

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes  
Monday, October 01, 2018  
Macomb Community Action Training Room  
21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MI

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:03 am.

**Attendees:**

Gerald Fisher-Curley, VA	Kara Fields, MCC
Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSCB	Robert Callahan, Furniture
Yolanda Spencer – Danddridge, VAMC	Joseph Rodgers, VOA
Rodney Tolbert	Mark Kilgore, CARE
Bill Browning, Detroit VA Medical Center	Chris Reilly, Michigan Works!
Jason Foltz, Prevention Concepts	Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Macomb Veteran Services
Chris Franklin, American Indian Vets of MI, Inc.	Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, Macomb Veteran Services
Katie Page, Vet Center	Mark Meadows, VAMC
Sharon Urban, Macomb Veteran Services	Charlene Myers, NCOA/DAV
David Dudek, Prevention Concepts	Colton Darrow, TTI
John Babcock, Michigan Works!	Dawn Revyn, VOA
Colton Darrow, TTI	Gabriella Barthlow, AFSC/CFPB
Adrienne Gasperoni, CARE	Tara Revyn, Mission BBQ
Chery Allen, SWS	John Gardner, Roush
Franklin Newman, AFA	Susan Casadei, Harbor Health Care

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

The committee members went around the table and introduced themselves and the service organization to which they worked.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The September 10, 2018 minutes were approved with changes by the collaborative. A motion was presented by Bill Browning and a second from Dawn Revyn.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**V. SPECIAL SPEAKER: Prevention Concepts: David Dudek and Jason Foltz**

The organization was founded in 2012 by Jason Foltz and David Dudek. They decided to create alternative programming to help the healing and recovery of people suffering from substance abuse, mental illness and PTSD. They spoke briefly about their K9 Assisted Therapy Program. This program is “specifically, and uniquely, designed to combine the care, responsibility, and accomplishment associated with the rearing, raising, and training of canines, with peer-recovery (substance abuse & mental health) supports and concepts.” The main program is 90 days, 8 hours a day; however, they do have flexible schedules for those who cannot or do not need that intensity. Right now the pay is pro-bono but they are working with Medicaid in hopes to gain a partnership. Their office is in Downtown Romeo but they have three program locations. For more information please visit their website: [www.preventionconceptsinc.org](http://www.preventionconceptsinc.org).

Mission BBQ: Tara Revyn, Community Ambassador

Opened September 11, 2011 by 2 people who are “passionate about BBQ, patriotic for Our Country, and who believe in running a business with meaning and purpose.” They are operating in 15 states. Their dining room has a local patriotic theme and at lunch time they play a salute the Stars and Stripes. The restaurant is located in Troy and soon in Northville. They support many first responders and the military. Veterans eat free on Veterans Day. Tara brings food to different organizations to not only feed veterans and the community but to inform people about their restaurant values and how they help out the community. Please stop by the restaurant or go to their website: <https://mission-bbq.com> for more information.

## VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Benefits/Communication

Laura briefly discussed the “yays” and the “we will do this next time” of the September 15 Freedom Fest Event. Four awards were given out at the event to: Gabe Barthlow, Katie Page, Chapter 154 and Vets Returning Home. She asked if everyone would please read her emails. She realizes she send out a lot but she believes there is good information that is being missed. The Veteran Services department is partnering with MCA to provide additional transportation to veterans to the VAMC. These drivers will be paid and will begin driving veterans on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday starting the first of November. These drivers will be able to take veterans in wheelchairs and a spouse/caregiver, if needed. Wheelchair bound veteran transportation is curb to curb, not door to door. The volunteer driver program that transports veterans on Monday and Tuesday will still be in effect. There are new eligibility regulations for the NSCP starting October 18. The asset limitation will be increased to \$123,600 with a 3 year look back.

### B. Employment

Mark stated employment in SE Michigan is still “hot” even with the Big 3s in a holding pattern. Hospitals are hiring janitors, skill trades, administration, nursing and doctors. Federal contractors under rule of law have to employ at least 7% of military in their workforce this took effect 3 years ago. Please sign up to receive and read through his newsletter for details and up to date hiring opportunities. Please contact him to sign up. He also mentioned to please have your veterans sign up for the Michigan Works! Bootcamp.

### C. Services

Madeline will be updating the Utilities Flowchart.

### D. Membership

Shaun was not present. Laura reminded the collaborative and the new attendees the process of becoming a member and how the roster and sign in sheet works.

### E. Faith Based

Rodney updated the collaborative on the success of the “Souls to the Polls” event. He and Katie will be providing holiday food to veterans and their families during the season. Unfortunately during the holiday seasons there is a rise of suicides. Rodney asked if you cannot get an “at risk” veteran to seek treatment, to please have them call him. He is available any time of day or night to take a phone call from a veteran who is considering suicide.

### F. Higher Education

Kara gave an update of the Forever GI Bill. The education centers are still in testing centers. If a recipient was overpaid during the transition time, the VA will not collect on the debt as long as it is directly related to this situation. Nationally, no schools know what to do yet. Stipends will be based on where the class is being taken instead of where they live. If you have a National Guard or Reservist who has been denied the GI Bill, ask them to apply again. They may get approved and/or even have more benefits.

## G. Round Robin

John Gardner: Rousch Management is hiring automotive, mechanical, HR, Program Management and I.T. positions.

Kate Logan: A reminder to call or go to the website 800 Mich Vet for services and benefits. There is also a calendar on the website for training, events, etc. Please take a look at the calendar for additional information and call her if you would like something added to the calendar.

Gerald Fisher-Curly: A big Thank you for your support, the last 2 veterans were successfully housed as the 2 programs were closed. Even though they do not have a presence in Macomb County they are here to service all Metro Detroit counties.

Brian Webb: There are now 17 veteran navigators working across Michigan. They help to identify veterans for treatment. Women's Veteran approach to start next year.

David Dudek: There is a benefit honoring Michigan Veterans and First Responders on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup> from 12 – 5 at Frontier Town in Washington, MI. Everyone is welcome.

Colton Darrow: TTI has a rapid rehousing program where eligible veterans can receive help with move in costs, up to 3 months' rent or hotel stays, utilities and other services. Please contact Colton for more information.

Joseph Rodgers: The VOA can help with some employment related costs. i.e. haircuts

Gabe Barthlow: After 5 years in this program, it will end March 29, 2019. She wants "to be as busy as she can before the program runs out." Please send her veterans. She can also help with veteran's families.

Chris Reilly: The income and residency requirements for eligibility for funded training services such as classroom or on the job training. They have 2 on the job training grants specifically for returning citizens. Please contact him for more information. There are no income cap and/or residency requirements for veterans.

Katie Page: Invited everyone out to the Trauma Sensitive Yoga Group at MCC Center campus on Wednesdays at 10:00 A.M. A Fall Schedule supplied. If you have any additional questions, please contact Katie.

Adrienne Gasperoni: Community Organizer team working in 9 to 10 cities in Macomb County to build drug free communities. We are looking for a veteran voice to join this team.

Mark Hill: Greater Macomb Program VOX (means voice) Voice of Recovery for Macomb County. They are planning their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sober Bowl Party. Every year they have around 300 people attend this event. They are looking for donations of food and prizes for this event.

Kara Fields: they have emergency funds at the college for service members and their families for students at the college. They can be flexible with the funding in order to keep them moving through school. If she can logically write it up to help keep them in school, she can possibly get a grant for the need. Next month's Collaborative meeting November 5, 2018 will be held at the MCC Center Campus, P Building, Room 129. It will start at 9:30 and there will be coffee, snacks and breakfast items. She will provide a map to the location soon. They will be having the Vet Photo Exhibit opening (8:30-9:30 am) with legislators,

community leaders, and breakfast for those who RSVP as attending. She invites everyone out to see the exhibit.

Madeline Habib: the HSCB Information Exchange is October 23<sup>rd</sup>. There are many different break out session and over 60 agency displays. Laura will be presenting on the Portal of Service Matrix.

Bill Browning: Fisher House update. They have entered into an access agreement with the city and the Detroit Land Bank Authority. They can now enter the property and do their due diligence with land inspection, soil analysis, etc. The process to acquire the land will take around 18 months. The land is about ½ mile from the Detroit VA; corner of John R and Palmer. Hopefully be able to break ground around 2020. Began fundraising with Fisher House of Michigan which is a 501c. Other VFW will be donating funds. They have received over 300K so far. They need 3.5M. Flu shots are available at the VAMC or at Walgreens, just show your VA I.D. card to get your immunization. The next Red Carpet event is Saturday, October 27, 2018.

Chery Allen: SW Solutions Piquette Square has housing for 150 veterans who live in permanent support housing. Veterans come to them from the Salvation Army and other veteran service agencies/shelters. They are located at Piquette/Brush in Detroit. They created a park in 2014 and they want to do a “Light up the Park” event, they are looking for donations of Christmas lights. Please contact Chery for more information on that.

Terry Taylor: is a Veteran Human Resources Specialist at VOA. They help vets with employment. The only qualification they have to meet is to have a DD214. They help them improve their employment, find clothing for interview, and can help with transportation issues; gas cards, bus passes, etc.

Tara Revyn: They have a program to hire veterans. Their Northville location is actively seeking to hire veterans right now. The website has a tab called Giving Back, it lists National and Local organizations to which Mission BBQ supports. They support these charities through their cup sales. Another interesting tab on their website is If These Walls Could Talk which has stories/videos of the hero's they have met.

## **VII. NEXT MEETING**

Monday November 5, 2018 at the **Macomb Community College Center Campus**  
**44575 Garfield Road Building P Room 129 Clinton Township, MI 48038**

## **VIII. ADJOURMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.