

National Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans Meeting
January 22 - 23, 2007
Department of Veterans Affairs Phoenix Medical Center Bldg. 21 Rm. 108
650 E. Indian Road
Phoenix, AZ 85008

The National Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans met on January 22 - 23, 2007 at Department of Veterans Affairs Phoenix Medical Center Bldg. 21 Rm. 108.

Committee Members Present:

George Basher, Chairman
Michael Blecker
Roosevelt Thompson
Sam Galbreath
Ralph Cooper
Joseph Smith
Gil Rodriguez
Kathy Spearman
Raymond Boland
Bob Cote' Richard Schneider

Committee Members Absent:

Leslie Lightfoot
Dr. Paul Errera
Sandy Miller
Paul Moore (special consultant)

Peter Dougherty, the Committee's Designated Federal Official (DFO) was present

Monday, January 22, 2007

Chairman Mr. Basher called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

Mr. Dougherty (DFO) summarized legislative issues on budget authorizations: Special needs grants to aid chronically mentally, frail elderly, terminally ill and women veterans, extension of Advisory Committee to 2010, VHA and VBA appointments of ex-officio to the committee, Grant Per Diem funded for 811 beds, establish new programs in Puerto Rico and Tribal lands in South Dakota. Authorization not passed: grants to permanent housing.

Mr. Dougherty continued the meeting with review of committee's annual report. Report received many positive comments on the following subject matters: Special needs grants, target funding for Puerto Rico, Dr. Perlin's Homeless Veteran Dental Care Services memorandum, 15 pilots for transitional housing and suggesting to use Enhanced Use Lease to put permanent housing on VA campuses.

Finally, Mr. Dougherty mentioned what was discussed with Secretary on a recent meeting. Items discussed were Substance abuse among homeless veterans, access to assistance, do more ramp up with other federal agencies, increase pilot programs.

National Coalition of Homeless Veterans (NCHV) Ms. Cheryl Beversdorf, President & CEO, NCHV, discussed the following items and provided a handout on the organization position statement.

- Decrease of 25 % of homeless veterans in streets in the last 5 years any given night because of increased partnership with VA.
- Homeless Veterans Service Providers has increased to 200. NCHV has grown to 260 members in 48 States.
- The number of Stand Downs has increased to 100.
- The past 2 years NCHV has provided 205 hours of training to over 2200 technical assistance providers that provided 6,000 consultations.
- The website had 60,000 hits for information.
- Discussed position statement handout and emphasized four primary action areas: provide access to health care, ensure income security, supply affordable housing and prevent homelessness.

Mr. John Driscoll assistant to Ms. Beversdorf Mr. Driscoll reviewed this year's CHALENG report. Emphasized the progress in the following areas of the report.

- More movement from transitional housing to permanent
- Increased aid for OEF/OIF vets
- The creation of the Incarcerated Veterans Guide
- Increase in Special Needs grants

Ex-Officio Reports

Mr. Mark Johnston, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Explained HUD overall program with homeless veterans to include number of veterans served and the number of veterans assessed for the annual progress report.

Mentioned the record request of \$1.5 billion for permanent housing.

Mr. Charles Ciccolella, Assistant Secretary, of Department of Labor (DOL)

Discussed issues of OIF/OEF with transition assistance and outreaching to employers for these vets.

Mentioned legislative issues concerning employment for veterans, the HVRP, and transition assistance.

Reviewed Slides on programs directed at homeless veterans with emphasis on performance of the programs. Outlook for 2007: 76 grants, funding for Homeless Stand Downs, technical assistance grants and Grantees will be announced in May 2007.

Issues to consider: Increase threshold for land and grant annual award from \$300,000, increase Homeless Stand Down \$400,000 and reintegration HVRP funds be increased

Mr. Paul Smits, Associate Chief Consultant, Homeless and Residential Treatment Programs, Department of Veterans Affairs

Provided an update of VA's Homeless Programs:

Discussed some of the initiatives from last year: Domiciliary programs: 11 new programs with some in rural areas, more flexibility in outreach, improved program with increased privacy and security for women veterans; reviewed Performance Measures especially the measure on follow up on veterans that have left the program;

Informed on six new pilots 3 Domiciliary and 3 GPD funded for 2 years

Discussed mental health program: new infusion of money for Psychiatric Residential Rehabilitation Treatment programs, all CBOCS have mental health programs, new initiatives for OEF/OIF veterans with PTSD, substance abuse counselors in most CBOCs

Announced there will be full time Grant Per Diem Liaisons by the end of February 2007, 30 full time Homeless substance Abuse Counselors and a new incarcerated vets outreach program allowing the 6 month window for those veterans in pre-release status

Roger Casey, Grant Per Diem

Discussed financial issues of the program and first OIG review of audit plan and second OIG review of compliance in federal rules

An advisory committee is reviewing the processes and volume of work

The Committee adjourned at 4:30 PM

Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Chairman Basher called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Committee Discussions on Annual Report

The committee reviewed the 2006 Annual Report and made recommendations and suggestions for the 2007 Annual Report. Emphasis on Community and Federal Agencies Partnerships and Strategic planning

The Committee Task Forces Chairs, OEF/OIF, Women Veterans, Housing, and Benefits, gave reviews of task forces issues for 2007 annual report.

Craig Burnett, CHALENG Coordinator

Discussed CHALENG report that annually looks at the needs of homeless veterans and the top 5 needs are permanent and transitional housing, Dental Care, Eyeglasses and child care

New emphasis on incarcerated veterans needs.

CHALENG report is responsible for initiating pilot programs

CHALENG report number of homeless veterans is 190,000 down from 250,000

Mr. Bryant Monroe is currently working on base closure activities (BRAC) at the Department of Defense

Discussed BRAC issues with steps in process in reuse of military bases

Increase emphasis in working with Redevelopment Authorities

VBA Benefits Report via teleconference call

Reviewed claims received from homeless veterans in FY 2006

The Committee adjourned at Noon.