

Veterans Services Task Force  
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Minutes

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Greg Lamb

With county since March – Outreach Specialist

Goal of position is to reach out to all vets in Multnomah County, and determine if eligible for services

Still defining job and how to do research

Return for reserve members, will set up table, and will also have private room to talk to vets/families

Ultimate goal is to have vets go the VSAs, not have us go to them

VA does not assist in getting resources, that is job VSA

Have put info in local free papers, participated in waterfront village Memorial Day festival

Big challenge is filtering out what can and cannot be acted upon.

Homework

JS

Ask veteran status if test positive for certain diseases,

Do survey at clinic, if vet, then referred to operation supervisor, and VA

People at clinics don't know much about possibilities

No records, no knowledge

Hard to tell where access system

GL

Not unusual that they don't self identify

JS

When asked, doesn't say has more than one insurance, though has tricare.

GL

We know how many cases we have, but we don't know how many people are screened out.

45-48,000 vets in Multnomah County

Very possible that we've talked to many of those

Not efficient or useful to take down info, names of every vet who contacts

If go to VA or

DM

Our goal is not to overwhelm VSAs, very small dept

Difficult to navigate the system

Purpose is to bring our county services together around where, who, which vets we service.

After getting an understanding of what we are doing here, we can go to other outside groups.

Helpful to hear what is helpful for the VSAs

Want to make sure that we have more streamlined and easier system.

GL

If service connected and have disability, \$25 for permanent registration of vehicles.

Can now identify on your driver's license that veteran

Some counties in OR have created Vets court

Klamath County -

Washington County

This month or next, state of OR has installed VSA at VA medical clinic to screen for other benefits they're entitled to. Have someone trained to be a VSA that can refer elsewhere.

Permanent position, but not sure of the staffing

TE

90 of emergency mgmt is vet

Can link to

FEMA training for emergency management

Emergency preparedness

Could do training just for vets, if demand

Very difficult on personal level to get GI benefits, had to jump through many hoops

First went to western culinary institute, then Clackamas CC, where campus VSA could case manage.

LG

Major challenge is finding out who can help you navigate the system

GL

VA Will give you forms, and will tell you how to process forms, but up to you

Each form is a "claim", and if the VA denies, won't appeal itself

County VSA will appeal

GL

Once out of system for more than a year, move down list of priority

VA is over 128 days behind on claims backlog

Campus VSAs are primarily focused on education benefits, but also help with other

One campus VSA travels between metro area schools? Where

Don't have to be currently enrolled to talk to VSA

BL

Interesting for MCSO and vets services, if dealing with vets, they're dealing with crisis

Vets in jail are not eligible for vet's services while detained pre-trial

Beginning Oct of last year, began asking at intake to increase understanding of how many serving

"Are you a veteran of the armed services?" yes or no question.

Wants to change rules that prohibit access to vets services, once accused of crime

Rulemaking at federal level has made previously eligible people ineligible, and thus transferring responsibly to local jurisdiction.

Just accused, being held pre-trial, why are they prevented from accessing services they've earned

Important to have local/state govts asking that question

To be eligible, need to be able to wade through bureaucracy, seemingly meant to disincline people from getting services.

Father in law made claim with VA, took a year to go through process to get desired outcome.

Got hearing aids and disability, but had time, no immediate need, no schedule conflicts (ret. And no family to take care of).

Those encountering criminal justice system need to have the path cleared for them, not blockaded

It appears, seems that there are more barriers than expressways for services

LG

Have housed VSAs for a while now

Biggest challenge is amount of work (3 FTE)

A few major intersects

Work with seniors and people with disabilities

VA has done well for acute care

Long term care has focus on nursing homes

Looking at working w/ Wash and Clack counties on expanding home and community based in-home vets

Wash co in fall, Multco soon after

Many opportunities to treat co VSAs to be "providers"

VA wants to build more veterans nursing homes, but often unnecessary

One of misconceptions is that Medicaid benefits precludes Veterans benefits

Our VSAs have worked with Medicaid workers to show that there are misunderstandings on both sides, and many are eligible for both

New program – PARIS – program that connects in with national and state databases, does comparisons, and can find universal list of possible benefits. Helps maximize vets.

Some perception that PARIS would kick people off of Medicare

State of WA has been using it for 5 years – WA co. knows a lot about it

There is an upsurge in Korea and Vietnam vets needing services

WA state likely has good data

PARIS Program– Not sure if federal or state, but probably pilot project where state used it and has open source.

DM

More obstacles?

LG

Don't have good capacity to follow up with people as much as we would like.

For those that we refer off to elsewhere, we lose sight of them. If had more capacity, could follow up with people.

Diane

How do we follow up on these obstacles?

JS

Biggest obstacle is information

Are there any logic models that can give you roadmap? Flow chart?

GL

We do have that.

JS

We don't know role of other county departments.

Spend money to analyze and look

What is our purpose? Especially if we don't have money to provide.

DM

We need to identify resources needed to go forward.

What would get us to the efficiencies needed to better serve?

Is there a model out there for other counties or states?

LG

Update from neighboring counties?

We are partnering with WA County now

Got inquiry from Clack Co, asking budget, FTE

Clack is doing some analysis of their program

Also, very fluid and porous movement between

GL

9 people at WA co

1 people at Clack

I've been trying to find a model

Are there aspects that can be combined to find best practices?

JS

Why/how do they have 9 VSOs?

Saves county money?

GL

Every county is different

We have competing interests in Multnomah County

Really don't know though

DM

Are other counties tracking referrals?

If get them to services, saves county money.

Action steps: Need to make contact with other counties – Drew, Lee

Long term care – Medicare vs. VA benefits

PARIS, contact Wash. Co, needs to be bought off on state level, or coalition of counties – Drew, Lee

Campus VSOs model.

Corrections, loss of services in pre-trial – NACO item?

BL

Went to seminar at PSU on services to vets locally

Talked about all sorts of services, but didn't seem like any focused outreach

Lots of things available but is there an opportunity to do outreach to those have found themselves in criminal justice system? Look at that group and find out how to connect them where they need to be connected.

We need to be more sophisticated in getting/maintaining data

GL

I can give you about three basic questions that can tell you whether services can be rendered

Question: Large population that needs services (Wash co has someone that goes to jails to talk to vets)

BL

35,000 bookings, with 28,000 discreet individuals

Of people booked, only 60% actually go onto housing bed

We only capture data on the 60% that stay in the bed

Running at 8-10% being vets, based off of question “are you vet of armed services?”

Can work to find some drill down questions

JS

Have checkmark if filing for OR health plan

Does checkmark help?

GL

Not unless there are metrics

JS

Just seems like another way to refer people away

GL

Gives opportunity to ask whether can access. Vet doesn't know if they can get access to something that they have been denied in the past. Vet must be in state of mind and willing to offer information, and seek help.

BL

Why are people hesitant to identify as vets, and ask for benefits?

GL

Current generation on return is younger, really just want to come home, and don't know that they're at risk until they're in trouble. Trying to preserve opportunity to re-join, because job situation is so bad, and barely keeping head above water. Afraid that if seek services, will disqualify them from future service.

Also there are homeless who don't want to take on any responsibility, and like that

LG

Will be interesting to hear about WA co outreach project in Jail

DM

Flow chart?

GL

Yes, has procedural steps, but not very vet friendly. I could likely invent one.

JS

Not national model for that?

GL

No. OR is a vet friendly state. Reason there isn't flow chart is that a vet might mess up appeals, other things, and VSO must fix problems, vets.

JS

Is it difficult to know whether qualify for GI bill?

LG

Yes. Knee injuries have nearly 10 pages of caveats. Nobody could wade through that without

help.

DM

How can we help VSOs? Besides money? After looking at more counties, finding out referrals, might be easier to

JS

Is there a national benchmark for Vets Services? Can we compare that to us?

DM

We should look at counties where there are huge numbers of vets.

GL

If we did that, we would find that support mechanisms are great helps. Here they are much more isolated.

DM

Perhaps we should look at other areas with large National Guard populations, and not active military, more apples to apples

JS

Is there a national database that does this?

LG

For younger vets, social media is the preferred way of access. Use internet, don't like to call. We may want to look at social media. Is found to be the best for the younger vets. They want to do research, and then call once they have info.

DM

Do we know how many we get via web?

LG

We could check with state. We haven't been very active with it though.

GL

Facebook page created as info push, not tracked. Huge time consumer.

DM

Other things we need to look at?

JS

We need to pin down what forward is, what the goal is?  
Right now we're trying to figure out the situation is.

Final Purpose/Outcome for this group

Doodle

Find out why not more people at table