



DELAWARE VALLEY VETERANS HOME
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – August 13, 2025, 10:00am

Advisory Council Members

In person

James Ritchie, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vice President Advisory Council
John Schwartz, American Legion
Ed Horan, Marine Corps League
Douglas Craig, Catholic War Veterans
Claudette Campbell, Military Officers Assoc. Of America
Patricia (Tricia) Udicious for Martina White, PA House of Representatives

Conference Call

Allan Abramson, Jewish War Veterans
Richard Fine, AMVETS

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Delaware Valley Veterans Home

Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General-VA
Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care
Barbara Raymond, Director of Veterans' Homes
Margo Coleman, Commandant, DVVH
Rita Yeung, Deputy Commandant, DVVH
Yahvae Jones, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator, DVVH
Rinisha Thomas, Clinical Service Manager, DVVH
Veronica Royster, Assistant to the Commandant

Absent

Benjamin Mastridge, Veterans of Foreign Wars, President Advisory Council
Larry Holman, Jewish War Veterans
Leonard M. Johnson, Disabled American Veterans
Samuel Huhn, Blinded Veterans Association
Violetta Berdichevskaya, Chief Medical Officer, DMVA
Erica Moore, Regional Program Outreach Coordinator
William McGoldrick, Volunteer Resource Coordinator, DVVH
Ashley Conaway, for Senator Frank A. Farry
Regional Compliance Officer

Residents

Bobby Malone, Resident Representative

- Moment of Silence
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call
- Swearing in New Member- John Schwartz, The American Legion
- Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2025.

Report from Yahvae Jones, Admissions/Marketing

- Last quarter we had 8 admissions, 11 expirations, and 2 discharges. Our current census is 158, we are working to get back to 165, which includes 7 pending admissions. We have 2 this week, 3 next week and 2 the following week.
- Our current wait list, we have 57 veterans on our skilled side and 5 on our secured. Our wait time is around 5-9 months depending on bed availability. Spouses wait, we have 18 spouses and that varies on if we have a female bed available.
- Marketing and outreach, I have been doing several events. Tomorrow I am going to be at the Chamber of Commerce event 5:00pm-7:30pm, and I have a lot of events planned for the next couple of months. I am still working closely with the VA Social Workers and neighboring nursing homes and facilities.

Employee Recognition

- We have 3 employees we recognized this quarter. One of the employees is here with us today, Tina Gardner. Tina has been here at Delaware Valley Veterans' Home for 3 years. She works in our Dietary Department, and she was our employee of the month through the "Caught you Caring" program for August. Tina has a twin sister as well, and they both have beautiful voices. Congratulations, Tina as well as the other two recipients, Richard McKellop from our Security Department, who was our employee of the month for June, and Chris Gannon for July from our transportation department, they received lunch tickets, a pin, and a certificate recognizing their achievements.

Report from Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General

- Last time I talked to you about the Federal VA and some of the changes they are talking about. At that time, they thought they were going to cut 70,000, they brought that down to 30,000.
- The big news in the last two weeks has been getting rid of contracts with unions. Firefighters, Security Guards, LPNs, RNs and CNAs are all union employees, we are not sure what the impact is going to be. The unions are trying to fight, that could have an impact.
- There was another article this week that came out, saying that they are struggling to recruit staff for the VA, because people are uncertain as to what jobs that will stay or go. They are opening more opportunities to send people out for private care. That is something you will see increase.
- We opened Lickdale Veterans' Outreach Center, we had a great ceremony, Fort Indiantown Gap off post. We partnered with Career link, they are going to have an office there two days a week, the Federal VA is going to send someone there one day a week, if people want to sign up for healthcare. It will become a one stop shop. We are working on getting machines for people to get their ID cards.
- This weekend I will be with the County Commissioner on Sunday.
- We have started two new committees from our Government Advisory Council. We have a bunch of committees. One is homelessness, we decided to take a more strategic approach to solving important problems. Those who cannot get into our homes, who do not qualify to go into homes, that were denied for whatever issues, who were incarcerated, we are trying to take care of those demographics to see what we can do. We just had a meeting last week with PennDOT, we have less options to get them to and from appointments, some are on a second floor. Rideshare is coming in to take folks, but they have a wheelchair, and they need help, they may not go in the home to help them. There are a lot of problems with transportation that we are trying to solve. We are working on that, and we had a great first start.

- PA VETCON will be in Valley Forge on October 22nd-26th. You are all welcome to come. There will be high-level speakers, Senators, County Directors, Resources, State agencies and industry leaders.
- Claudette Campbell asked when you say they are trying to get rid of unions, does that mean they do not want a union? General Weigl responded, they are stopping union contracts as the VA published, in some articles. We are waiting to see the outcome. I did let them know the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is hiring, and we do have unions.

Report from Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care

- Last week we had the opportunity to be at NASVH, which is the National Association of State Veterans Home. Barbara, the Commandants and I went down there. We went down there to continue education credits for our license. More importantly we go to talk with our counterparts from other states. A lot of the things that we are challenged with, we share with other State Veterans Homes across the country. We also take back some lessons learned. One thing that stood out to us is our VA nurse and retention grant, and we were awarded that last year for the first time. We had some success with the grant, but we did not spend the amount we were allotted. So, there were other areas that we could look into to help us drive recruitment and retention. Long Island New York had a lot of success and Michigan. Some of the states did make a significant reduction in the number of vacancies through other programs. Barbara and I meet monthly with our grants team, we are going to come this year with a lot more ideas, to see what the VA is going to do and what the state is going to do with us as well. Some ideas other states implemented, we can run into barriers with unions, and the commonwealth. There is definitely some opportunities out there that we can go after with education and other retention programs.
- This summer has been very busy with health inspections, since June 1st we have had 13 visits, from the VA, Department of Health, and Department of Human Services. Delaware Valley recently had the Department of Health, and they had a facility assessment, which is our own internal inspector.
- Five-star ratings are doing well. Delaware Valley and Gino Merli are still at five stars. Erie, Hollidaysburg and Southeast at four-star. We have Southwest at three-star. In Pennsylvania the average star rating for a nursing home is 2.5, so they are doing well.
- We have no positive COVID staff or residents across the entire state.
- Census, as Yahvae said, Delaware Valley has been doing great, they have been over ninety percent for over a year now, as well as Gino Merli and Erie. Occupancy is good, we have a total of 1,165 veterans and spouses across the state. We continue to see more and more admissions coming in. We had 43 admissions and 37 discharges, and we want to keep an eye on the admission number.
- Delaware Valley is going to interview a part-time physician next week. The position role will help support Delaware Valley and help to support Southeast when we have providers out on vacation or leave.
- Construction- Hollidaysburg is 98% done with construction, unfortunately we are waiting on parts that are going to delay us. We are looking at probably the first quarter of next year for the ribbon cutting.
- Senate bill 129, does impact our Advisory Council. It is expanding the number of members, in addition to our resident council presidents we will be adding an additional two community members, one being a family member or a resident representative, and another community member. Which could be another resident, or it could be someone out in the community who is interested in being on the board. The second big part of the change with this law is that we will have to produce an annual report for each advisory council. I am working on that, and I will get that to the president and vice

president to share. The annual report will be sent out to the advisory council a week before the last meeting of the year, we can go over any changes and approve it. It will be a living, breathing document. There are things that we won't get in for this year, or things that I cannot make a change for. We want to have a standard template for all six homes. Those reports will go to the Adjutant General, and they will be combined into one annual report, and that will be shared with the general assembly. Claudette Campbell asked how will you get the family member? Travis replied, each one of our homes has a resident council, we are going to look for some nominations at those council meetings. If people are interested, they can certainly go to the commandant. This law has very little changes, but there is a lot of impact for us operationally. It gave us a chance to look at all six councils and look at the bylaws, they are all a little bit different. We have a team working on trying to standardize what makes sense for all six homes, and get this done before December. We are in communication with the War Council and the Governors office. Douglas Craig added I live up near Lebanon, I use the Lebanon VA, which is a fantastic facility. They are building a new home out there, will it complement, represent, or duplicate this home? Travis replied, no, it will not duplicate this, it will be owned and operated by the Federal VA. It is a beautiful area and facility. General Weigl added, it is going to be a CLC (Community Living Center), not a state veterans' home. Pittsburgh has one as well.

Report from Barbara Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes

- One of the fun things we did over the summer, as Travis mentioned, was State Veterans Homes week. We did pie in the face, special bingo, making different tie dye t-shirts, circus, it was a lot of fun. Margo will go into more detail about what we did here. If you follow us on social media, you will see some of those different photos.
- No major changes across the board with the 13 surveys from our licensing agency, just some minor things. What we do if we get a deficient practice at one of our homes is we look to see what we need to improve at the other five to prevent any other further deficient practices.
- We are tracking CDC as far as vaccinations go, we are still waiting for final guidance regarding COVID and RSV, as well as influenza. Preliminary reports are there will be no changes in influenza vaccination, that is the one they recommend on an annual basis. RSV at this time is still preliminary, that would be still a one and done vaccination. The COVID vaccine is what we are waiting on, there is a new COVID vaccine that some of our doctors have already asked us to order, so our pharmacies are indeed ordering that. We follow what our medical doctors at our State Veterans' Homes, as well as our Chief Medical doctor (Dr. B.), we follow those orders. We do try to stay in line with whatever comes out of the CDC, but if the physician does not agree with that, we follow the doctors in the homes.
- Staffing- RN, LPN, and CNAs are our biggest challenges. Social Workers and Dieticians across the State, we struggle from that perspective as well.

Report from Margo Coleman, Commandant

- Thank you for being here for your support, also thank you for your continued support every month for our veterans/residents and the activities they have here. I know some of you help with casino night, horse racing, and you made sure we got through State Veterans' Homes week without any type of hiccups.
- We have added to our Quality Assurance Committee, the employee recognition committee. That committee oversee the "Caught you Caring program. The employee recognition committee, which was recently added to our Quality Improvement initiatives, had their start up meeting on April 1st. They have helped coordinate pizza for staff during State Veterans Home Week, handed out neighborhood buttons to rally support for the new names and will be implementing the starfish program on September 1st. They are going to be handing out cards to managers and supervisors, so if they see staff members doing something like going above and beyond, for example, one of our housekeepers helped a resident tie their sneakers. That is something that is not in their description, but it helps keep our residents safe. That would qualify them for one of those starfish, coupon and the starfish poem. I think everyone is looking forward to recognizing our staff.
- We updated our neighborhood names during State Veterans' Homes week, instead of A, B, C, D units. We wanted to commit to our philosophy of recognizing DVVH as a home where our Veterans and their spouses live rather than an institution where they are placed. We have updated our unit names, which we are now referring to as neighborhood's, to specific neighborhood names. Alpha Avenue, Bravo Blvd, Charlie Circle and Delta Drive, were the winners after the two-month long vote and signs have been placed above each neighborhood entrance.
- Rita will talk more about the construction, we hold stakeholder meetings every two weeks, to make sure we continue to drive that project forward.
- During State Veterans' Homes week Senator Joe Picozzi was here and celebrated with our veterans. We also had a representative from PA State Representative Martina White office, as well as PA State Representative Joe Hogan office. They were able to come here to see all the hard work our staff do every day. It was a really nice opportunity for them to see what they advocate for at times when they are in Harrisburg or in Washington. They can see the veterans and what impact they are making.
- The Department of Health and Life Safety Divisions were here back in the end of July for their annual health report as well as for our fire and life safety inspection. We did very well, we had six citations from the Department of Health on the health part, and we had six citations from the life safety part. They were very minimal, and we have already started putting our plan of correction in place to have both those fixed. The only other update is on our FPA survey that was conducted in June, we had seven deficiencies from that survey. We are going to be wrapping that process into our performance improvement project, to make sure we can get those areas back into compliance, and they were very minimal as well. Barbara Raymond added, during those FPAs we always tell the teams in the homes we are going to find more deficiencies, do not be anxious and nervous.

Report from Rita Yeung, Deputy Commandant

- Our headquarters hosted the annual fishing trip in June, ten of our residents went with activities, nursing staff, Bill and our Commandant. Our residents caught 32 fish in total. They won the most fish and biggest fish award. General Weigl added, when the residents sat down to eat, they said we did not come here to eat, we came here to fish. Travis added, Delaware Valley got caught in traffic on the way to the trip, they were 1 hour late and still won.
- The renovation project on our patio behind our Bravo Blvd and Charlie Circle dining rooms, there was a meeting between DVVH project team and the construction company. It was discussion about our current process of excavating the area is not working well, they agreed on a new method of excavating. We are waiting for the Department of Health approval, currently there are no further updates, or an anticipated completion date.
- The Alpha Avenue project will soon start, and we are waiting for the materials.
- On Bravo Blvd, recently we installed a split unit for better air conditioning circulation in our small dining rooms.
- DCNR are going to be repaving the driveway leading to our home, and hopefully they will widen the driveway entrance. According to DCNR, that may be the responsibility of the City of Philadelphia, more to come.

James Ritchie, Veterans of Foreign Wars

- I was at our state convention in June. The incoming Commander and Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars husband took the job that I had in Vietnam. Talk about crazy things happening, sometimes it is a small world.

John Schwartz, American Legion

- I am not sure what I am supposed to report about, I will talk about post 810, district 5 and district 1. I am from district 5, our new Pennsylvania State American Legion Commander is Pat Love, which comes from district 5. He was also our Vice Commander of eastern state, so we have a lot of our guys in there. Pat Love also participated in our trunk or treat last year, so he knows what we do. We are getting auxiliaries from different posts, post 810 has a very active presence out here. Hopefully the rain does not come, we are scheduled to go to the Trenton Thunder game tonight. I am in contact with Kristian (activities department), we base our schedule around what she wants us to do. She tells us what our mission is and how many troops we need, we do the best we can to fill the need. District 1 and District 5 like to come here for the dinners, district 1 in south Philadelphia is far away. We get as many people as we can to come. If you have any questions for the American Legion, please feel free to let me know, I can give my phone number or email address. Bobbie goes to Walmart trips with us and parx casino, and we have fun. I think we have the racetrack coming up soon.

Ed Horan, Marine Corps League

- I visited DVVH one day, and I asked Bill (volunteer coordinator) if there were some needs. I remember a while ago on your site there would be a list of donations requested, and Bill gave me a sheet of paper with the donation wish list that he had. I put out a newsletter monthly, I will keep including it to see if we could spread it out to our district, we are district 1, hopefully we can get some more items coming in. Supermarkets provide soap pods and different items requested. When COVID came along we lost people, and we were restricted from here. We kind of fell away from volunteering, hopefully we can get back on track and get some more volunteers to help here.

Douglas Craig, Catholic War Veterans

- Catholic War Veterans, we are a dying breed, just like some other organizations. I am part of the department, every department meeting we have is just dwindling. The Commander is travelling around the State trying to get people interested, I do not think he is having any luck. We are here, I am out in Lebanon, so I am not here to volunteer as much as I was when I was in the MOAA, which died under my leadership, people just quit coming. Willow Grove apparently is doing very well. I guess I will not be here next month unless I am reinstated, I am done November, I will talk with my boss and see what he can do.

Bobby Malone, Resident Representative

- I would like to thank Mr. Schwartz for the support they offer us. There are those who visit us on their own, I think that is great as well. We recently participated in a survey that was offered by the Ombudsman, we have not gotten the results back yet, I am hoping that it is favorable. I think that on the fishing trip, I think some residents did not participate, because of anxiety. They came back talking about how they sat stuck in traffic for hours, it was a big issue, they thought they would have to turn around and come back, they did not think they were going to make it. They did enjoy the fishing trip.

Claudette Campbell, Military Officers Assoc. Of America

- We are in Willow Grove, and we are thriving and recruiting new members. Our outreach efforts are mostly geared to other Veterans' Organizations, helping them or donations. We support scholarship funds or students who want to continue with their schooling past high school. We also have excellent speakers at our luncheons. At the last luncheon we had a speaker speak about the recruitment efforts, they gave a very positive message. I think we have an outstanding outreach effort.
- I like to commend this facility, I only know Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, although I hear about the other homes. I am impressed with the quality, how you incorporate recognition for your employees, and your activities. I think that is something you should be commended on.

Tricia Udicious, PA House of Representatives (Representative Martina White office)

- It has been a struggle with the potholes, I know it has been an issue. Our office has been in constant contact with Rob at Benjamin Rush, seeing who responsibility it was. What we were told yesterday is that they are waiting on a quote, as soon as that quote is in, they are going to start cold patching. They are currently out of cold patch. They do not have the budget yet. Once they get their budget and have their money, this is going to be a top priority. We are in contact with them, Rob has been pretty good with us.



Douglas Craig, Catholic War Veterans

- This program for the Sol Stark Hall of Fame ceremony today is very nice. Whoever did these programs did a really great job in honor of this gentleman. Margo responded, our printing shop did them, and it is a great program.

Old Business: None

New Business: Next year our Advisory Council meeting is on Veterans Day, is there a preference to have it before or after. November 4th, 2026, has been agreed upon. Ed Horan made a motion for the meeting to be November 4th, 2026, motion seconded by Claudette Cambell, all were in favor.

Good of the Counsel: James Ritchie- Getting together with other states, we found that when we go to national conventions you gain a lot of important information.

General Weigl- I just want to remind you all the parade is November 9th, we will take a few busloads of people from here down to the parade, I know a lot of your organizations are marching. If you are not marching, you are welcome to come down. This year the Grand Marshal is Ralph Galati, Vietnam POW, he is a great guy. We are where the Rocky steps are. We also have to get a date the mascots will be here, before the kickoff the parade week. The next meeting is not until November 12th, so I will say Happy Veterans Day now, thank you for all of your service.

Adjourned: 10:49 AM

Next Meeting: November 12, 2025