 **ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**January 4, 2024**

Attendees: Shelly Sizer, Cindy Whitesell, Dr. Weintraub, LTC Ann Willoughby, Michelle Panos, David Becker, BG Jackie Huber, Pam Sagness, Lonnie Wangen, Joyal Meyer (All virtual)

Absent: David Becker, Bryan Watters

**1. Opening.** Chairman Shelly Sizer briefly opened the meeting.

**2. Minutes.** The minutes from the November 2 meeting were accepted as written.

**3. New Business**

* **Executive Committee Updates**
  + **ND National Guard:** LTC Willoughby reported that National Guard Youth Coordinator, Mandy Malo, has resigned her position for another with better pay. The coordinator position is now listed as vacant. While awaiting a new coordinator the office of Servicemember and Family Support will do their best to start organizing the youth camps for the year. There is a yellow ribbon event on February 3rd for the first of the 112th Aviation Battalion that returned from their mission on the southwest border back in November.  
      
    BG Huber talked about the loss of two Guardsman over the holidays, their service arrangements, and chaplain support the wing is receiving to help cope with the losses. Friday there will be a change of command and the Wing from COL Johnson to COL Dmitrievich. Three army units are mobilized right now: DET 7 is CENTCOM region as well as Battery B with our ADA out of Grand Forks deployed to CENTCOM and the 817th out of Jamestown is at the southwest border. The Guard’s partnership with Guana is celebrating 20 years and 10 years with Togo and Benin. In answer to BG Hubers question Lonnie talked about the process for naming a bridge after a service member.
  + **ND Dept of Veterans Affairs**: Lonnie reported the first veteran graduated from Veteran’s Court. About 10 people are entering the program per month. He also talked about his efforts with the State Suicide Prevention office to promote 988 on every state agency website. They are also working with the DOT to place 988 signs along the road all over the state. Michelle and Lonnie are working on verbiage for a suicide awareness proclamation ready in time for the Governor’s State of the State address. The SAVE Training Commissioners Challenge will be revived. A few years ago, if you took the training, you could get a discount on your health insurance. He hopes to reinstate that. Lonnie will partner with UND Law School to provide legal services to veterans in the areas of homelessness, civil issues, and child support/custody. Another project is to have colleges offer veterans a one credit course to learn about their benefits, start claims and learn about resources for mental health. The NDDVA received their first veterans-preference approval for a National Guard, non-veteran member to apply for a state job and received their veteran points. He also talked about the availability of $5000 unsecured loan available to service members. Finally, he stated that he had 4000 Vietnam Veterans Coins minted to give at various events.
  + **NDHHS**-**Health:** Joyal reported that that as of December 11th, there were 129 suicides last year and 21 of those were veterans or military.
  + **NDHHS-Behavioral Health Div**: Pam stated that NDHHS is continuing to work on converting the human service centers to the CBHC model, Minot is the first one that's undergoing that change. They need to make changes to the payment system, develop certification for the clinics, and make changes to the clinics themselves. Veterans’ services will be available at each clinic. The other big change with the CBHC is that it starts to integrate physical health and mental health. The goal for at least one clinic certified and running before the next legislative session. CMS approval is also required.
  + **Regional VA, Fargo**: Dr. Weintraub stated that the VA had a bit of a set-back in terms of acquiring property, but they are regrouping toward a resolution. The VA’s mental health programs are still going forward and no new programming or particular initiatives since the last meeting.

**4. Old Business**

Michelle that the number of partner organizations and communities remains the same. For the Governors Challenge update she talked about how many people have completed the Star Behavioral Health Providers training and her efforts to promote the program. The COMPACT Act video is delayed until the state negotiates with Adobe for a statewide contract to purchase premium content. Heather Brandt is working on getting access to data from PyschArmor to see how many peer support specialists have taken the Military Culture Training. There have been approximately 100 additional gun cable-locks distributed since the last report. Also, 333 people have completed CALM Training and for any additional training the University of Jamestown  
agreed for $1000 to train up to 250 people a year and take care of all the CU paperwork. North Dakota is one of 14 states that was approved for technical assistance training for their suicide Mortality Review Academy that will take place in Arizona in March. The state also applied for technical assistance with crisis mapping. Pam reminded the committee about the state’s partnership with law enforcement for crisis tele-mental health services starting this month in Region 8 first. Lastly Michelle talked about the progress of the Hidden Wounds Bridge Dedication Ceremony, the proclamation naming 2024 as Veterans and Military Suicide Prevention Year.

**5. UPCOMING EVENTS**

Michelle highlighted some of the events listed below:

1. **STAR Behavioral Health Providers:** [**January Training**](https://starproviders.org/providers-tier-training/#search)
2. **VA Virtual S.A.V.E. Training:** Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 19th 9AM-10:30AM, email Tammy to register [**tammy.monsebroten@va.gov**](tammy.monsebroten@va.gov).
3. **Governor’s Challenge Team Mtg**: Jan 17, Virtual
4. **American Legion State Winter Conference**: Jan 25-28, Bismarck Hotel, Bismarck
5. **VFW State Mid-Winter Conference:** Feb 16-18, VFW Post 7564, West Fargo
6. **ACOVA:** Feb 8-9, Expressway Suites, Fargo
7. **FirstLink:** [**Jan-Feb Trainings**](https://myfirstlink.org/trainings/)
8. **Western ND Honor Flight:** April (TBD)
9. **VA Fargo** [**Creative Arts Competition**](https://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/programs/veteran-creative-arts-competition/?fbclid=IwAR3P-BPC4FZyG1LDIHzWzYncH-GM0mtw_Ji8i336Per1qvee7DKzETi_aDo) **Classification Handbook due Mar.**
10. **ND Brain Injury Network**: [**2024 Mind Matters Conference**](https://www.ndbin.org/events/mind-matters), Mar 21-21, Fargo.
11. **Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Celebration**: Mar. 29, Sleep Inn, Minot.

1. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

The next Coalition meeting date is March 7,2024, and the next Executive Committee meeting date is February 1, 2024.