

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes  
Virtual Meeting  
Monday, August 02, 2021

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:05 A.M.

**II. ATTENDEES:**

Laura Rios	Sharon Urban	Joyce Moultrie	David Hannum
Lisa Bowling	Sarah Moore	Cindy Ponton	Melissa Palonis
Marie Goral	Darryle Johnson	Gabriella Barthlow	Chris Reilly
Chris Franklin	Katie Carroll	Joshua Mathis	Pazzella Colston
Elizabeth Sergent	Stephen Boegehold	Robin Daniels	April Clipper
Brian Webb	Gerald Curley	Paul Salcepuedes	Shelby DeGrande
Teena Sawicki	Janet Smith	William Cochran	Adrienne Gasperoni
Moses Coleman	Emily Allen	Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards	

**III. INTRODUCTIONS/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Laura asked all attendees to enter their name in the chat box.

Laura introduced Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards as the new Co-Chair and Gabriella Barthlow as the new Membership Chair.

The January 4, 2021 meeting minutes were approved and recorded as written.

**IV. AGENCY UPDATES**

Gabriella Barthlow from Veteran Services, stated she has updated the roster and the collaborative has 99 registered members. She asked the attendees to contact her if someone's name wasn't on the list or if he/she would like to join. She also reminded the members of the financial coaching she provides for veterans and family members of veterans. Please contact her if you know of a veteran (or family member) who is in need of financial coaching. The roster has been uploaded to the Veteran Department's County website. She also reminded the collaborative that all services are free to veteran and their families and this forum is not the platform to sell services or items to other members or the veteran community.

Stephen Boegehold from DHHS, stated they are back in their offices – 2 weeks in office, 2 weeks at home. Their new office is located on Gratiot south of Hall Road; they are no longer in the Verkuillen building. The lobby is now open for walk in traffic. The state Emergency Relief is still the cornerstone of their services in collaboration with Veteran Services.

Chris Reilly from Macomb/St Clair Michigan Works!, stated all 5 locations are open to walk ins. They are not seeing a lot of traffic as of yet. He reminded the collaborative that Michigan Works! is NOT the

same as UIA. UIA is the financial support for unemployment and they are the reemployment plan. The offices for UIA are still closed. Veteran's Employability Bootcamp started back this week with 6 veterans signed up and 5 attending as of this morning. The Veteran Bootcamp runs every other month. The next one will be in October. Please contact Chris for more information.

Robin Daniels, Regional Representative from Senator Peter's office, stated the staff is working in the office but they are not open to the public yet. They have been teleworking throughout the Covid pandemic.

Adrienne Gasperoni from CARE of Southeastern Michigan, they support substance abuse recovery and prevention efforts in Macomb County. They just posted job openings for Peer Recovery coaches to work for the next 6 months with veterans. On September 11 they will be hosting a Celebrate Recovery walk on Belle Isle. They are always looking for veterans to share their stories on their city coalitions. Please contact CARE for more information. They are fully open for services.

Marie Goral from Veterans Services, stated that the Great Lakes National Cemetery is having their fundraising golf outing this weekend at the Lapeer Country Club. All money goes to support the Avenue of Flags located Great Lakes National Cemetery and the Great Lakes Advisory Council. The Council pays for many different projects that the cemetery hosts throughout the year. The golf outing is the biggest fundraiser of the year. Please contact Marie for more information.

Laura Rios from Veteran Services, stated that in January the VA has added 3 more presumptives to the Vietnam list; bladder cancer, Parkinson type symptoms, and Hypothyroidism. These claims are now being processed and awarded. The Blue Water Navy Act was approved but the VA still has to research to validate the ships that were in those waters during that time frame. They are still waiting for Hypertension to be awarded; it needs to be signed by the president.

Pazzella Colton from Homes for Heroic Veterans, stated her nonprofit provides transitional community housing for veterans. She has a documentary on this nonprofit and Laura will forward it to the collaborative. Please contact her for more information.

April Clipper, Consultant from Military OneSource stated they are a Department of Defense (DOD) funded program that provides quality of life resources to active duty, National Guard and reservists. They also serve the nearly discharged veterans for 1 year after they have left service. Please contact April for additional information.

Brian Webb, Project Lead for the Veteran Navigator program stated the new Macomb County Veteran Navigator is Jeff Luzius. The navigator program helps veterans with substance abuse and mental health challenges. They are out in the field now. Please contact him or Jeff for additional information.

Gerald Curly, from the VAMC, homeless program stated they have a new transitional provider called Operation Welcome Home based in Detroit. There are a few different locations and can take women and children. Please contact the VCCRC for more information. All walk in clinics are fully operational.

Elizabeth Sergent, Program Supervisor for the SSVF/Homeless Services at MCA, is working mainly with the Covid Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) program. She states if you know of a veteran in need of rental assistance, please contact her. The SSVF in Warren is also very busy.

Joshua Mathis from the Macomb County Vet Center is still working virtually. The center provides PTSD counseling, yoga, readjustment counseling, military sexual trauma and family members who have

lost anyone on active duty. National Guard members who were called up natural disaster, civil unrest are now eligible. Coast Guard veterans who were serving in a drug interdiction capacity are also eligible. Please contact the Macomb County Vet Center for additional information on programs.

Paul Salcepuedes, Veteran's Career Advisor, at Workforce Development, will see all veterans. They work with Michigan Works! and the Veteran's Bootcamp. They are scheduled to come back fully into the office on September 7, 2021. Please contact him for additional information.

Shelby DeGrande, from CaptionCall, CaptionCall is a Federal funded free service program for any veteran or family member with a hearing challenge. Please contact Shelby for more information.

Teena Sawicki, Suicide Prevention Coordinator with the Detroit VA stated they offer a VA SAVE training at no cost that is a 1 hour training that presents an overview of suicide prevalent risks, and warning signs. It provides guidance on how to intervene when someone is suicidal. Please contact Teena for additional information.

Janet Smith, Detroit VA Homeless Program, is working with the Vet's Returning Home transitional housing. They have 2 peers on sight at that home on Wednesdays.

William Cochran, with Congressman Andy Levin's office, states staff will be returning to the office starting in September.

Laura Rios will contact Madeline regarding the flowcharts. The collaborative would like to make sure they are up to date since Covid. She also stated the new Chesterfield Veterans Home works with both Medicare and Medicaid. Please contact Jennifer Manning at 586-210-7110 for more information.

The Ad hoc subcommittees that were formed late in 2019 would like to start up again. If you would like to join one of these committees please contact Chris Reilly.

**V. NEET MEETING**

October 04, 2021- virtual

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 A.M.