-19
4. **First Link Suicide Risk Assessment: Live One Hour Webinar**: Nov 18, Fargo
5. **First Link Adult Mental Health First Aid**: Nov 30, Fargo.
6. **Behavioral Health** **Dealing with Grief and Loss: Dec 21**
7. **Behavioral Health Peer Support Training:** For those who secured employment contingent upon peer support training. Jan 10
8. **Minot Military Affairs Committee:** Dec 2, Minot
9. **TAPS Peer Mentor Virtual Training:** Dec 8
10. **Wreaths Across America:** Dec 18, National Cemetery, Fargo
11. **Wreaths Across America:** Dec 18, ND Veterans Cemetery, Mandan
12. **Fargo/Moorhead Military Affairs Committee:** Dec 23, Fargo
13. **VA Flu Shot Events in Nov/Dec:** See the [VA website](https://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/stories/fargo-va-health-care-system-free-flu-shot-clinics-in-september-and-october/) for locations.
14. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

* The next Executive Committee meeting date is January 12, 2022,10:30 - Noon and the next Coalition meeting date is Dec. 9, 2021, 1:00 - 4:00.