VA NEW ENGLAND HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 5, 2011

The following organizations were represented:

Department of Veterans' Services
Connecticut National Guard
Massachusetts National Guard
New Hampshire Veterans Home
Disabled American Veterans
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Marine Corps League
American Legion
American Legion
Maine Veterans Coordinating Committee
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Vietnam Veterans of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.
Knights of Columbus
Soldier On
Korean War Veterans Association, Inc.
Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Auxiliary
Office of the Secretary of the Army for Rhode Island
AMVETS Auxiliary
American Legion Auxiliary
American Ex-Prisoners of War
American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.
Daughters of the American Revolution
Veterans Benefits Administration
State Veterans Council
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

VA Attendees:

Michael Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH	VISN 1 Deputy Network Director
Corrine Smith	VISN 1 Acting Chief Medical Officer
Craig Coldwell, MD	VISN 1 Mental Health Service Line Director
William Arndt, MD	VISN 1 Imaging Service Line Director
Michael McNamara	VISN 1 Outreach Coordinator
Joseph Dooley	VISN 1 Voluntary Services Director
Gail Goza-MacMullan, PhD.	VISN 1 Strategic Planner
Courtney Scala	VISN 1 Presidential Management Fellow
Craig Greczyn	VISN 1 Presidential Management Fellow
Donna Atkinson	VISN 1 Executive Assistant to the Network Director
Kathleen Cosgrove Makela	VISN 1 Acting Communications Officer
Tammy Follensbee	Director, Bedford VAMC
Karen Acerra-Williams	Assistant Director, VA Boston HCS
Pamela Redmond	Public Affairs Officer, VA Connecticut HCS
Marc Levenson, MD	Director, Manchester VAMC
Roger Johnson	Director, Northampton VAMC
Jack Beliveau	Acting Associate Director, Providence VAMC
Brian Stiller	Director, VA Maine HCS
Robert Walton	Director, White River Junction VAMC
Thomas Antonaccio	Public Affairs Officer, Providence VAMC
John Paradis	Public Affairs Officer, Northampton VAMC
Zachary Smith	Administrative Fellow, VA Maine HCS

Presenter	Discussion
Network Director's Report: Michael Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH	<u>Announcements:</u> Dr. Mayo-Smith welcomed members, reviewed the agenda and had VA staff introduce themselves.
Voluntary Services Joseph Dooley	Joe Dooley gave a presentation and noted that there are 7,130 volunteers in New England and they provided over 534,000 hours of service. This equates to approximately $11M of value to VISN (Veterans Integrated Service Network) 1.
Veteran Advisor Program Brian Stiller, Director Maine VA Health Care System	Brian Stiller gave an overview of the Veteran/Family Advisor Program which will increase opportunities for shared decision making.
Network Outreach Michael McNamara VISN 1 Outreach Coordinator	Michael McNamara updated members regarding outreach efforts noting plans for upcoming on-line advertising, direct mail campaigns, and outreach events. Break out groups met and gave feedback relative to the needs of the Veterans they serve. A compilation of comments from the break out groups is attached.
VBA Report Abner Concepcion, Boston VBA Regional Office	Abner Concepcion gave an overview of the Nehmer and fast track claim status, express lane pilot and the Veteran Service Center Performance.
Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Center Report Tom Hannon, APRN, BC	Tom Hannon gave an overview of Veteran Center services and provided an individual service plan questionnaire which is used for evaluation.
Evaluation	Attached.

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Michael Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH
Network Director

Recorded by: Donna Atkinson

On average, how do Veterans hear about VA Healthcare?

- Word of mouth
- Fairs/Events
- Situational
- City/Town Vet Agent
- Packets “I Serve” Town Office
- Support/Crisis (Clergy, Police, Sheriff)
- Civil service training programs
- Incarcerated Vets
- Yellow Ribbon Programs/Mob Events
- Universities
- Stand downs
- Vet to Vet
- VSO’s
- VA Town halls
- Local councils on aging
- Military Partnerships with HHS
- TAP/DTAP
- Other Healthcare Providers
- Ceremonies/Events
- Middle schools very welcoming and inquisitive (parents deployed?)
- MASS VSO = portal – educate and awareness
- Persuasive family members – get info to family also
- Schools in general
- Internet (young vets)
- Outreach pamphlets
- Pre/Post deployment

- Newspapers
- Job Fairs
- Public access TV
- Service officers
- Town meeting
- Online (Website (National, Local), FaceBook, banner ads)
- Update “look and feel” of VA to appeal to younger veterans
- Send reps to Senior & retirement centers
- Briefings (Demobilization)

What does your organization do to promote itself and increase membership?

- Attends Big E
- Public access TV – recent Vet announcement of service/story
- DOD (Keep person/person communications) Process transparency=key, transition coordination
- Political advocacy
- Communications of access
- Comp and Pens
- Niche Issues (i.e. Agent Orange)
- Sports affiliations/partnerships/sponsorships
- Naturalization Ceremonies
- Focus on “Veteran” primary
- Families-caregivers/elders
- Funeral Homes (Charitable donors)
- Wear “Veteran”
- Word of mouth
- Conventions each year with tables

- Brochures/business cards/applications
- Outreach
- Put card on cars w/ vet plates at mall etc.
- Thank vets in person
- CIV Hospitals, Doctor offices
- Newspaper
- Vet Justice Outreach
- 10EZ along with benefits claims in VSO package
- Encourage MyHealthevet
- “E-benefits” vs. “MyHealthevet
- VSO’s in Pre/Post deployment
- Reverse soldier process
- Contest (voice of democracy VOD)
- Yellow ribbon
- Volunteers share information about organization
- Social events (include membership applications)
- Focus on family members (what can organization do for the family too)
- Host luncheons for deploying troops
- Collaborate with state agencies/organizations
- While attending other events, mention your own organization

How can we better promote VISN 1 to reach additional Veterans? What other outreach activities do you feel we should conduct?

- Retiree Numbers
- Advocate Vet/Vet Peer/Peer
- Webcasting/Coleman/DOD
- Family Support

- Mil Med treatment (OEF/OIF needs access to record)
- PTO/Clergy
- PTA
- Leveraging VA OIF/OEF “young” vets
- CAC
- “Blitz” compete with Private Healthcare
- Rural Fairs
- Mil affinity Corporate ties (i.e. BAE, Raytheon)
- Speaker’s Bureau
- Road Show
- Civic lesson – schools
- Churches/Ministries
- Engaged Chaplains
- Target Audience specific strategies
- Telephone System – “Anti quoted”
- Generational differences – explore with regard to outreach
- Databases to identify vets? Town gives property tax discounts.
- Welcome home packages – thru local units
- User friendliness – so many programs that are disjointed
- “Vet navigators” to help access system
- Make sure people who answer “help” lines are trained to service
- VA should become a “consumer” – fresh eyes, put self in vets shoes
- We also need to be on “one page”
- Raise awareness on free entitlements (licenses, taxes) create lists
- Vet benefits hotline, webpage, etc.
- Which veterans (by wars) are we missing? This will change how we attack it…
- Pairing eligibility staff with Outreach
- Outreach to family and other influential individuals

- Offer childcare while veteran is receiving care (designated area)
- Expanded hours (promote evening and weekend clinics) – one or two days a week
- Enhance and promote services to women
- Kiosk (outside medical facilities), malls, expand Myhealthevet usage
- Dept. of Labor (state)
- Unemployment offices
- New patient orientation
- VA rep at VSO state conventions
- VA material to VSO's at special events (parades, ceremonies)
- More VA/VSO collaboration (add to outreach committees)
- Town meetings in rural areas
- Promote telehealth and MyHealthevet
- Use and develop apps (keep updated)
- Future MAC meetings
    - Teleconference (all participants)
    - More VSO participation