

**National Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans Meeting**  
**March 30 - 31, 2006**  
**Maryland Center Veterans Employment and Training (MCVET)**  
**301 N. High Street**  
**Baltimore, MD**

The National Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans met on March 30 - 31, 2006 at the Maryland Center Veterans Employment and Training.

**Committee Members Present:**

Robert Van Keuren, Chairman	Michael Blecker	Sandy Miller
Ralph Cooper	George Basher	Dr. Paul Errera
Leslie Lightfoot	Richard Schneider	Kathy Spearman
Paul Moore (special consultant)		

**Committee Members Absent:**

Sam Galbreath  
Bob Cote'  
Joseph Smith  
Gil Rodriguez  
Don Moreau  
Roosevelt Thompson

Peter Dougherty, the Committee's Designed Federal Official was present

**Thursday, March 30, 2006**

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

**Dental Care.** Dr. Robert Frame, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Dentistry, announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has allocated \$9 million to the VA's Homeless Veterans Dental Initiative (2-year funding). Funds will be dispersed to VA Dental Services based on the number of homeless veterans in each VA's catchment area. Dr. Nunez will be heading up the program on a part time basis. This program will be monitored by NEPEC. Dr. Frame reported that with these new funds, Dental Services expects to treat approximately 9,000 more homeless veterans. Updates will be provided to this Committee on a regular basis. Dr. Frame also provided an overview of VA's Dental Services.

**Review of Senate Veterans Affairs Hearing of March 16, 2006.** Ms. Cheryl Beversdorf, President & CEO, NCHV, discussed the recent hearing. The following are items that were discussed at the hearing.

- How to define the imminent risk of homeless.
- Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom veterans will continue to be on the top priority of law makers.
- The number of minorities among veterans.
- The partnerships with the community-based system of care, the importance of VA's Grant & Per Diem (GPD) Program, HVRP, and HUD McKinney.
- The decrease in the number of homeless veterans.

- The Senate Affairs Committee wanted to know what works and what doesn't and do the dollars actually help homeless veterans. They were informed of the progress being made and about how the VA pays for services for special needs funding and for the individual provider.
- The per diem payments by VA should be used in relationship to other programs.

There are several pieces of legislation that deal with long-term permanent housing with supportive services; Senator Obama's, Senator Byrd's, and Senator [REDACTED]'s.

There was discussion about including the recommendation in the annual report to change per diem payments to a fixed rate. It's important to note that the use of per diem can be a very effective way of doing business.

**Congressman Lane Evans' Retirement.** Mr. Dougherty announced that Congressman Lane Evans, a long-time advocate for homeless veterans, is retiring and will not seek re-election due to health problems. The Committee would like to send the Congressman a letter commenting him for his work. The NCHV is planning to make a tribute to Congressman Evans at the annual conference.

Ms. Lisette M. Mondello, Assistant Secretary, Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs, presented Mr. Paul Moore with his appointment certificate.

Mr. Dougherty introduced Col. (Ret) Chuck Williams, founder of MCVET, and thanked him for hosting the Committee meeting and allowing members to see his model program. Colonel Williams introduced his staff and provided a presentation of the MCVET Program. Mr. Dick Schneider presented MCVET with a check from the Non-Commissioned Officers Association in memory of Ms. Debbie Jackson that will be used to start the Debbie Jackson Female Homeless Veterans Scholarship Fund.

Students provided Committee members with a tour of the facility. The MCVET programs include a day drop-in facility, emergency housing, transitional housing, single-room occupancies, case management & substance abuse and mental health counseling, access to health care, education and employment services, laundry services, and a mess hall.

**Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) Update,** Mr. Stan Seidel, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), provided a handout on the status of the IVTP since the last Committee meeting.

At an upcoming Department of Labor Veterans Employment & Training Program Gaines Conference, Mr. Seidel will be presenting with Dr. McGuire, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Taylor on the problems associated with incarcerated veterans with mental illness and how to work with them.

Current grantees will be extended for another 15 months at the same funding level.

VA staff can now begin providing support to incarcerated veterans 6 months prior to their release as long as they are in pre-release status. Fifty percent of veterans in the GPD Program are previously incarcerated veterans. Data is being collected now.

Over the next several weeks there will be a solicitation for grant applications for HVRP funds. There will be \$12 million available for urban, non urban, and new grantees to help build capacity throughout the nation to serve homeless veterans. There will also be \$7.5 million available for Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) to provide employment and training opportunities for veterans. Another post award conference will be held for all grantees this summer. There was discussion regarding VWIP dollars and the fact that they have never increased. Mr. Blecker will articulate this issue in an email to Mr. Dougherty prior to the Committee's next meeting.

There was discussion about veterans in GPD programs and whether or not they are co-enrolled in HVRP programs, and could this data be collected. The VA has health info, and the DOL has employment information. Mr. Dougherty will follow up with Mr. Seidel on this.

**National Update.** Mr. Paul Smits, Associate Chief Consultant, Homeless and Residential Treatment Programs, Department of Veterans Affairs, provided an update of VA's Homeless Programs:

The intent of the VA's Homeless Follow Up Performance Measure, #1e, is to assure that homeless veterans are getting prompt medical, primary, and mental health care, including substance abuse treatment, and that they have a follow up appointment.

A letter will be coming out from VA Central Office soon that will address incarcerated veterans outreach, allowing the 6 month window for those veterans in pre-release status. VA medical center directors and homeless staff will be involved in this homeless prevention measure.

The VA funded 2 additional Domiciliary programs and 4 additional Psychiatric Residential Rehabilitation Treatment programs.

There is no final word yet on the Government Accounting Office and Inspector General reviews. If there are any recommendations, they will be shared with the Committee.

Mr. Smits will be working with GPD sites to put evacuation plans in place in order to get veterans out of harms way in case of emergencies and will be creating interdisciplinary outreach teams that can be deployed in a short period of time. The Department will be asking for the ability to replace lost capital on a non-competitive basis in the event that GPD Programs experience a natural disaster.

### **Ex-Officio Reports**

Mr. Dougherty reported for the ex-officio members who were not present: Mr. Jerry Regier, Department of Health & Human Services, is currently working on the Committee's request for data from program that collect veterans' data. Mr. Bryant Moore is currently working on base closure activities at the Department of Defense. The Department of Housing & Urban Development recently announced its continuum of care funding. The Interagency Council on Homelessness has its full committee meeting next week. There has been more encouragement of cities to include veterans in their 10-year planning process.

### **Committee Discussions on Annual Report**

The committee reviewed the 2005 Annual Report and made recommendations and suggestions for the 2006 Annual Report.

The Committee adjourned at 4:30 PM

### **Friday, March 31, 2006**

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

The committee continued its review of the 2005 Annual Report and made recommendations and suggestions for the 2006 Annual Report.

The Committee adjourned at Noon.

