

Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission

Meeting Agenda

June 16, 2023, at 1000 AM

Location: Arrowheads Community Club

1000	Call to Order	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Moment of Silence	Vice-Chair Connie Snavelly
	Pledge of Allegiance	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Introduction of Commission Members	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Oath of Office	MG Mark Schindler
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Jesiah Schrader: President PASACDVAMr. Stanley Majocka: Commander IAWV	
	Certificates of Appreciation	MG Mark Schindler/Chair Taylor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Craig Wilhelm-TAL, Mr. Bernard McDonald-AMVETS Mr. David Brady-MCL, Ms. Terri Lynn-DAV	
	Chairman's Open Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	TAG's Opening Remarks and Comments	MG Mark Schindler
	Approval of 14April 2023 Meeting Minutes	Requires Vote
	Reading of Official and Other Communications	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	DAG-VA Opening Remarks and Report	BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PPL, BVH, PIROPrograms Report	Requires Vote
	VISN 4	Mr. Chuck Tilges
	Committee Reports	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">VSO GrantRETXLegislativePensions/Relief/Grave MarkingsWomen VeteransVeterans' HealthGovernance CommitteeTransportationPAWVC Update	Mr. Matthew Hollenbeck Mr. Jesiah Schrader Mr. Robert Heister Mr. Larry Googins Ms. Lisa Kaye Mr. Mark Baylis Mr. Michael Brooker Mr. William Hines President Mr. Bernard McDonald
	Unfinished Business	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	New Business	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Presentation: Keystone Challenge Academy	Mr. Kyle Mann
	Good of the Order	SVC Commissioners
	Agenda Items for Next Meeting	SVC Commissioners
	Closing Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Next Meeting	
	September 8, 2023, 10AM	
	Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville	
	Retiring of the Colors	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Adjournment	Chairman Nicholas Taylor

State Veterans' Commission Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2023

10:00 AM to 11:08 PM

Arrowheads Community Center, Fort Indiantown Gap

Call to Order		Chairman Nicholas Taylor
The Pennsylvania State Veterans' Commission (SVC) meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.		
Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance		
The moment of silence was presented by the Chairman Mr. Nicholas Taylor. Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.		
Commission Introductions		
MG Mark Schindler	TAG	
BG (PA) Maureen Weigl	DAG DMVA-OVA	
Mr. Nicholas Taylor	SVC Chairman; Commander, Catholic War Veterans	
Mr. Bernard McDonald	Commander, AMVETS	
Ms. Terri Lynn	Commander, Disabled American Veterans	
Mr. David Gui	Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans	
Mr. William Albert (on phone)	Commander, Blinded Veterans of America	
Mr. David Eisele (on phone)	President, PA State Association of County Directors of Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Robert Heister	President, Military Officers Association of America	
Mr. Phillip Arnold	Adjutant, Military Order of the Purple Heart	
Mr. Larry Googins (on phone)	President, Vietnam Veterans of America	
Ms. Constance Snavelly	Designee, Keystone Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America	
Mr. David Brady	Commandant, Marine Corps League	
Mr. Craig Wilhelm	Commander, The American Legion	
Mr. James Hogan	Adjutant, The American Legion	
Ms. Lisa Kaye	Member-at-Large	
Mr. Mark Baylis	Member-at-Large	
Mr. David Cowgill (on phone)	VHA, VISN-4	
Absent Members		
Mr. Frank Boken	President, Military Order of the Purple Heart	
Mr. Gerald Hawk	Executive Director, AMVETS	
Mr. Charles Jackson	Member-at-Large	
Mr. Michael Brooker	Member-at-Large	
Mr. Henry Mannella	Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars	
Mr. John Getz	Adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars	
Mr. Richard Fine	Commander, Jewish War Veterans	
Others Present		
Brig Gen Michael Regan	PANG-Air	
CSM Jon Worley	PANG-Army	
Mr. Joseph Batt	DMVA-OCC	
Mr. Marc Ferraro	Executive Deputy Secretary	

Mr. Nate Silcox	Executive Director senate VAEP	
Mr. Cory Bender	DMVA-PIRO (Outreach and Reintegration)	
Mr. Rich Hamp	Special Assistant to DAG-VA	
Mr. Travis Davis (on phone)	Executive Director DMVA-BVH	
Mr. Nicholas Gilliland	DMVA-PIRO (Outreach and Reintegration)	
Mr. Brian Natali	DMVA-PIRO (Programs and Services)	
Mr. Michael Hillman	Office of House Representative Solomon	
Mr. Jeffrey Wallitsch	DMVA-OCC	
Mr. Michael Woody	DMVA-PPL	
Ms. Joan Nissley (on phone)	DMVA-Public Affairs	
Mr. Tom Cherry	DMVA-PIRO (Programs and Services)	
Mr. Thomas Coreau	PASACDVA-Dauphin County	
Mr. Leonard Sam M. Johnson	DAV	
Mr. D. Robinson III	DAV	
Mr. Joseph Neild	PASACDVA-Dauphin County	
Mr. Mike Rang	CWV	
Mr. Matthew Hollenbeck	TAL	
Mr. Richard Hudzinski	VVA	
Ms. Rogers (on phone)	Penn State Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness	
Oath of Office		
N/A		
Recognition of Governor's Proclamations		
Mr. Rick Hamp read the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office Proclamations for Vietnam Veterans Day, Tuskegee, and Military Sexual Trauma Awareness into the record.		
Chairman's Opening Remarks		Chairman Nicholas Taylor
<p>The Chairman welcomed the members to the meeting, and said he hoped they had a joyous and safe holiday. He then advised the members and guests to please raise their hands when they have a question and identify themselves before speaking but to also bear in mind, he wants to keep the meetings focused and succinct.</p> <p>The Chairman informed the members that his and the Vice-Chairman's meetings with the DAG, Mr. Hamp and Mr. Mutschler on Tuesdays are very informative, for example review of the BVH, VSO training, the VSO grants, and updates on the number of veterans serviced which adds to the continued cooperation between the DMVA and SVC.</p> <p>He noted to the members that they have a book in at their seat which described PA laws as they relate to veterans and their family's courtesy of PA House Representative Solomon. He advised the members to seek out these books for distribution to the members of their respective service organizations.</p> <p>The Chairman closed his opening remarks by thanking all the members and the DMVA staff that everything they do to support/assist veterans and their families in all aspects from the small to the large, and he salutes them for their continued dedication to our veterans.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussion</u></p> <p>None.</p>		
TAG's Opening Remarks		MG Mark Schindler
TAG greeted the members and noted that his schedule had prevented him from attending recently. He then said he first wanted to briefly update the members and community at large about the PA National Guard. There are approximately 900 PANG soldiers deployed overseas or within the continental U.S. with approximately 150 Air PANG deployed internationally. He informed the members that PANG will start welcoming soldiers back in the		

<p>July/August timeframe; however, the new procedure is individually ticketing (airline) so it poses a problem in welcoming them back in larger groups, but we will send PANG/others out to welcome them home.</p> <p>TAG informed the members that he was able to visit several of the homes and interacted with DAG-VA and with Executive Director DMVA-BVH Travis Davis for the winning team in the cookoff at Gino Merle. He had a great visit at the Erie home, and the Homeless Vet Standdown in Harrisburg.</p> <p>TAG told the commissioners that Governor Shapiro will be attending the groundbreaking for the new construction at Hollidaysburg Veterans Home, and that it is now on track after getting the instrumental assistance from the Governor and working out the “hang-ups” that had been delaying it.</p> <p>TAG announced he will be attending some other events in May such as Loyalty Day, 25th anniversary of Southwest Veterans Center and Boalsburg events. He then closed by thanking the commissioners for all they do for veterans every day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussion</u></p> <p>None</p>	
Approval of the February 3, 2023, Meeting Minutes	
<p>Motion: Mr. David Brady, MCL, motioned to approve the meeting minutes</p>	
<p>Second: Mr. Craig Wilhelm, TAL, seconded the motion</p>	
<p>The body agreed; motion carried. Minutes approved.</p>	
<p>Reading of Official and Other Communications Chairman Nicholas Taylor</p>	
<p>Chairman briefed the commissioners on a complaint lodged on April 5, 2023, to the SVC about some mechanical issues at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. The Chairman informed the complainant that it was not within the bailiwick of the SVC to address his complaint; and that VISN 4/Lebanon VA Med Ctr had seen the complaint and addressed it.</p> <p>There were no questions/comments from the commissioners.</p>	
<p>Deputy Adjutant General-VA Remarks BG (PA) Maureen Weigl</p>	
<p>DAG-OVA greeted the members and said she echo’s TAGs comments about it being a busy month of veteran activities and homes visits. DAG-OVA complimented BG McHugh on organizing Women’s Veteran History Month and TAG on his support of it; along with the presentation of awards to 20 veterans.</p> <p>DAG-OVA informed the members that DMVA held its first PACT ACT townhall, the next one will be on June 14, 2023, in Erie and members will receive an invite. She informed members that they will receive an invitation to the Hollidaysburg Veterans Home for the groundbreaking ceremony on May 2, 2023.</p> <p>DAG-OVA complimented Executive Director DMVA-BVH Davis on the outstanding work he has done to bring the homes to a 1000 census since COVID.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussion</u></p> <p>None</p>	
<p>DMVA PPL Mr. Michael Woody</p>	
<p>Director DMVA-PPL Dusty Durand greeted the members and drew their attention to two guests: Mr. Nate Silcox, Executive Director VAEP for Chairman Senator Mastriano, and Mr. Michael Hillman, staff of House Majority Leader Representative Solomon.</p> <p>Mr. Durand said two Senate Bills 126 and 447 have moved out of committee. There was no other movement on bills, but the House is now up and running so we will see movement.</p>	

<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None	
DMVA Bureau of Veterans Homes	Mr. Travis Davis
<p>Executive Director DMVA-BVH Mr. Travis Davis provided the following information to the members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BVH had 10 inspections from different agencies: Department of Health, VA, and Department of Human services. • BVH received the following ratings: 5 Stars for Gino Merle, Sailors and Soldiers Home and Delaware Valley Veterans Home. 4 Stars for Southeastern Veterans Center and Southwest Veterans Center. 3 Stars for Hollidaysburg Veterans Home. • COID: No hospitalizations, 25 Veterans tested positive and 6 staff members. • Influenza was zero for entire BVH. • Admissions are at the highest since the pandemic. • Staff ratio to patients is going well, but still advertising for jobs. • April is volunteer month and Mr. Davis said the service organizations pre-COVID were instrumental in providing volunteers and he called on them to again help. • Announced the HVH groundbreaking on May 2, 2023. • TAG fishing event is June 8, 2023. • Homes Week is June 11 to 17, 2023. • Gino Merle added a women's wing. 	
<u>Questions/Discussion</u>	
None	
DMVA PIRO	Mr. Brian Natali
<p>Mr. Brian Natali DMVA-PIRO Chief of Programs and Services briefed the members on the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VETConnect provided over 17,000 program interactions with veterans and their families with over 1,900 resources with over 200+ connections every month. • The next phase of VETConnect is the completion of mapping which will allow veterans and their families to put in their zip code and find programs, resources in their immediate area. • The recent townhall had 26 attendees, 5 vendor tables. It was a positive outreach where several veterans were helped directly with applications. The next townhall 'Let's Talk-Vet 2 Vet Discussion & Resource Fair' will be held at Erie VFW Post 470 on June 14, 2023. • The accredited VSO collaboration and training forums continue, it's a good opportunity to receive training and have questions answered. All VSOs are encouraged to attend. DMVA will again host accreditation training this fall where 80-90% will be virtual classrooms with some in-person training. DMVA-PIRO will do all it can to provide quality accreditation training to all VSOs. • PIRO is continuing to work on transportation services for veterans, and recently hosted a round table discussion in Pittsburgh. Over 100 people attended. • Regulation 43 Chapter 5 rewrite has been completed and sent to legal which will then forward to TAG for approval who will send it to PPL. • DMVA-PRIO is dedicated every day to thwart pension poaching, every effort is made to ensure our veterans, and their families are not taken advantage. Attorneys are in place to assist as well as the Office of the Attorney General. If you know of any scams please notify us, if you know of any veteran that had been taken advantage of, please get a written statement and send it to us. 	
<u>Questions/Discussion.</u>	
<p>Mr. Hudzinski asked if it would be possible to receive minutes or notes from the transportation round table held in Pittsburgh.</p> <p>Mr. Natali said he would provide them.</p>	
None	

Approval of State Veterans' Programs Reports	
Motion: Mr. Bernard MacDonald, AMVETS, motioned to approve the programs reports	
Second: Ms. Terri Lynn, DAV, seconded the motion	
The body agreed; motion carried. Programs reports approved.	
VISN-4	Mr. Tim Liezert
Due to technical difficulties VISN 4 was unable to participate.	
VSO Grant Committee	Mr. Matthew Hollenbeck
Mr. Hollenbeck provided following statistics from the Act 66 for July/22-12/22: 23485 vet interactions, 1368 outreach events separate and w/DMVA, 3120 referrals to DMVA, 714 enrolled into VA health care, 687 referrals to commonwealth programs, 1268 referrals DMVA state programs, 371 referrals to county programs, 120 into vet registry, held 68 training events. And committee working with DMVA on making grant adjustments.	
<u>Questions/Discussion</u>	
None	
RETX Committee	Mr. David Eisele
No Report	
<u>Questions/Discussion</u>	
None.	
Legislative Committee	Mr. Robert Heister
Mr. Heister informed the members that the committee had meet and discussed two issues: first issue, was the need to solve the van transportation problem which he noted was quite complex from securing drivers to vans and the maintaining them. Second, revolved around Title 5, 911b which states that to serve as DAG-OVA the person had to be a commissioned officer for 10 years. The discussed focused on why not an enlisted service member who was very accomplished serve as DAG-OVA, the committee is looking at that in a preliminary stage.	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None.	
Pensions/Relief/Grave Marking/State Military Cemetery Committee	Mr. Larry Googins
No Report	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None	
Women Veterans Committee	Ms. Lisa Kaye
No Report	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None.	
Veteran Health Committee	Mr. Mark Baylis
Mr. Baylis first briefed the members on the Long-Term Council (L-TC):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shapiro Administration has assumed control so there was turnover. 	

- Shapiro Admin briefed the L-TC on implementing their Master Plan on Aging which included a hot-map showing targeted income areas that need addressing with aid. Mr. Baylis proposed to the briefers that they should include veterans and target food pantries and soup kitchens where many low-income veterans can be found.
- Shapiro Admin briefed on Act 64 Mental Health Plan for Seniors: Last year 100 million was placed into the fund, this year it will be divided up. Mr. Baylis noted while listening that there was no mention of veterans; and believes this would be a perfect plan to have veterans participate and called on the SVC Legislative Committee to address this issue.

Mr. Baylis then briefed the members on the Veterans Health:

- He informed the members that he lost some key committee members, is currently recruiting Mr. William Hines-DVA, Ms. Stephanie Richards who is a counselor for veterans' suicide and Mr. Kevin Cope an expert on homelessness. LTC (ret) Doug Harsh is considering joining- he would bring a legal expertise to the committee.
- Mr. Baylis said he currently is consulting with Dr. Kim Dubois expert in veteran suicide prevention with programs like 'upstream interventions' and focusing on veteran relationships with family counseling.
- Mr. Baylis requested members to support SB89 which will help National Guard and Reservist service members who were never deployed to active duty receive VA benefits.

Questions/Discussions

None

Governance Committee

Mr. Michael Booker

Mr. Hudzinski, a member of the Governance Committee, read into the record Governance Committee Chairman Mr. Michael Brooker's letter to the commissioner members:

**Governance Committee Report
PA State Veterans Committee Meeting
Friday, April 14, 2023**

Fellow Commissioners,

Michael Brooker is unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment made before the change of this month's commission meeting date. Hopefully, Rick Hamp, our liaison from the DMVA, and I will be able to fill his shoes in successfully advancing the task given to the committee nearly a year ago to establish written operating rules and instructions.

Our goal today is two-fold:

1. To receive an up or down vote on the Final Draft of the Bylaws.
2. To elicit questions and spark robust discussion from the commissioners regarding the Draft Operating Procedures and Policies, or OPP.

In our judgment, the bylaws, and the OPP – along with the statute law to which they refer – provide both the commission and its members the necessary tools and requisite guidance to effectively perform their duties. While the bylaws are more general and overarching, the OPP is a seminal document intended to complement the statute and bylaws, which are rule or order oriented, by providing commissioners the beginnings of a nuts-and-bolts document on the "how to act and perform" – as Commissioner Brady queried when he first came on board several years back. It is pertinent and necessary to point out: like the draft Bylaws, the draft OPP has no precursor and was crafted by the committee from scratch to provide a thorough, although not exhaustive, playbook predicated on each commissioner taking an active and participatory role in the commission's work. The committee's vision is that the OPP will be a dynamic document that will evolve to meet the future needs of the commission; unlike the bylaws, which are intended to be more static, and law bound.

Therefore, it is the Governance Committee's recommendation that our discussion today focus on approval of the Final Draft Bylaws, up or down, as sufficient time has been provided to the commissioners to comment over the past months; and then have a rigorous question and comment period concerning the OPP. Our target is to finalize it for a vote at the June SVC meeting.

<p>Mr. Chairman, I respectfully request we open the floor to a vote on the bylaws as presented; and, subsequently, a thoughtful discussion by the commission on the draft</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussion</u></p> <p>See Unfinished Business section for vote and discussion.</p>	
<p>PA War Veterans Council Update</p> <p>No Report</p>	<p>Mr. Bernard McDonald</p>
<p>Unfinished Business</p> <p>See Governance Committee section above for record of Chairman Brooker’s letter to the members, subsequent discussion was moved to unfinished business under the direction of Chairman Taylor.</p> <p>After Mr. Hudzinski read the letter, he advised the members on the change they made requiring members to be PA residents and asking the Governor’s Office to make the same changes to the MAL requirements as well. Chairman Taylor noted these are minor changes do not influence the Bylaws.</p> <p>Chairman Taylor called for a member to make a motion to approve the Bylaws, Mr. Hudzinski make the motion and Chairman Taylor seconded it. Chairman Taylor asked for a discussion before the vote, there wasn’t any discussion.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. Richard Hudzinski, Designee Gov Committee-VVA, motioned to approve the Bylaws</p> <p>Second: Chairman Nicholas Taylor, CWV, seconded the motion</p> <p>The body agreed; motion carried. Minutes approved.</p>	<p>Chairman Nicholas Taylor</p>
<p>Chairman Taylor informed the members that OCC said they can continue to use the term commissioners while acting in an official capacity, but it will require the wearing of a name tag. He said the production of the name tags is in the discussion phase.</p> <p>Mr. Hudzinski informed the members that the operation procedures will be ready for a vote at the June 2023 meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Leonard Johnson-DAV raised the issue of the PACT Act not including melanoma for Vietnam Veterans. He would like the SVC to support having it listed as one of the medical conditions. Chairman Taylor advised him to write a letter to the SVC requesting the same.</p> <p>Mr. Hudzinski stated this issue was addressed at a previous meeting attending by VISN 4 Mr. Liezert and the DAG agreed to push it forward.</p> <p>The DAG said she raised it at National and VA is aware and is on the list as one of the health issues to be added as well as other skin problems.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No Further Discussion</p>	
<p>New Business</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Chairman Nicholas Taylor</p>
<p>Good of the Order</p>	
<p>Mr. David Brady-MCL said the wanted to draw the members attention to the Memorial Day Observance at the Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery on May 28, 2023, at 2pm. He told the members that the MCL had put a</p>	

memorial on the pathway along section 24D and urged the other commissioners to have their organizations do the same.	
Items for Next Meeting	
None	
Closing Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
Chairman thanked all the members for that they do, and to focus on their safety and health.	
Next Meeting	
Friday, September 8, 2023, 10:00 AM Forum: Arrowheads Community Center, FIG	

The minutes of this meeting are respectfully submitted by:

BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
Deputy Adjutant General
Veterans Affairs



STATE VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 16, 2023



DMVA MILITARY UPDATE

CURRENT MOBILIZATIONS & TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS



PAARNG Current Deployments						
MDATE	MSAD	UNIT	OPN	PAX	MISSION	Projected Return Date
08 OCT 22	10 OCT 22	28 ID HQ	OSS	555	T10, 12302	04 AUG 23
07 OCT 22	10 OCT 22	55 MEB	SWB	102	T10, 12302	03 AUG 23
ARNG Soldiers at MOB/DEMOB Sites				0	Various Missions	Various based on tour
Various Individual MOB Soldiers				3	Various Missions	Various based on tour
Total PAARNG Deployed: 660						

PAANG Current Deployments		
Unit	Opn	Pax
193 SOW	OFS-OIR-OSS, Other	8/1
111 ATKW	IPR (HS), OFS-OIR-OSS, TS	36/6/40
171 ARW	Alert Status (HS), OFS-OIR-OSS	37
Total PAANG Deployed		128

Total PANG Deployed 806

OVA LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP 5June23

Bills passed through the House:

[House Bill 269, PN 232 \(Webster\)](#) extends the time when a veteran's records of discharge may not be disclosed—other than to the subject of the records, immediate family, or authorized representatives—to 85 years from 75 years. **second consideration*

[House Bill 325, PN 288 \(Staats\)](#) connects families of deceased veterans with their burial benefits by requiring the funeral entity to notify the county veterans affairs director of the death and provide the family with the contact information for the county director. **second consideration*

[House Bill 404, PN 372 \(Watro\)](#) adds Department of Health, which certifies emergency medical services personnel, to the list of agencies that can exempt a member of the military or a veteran from certain licensure, registration, or certification requirements. **second consideration*

[House Bill 892, PN 874 \(Kaufer\)](#) codifies the PA VETConnect program to improve the health and well-being of veterans and their families. Companion Bill, identical, [SB 447 \(Mastriano\)](#) **second consideration*

[House Bill 1086, PN 1112 \(Takac\)](#) to makes changes to the Veterans Registry law as requested by the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. **second consideration*

[House Bill 1091, PN 1134 \(D. Williams\)](#) increases the pension for veterans who are blind, an amputee, or paralyzed as a result of their military service to \$270 from \$150 per month and indexes the amount to the inflation rate. Companion Bill, identical, [SB 290 \(Mastriano\)](#) **second consideration*

PVH Current Licensure Status



SVH	Regulatory Agency	Survey Reason/Type	Survey Date(s)	Status/comments
DVVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	03/01/23 - 03/06/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Pending	05/30/23	Pending
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	03/21/23	POC accepted, date certain 4/28
	VA	Recognition Survey	12/14/22 - 12/16/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification (next due Dec 23)	06/07/22 - 06/10/22	Cleared
GMVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	10/11/22 - 10/14/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	03/01/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints, Follow-Ups	09/22/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/17/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	10/18/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/14/23 - 02/17/23	Cleared
HVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/22/22 - 08/26/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	04/14/23	POC accepted, date certain 6/6
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints	11/29/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	08/30/22 - 08/31/22	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	08/16/22 - 08/17/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	06/06/22 - 06/10/22	Cleared
PSSH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	04/18/23 - 04/21/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Incident	05/15/23	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	04/25/23	POC accepted, date certain 6/1
	DHS	Annual Recertification	02/21/23 - 02/23/23	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Incident	05/02/23	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Incident	03/09/23	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/13/23 - 02/17/23	CAP accepted, date certain 5/17
SEVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/23/22 - 08/26/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Event	03/16/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Event	12/14/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	08/30/22	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	09/07/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/27/23 - 03/03/23	CAP accepted, certain date 7/28
SWVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	07/11/22 - 07/15/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	01/26/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	12/23/22	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint, Incident	08/18/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	07/20/22 - 07/21/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	05/02/23 - 05/05/23	Cleared

Ratings as of 28 APR 2023 - Next Update End of Jul 2023			
Facility	5 Star Rating:	Facility	5 Star Rating
DVVH	★★★★★	PSSH	★★★★★
GMVC	★★★★★	SEVC	★★★★
HVH	★★★★	SWVC	★★★★

Each DMVA Pennsylvania Veterans' Home is currently licensed by the PA Department of Health, PA Department of Human Services and certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. HVH, PSSH and SEVC have a Personal Care program.

Last updated: 5-30-2023

Resident COVID-19 Update

Resident COVID-19 Status: 26 MAY 2023		
Veteran Home/Center	Isolation	Quarantine
DVVH	0	0
GJMVC	0	0
HVH	0	2
PSSH	0	0
SEVC	0	0
SWVC	0	0

Staff COVID-19 Update

COVID Data as of 26 MAY 2023	DVVH	GMVC	HVH	PSSH	SEVC	SWVC	TOTAL
Total # COVID (+) Residents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total # COVID (+) Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Residents who have received a Bivalent vaccine	123	129	161	79	162	107	761
Number of Staff who have received a Bivalent vaccine	29	99	24	109	71	47	379

Pennsylvania Veterans Homes COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 links for information related to the Veterans Homes and skilled nursing facilities.

- <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/LTCF-Data.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/SNF-Guidance.aspx>
- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19MpLoPxayE1MDwQJJYCZxISN64V4FJSJPGzfvVBb5Mw/edit#gid=1511961664>



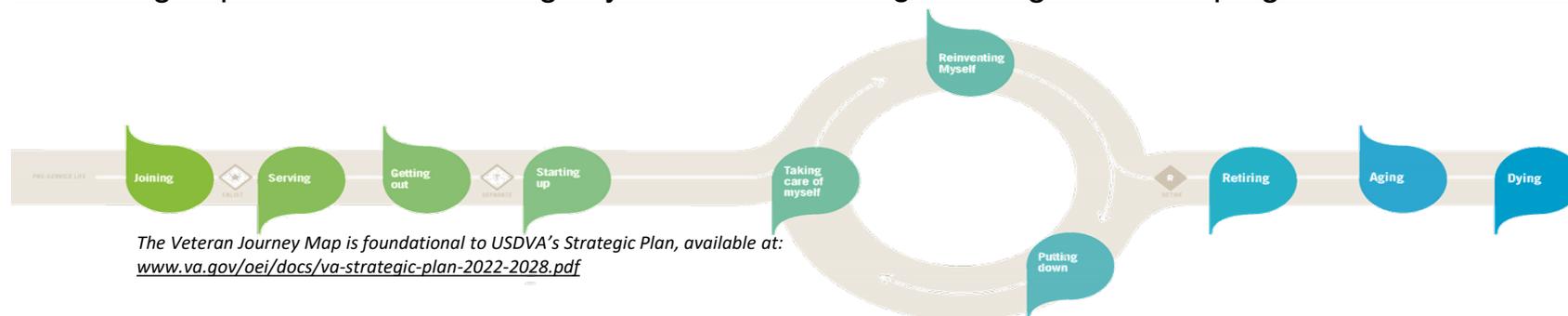
**BUREAU OF VETERANS PROGRAMS,
INITIATIVES, REINTEGRATION, AND OUTREACH
MR. JOEL MUTSCHLER**



Together We Serve



- Our Servicemember, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Community
 - Comprises approximately 14% of Pennsylvania’s total population
 - Top issues: Homelessness, Transportation, Employment, Mental Wellness, & Benefit Awareness
 - Find resources and link to our team through PA VETConnect – dmva.pa.gov/vetconnect
- PACT Act Impact
 - 276,415 Total Veterans/Survivors nationwide completed PACT Act-related claims
 - Pennsylvania is 8th out of 55 state/territories in completed claims
 - 16,510 (2.6% of total claims) from PA Veterans/Survivors (8/10/22 – 5/20/23)
 - 9,510 (3.65% increase) in Pennsylvania Veterans Healthcare enrollments
 - Visit www.va.gov/PACT to get the latest information and updates
- Expanding Outreach Efforts
 - Pennsylvania Salutes You for Your Service: www.pa.gov/welcome-back-veterans
 - “Let’s Talk, Vet 2 Vet” Series on the PACT Act
 - Sign up for PA Veterans Registry and the *DMVA Digest* – register.dmva.pa.gov





PA VETConnect



We build relationships that amplify service to the SMVF community

- Briefed 290 Marines over six briefings at USMC IRR Muster. Directly connected with 15 Marines to apply for veterans' benefits.
- Creating a Regional Veterans Job Club working with the DVOPs and LVERs to also include Chambers of Commerce, Veteran-owned businesses, and universities/colleges in NEPA.
- Participating in the LGBTQ+ Coalition and collaborating with Lancaster Vet Center and the VISN 4 Lead LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator, to benefit Veterans within SEPA.
- Attended the American Legion Charter ceremony for the Robert J. Fike Post 110, held at SCI Mercer on 24 May 23. This is the first American Legion Post within a correctional facility in Pennsylvania.
- SCI Phoenix VSU Visit on 22 May 23. Veteran benefit briefing to inmates; assisted eight on status/submission of benefit applications.

■ Successes

- >17,000 Connections
- > 2,000 resources
- Building trust within the network



Reintegration and Outreach Events Overview



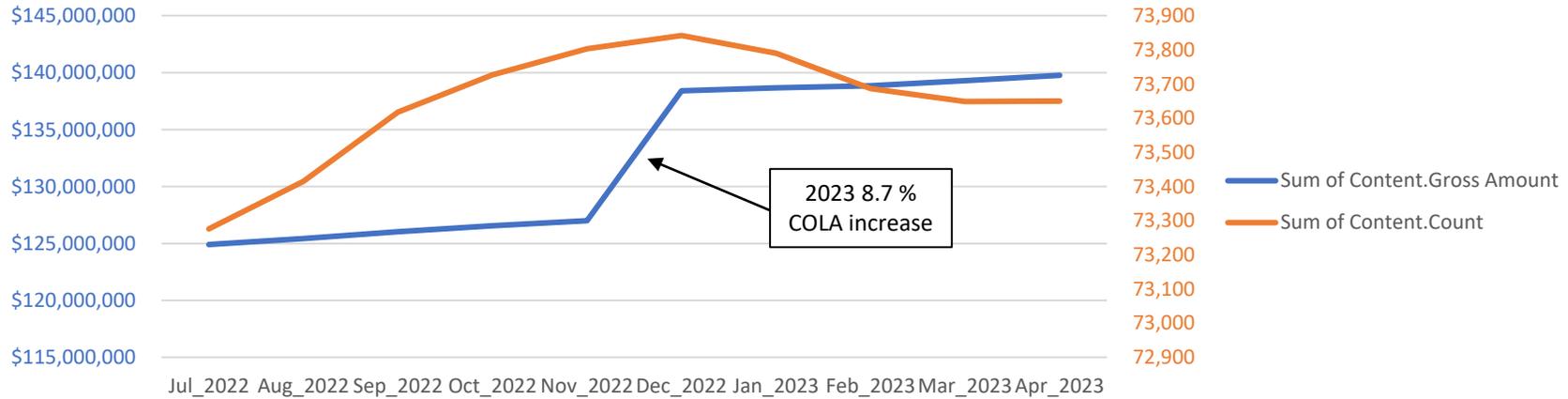
Outreach Statistics					
	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Year to Date
Outreach Events Supported	61	42	14	46	163
Mobile Outreach Van Events	13	4	8	6	31
Veteran Interactions	1,196	775	646	959	3,576
Claim Referrals to County Directors and Service Organizations	452	237	120	102	911
Claim Referrals to Other State, County and Local Organizations Assisting Veterans	225	194	10	34	463
Health Care Enrollment Referrals	162	71	116	56	405
Number of Veterans Registry Cards Distributed	119	136	124	6	385
County Directors Office Attended	32	12	2	5	51
Legislative Attended Events	32	16	1	7	56

213% increase in outreach engagements from May 2022 to May 2023

As of 31 May 2023

> community > commonwealth > **country**

OVA / VSO Grant Program Summary



Note: Data is derived from monthly Federal Veterans Affairs reports. Content Count is the number the of recipients receiving VA compensation and pension. Content Gross is the dollar amount associated with compensation and pension payments.

Veterans' Trust Fund



VTF Report						
Source	Week	Month to Date	Fiscal Year Total		Total	# HOV Sold
Appropriation Transfer to VTF	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$1,700,000.00	
HOV License Plate	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$1,234.00	82	\$54,836.00	3,656
PA Monuments LP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0
HOV Motorcycle License Plate	\$0.00	\$46.00	\$122.00	8	\$3,601.00	240
HOV Women's License Plate	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$90.00	6	\$1,650.00	110
Checkoff & Donations	\$15,716.00	\$107,630.50	\$1,194,235.99		\$14,215,902.98	
Veterans Trust Fund Online Donations	\$127.00	\$182.00	\$667.00		\$6,795.00	
SECA Donations	\$0.00	\$323.76	\$2,362.00		\$17,067.22	
County Juror Donations	\$2,321.05	\$4,358.72	\$21,175.47		\$72,655.19	
Casino Donations	\$0.00	\$1,345.95	\$43,632.25		\$44,938.74	
Interest	\$0.00	\$8,914.51	\$66,532.00		\$249,019.97	
VSO	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$700,000.00	
PENNDOT Costs (SFY 16-17)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$194,000.00	
PENNDOT Costs (SFY 15-16)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$194,000.00	
PENNDOT Costs (SFY 14-15)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$194,000.00	
PENNDOT Costs (SFY 13-14)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$194,000.00	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 21-22)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,346,748.65		\$1,339,141.71	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 20-21)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$782,833.48	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 19-20)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$800,000.00	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 18-19)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$780,137.46	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 17-18)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$763,749.14	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 16-17)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$641,329.75	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 15-16)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$502,126.03	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 14-15)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$472,473.67	
VTF Grant NOFA (SFY 13-14)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$442,020.00	
Veteran Programs Training	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$8,700.00	
Veterans Assistance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$22,901.34	
VTA	\$10,800.00	\$58,552.00	\$632,019.00		6,014,133.32	
Working Balance	\$7,364.05	\$64,279.44	-\$648,716.94		\$2,320,920.20	4,006

Donate to the Veterans Trust Fund, Veterans Memorial Trust Fund, Military Family Relief Assistance, and Veteran Home Welfare funds at donate.dmva.pa.gov.

GDX Analysis Update FY 2010-2022



Year	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditures	Expenditures per Veteran
2010	964,132	\$ 3,824,046,165	\$ 3,966.31
2011	933,404	\$ 4,096,335,085	\$ 4,388.60
2012	980,529	\$ 4,075,363,910	\$ 4,156.29
2013	953,644	\$ 4,782,351,480	\$ 5,014.82
2014	939,069	\$ 5,260,391,172	\$ 5,601.71
2015	916,638	\$ 5,432,717,648	\$ 5,926.79
2016	845,507	\$ 5,480,864,013	\$ 6,482.34
2017	819,185	\$ 5,663,673,670	\$ 6,913.79
2018	793,321	\$ 5,547,696,283	\$ 6,993.00
2019	768,094	\$ 6,107,649,721	\$ 7,951.70
2020	791,914	\$ 6,439,247,984	\$ 8,131.25
2021	720,029	\$ 6,646,599,889	\$ 9,231.02
2022	719,233	\$ 7,782,109,558	\$ 10,820.01

Analysis:

- 104% Increase in expenditures= increase in claims processed
- 25% Decrease in Veteran population
- 173% Increase in expenditures per veteran
 - Increased ROI per Veteran, more claims per Veteran

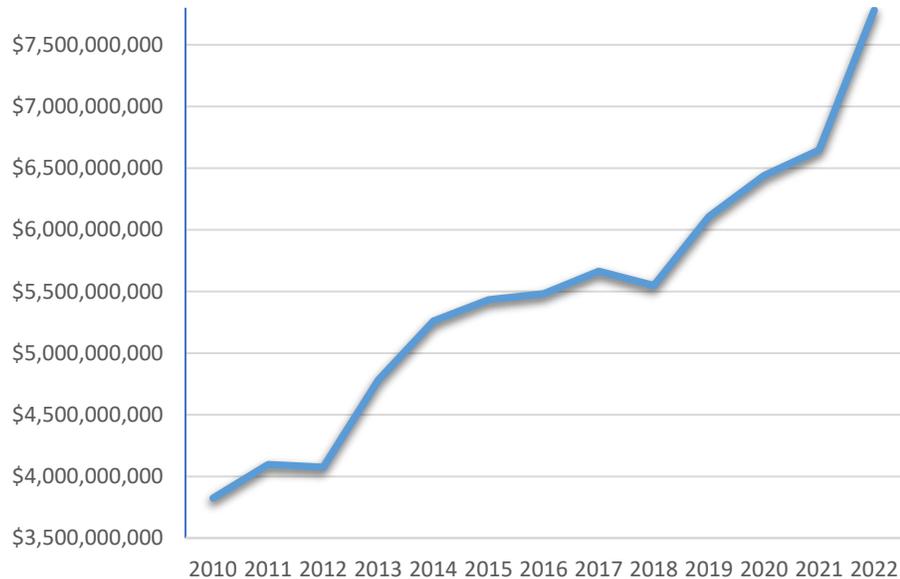
DMVA & Partners are:

- Serving more Veterans
- Serving Veterans more efficiently
- Generating significant increases in Federal Expenditures being spent on the Commonwealth's Veterans, despite a decreasing population.

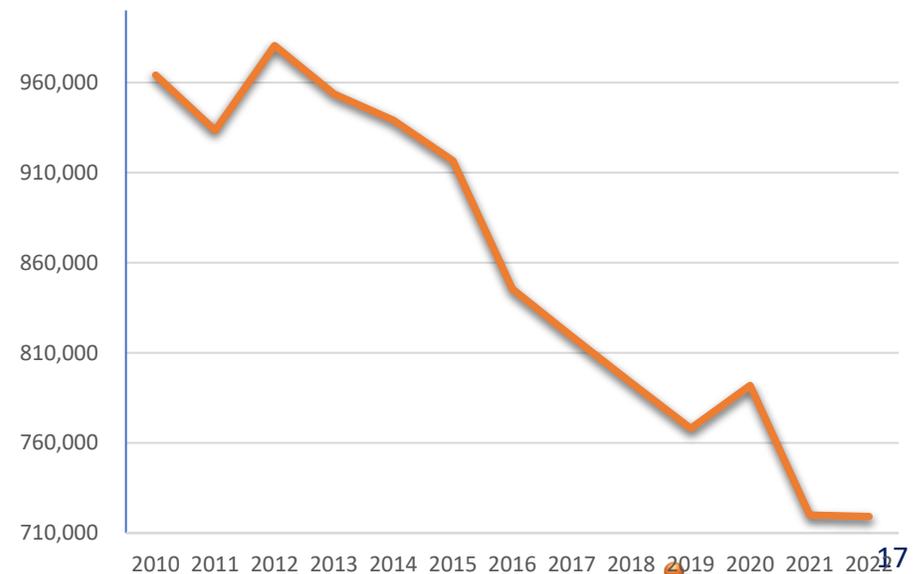
Pennsylvania FY22 GDX Changes:

- C&P expenditures up 18%
- Total expenditures up 17%
- Population down 6.7%
- Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment 12th to 11th, passing Arizona up 10%

Total Expenditures



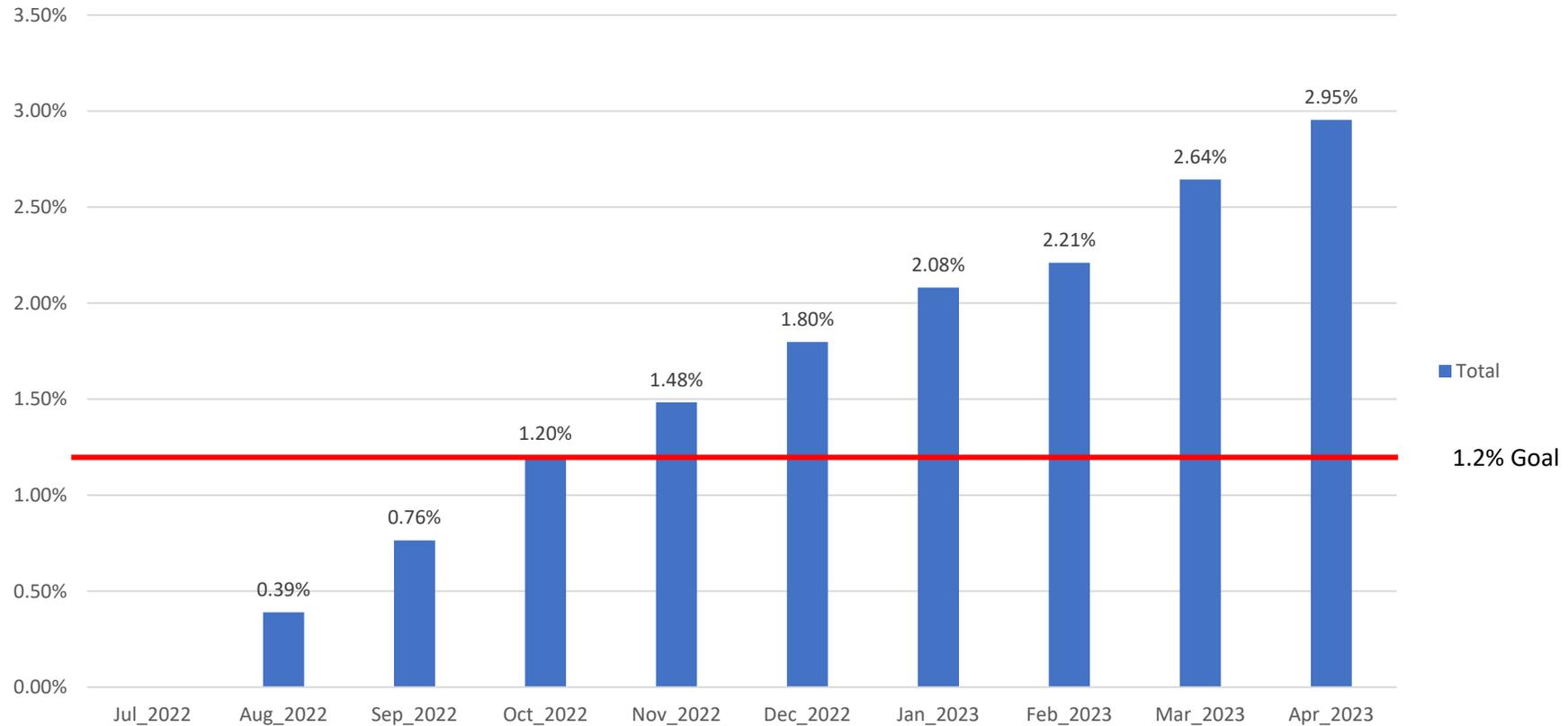
Population



Claims Paid As Reported By VA Central Office (VACO)



Percent Increase of Claims Paid from July 2022

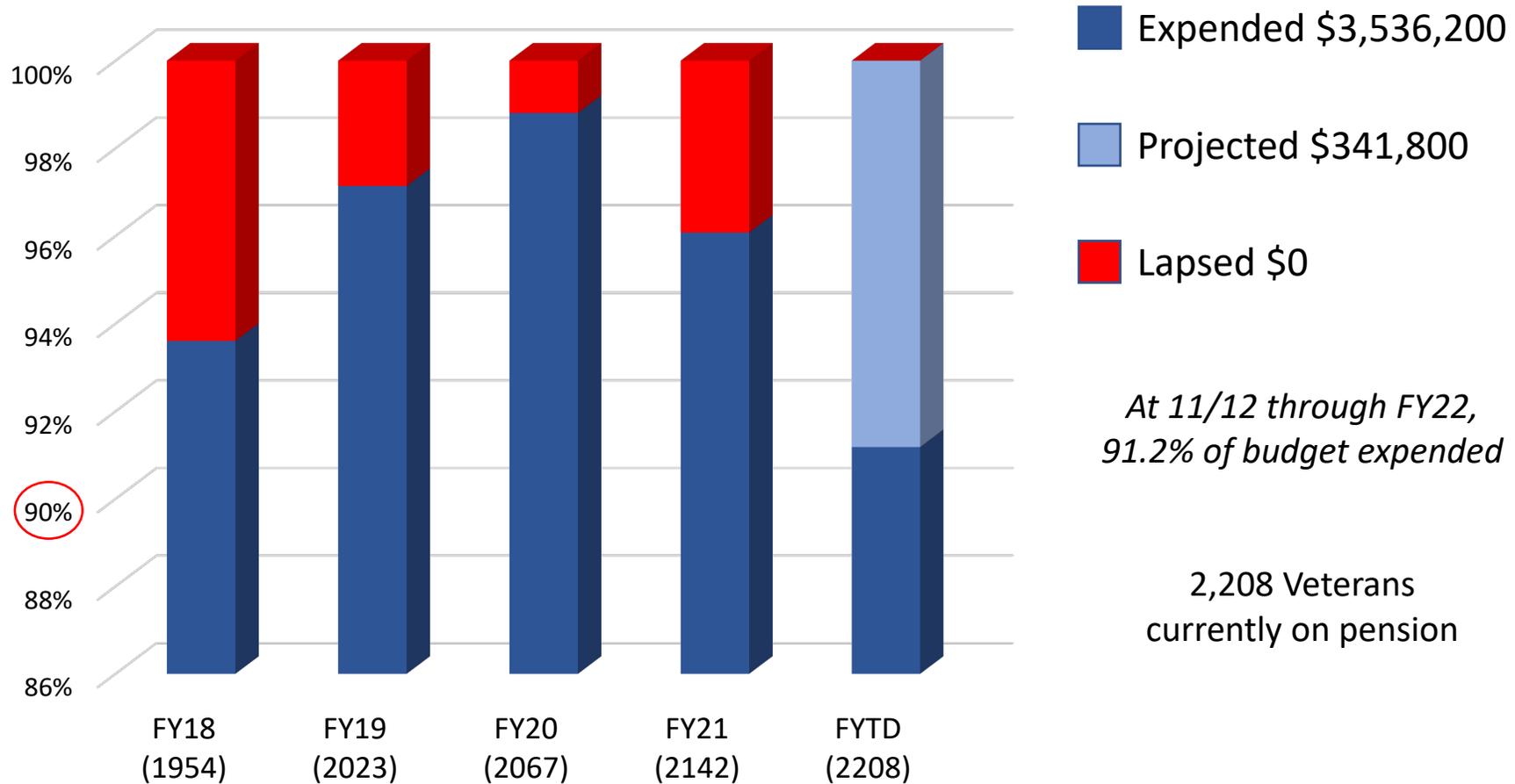


% reflects the combined efforts of: AMVETs, DAV, DMVA (to include counties), TAL, VFW, and VVA in federal VA compensation and pension claims.

Amputee & Paralyzed Veterans' Pension



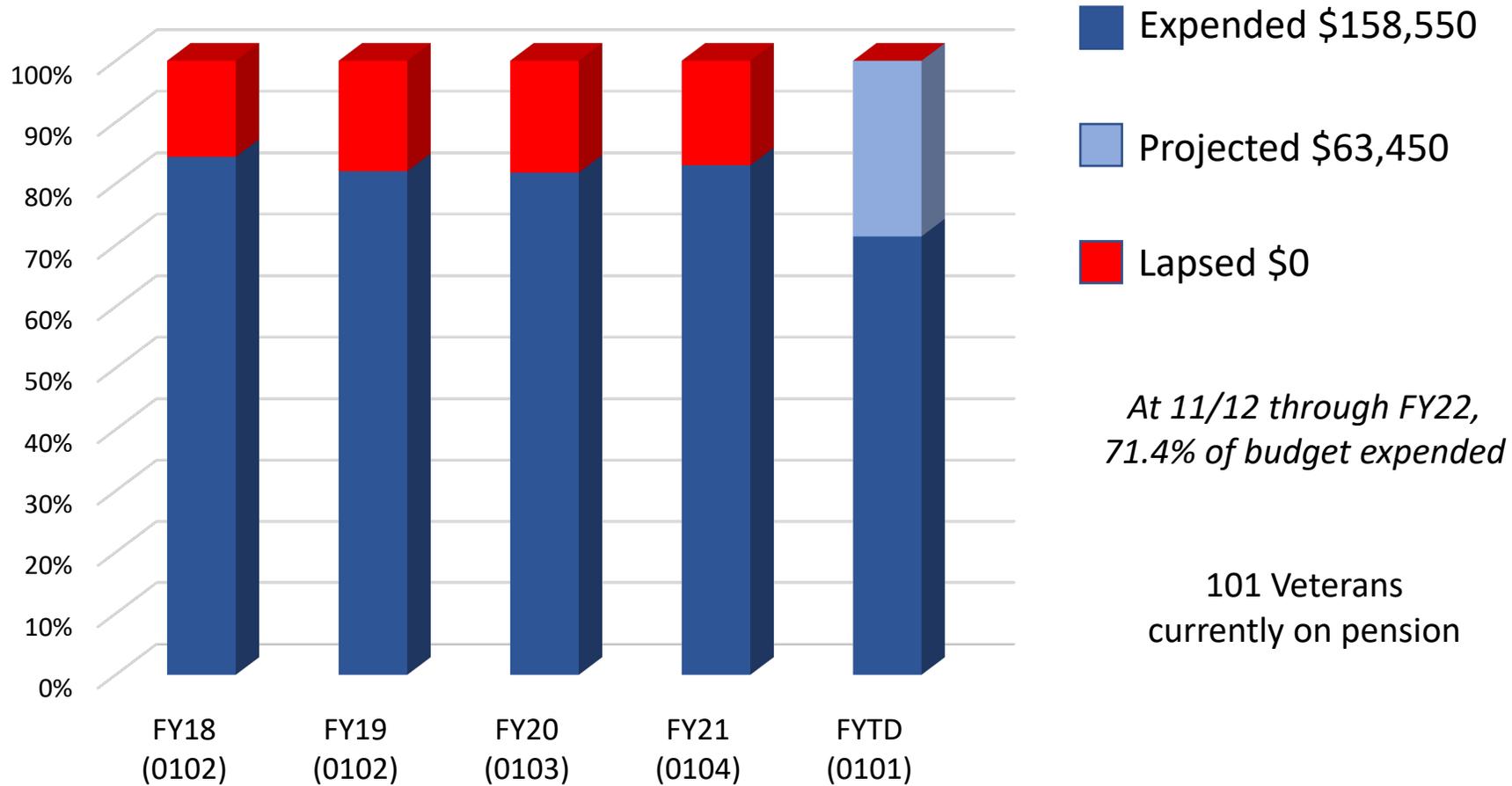
\$3,878,000



Blind Veterans' Pension



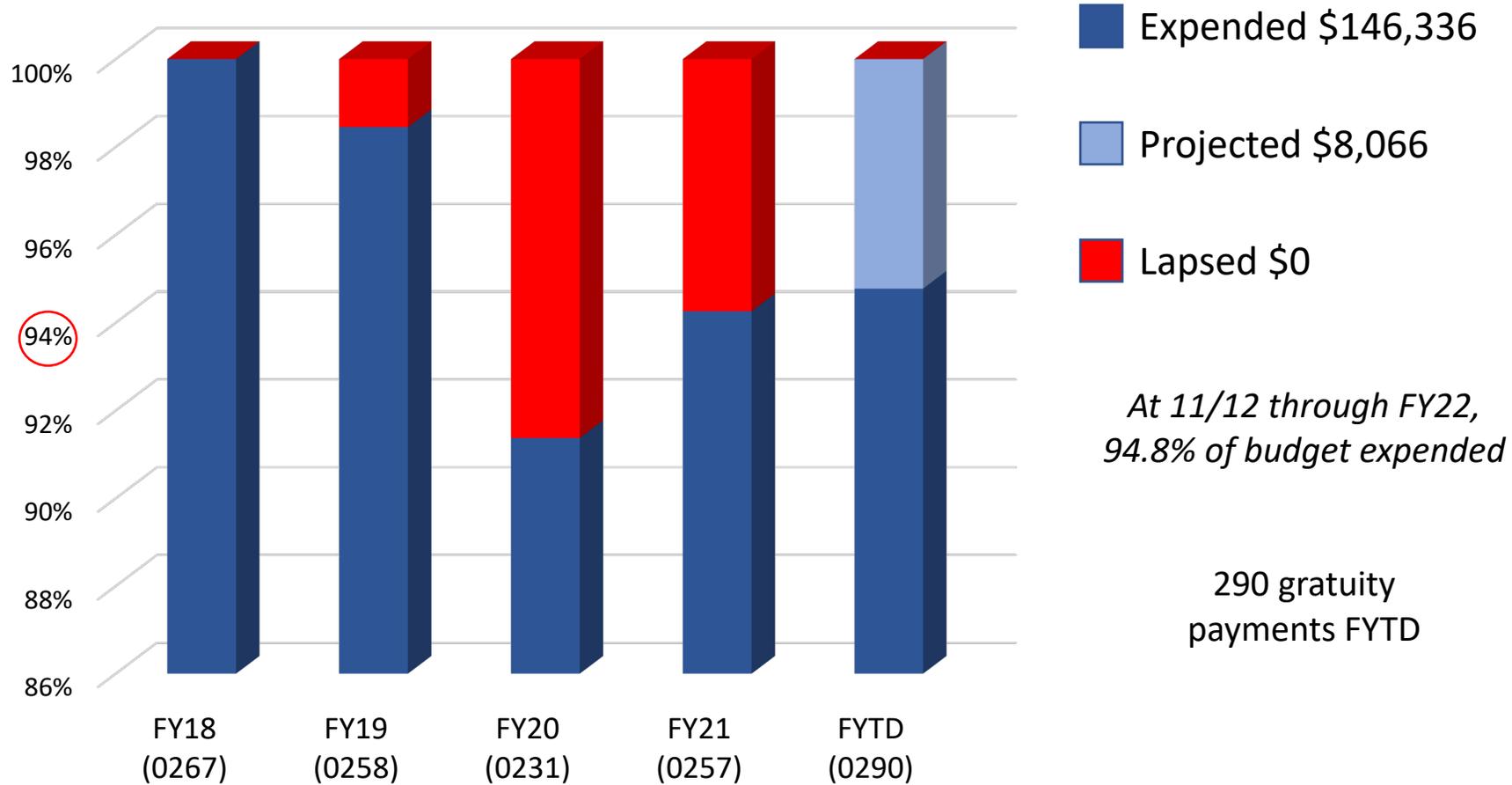
\$222,000



Educational Gratuity



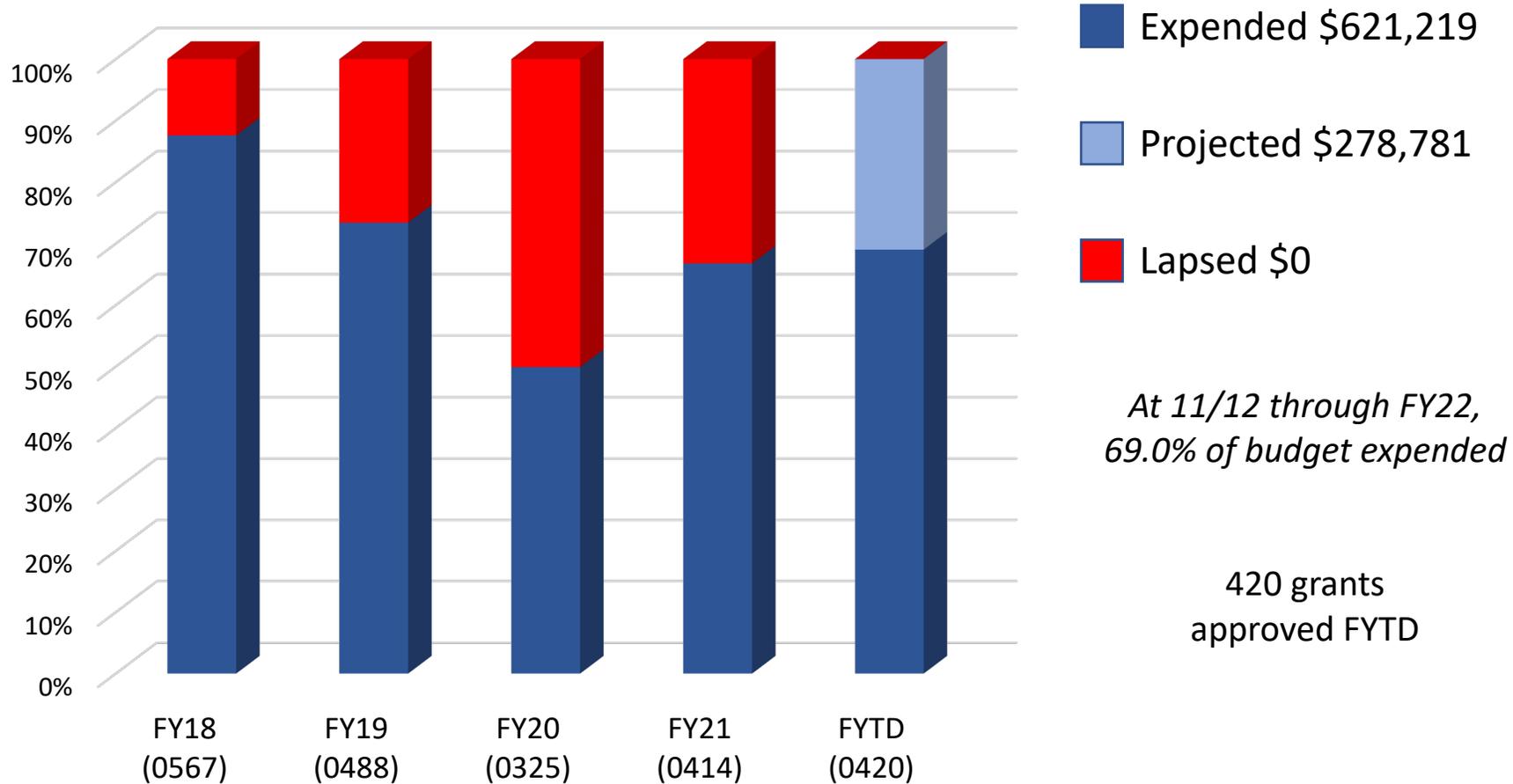
\$154,402



Veterans' Temporary Assistance



\$900,000

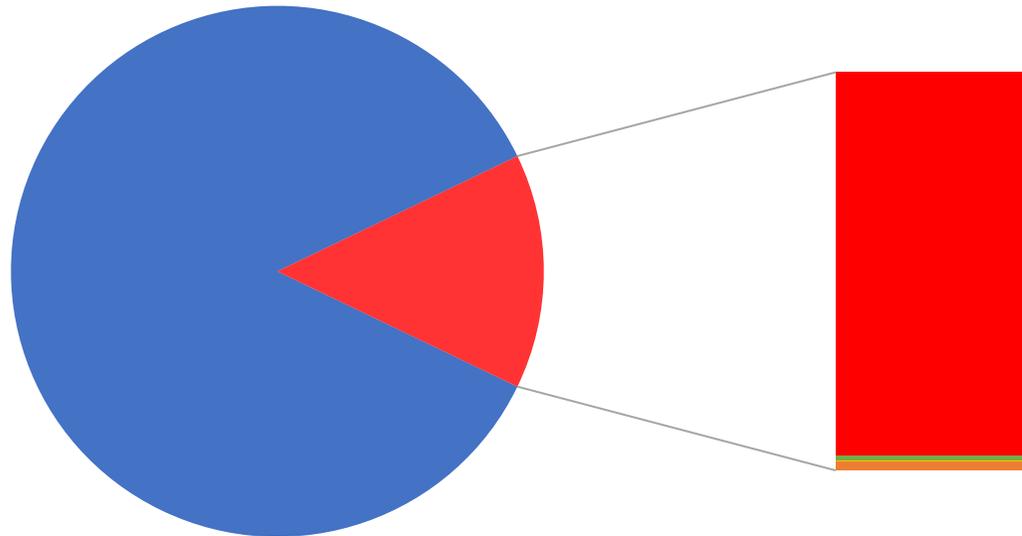


Military Family Relief Assistance Program



Total All Contributions FY2005-22

\$2,194,796.83



- Personal Income Tax Donations
- Personal/Corp/Org Donations
- Cash Donations
- Other Dept of Revenue Transfers
- Online Donations

Total Grants FYTD 2022

(\$ 54,265.00)

Total Grants FY 2005-22

(\$ 976,186.86)

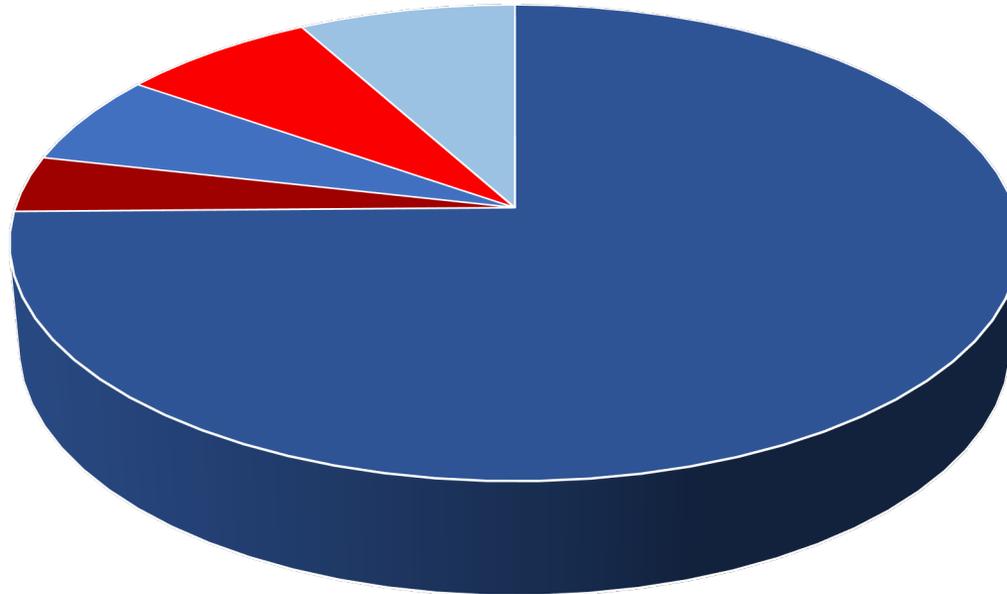
MFRAP Account Balance

\$ 1,218,609.97

Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption



1,362 Total Adjudications
from 28 Mar to 26 May 2023



- 1,018 Approved (74%)
- 52 Denied: Financial Need
- 84 Denied: Ineligible*
- 99 Removed: No Response
- 109 Removed: Eligibility Change

* 84 Applications Ineligible by Reason

- 20 – Veteran did not have a total or 100% permanent disability during lifetime.
- 15 – Property not owned solely by Veteran or jointly or estate by entirety with spouse.
- 29 – Veteran did not serve during a period of war or armed conflict.
- 20 – Veteran has future exam, therefore not rated as total or 100% permanent.

Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption



As of 26 May 2023

> community > commonwealth > country

Beware of Pension Poaching!



Never pay for your Veteran benefits.

**Always use the free and expert assistance of a
VA-accredited Veterans Service Officer (VSO).**

Find a VSO at dmva.pa.gov/vetconnect

Immediately report known or suspected pension poaching, scams or fraud to the PA Attorney General's Military and Veterans Affairs section:

Call (717) 783-1944

Email PAvets@attorneygeneral.gov

File a complaint online at www.attorneygeneral.gov



VISN 4 Access – Fiscal Year 2023 Wait Times



Clinics FY23 thru May 16	Number of Appointments	Average Wait
Mental Health	215,469	5.0
Primary Care	315,765	5.0
Specialty Care	599,040	10.1
Other	438,912	6.2
ALL	1,569,186	7.3

FY23 data updated 5/18/2023 with appointment info as of 5/17/2023.

VISN 4 Access – Current Average Wait Times



VISN 4 Facility	Primary Care	
	New Patients	Returning Patients
James E. Van Zandt VAMC	18	2
Abie Abraham HCC	13	1
Coatesville VAMC	14	4
Erie VAMC	18	4
Lebanon VAMC	16	5
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC	33	5
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (University Drive)	21	10
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (H.J. Heinz)	15	11
Wilkes-Barre VAMC	18	2
Wilmington VAMC	8	9

FY23 data updated 5/17/2023 with wait times as of 5/16/2023 for the last 30 days.

www.accesstocare.va.gov

June 2023 Update

> [community](#) > [commonwealth](#) > [country](#)

Improvements to the Access to Care website

Average wait times for all VHA medical centers and clinics are now calculated to include additional steps in the appointment process that had not been captured in the past.

- For **new patient** appointments, average wait time is calculated from the earliest time a request for care is consistently recorded in the scheduling system to the date the appointment is completed – or the date it is scheduled to occur if not yet completed.
- For **established patient** appointments, average wait times are measured from the date agreed upon between a Veteran and provider for future care and ends on the date care is received, or the date that care is scheduled to occur if it has not yet occurred.

The upgraded calculation makes the website more reflective of the complete process of requesting and receiving care. Averages are representative of general performance and may not represent individual experience. Average wait times are never used to determine eligibility for community care.

VISN 4 Care in the Community



	Care in the Community Consults (Scheduled and Completed)	Non-VA Unique Patients*
FY 21	156,191	85,497
FY 22	168,184	89,683
FY 23 (as of 5/17/23)	118,543	78,619

*Number of unique enrolled Veterans who receive community care at VA expense

FY23 data updated 5/18/2023 with consult info as of 5/17/2023.

NEXT MEETING



**Friday September 8, 2023
at 10:00AM**

**Arrowheads Community Club
Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA 17003**

VISIT www.dmva.pa.gov/veterans/commissionsandcouncils FOR SVC INFO



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare–VISN 4

VISN 4 Update

June 16, 2023

Leadership Update

Jeffrey Beiler, Director of the Coatesville VA continues to serve as interim director for Wilmington during the recruitment process.

Margaret Wilson, Associate Director for Patient Care Services at Lebanon continues to serve as Medical Center Director during the recruitment process.

Ashley Klick, Deputy Nurse Executive, Lebanon, PA VAMC, is detailed to the role of Acting Lebanon Associate Director of Patient Care Services.

Jennifer Harkins, Associate Director of finance and operations at the Coatesville VA continues to serve as acting executive director for Coatesville.

Dr. Jaconda Lightburn, Associate Director from Lebanon VAMC, continues to serve as Deputy Director in Philadelphia during the recruitment process.

Kathryn Barley, CBOC Manger at the Lebanon VA continues to serve as their Acting Associate Director.

Jeston Robinson is currently serving as the Acting VA Pittsburgh Assistant Director and Western Market Lead.

Patient Experience Update

VISN 4 continues to have the highest patient trust score in the nation at 93.9%. VISN 4 also has the highest number of compliments at 75.9%. VISN 4 has the lowest number of recommendations at 11.8% and concerns at 12.3%.

The top compliment themes over the past 90 days were quality of care, interactions with staff, cleanliness of facility, satisfaction with specialty care, and satisfaction with VA Providers.

PACT Act Update: PACT Act Key Data

As of May 13, Veterans and their survivors have filed more than 567,000 (567,009) claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the PACT Act since it was signed into law Aug. 10, 2022.

VA has awarded more than \$1 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and survivors who filed PACT Act-related claims.

As of May 6, more than 3.3 million Veterans have received VA's new toxic exposure screenings since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law, with approximately 42% reporting a concern of exposure.

VA's public-facing PACT Act dashboard is published every other Friday and has the latest data and information on how VA is implementing the PACT Act.

PACT Act Deadlines

If you apply for PACT Act-related benefits on or before August 9, 2023, your benefits may be backdated to August 10, 2022 – so get your claims come in as soon as possible. And if you're not ready to submit a full claim by then, don't worry – you can also submit an intent to file before August 10, 2023, and still receive the same effective date.

Also, there are less than six months remaining in the PACT Act one-year special health care enrollment period for Post-9/11 combat Veterans. VA encourages all Post 9-11 combat Veterans to apply now before this eligibility window closes on September 30. To learn more, visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Expiration

With the expiration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023, some of VA's pandemic-related authorities expired as well. VA prepared for this moment for months, working to make this transition as seamless as possible for Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. We at VA also worked with our partners in the Administration and in Congress to extend or reinstate these authorities when possible.

To inform Veterans and their families about the impact of the end of the public health emergency, VA has published a [comprehensive overview on our blog](#).

As our nation enters this new moment, VA remains committed – as always – to delivering world-class care and benefits to all those we serve. If you are concerned about the expiration of any of these authorities, we encourage Veterans to reach out to

your local VA medical center or call 800-698-2411 or go to <https://www.va.gov/contact-us/>. We will make sure that Veterans get the care and support that they have earned.

Electronic Health Record (EHR) Program

VA has reached an agreement on an amended contract with Oracle Cerner to deliver the high-functioning, high-reliability, world-class electronic health record that Veterans deserve.

The contract now includes stronger performance metrics and expectations, as well as larger monetary credits to VA if Oracle Cerner doesn't meet expectations.

The contract has also been renegotiated from a 5-year term to 5 one-year terms, so VA will have the opportunity to review our progress and renegotiate again in a year if need be.

Ultimately, we believe that this new contract gives VA the tools we need to hold Oracle Cerner accountable to deliver an EHR that will meaningfully improve Veterans' health outcomes and benefits.

The system has not delivered for Veterans or VA clinicians to date, but VA is stopping at nothing to get this right – and we will deliver the efficient, well-functioning system that Veterans and clinicians deserve.

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 then Press 1

More Veterans are reaching out to the Veterans Crisis Line than ever before. In fact, Veterans called, texted, and messaged the hotline 88,092 times in March 2023 – the most in the history of the hotline. There was a slight decrease in contacts in April, when Veterans called, texted, and messaged the hotline 80,870 times.

This year-over-year increase in contacts means that Veterans in crisis are getting the help they need at the moment they need it.

Now, there is no one factor that fully explains the increases; many factors can influence increases in calls to the Veterans Crisis Line.

There are, however, some clear trends that can help explain this increase:

First, seasonality – year over year, we've consistently seen increases in contacts during March – including similar spikes in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Seasonal patterns of variation over time occur in other parts of the year as well

Second, since we shortened the hotline number to 988, more Veterans are reaching out than ever before.

Since the launch of the 988, and subsequent advertising and awareness campaigns, there has been a consistent increase in VCL calls (12%), texts (36%), and chat messages (10%) across the board.

VA has also been aggressively reaching out to Veterans – in media, advertising, and in person – to raise awareness for this simplified hotline number. This has resulted in significant increases for VCL volume, just as it has for the National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline which fields crisis calls across the Nation outside of the VCL.

It's also important to note that even at this time when more Veterans are reaching out to the crisis line than ever before, the hotline is working – and getting Veterans the help they need at the moment they need it. To date this year, 98.7% of calls have been handled, the average speed to answer is just 9.7 seconds, 96.6% of calls have been answered within 20 seconds.

Ultimately, 988 is a reflection of our top clinical priority – which is preventing Veteran suicide and get Veterans the help they need, when they need it.

We will continue to aggressively promote 988 (then press 1) to make sure that Veterans and their families know that we are here for them, 24/7, and ready to connect them with caring, qualified responders. Any time, any place.

Overall Claims Backlog

Right now, VA is delivering more benefits, more quickly, to more Veterans than ever before. In April, VA also processed its millionth disability compensation and pension claim during fiscal year 2023, putting VA on pace to process a record number of Veteran claims for the third year in a row.

Since the PACT Act was signed, Veterans have filed more than 1.6 million (actual: 1,659,861) total claims—an increase of more than 29.7% over the same period last year.

As of May 13, the overall claims backlog is 210,903 claims, which is 25.9% of the overall inventory of claims. With the passage of the PACT Act last August, we've stated that the backlog would grow for a time; however, sound workload management has actually decreased the percentage of claims in backlog (26.9% at the signing of the PACT Act). VBA has a robust, data-driven model and remains ahead of projections but anticipates higher backlog levels until 2024.

VBA continues to hire to expand claims processing capacity to deliver benefits to Veterans as fast as possible.

**GINO J. MERLI VETERANS' CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
May 19, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Lisa Solarczyk, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Bernie McDonald recorded roll call and attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS

Lisa Solarczyk, President - Marine Corps League
William Smith, Vice President - The American Legion (Excused)
Bernard "Bernie" McDonald, Secretary - AMVETS
Robert Cudworth - Military Officers Association of America (Excused)
Robert Smith - Military Order of the Purple Heart (Excused)
Russell Canevari - Veterans of Foreign Wars (Excused)
Richard Green - Blinded Veterans Association (via telephone)
Joe Sylvester - Disabled American Veterans
Rosemary Brown - PA State Senate (Excused)
Tim Cleveland – PSACDVA (via telephone)
Lisa Kaye – PSACDVA (Excused)
Roger Risner - GJMVC Resident Representative

DMVA

Major General Mark J. Schindler - Adjutant General, Pennsylvania (Excused)
Maureen Weigl, BG - Deputy Adjutant General, VA (via telephone)
Travis Davis – Executive Director, Long-Term Care (via telephone)
Barbara Raymond – Director, Bureau of Veterans' Homes
Vito P. Ruggiero – GJMVC Commandant
Kathleen Ambrose - GJMVC Deputy Commandant

OTHERS PRESENT / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Daniel Kazmierski, Medical Director
Sara Butler, Admissions
Jan McAllister, Volunteers
Janice Gavern, American Legion Post 154
Mark Grohowski – PA State Senate, Lisa Baker (via telephone)
Russell Lloyd, WBVAMC Medical Director (via telephone)
Lynn O'Day, Recorder

MOMENT OF SILENCE

- A moment of silence was led by Lisa Solarczyk, President.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Previous minutes accepted as written.

REVIEW OF MEMBER STATUS

Jewish War Veterans (Vacant)
Catholic War Veteran (Vacant)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (Vacant)
PA House of Representatives (In process of replacement)
Rosemary Brown will replace Lisa Baker of the Pa State Senate

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL

- General Weigl welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologized for not being present, she is currently working on budget hearings and the state's government changes. She stated that she has confidence in Vito and the staff. She noted that the facility is doing a great job

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LONG-TERM CARE

- Travis Davis reported that Gino Merli has achieved a 5-star overall rating.
- We are in the process of our VA survey..
- We are getting ready for our budget and preparing to publish our Pa. bulletin rate. In addition, our census continues to grow. We still have a wait list, but we are seeing a decrease. We are still relying heavily upon recruitment.
- We started "Walk-In Wednesdays" and we will continue with our job fairs.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STATE VETERANS' HOMES

- The VA is at 2 of our facilities and we are awaiting their visit at Southeast as well. Those 3 homes are due every February. The VA has transitioned back to an in-person survey process. The current surveys are going very well, and they are expected to exit Friday.
- We have 5 homes with a COVID positive residents (a total of 6 residents). 3 have no symptoms and are being housed in "red zones" or isolation areas and the other 3 have minor cold type symptoms. We have 19 staff members positive currently. There are no positive staff members at our Southeast facility, and we have no positive residents at our Southwest facility.
- We have no other outbreaks from a respiratory or gastrointestinal perspective. We also keep track of those.
- We are waiting for the public health emergency to end on May 11 to determine if there are going to be any changes from the masks or testing. As of yet, Pennsylvania has not changed any of their guidance. Interestingly, New York did change their guidance and has left the decision up to the individual healthcare facilities. The concerns we have with the ending of the health emergency is funding and testing. However, we did get funding from the Commonwealth to continue testing our staff and residents.
- Our Southwest facility has a new Director of Nursing which brought Andrew back to the facility. The Director of Nursing at the Delaware Valley facility will be retiring at the end of the month. She has been with Delaware Valley for 20 years.
- We are fully licensed at all 6 of the facilities for the Department of Health.
- Our current census is 957 which has increased over the last month. Staffing remains a challenge. Our vacancies are still quite high, but we are still maintaining our current hour per patient per day ratio (the number of hours we provide care for).
- Our Hollidaysburg and Southeast facility were noted as Best Nursing Homes through US News. They looked at various things such as overall performance, reputation in the community, how they handled COVID 19 and surveys.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

- Daniel Kazmierski fortunately we are seeing fewer and fewer severe cases of COVID. Residents and staff who are getting COVID are getting through it more successfully. Fewer and less severe symptoms, less days missed of work and less morbidity.
- We have had 2 positive residents this year. We had a recent admission who tested positive this week, but he is doing well with antiviral medication. WE have had 11 staff positive this year, no deaths and the last positive was last week, 2/11/23.
- We have 125 of 140 residents completely up to date with the vaccine. 10 residents are refusing the vaccine. We have 89 staff completely up to date.
- We continue to monitor antibiotic usage in the facility, using only when necessary. We are treating fewer and fewer colonization of urinary tract infections and recognizing many residents have bacteria that colonize the urinary tract, and we don't automatically treat them unless they are symptomatic and meet strict criteria.
- We are promoting all vaccines including pneumonia, shingles and influenza.
- We are trying to minimize Foley use in the facility. We have 12 residents who have FOLEY catheters, and we make sure they meet strict criteria.
- One of the chief challenges for this year is going to be the use of psychiatric medications. The Department of Health and Human Services has made a requirement that nursing homes must prove that a resident has a diagnosis of schizophrenia before they can prescribe some of the stronger antipsychotic medications. We do monthly reviews of all residents to make sure they have the appropriate diagnosis for these stronger medications and if we feel the medications are necessary and we don't have enough backup diagnosis, we will set up psychiatric consultations for the residents to try and confirm the diagnosis.

REPORT OF THE ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

- Our current census is 139 with an admission coming today.
- Since our last meeting, we had 23 admissions but unfortunately had 10 residents pass away.
- The waiting list here at Gino is not as long as what it used to be. Once the person applies, the admissions committee will review the applicant and get them on the waiting list, and they are admitted as soon as possible. We are averaging 2 to 4 admissions a week.

REPORT OF THE COMMANDANT

- We have a VA survey currently taking place as well as a remodeling process. It is a weeklong process. They look at various items, clinical and non-clinical, throughout the building.
- The non-clinical portion is called Life Safety Review where they review the environment. It is very rare that they don't find any deficient practice in the facility. Vito proudly noted that despite the remodeling process, we received no deficiencies with our Life Safety Review portion of the survey.
- We will be resurrecting our quarterly meetings with our local VA. It will help promote camaraderie as well as address any concerns before they become an issue.
- Please go out to the community and take our applications to your organizations.
- We are in the middle of our heating and air conditioning project. We have the second floor complete and 1 hallway on the 3rd floor. The expected completion date is between May and June. We do have to disrupt the residents temporarily and everyone has been very understanding.

- There were a series of articles in the newspapers regarding nursing home care. They based it on a 2-year window of deficiencies that local nursing homes received. One of the nursing homes had a number as high as 86 deficiencies. Gino Merli was noted as #1 on the list with the least number of deficiencies. We are proud of our staff and the job they are doing. We take care of our residents, and we are committed to our residents and veterans.
- We will be having our 2nd annual golf tournament. Last year we raised over \$32,000.00 for the resident welfare fund. It is Monday, June 5th, 2023, at Mount Airy.
- We are having our annual motorcycle ride.
- The bureau started an initiative for resident and family surveys. They are very important to receiving feedback for us to act on it and be proactive rather than reactive. Gino Merli received the most feedback and the most positive responses.
- Gino Merli won our cooking contest. The General will be coming on March 22nd to present all the dietary staff with chef coats.

THE GOOD OF THE COUNCIL

- Janice Gavern of the American Legion post 154 in Montrose. She announced that the 8th of March, she will be having the 13th bi-annual women veterans' and friends tea. She had been conducting them for the last 7 years here at Gino Merli. General Weigl has agreed to attend. Janice will be showing posters of the Military Women's Memorial in Washington. She will also be talking about 2 women veterans who were residents here and have passed away a few years ago, in order to expand their story into the database of the women's memorial.
Janice also reported that Women's Veterans' Committee will be having the very first Women's Veterans Conference April 21-22. If any organizations have women veterans, please tell them to look into it. We would be delighted to have people involved. Lynn will get the information and forward it to all the members so that they can forward it to the women in the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was announced: May 18, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.



SOUTHEASTERN VETERANS' CENTER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 12, 2023

The Southeastern Veterans' Center Advisory Council met January 12, 2023 at 10:00AM in the All- Purpose Room at the Southeastern Veterans' Center.

Advisory Council Members Participating:

Mary Archey, Marine Corps League, Vice President- **via phone**
Richard Doherty, Military Officers Association of America
Thomas Applebach, Lehigh County Office of Veterans' Affairs
John Getz, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs/Southeastern Veterans' Center:

Maureen Weigl, BG (PA) – DMVA
Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care - DMVA
Barbara Raymond, BVH Director – DMVA- **via Microsoft TEAMS**
Josh Spigner, Regional Compliance Officer- DMVA- **via Microsoft TEAMS**
Brian Gula, Commandant – SEVC
Mildred Butler-Coleman, Deputy Commandant – SEVC
Lauren Stenson, Director of Nursing - SEVC
Jill Alwine, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator – SEVC
Jeremiah Mensah, Assistant Director of Nursing- SEVC

Visitors:

Nikki Whitlock, Constituency Relations, Senator Katie Muth's Office
Linda Neiman, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

Excused Absence:

Barry Amole, Vietnam Veterans of America, President
Robert Richardson, Resident Representative
Kenneth Schweitzer, American Legion
Anthony Arnao, Jr. Catholic War Veterans
Thomas Brown, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Jeffrey Elliot, PA AMVETS
Doug Forsythe, Disabled American Veterans
VACANT, PA House of Representatives
VACANT, PA State Senate
MG Mark J. Schindler, Adjutant General - DMVA
Robert Stone, American Legion

Call to Order:

The Advisory Council Meeting was called to order by Mary Archey at 10:06 AM. There was a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Approval of October 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes:

Due to the lack of a quorum, the meeting minutes from the October 13, 2022 meeting could not officially be approved.

Report of the Medical Director:

Lauren Stenson, SEVC Director of Nursing, reported on behalf of Medical Director Dr. Monika VanSant. Lauren Stenson stated that our part-time CRNP, Kira Schteinberg, has left SEVC since the last meeting. However, we had a full-time CRNP start, and she is doing a phenomenal job. We are also hoping to have another full-time CRNP start by the end of this month or beginning of next month. Our third full-time CRNP position should be posting shortly, as well. Since November, we have onboarded 1 RN, 4 LPNs, and 2 CNAs. In order to attract more potential candidates, we are looking at adding alternative schedules that would allow staff to have more flexibility. Also, the DMVA has started a hiring initiative called Walk-in Wednesdays. Every Wednesday from 11-3pm, anyone can walk-in and interview for any open positions.

Infection Control update: Currently the facility has no Covid positive residents or residents with the flu. However, we do have one resident that is positive for RSV. There is no real treatment. Staff are monitoring the resident and providing plenty of fluids.

Vaccination update: We are 100% compliant with staff. On our personal care unit, we are at 83.7% for Covid and 89.2% for the flu. On our skilled nursing units, we are 53% for Covid and 81.9% for the flu. We are still working on getting consents from POAs, so we expect these numbers to increase.

Mary Archey asked for an update on the possible partnership with Reading Area Community College regarding SEVC being used as a potential clinical site. Brian Gula stated that we had an agreement drafted and approved by our legal department. We sent it over for RACC to review and now we are waiting to hear back from whether they want to enter into the agreement.

Report of the Admissions and Marketing Coordinator:

Admissions Coordinator Jill Alwine reported that as of the end of the 4th quarter the facility had an average of 187 residents, 119 in skilled nursing and 39 in personal care. With 105 vacancies, our occupancy rate is 64%. We are excited to announce that we will be doing a lot more admissions in the beginning part of this year. We have several scheduled for January and February. We are also discussing the possibility of opening half of our closed unit this Spring. There are currently 120 people on the waitlist, 93 veterans and 27 non-veterans/ spouses. The approximate waiting list times for skilled nursing and personal care are 4-6 months and 6-9 months, respectively. Our memory care unit is currently about a year wait, due to it being our smallest area.

Report of the Deputy Adjutant General – General Maureen Weigl – DMVA:

General Weigl started off by congratulating Brian, Mildred, and the staff for putting on a great holiday breakfast for the residents. Photos from the event are featured in the January 2023 Vet Gazette. The biggest thing going on right now for us is the changes happening in the state government. General Schindler is waiting to hear whether he will be staying on board; we believe he will. There are also changes outside of our department that will affect us. We have a new Secretary of Aging, a new Secretary

of Health, and a new Secretary of Human Services. A lot of these people are our counterparts that we work with closely together. These numerous changes will influence our policies and procedures in some way. The next two months will be really focused on relationship building; meeting the new staff and learning about where they are going while also educating them on what we do and what our homes are like. We are also hoping to have a new Advisory Senate and House Representative join us and learn about the homes.

Report of the Executive Director, Long Term Care – Travis Davis – DMVA:

Travis Davis started off by offering some congratulations to the veterans' homes. Every year, Newsweek puts out a list of the best nursing homes in the country, broken down by state. Out of over 700 nursing homes in PA, 3 of our state homes made the top 25. Southeastern Veterans' Center was the highest of the 3, ranked at #13, followed by Hollidaysburg at #14, and Southwestern at #21.

We currently have 234 veterans and 112 non-veterans/ spouses on our waiting list for all 6 homes. The census across all 6 homes is at 943 which is an occupancy rate of 62%. We are slightly down from where we were back in September. Unfortunately, we did have a lot of deaths toward the end of the year. This is typical for our industry and the time of the year. We are working on building up that census again. Southeastern is doing a good job at getting admissions in and pushing through their waiting list.

Covid update in the homes: we currently have outbreaks in 2 facilities, 1 positive resident at Gino Merli and 11 positive residents at Hollidaysburg. Regarding staff, we currently have 17 positive staff throughout 5 of our 6 homes. We are watching what is happening in the hospitals and being told that they are seeing a lot more Covid in their ERs. We think that we will see a spike in Covid cases after the holidays, so we are doing everything we can to keep our residents and staff safe.

Regarding inspections, all 6 of our homes remain 3-stars or above. Delaware Valley and PA Sailors' and Soldiers' home are 5-star facilities, Southeastern, Gino Merli, and Southwestern remain 4-star facilities and Hollidaysburg remains a 3-star facility. Within the first quarter of 2023 we are anticipating 3 annual VA surveys at Southeastern, Erie, and Gino Merli.

We finished out 2022 with our final Medical Advisory committee meeting. This year was the first full annual year of that committee. We have a great team which includes all of our medical directors as well as 3 outside physicians that bring us expertise in behavioral health, medicine, and infectious diseases. We spend a lot of time educating and presenting quality metric data, as well as any new information that comes out whether it is a regulation or new drug that is available to our residents.

Recruitment is still our biggest challenge to overcome right now in order to fill our beds. The Walk-in Wednesdays mentioned earlier is an initiative started by the DMVA to help bring staff on board and expediate the hiring process. We have seen some early success so far with this. We are also continuing our job fairs. Southeastern has their next job fair coming up in April.

Major construction updates: We are closing a big capital project in Erie that included renovation of the therapy gym, dining area, and front entrance. Also, Erie is about 90% complete with their personal care flooring project. We are in the official bid phase for Hollidaysburg for the construction of a brand new 200 bed facility to replace old infrastructure. We are hoping to break ground this May. The project is estimated to take about 2 years. Southeastern does not have any big capital projects going on currently, but we do have some things in the pipeline like some infrastructure upgrades coming up in 2024-2025 and the replacement of Coates Hall around 2026-2027.

At the end of January, we are going to celebrate the 20th anniversary for Delaware Valley Veterans Home. We are looking forward to having an open house to celebrate the day with residents, staff, and the public. Also coming up we have the National Association of State Veterans' Homes' Winter Conference that we take our leadership to and meet with our counterparts and other commandants from across the country. Some topics that are discussed include covid strategies, capital projects, grant-funding, and the VA gives a presentation about upcoming things.

Thomas Applebach asked if the 200 beds in Hollidaysburg are going to be additional beds or replacing old infrastructure. Travis stated that it is going to be a replacement project. Currently, Hollidaysburg has 3 main care facilities, 1 personal care facility and 2 skilled nursing facility. The new 200 bed building is going to replace the 2 skilled nursing buildings.

Report of the Director of Veterans' Homes – Barbara Raymond – DMVA:

Travis Davis clarified that Barbara Raymond was battling laryngitis and that he went over most of her report. She was present via Microsoft TEAMS in case anyone had any questions.

Report of the Commandant – Brian Gula– SEVC:

Brian Gula stated that we are expecting our Annual Federal VA survey to take place in February, so our team is double and triple checking to make sure everything is in order. Shortly after, we will also enter the window for our Annual Department of Health survey.

We did have an event occur recently where a resident burned himself with a cup of tea. We immediately put a plan of corrections in place at the time of the event to try and prevent that from happening again. We self-reported it to the Department of Health along with all the interventions, education, and auditing that we put in place. The DOH came out on December 14th to review the event and our plan of correction. Unfortunately, after their review they did cite us for the event. However, we had taken some time to gather supporting documentation to dispute the deficiency. We feel very strongly that the event was unavoidable in that we did not do anything against regulation nor neglect to follow any safety precautions. The result of that is pending.

Richard Doherty asked for clarification on the incident. Brian explained that the resident had spilled a cup of tea on himself. He continued to say that it was unfortunate that the event occurred, but the team immediately jumped in to rectify the situation. The veteran is doing very well and healed quickly.

Brian wanted to highlight our Activity and Volunteer departments for putting on a great holiday breakfast and throwing fabulous Christmas parties for all the units.

Travis noted that we had a message from Barb Raymond in the chat on TEAMS. Barb wanted everyone to know that, in December, Delaware Valley had a recognition survey regarding the 41 personal care beds that were converted to skilled nursing beds. The VA came in to recognize those beds, so Delaware Valley could start taking admissions. Delaware Valley passed the survey and is now working on admissions to fill those beds.

Report of the Deputy Commandant – Mildred Butler-Coleman – SEVC:

Mildred Butler-Coleman provided the council members with SEVC construction updates:

Our 2 boilers are being replaced, 1 in Coates Hall and 1 in the CLC. We are waiting for the materials to arrive, which should be within the next two weeks. Once the materials arrive, then we will begin the replacement.

Our resident elopement prevention program has been upgraded. Residents that were determined to be elopement risks would wear bracelets that would activate an alarm whenever they got too close to doors. Each building had a separate system. This meant that we had to have two separate sets of bracelets and supplies and whenever they went from one building to another, they had to switch out the bracelets. Now each building has the same Accutech system.

Symtech, the company that we use for our badge swipe system in the CLC building, is going to update the doors in Coates Hall. They will get rid of the current keypads and replace them with the badge swipe system, so we will be able to swipe our badges to get in and out of doors rather than entering in a code.

The CLC flooring project was completed in November before the holiday. The carpet in the resident's rooms has been switched out to luxury vinyl flooring, which helps with infection control. We had to do the floors one at a time which meant we had to move residents around, so it was a very big, tedious project.

Within the last 2 weeks, we had new cabinets and granite countertops installed in Tilghman Hall to replace the old, outdated cabinets and countertops. The cabinets are lighter in color and look much nicer.

Thomas Applebach asked what the outline of the plan was for the building that will replace Coates Hall. Mildred answered that it will probably be designed like what the CLC building looks like, more state of the art and resident focused. Thomas Applebach asked if it would be the same footprint. Travis said that we are not sure yet, but we have learned a lot since Covid about how we need to design and clean. We are hearing that private or semi-private rooms are important to residents. From a nursing perspective, it's important to have complete visibility of the floor from the nurse's station, by making sure that hallways are not too long or that there are not 'blind spots', so staff can see a call bell or hear if someone is calling for help. All these efficiencies are being taken into account when planning out the design phase.

Mildred also thanked all the organizations for their contributions during the holidays. We had a lot of people reach out to sponsor veterans. Allie and Tara would especially like to thank everyone for their outreach during that time. We are seeing an increase in volunteers wanting to come in and help, including high school students.

Mildred concluded by saying that we have a new Institutional Fire Safety Specialist, Zach Guziak. Zach has been here at SEVC for 14 years and was recently promoted from Security Officer 2 to IFSS on January 7th.

John Getz stated that a member of the VFW Auxiliary in this area has been trying to reach out regarding the Friend of a Veteran program. Mildred stated that the past few months have been crazy due to the holidays, but if John gave her the persons' contact info, that we would reach out.

Nikki Whitlock asked if we were currently designing what the new building replacing Coates Hall will look like. Travis Davis stated that we will probably not start the design phase for about 2 years. Travis did state that the renditions for the Hollidaysburg facility are complete and will be presented to the State Veterans Commission this month.

BVH Compliance Update:

Josh Spigner, Regional Compliance Officer, was present via Microsoft TEAMS to give the BVH compliance update. Josh started off by saying that BVH is non-compliant with the federal requirements to run regular exclusion checks. At this point we have something on the Software Agreement Backlog for Justifacts, so we hope to hear back about that, so we can use that software to further our interests. The second issue is about our PBJ auditor raising a concern about overreporting. We have added expanded functions on Kronos. Managing those functions are still a work in progress, but we are looking forward to reporting more once we get some issues ironed out.

Our therapy services provider, Benchmark, is being reviewed for BVH contract compliance. Interviews and investigative research to address initial issues /questions raised by senior management began on 8/15/22. The 2nd phase, which includes a contract review and billing audit, is currently being planned.

Thomas Applebach asked for clarification on what an exclusion check was. Josh explained that we run monthly checks with the OIG to make sure the staff that are providing care in our homes have clean backgrounds, no convictions, or issues with fraud.

In response to a question asked by Thomas Applebach, Travis confirmed that we are still using Benchmark to provide our therapy services. Barb also confirmed that there are no known concerns.

Presentation of Senate Citation:

Moved to the end of the meeting.

Comments from the Council:

John Getz wanted to thank everyone for what they do for the veterans' homes. He also said to reach out to him if there is anything that SEVC needs from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He offered to help put information out about SEVC through VFW's social media.

Thomas Applebach asked if SEVC has a Facebook page that we use to share information. Travis Davis stated that we do not have a specific Facebook page as it needs to be Commonwealth-approved. The DMVA has a Facebook page that we can post on via submitting content to our communications director. Thomas Applebach said that he would like to share openings at the veterans' homes and other information via their social media. General Weigl stated that the council members can follow the DMVA page and 'share' the posts as information about the homes is posted on there.

Nikki Whitlock let Brian and Mildred know that if our social workers ever have residents that need help with state documentation, to reach out to her office because they can help with any issues and can even expedite the process.

Old Business:

Nothing to Report.

New Business:

Nothing to Report.

Good of the Council:

Nikki Whitlock told the council members that Jeremiah Mensah, our Assistant Director of Nursing, received the 2022 DMVA Employee of the Year award and that Senator Muth wanted to give him a Senate Citation for his hard-work, dedication, and compassion. Brian Gula explained that Jeremiah was recognized by the DMVA for his work ethic and success at SEVC, along with the care he gives to the residents and the support he gives to the staff. Jeremiah started at SEVC in 2013 as a CNA while he was going to school. He left in 2017 and in 2019, he came back as a PRN. In 2020, Jeremiah was with Infection Control and last year he started as an Assistant Director of Nursing. Jeremiah said he could not do everything without the help of the amazing staff at SEVC.

Time and Date for the next Meeting:

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Thomas Applebach and seconded by Richard Doherty to end the meeting. Motion carried. The next regular meeting of the Advisory Council will be held on April 13, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Approved:

Barry Amole, President

Minutes submitted by: Sarah Klufas

HOLLIDAYSBURG VETERANS' HOME (HVH) ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, January 19, 2023
10:00 A.M.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Raymond Lenz, (Acting Council Present), American Legion Department of PA
Henry Gaunt, AMVETS
Joe Rodkey, Blinded Veterans Association
Goose Marin, Catholic War Vets
Brian Querry, Centre County, Director of VA
Ron Dawson, MacArthur Hall, Resident Representative
Thomas Williams, VFW Department of PA

VIPs PRESENT:

Senator Judy Ward
State Representative Louis Schmitt Jr.

DMVA PRESENT

Travis Davis, Executive Director of Long-Term Care (via telephone)
Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes
Craig Swineford, Veterans' Service Specialist, Central PA Region

HVH PRESENT

Sam Dunkle, Commandant
Chrissy Dambeck, Deputy Commandant
Sarah Reinhardt, Doctor
Kelly Smith, Director of Nursing
Joe Patterson, Admissions & Marketing
DeAnna Calderwood, QA Coordinator
Jessica Fiochetta, QA Specialist
Tia Williams, Assistant to the Commandant and *Recorder*

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael "Mick" Hoover, MOPH Guest
Mrs. Anna Marie Rodkey, Spouse of Joe Rodkey
Constance Stransky, Guest of Council Member Ray Lenz
Amanda Walker, District Director – Office of Senator Judy Ward
Michael Gassler, MacArthur Hall Resident

VACANT POSITIONS:

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
Jewish War Veterans, Vacant

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Duffy Hines (Council Present), Marine Corps League Department of PA
Tim Susengill, Vietnam Veterans Association

David Wagner, DAV
Robert "Hank" Sembower, Military Officers Association of America

Called to Order/ Roll Call

Ray Lenz called the meeting to order at 1000hrs and asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves and to provide their title and or Service Organization.

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Ray asked everyone to stand and to take a Moment of Silence to remember all the veterans and staff members of the HVH that have passed since our last meeting, including Activities worker Mark Krug. Ray then asked for everyone to stand and join-in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Ray asked every member if they had any question, comments, or concerns regarding the Minutes from the previous meeting held on Thursday, October 20, 2022, ~ no comments were received. Ray, "All those in favor to accept the Minutes, say, I" ["I" could be heard] and "All those opposed, say Nay" [none of the Advisory Council Members responded – "Nay". Ray said the Minutes for October are accepted as posted.

Swearing-In New Members

None

Dr. Sarah Reinhardt

Medical Update

Dr. Reinhardt explained that the Red Zones are being maintained. There is an early, hard-hitting flu season this year. Every resident is vaccinated who was willing and able. Dr. Reinhardt said it is a great blessing to work at HVH with Veterans and their spouses, specifically through the times of COVID-19, as she felt she was really able to make a difference in the lives of others.

Questions, Comments or Concerns (QCC) for Dr. Sarah Reinhardt

Representative Lou Schmitt asked about the guard shack. Dr. Sarah explained protocol is different now; we are still masking upon entering but temp checks have stopped as it hasn't been the best screening tool. She also stated that everyone willing and able to receive the COVID-19 shot has done so.

Final QCC for Dr. Sarah Reinhardt

None received.

Barb Raymond, Director, Bureau of Veterans Homes

BVHs COVID-19 Report

Barb said the CMS guidance was changed right after the last Advisory Council meeting. BVH/HVH then wrote policies and procedures, trained staff and then made changes. Testing process has changed. Due to decrease in numbers, we've moved to testing (mostly) symptomatic. At this time, HVH is the only SVH with active resident COVID cases. 8 staff members COVID+ over 4 homes. Decrease in staff positives which means decrease in resident positives. No COVID deaths in 2023. Barb stated there were 25 COVID deaths in 2022 – all with COVID as

secondary cause. The Public Health Emergency extended 90 days and will be considered the last time for extension. During this extension, federal VA does not require maintaining 90% occupancy for funding.

New Governor

Barb spoke about Pennsylvania's new Governor, Josh Shapiro. She stated the cabinet-level members may change. Barb anticipates Adjutant General Schindler to stay with us.

5-Star Ratings

5-Star – GMVC, PSSH, DVVH

4-Star – SEVC, SWVC

3-Star – HVH

Surveys

Barb said Gino Merli Veterans Center, PA Soldiers and Sailors Home, and Southeastern Veterans Center are preparing for their VA Surveys in the first quarter. All six SVH licensed with DOH/DHS – fully certified with federal VA.

Admissions

Robust pre-pandemic waiting list. SVH staffing significantly better staffing ratios than in the private sector. 4.2hrs PPD – regs are under 3 hrs. Admissions are continuing across all six homes, but with caution due to staffing.

Staffing

Job Fairs will be held in all 6 homes in the spring. Open interviews during "Walk-In Wednesday" going well.

Construction Updates

PSSH just front entrance/dining room/therapy updates. Still working on their flooring update. SEVC is working on a flooring update. GMVC is working on HVAC renovation. SWVC is working on a doctor's area/med rooms update.

Final QCC for Barb Raymond

None received

Joe Patterson, Admissions & Marketing

Marketing

Joe said Dave Wagner invited him to the VVA Association meeting and there were about 50 people in attendance. It was mainly a Q & A time; some questions about cost of care and about dialysis were brought up. Overall, it went very well.

Admissions

Joe reported seven (7) admissions last quarter, 4 transfers, 46 in the pipeline (from packet to placement). Joe explained that the "pipeline" has many phases such as waiting for financials, clinical reports, Admission Committee meeting, etc.

Questions, Comments or Concerns (QCC) for Joe Patterson

Senator Judy Ward asked what our current Census is – 239

Brian Querry asked about the “pipeline”: it seems as though there are a lot in the pipeline, but few getting in. Is this normal? What is average time from application to admission? – Joe says it takes two weeks approximately for financials to determine cost of care. Some pipeline people could be at a standstill due to waiting for MA-51 from their doctor, could be requesting paperwork from various sources which is taking longer than anticipated, etc. Kelly Smith, Director of Nursing, stated we’ve consistently had admissions weekly.

There was a recommendation to include the average amount to see if pipeline is going up or down.

Senator Judy Ward asked about families who are on edge/ on the fence about their loved one needing care – Joe stated they can be in the pipeline but don’t need to take the spot right away if offered. Families can always say they need more time.

Joseph Rodkey asked what is the main reason for residents transferring to other facilities? – Joe stated it is to be closer to family. Barb Raymond stated that HVH tends to have open beds, so sometimes residents go to HVH because they have the first availability then transfer closer to home when availability opens at that SVH.

Joe Patterson, Admissions & Marketing

Admissions

Joe provided pie chart to each member and referenced that since the last meeting the HVH has had twenty-five (25) new admissions, discharges eight (8) and deaths twelve (12).

Sam Dunkle, Commandant (CMD)

Staff Moves

The Commandant announced Joe Patterson’s promotion to Admissions & Marketing Coordinator. He stated we will be setting Joe up at VZMC for marketing, along with VFW and American Legions like pre-pandemic times. The Commandant announced Tia Williams as his new Clerical Assistant, taking Joe Patterson’s previous position.

Census

The Commandant stated we will be looking at census numbers and continuing with admissions.

Holiday Season

The holiday season went very well. We’ve highlighted every donation of \$500.00 and above in the report. The holiday fund has raised over \$67,000.00 and is still growing. When the holiday fund first started, it was at \$20,000.00. We will be raising resident gift to \$75.00 each, up from the previous \$50.00 each. Residents can choose from a gift card of that value or that amount of money added to their Members Fund Account.

COVID-19 Update

The Commandant stated there are five (5) residents in the Arnold Hall Red Zone with two (2) coming out today. Most are asymptomatic. There are Zero (0) residents in the MacArthur Hall Red Zone. The gates at the entrances have been taken down and the guard shack has been eliminated. The Commandant stated we are not taking the row of flags down yet. COVID-19 Vaccines and Boosters are available to staff and residents who want them.

Miscellaneous

The Commandant stated we are trying to bring in the motivational speaker from the Senior Leadership Conference which was held in October.

We are working toward the standardization of all six State Veterans' Homes. Housekeeping Managers from all the homes met last week here at HVH to work on standardization of chemicals. They were able to go from 300 down to 16 chemicals being used across the board, resulting in the MSDS downsizing. Barb Raymond stated there was an issue pre-pandemic where a facility independently switched to a product that did not kill Norovirus, so at this meeting all chemicals were looked at.

The commandant announced we will do the Saint Patrick's Day costume contest again.

HVH did not participate in the Veterans Day Parade because it was cancelled

HVH Held a Veterans Day Ceremony along with a Marine Corps Birthday cake cutting ceremony

Thanksgiving Harvest Luncheon was held and went well. We were unable to host the Christmas Holiday Luncheon due to a resurgence in COVID-19, but are planning to host a Valentine's Day Reception.

No major tags and no harm was found during our surveys; we are in compliance

An ugly sweater contest was held in December

HVH was rated as a U.S. News and World Report Best Nursing Home

HVH will be hosting an Active Shooter Exercise this spring in cooperation with Hollidaysburg Police, Logan Township Police, Allegheny Township Police, Blair County Sherriffs, 911 Call Center, and others. S1 will be used since it is an empty unit.

CLC "Lightner Hall" Update

The Commandant stated he will be attending the State Veterans Commission on February 3rd to officially propose the name "Lightner Hall". The new CLC will have 8 units – 2 floors with 4 units each. The units, or "neighborhoods", will be named after local fallen heroes, Veterans Hall will be twice as large and there will be a terrace that looks out to Plank Road. The goal is for a June 2023 start on the facility.

Land Sale

Land was sold for hill behind MacArthur Hall for 1.3 Million Dollars. The line is the road to MacArthur Hall over to the graveyard. We are unsure of what will be done with it by the purchaser.

QCC for Sam Dunkle, Commandant

Michael Gassler asked if there is any word on maintenance for current buildings? – MacArthur Hall project will be starting this spring. Work will be done on the roof, replacing windows and bricks. Explained the new building will be a turn-key operation. MacArthur Hall residents will go to Eisenhower Hall while indoor MacArthur Hall renovations are being done.

Constance Stransky stated she loved the Christmas decorations here at HVH.

Ray Lenz stated the American Legion was supposed to be here on December 6th but visits were cancelled. Came on December 12th to pass out cards. He also stated they were unable to come for the singalong due to an ice storm and then unable again the next week because of Influenza and COVID.

Sam Dunkle, Commandant – Alibis

Introduced new QA Coordinator, DeAnna Calderwood and QA Specialist, Jessica Fiochetta. He stated we are changing our approach to hands-on with Nursing Department to help.

Ray Lenz – Report of Status:

Haven't gotten anyone to replace Stanley

Waiting for Mick Hoover's approval

Duffy and Ray need to be renewed – (there were no corrections or objections on this)

Old Business:

N/A

New Business:

Chrissy Dambeck – Compliance Report (FIG unable to make it)

4 complaints, Investigations 2 across the board

Justifacts – still in process of contract – legal team

December – external contact from auditor concerning staffing has been resolved.

Contact received from Benchmark Therapy – Audit/Investigation ongoing

Complaint – possible HIPAA breach; was found to be privacy policy, not HIPAA

Ray Lenz – recognized Dietary Department and workers for a job well done. Suggested sending Duffy Hines a “Get Well Soon” card (which was passed around after the meeting and sent via mail)

Constance Stransky - stated it seems as if things are going well along with morale is improving

Michael Gassler – stated morale has been steadily improving over the last few years

Barb Raymond - Suggested changing meeting to the second Wednesday of the month (quarterly) due to conflict with another meeting General Weigl has. Changing the date would improve her possibilities of being able to make it to HVH Advisory Council more often. (it was stated by Senator Judy Ward and Representative Louis Schmitt that this change would result in a conflict for them) Ray Lenz stated he would like to revisit this topic to make a decision at the next meeting.

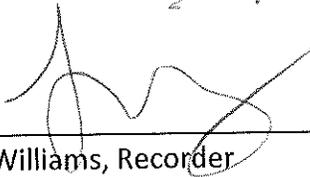
Announcements/ Good or the Council:

N/A

Adjournment

Ray reminded everyone the next Advisory Council Meeting will be on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 1000hrs.

Meeting was adjourned at 1106hrs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tia Williams', is written over a horizontal line.

Tia Williams, Recorder

JOANNA E. McCLINTON, MEMBER
SPEAKER
191ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
139 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202191
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2191
PHONE: (717) 772-9850
FAX: (717) 783-1516



52 SOUTH 60TH STREET
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 15, 2023

Major General Mark J. Schindler
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Fort Indiantown Gap, Room 200 P-0-47
Annville, PA 17003

Dear Major General Schindler,

Please be advised that I hereby appoint the following members of the House of Representatives to the below listed Veterans' Home Advisory Councils for the 2023-2024 Legislative Session of the General Assembly:

Gina J. Merli Veterans' Center – Representative Kyle Timothy Donahue
PA Soldiers' and Sailors' Home – Representative Patrick J. Harkins
Southeastern Veterans' Home – Representative Dan Williams
Southwestern Veterans' Home – Representative La'Tasha D. Mayes

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanna E. McClinton".

Joanna E. McClinton
Speaker of the House
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

cc: Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions
Joint State Government Commission
Keisha Wright, Office of Chief Clerk

JOANNA E. McCLINTON, MEMBER
SPEAKER
191ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 15, 2023

Major General Mark J. Schindler
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Fort Indiantown Gap, Room 200 P-0-47
Annville, PA 17003

Dear Major General Schindler,

Please be advised that I hereby appoint the following members of the House of Representatives to the below listed Veterans' Home Advisory Councils for the 2023-2024 Legislative Session of the General Assembly:

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home – Representative Martina White
Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home – Representative Jim Rigby

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna E. McClinton".

Joanna E. McClinton
Speaker of the House
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

cc: Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions
Joint State Government Commission
Keisha Wright, Office of Chief Clerk

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, Philadelphia PA - Peter Ojeda - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	141	116	25	82%	21	2	0	44	13		
Memory Care	30	29	1	97%	0	0	1	13	6		
Total	171	145	26	85%	21	2	1	57	19		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				7%							
Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, Scranton PA - Vito Ruggiero - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	156	122	34	78%	7	0	6	3	13		
Memory Care	40	21	19	53%	0	0	0	3	3		
Total	196	143	53	73%	7	0	6	6	16		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				13%							
Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, Hollidaysburg PA - Barry Lowen - Interim Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	231	150	81	65%	8	0	5	14	4		
Memory Care	26	18	8	69%	0	0	2	2	0		
Personal Care	167	74	93	44%	1	1	0	3	1		
Total	424	242	182	57%	9	1	7	19	5		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				16%							
Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home, Erie PA - Cheri Spacht - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	75	64	11	85%	3	0	3	10	2		
Memory Care	32	23	9	72%	5	0	0	2	3		
Personal Care	100	51	49	51%	1	1	0	3	1		
Total	207	138	69	67%	9	1	3	15	6		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				11%							
Southeastern Veterans' Center, Spring City PA - Brian Gula - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	208	132	76	64%	7	4	4	18	8		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	2	0	0	28	3		
Personal Care	54	37	17	69%	5	3	0	11	2		
Total	292	199	93	68%	14	7	4	57	13		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				8%							
Southwestern Veterans' Center, Pittsburgh PA - Richard Adams - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	196	103	93	53%	5	3	4	12	6		
Memory Care	40	28	12	70%	3	0	0	5	3		
Total	236	131	105	56%	8	3	4	17	9		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				13%							
Summary / Pennsylvania Bureau of Veterans' Homes											
Veteran Census/Events	Auth Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	1007	687	320	68%	51	9	22	101	46		
Memory Care	198	149	49	75%	0	0	3	53	18		
Personal Care	321	162	159	51%	7	5	0	17	4		
Totals	1,526	998	528	65%	68	14	25	171	68		
Veteran Status:	Total Non-Vets (f)	Male Non-Vet	% Non Vets (f)	Total Vets (f)	% Vets (f)	Male Vets	Total Male (f)	Female Non-Vets	Female Vets	Total Female (f)	VH Totals (f)
Non-Veteran/Veteran	10	0	7%	135	93%	134	134	10	1	11	145
DVVH	18	1	13%	125	87%	123	124	17	2	19	143
HVH	38	1	16%	204	84%	193	194	37	11	48	242
PSSH	15	3	11%	123	89%	116	119	12	7	19	138
SEVC	16	1	8%	183	92%	171	172	15	12	27	199
SWVC	17	2	13%	114	87%	111	113	15	3	18	131
Totals	114	8	11%	884	89%	848	856	106	36	142	998

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, Philadelphia PA - Peter Ojeda - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	141	121	20	86%	11	2	3	40	13		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	0	0	0	16	6		
Total	171	151	20	88%	11	2	3	56	19		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				7%							
Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, Scranton PA - Vito Ruggiero - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	156	119	37	76%	8	1	6	8	11		
Memory Care	40	27	13	68%	4	1	1	2	4		
Total	196	146	50	75%	12	2	7	10	15		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				14%							
Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, Hollidaysburg PA - Barry Lowen - Interim Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	231	153	78	66%	3	1	3	16	6		
Memory Care	26	18	8	69%	1	0	1	2	0		
Personal Care	167	69	98	41%	0	1	0	3	1		
Total	424	240	184	57%	4	2	4	21	7		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				16%							
Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home, Erie PA - Cheri Spacht - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	75	64	11	85%	3	0	3	12	1		
Memory Care	32	23	9	72%	0	0	0	2	3		
Personal Care	100	52	48	52%	1	0	0	4	1		
Total	207	139	68	67%	4	0	3	18	5		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				9%							
Southeastern Veterans' Center, Spring City PA - Brian Gula - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	208	129	79	62%	5	3	5	25	8		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	0	0	0	31	3		
Personal Care	54	37	17	69%	2	2	0	12	3		
Total	292	196	96	67%	7	5	5	68	14		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				8%							
Southwestern Veterans' Center, Pittsburgh PA - Richard Adams - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	196	104	92	53%	1	1	1	15	6		
Memory Care	40	26	14	65%	0	0	0	7	2		
Total	236	130	106	55%	1	1	1	22	8		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				12%							
Summary / Pennsylvania Bureau of Veterans' Homes											
Veteran Census/Events	Auth Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	1007	690	317	69%	31	8	21	116	45		
Memory Care	198	154	44	78%	0	1	2	60	18		
Personal Care	321	158	163	49%	3	3	0	19	5		
Totals	1,526	1,002	524	66%	39	12	23	195	68		
Veteran Status:	Total Non-Vets (f)	Male Non-Vet	% Non Vets (f)	Total Vets (f)	% Vets (f)	Male Vets	Total Male (f)	Female Non-Vets	Female Vets	Total Female (f)	VH Totals (f)
Non-Veteran/Veteran	10	0	7%	141	93%	140	140	10	1	11	151
DVVH	20	1	14%	125	86%	124	125	19	2	21	146
HVH	38	1	16%	202	84%	191	192	37	11	48	240
PSSH	13	2	9%	126	91%	120	122	11	6	17	139
SEVC	16	1	8%	180	92%	169	170	15	11	26	196
SWVC	16	2	12%	114	88%	110	112	14	4	18	130
Totals	113	7	11%	888	89%	854	861	106	35	141	1,002

Pennsylvania Veterans Homes Census as of Midnight May 31, 2023

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, Philadelphia PA - Peter Ojeda - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	141	124	17	88%	6	0	3	42	10		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	0	0	0	15	6		
Total	171	154	17	90%	6	0	3	57	16		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				6%							
Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, Scranton PA - Vito Ruggiero - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	156	126	30	81%	9	1	3	3	11		
Memory Care	40	30	10	75%	5	0	0	3	3		
Total	196	156	40	80%	14	1	3	6	14		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				15%							
Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home, Hollidaysburg PA - Barry Lowen - Interim Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	231	153	78	66%	5	1	3	18	6		
Memory Care	26	19	7	73%	1	0	0	4	0		
Personal Care	167	71	96	43%	3	1	1	3	1		
Total	424	243	181	57%	9	2	4	25	7		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				15%							
Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home, Erie PA - Cheri Spacht - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	75	65	10	87%	5	1	0	7	1		
Memory Care	32	28	4	88%	2	0	0	2	3		
Personal Care	100	53	47	53%	1	0	0	4	1		
Total	207	146	61	71%	8	1	0	13	5		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				11%							
Southeastern Veterans' Center, Spring City PA - Brian Gula - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	208	137	71	66%	10	1	1	18	6		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	0	0	0	31	1		
Personal Care	54	36	18	67%	1	2	0	14	3		
Total	292	203	89	70%	11	3	1	63	10		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				9%							
Southwestern Veterans' Center, Pittsburgh PA - Richard Adams - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	196	104	92	53%	4	1	2	20	7		
Memory Care	40	32	8	80%	6	0	1	2	2		
Total	236	136	100	58%	10	1	3	22	9		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				12%							
Summary / Pennsylvania Bureau of Veterans' Homes											
Veteran Census/Events	Auth Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	1007	709	298	71%	39	5	12	108	41		
Memory Care	198	169	29	85%	0	0	1	57	15		
Personal Care	321	160	161	50%	5	3	1	21	5		
Totals	1,526	1,038	488	68%	58	8	14	186	61		
Veteran Status:	Total Non-Vets (f)	Male Non-Vet	% Non Vets (f)	Total Vets (f)	% Vets (f)	Male Vets	Total Male (f)	Female Non-Vets	Female Vets	Total Female (f)	VH Totals (f)
Non-Veteran/Veteran	9	0	6%	145	94%	144	144	9	1	10	154
DVVH	23	1	15%	133	85%	130	131	22	3	25	156
HVH	36	1	15%	207	85%	196	197	35	11	46	243
PSSH	16	2	11%	130	89%	123	125	14	7	21	146
SEVC	18	2	9%	185	91%	174	176	16	11	27	203
SWVC	16	2	12%	120	88%	117	119	14	3	17	136
Totals	118	8	11%	920	89%	884	892	110	36	146	1,038



Veteran Transportation in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is home to over 700,000 veterans – the 4th largest veteran population in the nation. Access to appropriate medical and mental health care, the ability to access gainful employment, and the ability for veterans to remain active and involved in their communities play a large role in the overall health and welfare of our Nation’s heroes. Transportation access is key to keeping veterans safe, healthy, and involved.

Veterans may struggle to find reliable and affordable transportation for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to age, disability or illness that make personal driving or use of fixed-route or shared-ride transportation programs difficult or impossible; lack of financial means to purchase, maintain or repair a personal vehicle; lack of family or informal support to assist with rides; residing in a rural area with great driving distances between services and a lack of nearby providers, which often necessitates travel into other counties; limitations of current shared-ride systems that result in veterans waiting long periods of time before or after appointments; low-income veterans being eligible for the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) but not being able to use this transportation program to get to VA appointments; Compensation and Pension exams being located out of county and sometimes several hours away from a veteran’s residence; and transit authorities being bound by county borders or coverage territories.

According to a 2020 research article on barriers faced by post-9/11 veterans¹:

- 16% of programs provided transportation with only 2.7% of veterans reported using or benefitting from programs that provided transportation.
- Veterans with probable PTSD symptoms were two-times more likely to utilize programs that offered transportation compared to veterans without PTSD symptoms.
- Veterans with physical health conditions were not significantly more likely to utilize programs that provide transportation.
- Transportation appears to be a key access assistance component particularly for veterans with serious injuries or disabilities that prevent them from getting around by themselves or for those who do not have the financial means to purchase and maintain their own transportation.

The PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) receives no funding to combat veteran transportation challenges; however, through the Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA), it provides grants through the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) to organizations that seek to address transportation challenges and underlying issues. DMVA also administers the Veterans Temporary Assistance program (VTA) and the Military Family Relief Assistance Program (MFRAP), which both may assist veterans with funds to address emergent transportation-related issues in addition to referrals to other governmental and community resources. Additionally, PA VETConnect is identifying transportation programs at the local and regional levels and is building relationships with organizations and programs at the community level that address transportation challenges for veterans. Furthermore, PA VETConnect staff are establishing or participating in veteran-centric coalitions across the Commonwealth. The State Veterans Commission has also recently established a committee focused on addressing the transportation issues facing our community. These spaces bring together stakeholders who can collaborate to better understand the transportation challenges veterans face and brainstorm potential solutions with the resources that currently exist.

For example, DMVA VSOs located in western PA are working with the VA’s regional director to address veteran transportation issues in that area, identifying barriers and brainstorming solutions. Personnel have canvassed the 27 counties in the western district to see what transportation options are available at the county and local levels. In addition to the VA, DMVA is seeking input from organizations including the Veterans Leadership Project and

¹ Morgan et al. BMC Health Services Research, 2020, *Reducing barriers to post-9/11 veterans’ use of programs and services as they transition to civilian life*

Advocate Health Advisors, hosting roundtable discussions with a goal of creating an actionable plan moving forward to minimize, and eventually eliminate, this transportation issue. With the success of this initiative, a more widespread program is possible to assist veterans across the Commonwealth. No veteran should miss a compensation and pension exam due to a lack of transportation.

Currently, there are several programs that exist from the VA and from Pennsylvania that may help to reduce transportation barriers for veterans who qualify for such programs. These are not one-size-fits-all solutions, however, and each has their limitations and drawbacks.

The VA Health Administration (VHA) offers three transportation programs that may benefit Pennsylvania's veterans if they meet eligibility criteria.

- [VA Travel Pay Reimbursement](#) pays back eligible veterans and caregivers for mileage and other travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments. Each medical center has a beneficiary travel point of contact.²
- [Veterans Transportation Service \(VTS\)](#) provides free, convenient, safe and reliable transportation to qualifying veterans who require assistance traveling to and from VA healthcare facilities and authorized non-VA healthcare appointments when they do not have access to transportation options of their own due to financial, medical or other reasons. The VTS partners with service providers in local communities such as Veteran Service Organizations, local and national non-profits, and federal, state, and local transportation services, to serve veterans' transportation needs.³ One example of this partnership is the Disabled American Veterans ([DAV Medical Transportation Program](#)) which operates a fleet of vehicles that provide free rides to VA medical facilities for injured and ill veterans. The provision of this service depends entirely on a pool of volunteers available in any given area; therefore, not all counties have equal access to the DAV Medical Transportation program. In fact, it is non-operational in some areas.⁴
- Finally, VA now offers a rideshare program for veterans enrolled in VA homeless or veteran justice outreach programs. Veterans can utilize rideshare programming such as Uber and Lyft where it is available to get to medical and mental health appointments, job interviews, substance use treatment, and court appearances. Due to the rural nature of many of Pennsylvania's counties, however, rideshare services are not readily available everywhere.

Pennsylvania offers transportation programs that may assist eligible veterans. Find My Ride (FMR) provides education on these services and explains programs specific to seniors age 65+, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Since many veterans fall into one or more of these categories, these services may be of assistance in some circumstances. Veterans can apply online at [FMR Apply](#)⁵ or they can contact their [local transportation provider](#)⁶. Additionally, those interested in learning what services are available by county can use the [PennDOT Public Transportation Services and Program Map](#)⁷. More information about the following programs can be found on the [FMR education site](#)⁸.

² US Department of Veterans Affairs, "VA Benefits and Health Care," *VA travel pay reimbursement*, [VA Travel Pay Reimbursement | Veterans Affairs](#)

^{3 3} US Department of Veterans Affairs, "VA Benefits and Health Care, Health Benefits," *Veterans Transportation Service*, [Veterans Transportation Service \(VTS\) - Health Benefits \(va.gov\)](#)

⁴ Disabled American Veterans, "Medical Transportation," *Need a Ride?*, [The DAV provides FREE Rides for Veterans - Disabled American Veterans](#)

⁵ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, "Determine Transportation Eligibility," *Find My Ride Apply*, [PennDOT Find My Ride Apply \(pa.gov\)](#)

⁶ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, "Find My Ride Education," *Contact Us*, [FMR Education \(pa.gov\)](#)

⁷ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, "Public Transportation Services and Programs Map," [Transit Map \(penndot.gov\)](#)

⁸ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, "Find My Ride," [FMR Education \(pa.gov\)](#)

- Senior Shared Ride Program enables those 65+ to use shared ride services and pay only a small portion of the regular shared ride fare or perhaps nothing at all. The shared ride service picks up passengers at home and takes them directly to the destination (typically curb-to-curb service). The downside to this service is that it is often unable to travel outside of specified coverage zones and those riding often have long wait-times before and after their appointments.
- The Free Transit Program for Seniors provides a pass to seniors 65+ to ride for free on all public transportation bus services in PA. This is fixed-route service following repetitive, fixed schedules along consistent routes, picking passengers up from and delivering them to specific locations. If the location of a veteran's destination is not on or near a fixed route, this service will be of no value.
- The Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Program pays for those aged 18 to 64 to be picked up at their residence and travel to locations within their county, or in some cases, to locations outside of their county. Riders receive discounts on shared-ride services, which in most cases results in free or significantly reduced fare. Proof of disability must be provided. Prior-day advanced registration is required.
- The MATP may consist of mileage reimbursement, public transportation bus passes, or pick up by a vehicle at home. The county of residence provides the type of transportation that is least expensive. More information on MATP and other programs for low-income individuals may be obtained from a local county assistance office. Please note that this program cannot help to transport a veteran to a VA appointment since VA does not bill medical assistance. This program would only be beneficial to veterans who were receiving healthcare from a provider that will bill medical assistance.

Some community action agencies and non-profit organizations may offer grants or funds to help individuals with the cost of vehicle repairs or to purchase a used vehicle. These programs are not widely available however and are often restricted to one county or a specific coverage area. They also tend to have strict eligibility criteria. Some transit providers have started to offer rides for veterans going to VA medical appointments through donated funds meant for this specific cause. For example, RabbitTransit can provide York County veterans with rides to VA medical appointments through a pot of money donated and earmarked for this purpose.

A better understanding of the steps and elements necessary to support such a program could help other counties replicate this model. Funds to support these types of programs are essential however to being able to make them more widely available and expand the number of veterans who can benefit from them.

Additional Resources

- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2014). Community Tools to Improve Transportation Options for Veterans, Military Service Members, and their Families.
- National Center for Transit Research (2014). Improving Veteran Mobility in Small Urban and Rural Areas
- National Conference of State Legislatures (2013). State Activities to Help Military Veterans Access Transportation.
- Veteran Transportation Matters Report: Addressing the Transportation Needs of Veterans in Arizona (2021)

For additional information, please contact Brigadier General (PA) Maureen Weigl, Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs, 717-861-8808 / mweigl@pa.gov or Mr. Joel Mutschler, Director for the Bureau of Veterans Programs, Initiatives, Reintegration, and Outreach, 717-861-8771 / jomutschle@pa.gov.

RETX - Exempt List

mvfigsqlprod01
5/26/2023
rep_VADC_RETX_Exempt_List_New

Summary of Current Applications (Exempt)

Count	No Activity	Review Process Started	Review App Received	New Apps Pending
17330	16890	407	33	272

Summary of Activity from 03/28/2023 to 05/26/2023

Apps Created: 916	
New:	601
Review:	315

Apps Approved: 1018	
New:	642
Review:	376

Apps Denied (Financial Need):	52
Apps Denied (Ineligible):	84
Apps Removed (No Response):	99
Apps Removed (Eligibility Change):	109

Summary of Ineligible Reasons

Reason	Count
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that the veteran did not have a total and/or 100% permanent disability during their lifetime.	20
The property for which you claim exemption is not owned solely by you, or as an estate by the entirety with your spouse.	15
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that the veteran did not serve during a period of war or armed conflict.	29
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs stated that you have a future exam, therefore, your disability has not been rated as total or 100% permanent.	20

Summary of Activity from 03/28/2023 to 05/26/2023

APPLICATIONS APPROVED	1018
New	642
Review	376

APPLICATIONS DENIED	344
Financial Need	52
Ineligible	84
No Response	99
Change of Eligibility	109

OVER INCOME	107
New	56
Review	51

11%
9%
14%

APPLICATIONS CREATED	916
TOTAL ADJUDICATED	1174



**Pennsylvania Department of
Military and Veterans Affairs**

Presents

Let's Talk - Vet 2 Vet Discussion & Resource Fair

**Join
us!**

Learn more about the PACT Act and your veteran benefits

TOPIC

Together, the PA DMVA and federal VA staff will host a presentation to provide veterans and their advocates with a convenient platform to learn and ask questions about eligibility and applying for benefits related to the PACT Act. The new PACT Act law expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

WHEN

June 14, 2023, 6-8 p.m.

Arrive early for a Resource Fair from 5-6 p.m.

WHERE

Two convenient ways to participate!

In-person:

- Please register your attendance with the QR code below or call 814-323-8006, if you need assistance
- Arrive early for a dedicated Resource Fair from 5-6 p.m.
- Location: Erie VFW Post 470, 1808 W. 26th St. Erie, PA 16508

Call-In:

- Please register your attendance with the QR code or call 814-323-8006, if you need assistance
- Dial-in number for those not attending in person: 267-332-8737.
Conference ID: 650433659#





TO The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission Members

FROM Nicholas M. Taylor
Chairman, Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission

DATE 5 June 2023

RE Appointment Memorandum – Interim Commission Vice Chairperson

1. The following individual is appointed as the Interim Vice Chairperson of the Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission (PASVC):

<u>LAST</u>	<u>FIRST</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Snavelly	Constance	Representative, Korean War Veterans Assoc.

2. Authority:

- a. Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 51, Chapter 17, Subchapter A, § 1702(c) and § 1703.
- b. Verbal Order of the Commission Chairman (VOCC) on 2 June 2023.

3. Purpose: To assist the Commission Chairman in the prosecution of duties and responsibilities of the Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission.

4. Period: Effective 2 June through 13 October 2023.

5. Special Instructions:

- a. This appointment is made to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. David Eisele.
- b. This is an interim appointment until the scheduled Commission election on 13 October 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. M. Taylor", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

NICHOLAS M. TAYLOR
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Ret.)
Chairman
Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission



TO The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission Members

FROM Nicholas M. Taylor
Chairman, Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission

DATE January 20, 2023

RE Appointment Memorandum – Transportation Committee

1. The following individuals are appointed to the Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission (PASVC) Transportation Committee:

<u>LAST</u>	<u>FIRST</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Hines	William	Disabled American Veterans	Chairman
Hawk	Gerald	AMVETS	Member
Hudzinski	Richard	Vietnam Veterans of America	Member
Getz	John	VFW	Member
Mutschler	Joel	DMVA, Dir. PIRO Bureau	Advisor

2. Authority:

a. Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 51, Chapter 17, Subchapter A, § 1703 and § 1704.

b. Verbal Order of the Commission Chairman (VOCC) on 20 January 2023.

3. Purpose: To establish a standing committee commission that is responsible for investigating and recommending to this commission actions, processes, and procedures regarding transportation issues affecting Veterans in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

4. Period: Effective 20 January 2023 (VOCC) and until officially released or relieved from this appointment.

5. Special Instructions:

a. This committee will meet at the call of the Committee Chairman.

b. The committee's primary purpose is to advise and recommend to the PASVC processes, procedures, and actions to enhance and improve transportation services to Veterans.

c. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, there are a number of challenges in the area including, but not limited to:

- (1). Transportation to and from medical appointments.
- (2). Transportation requirements as they relate to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) service needs.
- (3). Number of vehicles / vans currently in the program and the plan for Maintenance recurring maintenance and life-cycle replacement plans.
- (4). Obtaining Highly Rural Transportation Grants.
- (5). Beneficiary Travel.
- (6). Recruitment, training, and retention of vehicle / van drivers.
- (7). Public Private Partnership (P3) agreements with organizations specifically
 - (a). The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).
 - (b). Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative.
 - (c). Strengthening Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Partnerships to Promote Community Living (HHS).
 - d. Coordination with all offices of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is encouraged and desired for synchronization of activities and continuity.



NICHOLAS M. TAYLOR
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Ret.)
Chairman
Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission



**Helping teens to achieve the self-discipline,
education, and skills necessary to succeed as
productive, responsible citizens**

- 100% funded by the National Guard, DoD, and DMVA
- No cost to the home school district, the student, or families
- HS credit earning, adaptive credit recovery, or GED option
- An engaging, safe, and structured stay-at-campus experience
- Open statewide to Pennsylvania students, 16 –18 years old
- Certified PA teachers

- Academics
- Citizenship
- Life Coping Skills
- Job Skills
- Leadership & Followership Skills
- Physical Training
- Health & Hygiene
- Service to Community

Email: RA-MVPACHALLENGE@pa.gov

Call: [717-861-8437](tel:717-861-8437), [717-861-2953](tel:717-861-2953), or [717-861-8212](tel:717-861-8212).

Keystone State Challenge Academy

Bldg. 7-6, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003



Keystone State Challenge Academy

Mission: To provide Pennsylvania teens who are struggling in high school a path to achieve the self-discipline, education and skills necessary to succeed as productive, responsible citizens through an engaging, safe, and structured residential experience.

➤ 22 week voluntary Residential Military Academy Model program located on Fort Indiantown Gap with contracted Educators from the Capitol Area Intermediate Unit.

Focused on Youth who:

- are Struggling Academically
- Wish to build Self Confidence
- and Leadership / Character Development

2 Educational Tracks:

- GED
- Credit Recovery

Cadets will:

- Take ASVAB
- Complete a minimum 40 hrs of Service to Community
- Be exposed to Career Opportunities

Cadets are not adjudicated delinquents - No felonies / only minor misdemeanors can be accepted.



NGYCP Regulatory Guidance

DoDI

The NGYCP is not a military activity of the National Guard, and programs established in accordance with this issuance will be conducted so as not to detract from military training or operational activities of the National Guard or the operations of other military components. NGYCP falls under the DoD community service and outreach missions.

2.1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS (ASD(M&RA)).

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the ASD(M&RA):

- a. Exercises management, budget and funds management, and policy implementation oversight of the NGYCP.
- b. Exercises the authority of the Secretary of Defense to conduct the NGYCP in accordance with Section 509 of Title 32, U.S.C.

2.2. CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU (CNGB). The CNGB:

p. Permits the use of National Guard equipment and facilities, including U.S. military property issued to the National Guard, to be used in carrying out the program. This includes housing facilities, General Services Administration vehicles, military buses, and other military vehicles, individual clothing and equipment under the control of the State USPFO, as well as use of the Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services. NGYCPs should be given priority to receive excess National Guard organizational and individual clothing and equipment that will be useful to NGYCPs, and to access surplus equipment through the Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services.

3.2. PROGRAM PERSONNEL.

a. Personnel of the National Guard of a State in which the NGYCP is conducted may serve on full-time National Guard duty, as defined in Section 101(d)(5) of Title 10, U.S.C. for the purpose of providing command, administrative, training, or other supporting services for the program. Such personnel may be ordered to duty pursuant to Section 502(f) of Title 32, U.S.C., for no longer than the period of the program to perform these services. Personnel may support NGYCP while employed in a state active duty status within their respective National Guard organizations.



ChalleNGe

Core Components

1. Academic Excellence

2. Responsible Citizenship

3. Life Coping Skills

4. Leadership &
Followership

5. Job Skills

6. Health & Hygiene

7. Physical Fitness

8. Service to Community



22 Week Model Overview

Week 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Red Phase		Yellow Phase					Labor Day 3 Day Pass Urinalysis	Blue Phase		Field Trip #1 Harrisburg Museums
Reception 16 Jul 22	Acclimation	Crossover Ceremony	Begin P-RAP							
Backfill Drops	Diagnostic PF Assessment	Pre-TABE Assessment					PF Assessment	ASVAB	GED Students Identified	
		Service to Community Begins								

Week 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Mentor Match Ceremony		Green Phase		Field Trip #2 Gettysburg		Thanksgiving 4 Day Pass Urinalysis		Gold Phase	Graduation 16 Dec 22
	Register to Vote	Register to Vote	Register to Vote		Election Day	Register for Selective Service		Cadet Placement w/ Mentor	Finalize P-RAP	
		PF Assessment		Career Fair	GED Testing	GED Testing	Final PF Assessment	Post-TABE Assessment	Optional PF Assessment	



Sample Daily Schedules

M-F Daily

Time	Event
0600-0630	Wakeup and Prepare for Day
0630-0640	Morning Colors
0645-0745	Breakfast
0745-0800	Latrine break
0800-1130	Classroom
1130-1230	Lunch
1230-1430	Classroom
1430-1500	Change for PT
1500-1615	Physical Training
1615-1700	Recovery/Personal Hygiene
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-1900	Homework / Group Discussion
Variable-1930	Platoon time
1930-2100	Platoon time (Snack) rotation begins at 2000
2100-2130	Letter writing
2130-0600	Lights out

Saturday/Holiday

Time	Event
0600-0630	Wakeup and prepare for day
0630-0640	Morning Colors
0645-0800	Breakfast
0800-1130	Classroom or outdoor training
1130-1230	Lunch
1230-1430	Classroom or outdoor training
1430-1500	Change for PT
1500-1615	Physical fitness
1615-1700	Recovery/Personal Hygiene
1700-1800	Dinner
1800-1830	Drill and Ceremony
	Platoon Time/ Study Time / Character-Movie / Snack
1830-2100	Snack
2100-2130	Letter writing
2130-0600	Lights out

* Sundays include religious services at the FTIG Chapel



Service to Community Coordination

Service to Community

CP 1: Foundational Doctrine

Chapter IV; Sub-Section 3 (Service to Community)

Cadets must perform a minimum of forty hours of qualifying service to the community to successfully complete this core component. By working to achieve a service to the community goal, both individually and in teams, Cadets learn the value of their labor while directly experiencing the difference they can make in the lives of those around them. At the same time, Cadets learn to understand that as members of the community themselves, they are creating improvements in their own lives because they also benefit from a stronger community. Cadets are also exposed to a wide variety of opportunities that can manifest themselves as future career and vocational paths. Mastery of this component allows Cadets to feel ownership in their community and accountability to their peers and themselves.

Tasks completed in the Service to the

Community core component are:

- Describe the importance and value of a service to the community and/or conservation project.
- Complete a minimum of forty hours of service to the community / conservation projects.

- FTIG National Cemetery
- March for the Fallen
- Swatara and Memorial Lake State Parks
- Fisheries
- Homeless Veterans Standdown
- Post botanist / lanternfly research
- Butterfly Relocation
- Central PA Food Bank



Post-Residential Phase

CP 1: Foundational Doctrine

Chapter III; Sub-Sections 3-4

- The Post-Residential Phase begins at the successful graduation of the Residential Phase and is the Graduate's opportunity to apply program strategies to transition into serving as a productive member of society.
- In the **year-long** Post-Residential Phase, Graduates transition from being an integrated member of a strong team back to being an individual contributor focused on self-development.
- The P-RAP is used within the Post-Residential Phase and as part of the mentoring relationship to provide a point of reference, discussion, and focus for Cadets outside of the quasi-military environment's structure. The P-RAP helps the cadet successfully translate a **systematic goal-setting process** to succeed in their lives.
- By Week 13 of the Residential Phase, all Cadets are matched with a Mentor and begin a **weekly relationship** with that Mentor. When transitioning into the Post-Residential Phase, this Mentor-Mentee relationship serves as the primary connection between a Graduate and the ChalleNGe program.
- Counselor Case Managers support the Mentor-Mentee relationship and document a Cadet's progress in the Post-Residential Phase.
- **Placement can be achieved by employment, education enrollment, return to High School, Military Service, Volunteering or any combination.**



Youth Initiated Mentoring

CP 1: Foundational Doctrine

Chapter III; Sub-Section 4

- The purpose of a youth-initiated mentoring model is to build on an existing relationship or familiarity based on trust, respect, and admiration. This process is led by our Counselor Case Manager.
- Youth initiate this process by self selection of a mentor. While this is preferred, if the Cadet cannot find a suitable Mentor, a pool of qualified Mentors can be used.
- Additional preferred screening criteria include:
 - Close geographical area
 - Same gender
 - Common Interests
- Mentors are carefully screened and vetted for suitability prior to being matched with a Cadet, including the following:
 - FBI Fingerprint Check
 - PA Childline Child Abuse Clearance
 - PSP Records Check
- Once Cadets are matched with a qualified Mentor, both receive extensive training to ensure that the relationship will meet the expectations of the program and the participants. Cadets and Mentors learn how to:
 - Approach their new mentoring relationship
 - Set and maintain realistic goals and expectations
 - Understand their specific roles as a mentor or mentee
 - Identify the skills that will help them connect with each other
 - Ask for help or advice



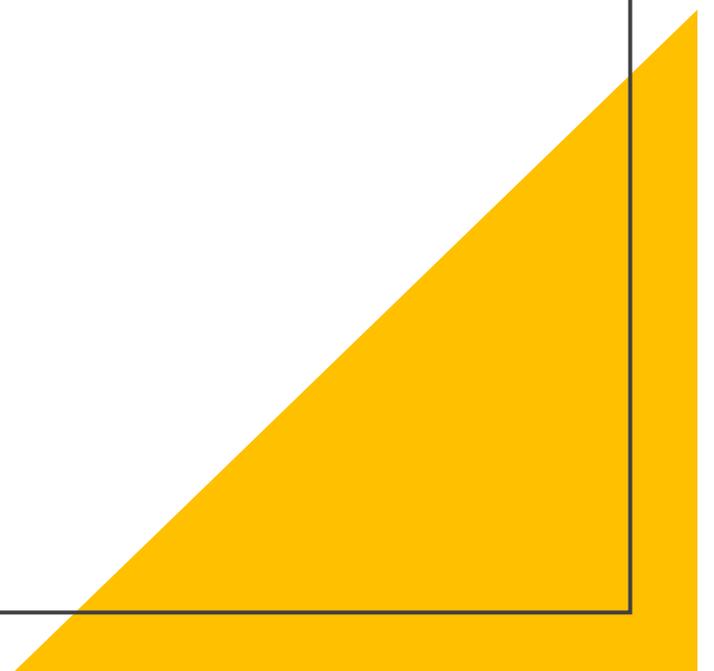


KEYSTONE STATE CHALLENGE ACADEMY

MENTOR PROGRAM

KSCA Video

<https://www.facebook.com/KeystoneStateChalleNGeAcademy/videos/492607132890162/>



Post Residential Phase

- It is a 12-month period after graduation.
 - Graduates will meet with Mentors on a monthly basis (60 minutes a month.)
 - These Mentors will help our graduates navigate through potential barriers upon returning into their communities.
 - Mentors will be a resource to help graduates find placement in education, employment or enlistment into the military.
- 

Post Residential Action Plan: P.R.A.P



This is a document that our Cadets use to identify their placement goals for their Post Res. Phase.



The Cadets, KSCA Post Res. Staff, guardians and their mentors will use this document as a reference for their placement options in the Post Res. Phase.



A copy of their PRAP will be given to the Cadet, their guardians and their Mentors.

WHY DO CADETS NEED MENTORS?



- Continuation of Support Services.
- Encourage them to stay bought into the positive changes they have made during their residential phase at the KSCA.
- Hold them accountable for their placement goals.
- Help navigate them through situations inside of their own communities.
- Have a consistent positive Role Model in their life.
- To give these Cadets HOPE and OPPURTUNITY.



Types of Mentors:

- Youth Initiated Mentor- A Cadet has identified someone in their life that would be a positive Mentor for them.
- Pool Mentor- Someone in the community that is interested in becoming a Mentor. There are various levels of involvement for our Pool Mentors.
- Community based Mentoring Events- Events in the Graduates communities that can be sponsored by an organization/group.

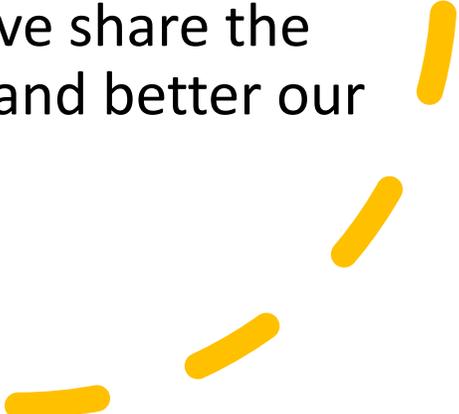
Social Capital and Post Residential Placement

- Defined as: the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.
- What does your Social Capital look like?
- How can your Social Capital help build connections and resources for our graduates?
- The Three E's: Education, Employment, and Enlistment.



A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

KSCA'S POST RESIDENTIAL DEPARTMENTS VISION FOR THE FUTURE.

- To be the best Post Res. Department in the NGB will take.....
 - Creating a large social network of resources for our Cadets upon graduating the Academy.
 - This will be done by building our Social Capital in the Commonwealth. (Mentors, Community Based Resources, Secondary Education, Employers, etc.)
 - Building our Mentor Pool and Community Based Mentor Events.
 - This will help ensure the commitment of the Cadet to their success. While we as a collective share the responsibility to help guide our youth and better our own communities.
- 
- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several short, thick yellow dashes arranged in a curved, upward-sloping pattern.



**“THIS IS NOT A HANDOUT;
THIS IS A HAND UP”**



Cadets and their success's:

QUESTIONS?



WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

- Kyle Mann
- Post Residential Manager
- kymann@pa.gov
- OFFICE: 717-861-7518
- WORK CELL: 717-376-6817

