

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE)
National Advisory Committee (NAC) Executive Committee (EC) Meeting
Tuesday, May 25, 2021 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Call to Order: John Kleindienst, National Representative, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and EC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance: Charles Gallina, National Representative, Knights of Columbus, provided the invocation, and Mary Morgan, National Representative, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and EC Vice Chairperson, led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Vice Chairperson Morgan performed the roll call. Executive Committee attendance was duly recorded as follows:

	<u>Present (P) / Absent (A)</u>	
American Gold Star Mothers	P	
American Legion, The	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary	P	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	P	
Corporation for National and Community Service	P	
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Fleet Reserve Association	P	
Home of the Brave	P	
I.B.P.O Elks of the World, Inc.		A
Knights of Columbus	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	P	
Military Women Across the Nation	P	
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
National Society Sons of the American Revolution		A
Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc.	P	
Sons of the American Legion	P	
United Veterans Services	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	

VA and Other Staff Present:

- William Ball, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Palo Alto Health Care System
- Mary Barcikowski, Administrative Officer/NAC Meeting Planner, VA CDCE, VACO
- Jonathan Barczyk, Public Affairs Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, VA Maine Healthcare System
- Elizabeth Cazares, Voluntary Service Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, South Texas Veterans Health Care System

- Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D. Director/NAC Designated Federal Officer, VA CDCE, VA Central Office (VACO)
- Tyrone Green, Program Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Marcena Gunter, Voluntary Service/Public Affairs Officer/NAC Meeting Planner, VA St. Louis Health Care System
- Virginia Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Lawrence M. Kelly, Treasurer, VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Partners, Inc.
- Sandra Kriebel, Member, Membership Subcommittee
- Joyce Kuwae, Voluntary Service Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, VA Maryland Health Care System
- CarolAnn Miragliuolo, Senior Advisor, VA CDCE, VACO
- Karen O'Neal, Chief, Voluntary Service, Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC), Erie, PA, and Co-Chair, Partnership Subcommittee
- Anne Parker, Blue Star Mothers of America, Chair, Recommendations Subcommittee
- Ronald Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight, Co-Chair, Partnership Subcommittee, and Member, Volunteer of the Year Subcommittee
- Vicki Sarracino, Soldiers' Angels, Chair, Recruitment Subcommittee
- Kevin Stanford, Program Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Prince Taylor, Deputy Director/NAC Alternate Designated Federal Officer, VA CDCE, VACO
- Nathan Witt, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO

Minutes of the Last EC Meeting: Todd Desgrosseilliers, National Representative, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc., summarized the minutes of the EC's most recent meeting, held the preceding Friday. The EC reviewed the slate of CDCE officers for the fall and the agenda for the upcoming NAC meeting. Lawrence M. Kelly, Treasurer, VAVS Partners, Inc. presented his report. In new business, Mr. Desgrosseilliers announced he was assembling a file of VAVS Partners, Inc. legal documents, NAC and EC minutes, and other relevant information; EC members would be able to review and add to the file.

Designated Federal Officer's Announcements: Sabrina Clark, Ph.D., Director, CDCE and NAC DFO, expressed her excitement about the virtual NAC meeting. She pointed out that as many as 700 virtual attendees were expected and hoped that NAC would represent the Secretary with high regard.

VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Kelly reported that between September 17, 2020 and May 19, 2021, VAVS Partners, Inc. had a net profit of \$7,000.78, but that it owed \$7,594.50 for the second half of NAC event boxes, leaving it with a net deficit of roughly \$594. As of May 19, its balance was \$60,398.28. On its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990 for fiscal year (FY) 2020, it reported \$33,182 in total revenue and \$38,259 in total expenses for a net deficit of \$5,077. The IRS had accepted the form.

Dr. Clark suggested sharing a slide at the NAC meeting providing information on how individuals could donate to VAVS Partners, Inc. Chairperson Kleindienst expressed support for the idea, and no one objected.

Chairperson Kleindienst reminded the EC that Mr. Kelly would be stepping down as treasurer after that year. Vice Chairperson Morgan added that CDCE was still seeking his replacement.

Business Session: Chairperson Kleindienst called the business session of the EC meeting to order.

Subcommittee Reports:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): Patricia Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary, reported that changing the SOP to reflect the transition from VAVS to CDCE was proving more complicated than anticipated. The 75th Anniversary Booklet made references to both names, creating some confusion. The NAC charter and SOP currently match in terms of language. Dr. Clark reminded the EC that she had circulated a slide deck and fact sheet which she hoped would resolve at least some of the questions people had regarding the transition. She shared that the updated Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 1620 mentioned both VAVS and CDCE, and clarified when use of each was appropriate.

Ms. Kranzow announced that she would not present information relative to the name change for a vote at the NAC meeting, but would share that work remained ongoing. Chairperson Kleindienst agreed that was the best course.

The Partnership Subcommittee wanted to add the following items to the NAC SOP:

- Page 3: add “g. whether the potential member has a standing approved Code of Conduct and Ethics” under “Application for Membership”
- Page 12: insert “(i.e. Platinum level Guide Star)” under “e. Positive rating from a non-profit ‘watchdog’ organization”
- Page 12: add “g. Code of Conduct and Ethics”
- Page 12: insert “e. Must provide a Code of Conduct and Ethics along with application” under “All applicants will demonstrate the following”

Ms. Kranzow moved that the EC recommend the aforementioned changes to the NAC. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Membership: Vice Chairperson Morgan reminded members that due to COVID-19, the EC had approved an extension of membership for one additional year for current members. The extension would expire at the end of the fiscal year on September 30. NAC had seven categories of membership: Service, Associate Service, Donor, Associate Donor, Adjunct, Strategic Engagement, and Honorary. It had recently received membership applications from three organizations: Student Veterans of America (SVA), Warrior Rising, and the Combined Arms Institute. All three were applying as Strategic Engagement members. The Subcommittee planned to recommend membership for SVA and Warrior Rising once they submitted their articles

of incorporation. It did not intend to recommend membership for the Combined Arms Institute because its services at present were mostly limited to Texas.

Recruitment: Vicki Sarracino, Soldiers' Angels, reported volunteer hours were lower than usual which was largely expected due to COVID-19. For FY2020, there were 45,533 Regular Scheduled volunteers, down 15,486 from FY2019. There were decreases in volunteers across all age ranges, even ages 55-64 and 65-74, which typically saw increases. Through the first and second quarters of FY2021, total volunteer hours were down 2,714,015 from FY2020.

The Subcommittee had crafted a survey of all NAC member organizations asking how to best retain volunteers. Ms. Sarracino expressed disappointment with the response rate; only 17 organizations responded, some of whom did not answer all questions. 84 percent of respondents stated they were still communicating with volunteers. When asked what type of virtual projects were being utilized, the responses included making handmade masks, creating administrative tasks for volunteers, and supporting the VA with virtual programming. When asked if there were positions waiting for volunteers, six of 17 stated they had open positions. When asked if they had continued recognition programs, 10 stated they continued their program, often virtually.

When organizations were asked about the things they struggled with during the pandemic, the top three responses were keeping volunteers engaged, volunteer access to the VA, and limited interaction with CDCE. The top three successes were increasing and adjusting the programs to assist the needs of the VA, creating virtual assignments and trainings, and finding donors who were interested in combatting food insecurity or COVID-related assistance. When surveyed on information the organizations wanted to share to help others, responses included making sure to keep in contact with volunteers, working to help them find other ways to support the VA, soliciting input from volunteers about their experiences, and recognition of the difference between competing with other organizations and complementing them.

The Subcommittee had prepared a document on equity in volunteering, which contained eight strategies: shifting to new language for volunteers, building new relationships, understanding the importance of socioeconomic status, embracing skill-based opportunities, recruiting from those using the services, partnering to engage the youth, removing barriers, and creating an inclusive organizational culture.

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Gallina reported that the quality of nominations was much improved from previous years. There were three finalists for Male Volunteer of the Year, and four for Female Volunteer of the Year. The nominees were so close in terms of judging criteria that for the first time Mr. Gallina could recall, the Subcommittee decided to award Male and Female Volunteer of the Year to two nominees each. The Male Volunteers of the Year were Gabe Cinquegrana, Sons of the American Legion, and Roger Hull, Soldiers' Angels. The Female Volunteers of the Year were Donna Ray, American Legion Auxiliary, and Carol Adams, Soldiers' Angels. The Subcommittee's goal for 2022 was to increase the number of quality nominations from NAC members.

Partnership: Karen O'Neal, Chief, Voluntary Service, Erie VAMC, Erie, PA, and Partnership Subcommittee Co-Chair, noted that in addition to the proposed changes to

the SOP the EC had already discussed, the Subcommittee was presenting the EC with two recommendations:

1. The NAC membership recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approve the proposed standardized listing of in-kind donation values to promote a consistent and more accurate reporting of donation values.
2. The NAC membership recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approve the inclusion of VA volunteer drivers in the VA Drug Free Workplace Program.

Chairperson Kleindienst called for a vote on bringing the aforementioned recommendations before the NAC. The EC voted in favor of doing so without opposition or abstention.

Recommendations: Anne Parker, Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. announced that the Subcommittee was submitting to the EC nine recommendations from five organizations.

Sons of the American Legion

1. *Discontinue the automatic inactivating of volunteers after 11 months of inactivity in the Voluntary Service System (VSS) database program.* Virginia Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, CDCE, VACO, pointed out that the threshold for automatic inactivation was 12 months, not 11, and VAVS chiefs monitored reports which notified them 30 days in advance that a volunteer was about to become inactive. Moreover, a new system was expected to be in place by the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Parker recommended removing this recommendation.
2. *Allow a volunteer's hours to remain with the organization they are affiliated with after they become inactive in the VSS database program.* Ms. Hoover noted that an affiliation with an organization was never lost unless the organization itself was inactivated in the system. CDCE could not delete volunteers, and once a fiscal year closed, it could not delete their time either. Ms. Parker recommended removing this recommendation as well.
3. *Develop an annual award, both national and local, for NAC member organizations.* Ronald Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight, recalled that the EC had addressed a similar recommendation in the past, and had elected not to move forward because it did not deem it necessary to take it to the Secretary's office. He added the recommendation mentioned a local award which is not relevant to the Secretary. Mr. Rolfes and Dr. Clark pointed out that it was not clear what specifically the award was to recognize. Ms. Parker recommended returning this recommendation to Sons of the American Legion to provide more information.

Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Programs initiated by VA Central Office, such as Compassionate Contact Corps, should be at all hospitals without the hospital being able to decide whether to implement the programs unless local policies or manpower issues prevented participation. Prince Taylor, Deputy Director, CDCE, assured the EC that CDCE was working on this issue. Dr. Clark added

there were several valid reasons why facilities were unable to implement certain programs. She thought it needed more clarification prior to going before the Secretary, and given the operational realignment, it was possible that the issue could be addressed within VHA without involving the Secretary. On behalf of Blue Star Mothers of America, Ms. Parker agreed to table this recommendation.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

1. *Allow and implement more creditable projects for volunteers to do outside of the VA, as long as Veteran/staffing privacy issues are not involved.* Ms. O'Neal expressed uncertainty as to what the recommendation meant by "creditable projects." Mr. Gallina stated he was unable to determine what the recommendation was addressing, and that it needed to be rewritten. Ms. Parker said she would recommend removing this recommendation.
2. *Add a column on the Annual Joint Review (AJR) for meeting attendance at VAVS Committee meetings.* Dr. Clark noted that CDCE was looking to revamp the entire AJR process, and this was something that could be accomplished without going to the Secretary. Ms. Parker recommended removal of this recommendation.

Military Women Across the Nation

1. *Allow facility volunteers to adopt a social gathering (coffee-klatch) with members having similar interests to gather in-person (when protocols allowed), or virtually periodically.* Mr. Gallina stated this was something that could already be done at each location and did not require a recommendation to the Secretary. Ms. Parker agreed to remove this recommendation.
2. *Expand assistance to Veterans who are not tech-savvy with volunteers who are able to guide them through the VA's online resources.* Dr. Clark informed the EC that NAC would hear a report on this issue, and the matter did not need to go to the Secretary. Ms. Parker said she would withdraw this recommendation.

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

1. *Change the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee to the Center for Development and Civic Engagement National Advisory Committee.* On behalf of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Vice Chairperson Morgan stated this could be discussed along with the SOP and did not need to be a formal recommendation. Ms. Parker agreed to withdraw this recommendation.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Chairperson Kleindienst recommended an in-person EC meeting at DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Wednesday, October 13, and half-day Thursday, October 14. There was no objection to this proposal and Vice Chairperson Morgan agreed to lead arrangement of hotel accommodations.

Adjournment: Chairperson Kleindienst adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE)
National Advisory Committee (NAC) Business Session
Wednesday, May 26, 2021 - 12:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.**

Welcome: Sabrina Clark, Ph.D., Director, CDCE, and Designated Federal Officer (DFO), NAC, welcomed attendees to the virtual meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Platform Orientation: Mary Barcikowski, Administrative Officer, CDCE, VA Central Office (VACO), and Virginia Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, CDCE, VACO, gave a tutorial on the virtual platform.

Whole Health Meeting Tips: Alison Whitehead, MPH, C-IAYT, PMP, National Program Lead, Integrative Health Coordinating Center, VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, led attendees in a whole health exercise and offered advice on how to maintain whole health over the course of the meeting.

Meeting Overview: Dr. Clark gave an overview of the meeting.

Official Opening: John Kleindienst, National Representative, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson, officially opened the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance: Charles Gallina, National Representative, Knights of Columbus, provided the invocation, and Mary Morgan, National Representative, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and EC Vice Chairperson, led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Mr. Kleindienst performed the roll call. National Advisory Committee attendance was duly recorded as follows:

	<u>Present (P)/ Absent (A)</u>	
American Gold Star Mothers	P	
American Legion, The	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
American Red Cross	P	
AMVETS		A
AMVETS Auxiliary		A
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	P	
Blinded Veterans Association	P	
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.	P	
Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL), Inc., The		A
Corporation for National and Community Service		A
Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, (1861-1865)		A
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	P	

Fleet Reserve Association	P	
Forty and Eight	P	
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	P	
Home of the Brave	P	
I.B.P.O Elks of the World, Inc.		A
Jewish War Veterans of the USA	P	
Knights of Columbus	P	
Korean War Veterans Association		A
Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association		A
Ladies Auxiliary to the Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.		A
Marine Corps League		A
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	P	
Masonic Service Association of North America, The		A
Military Order of the Cootie		A
Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary		A
Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary		A
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.		A
Military Women Across the Nation		A
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Inc.		A
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
National Society Sons of the American Revolution		A
National Society United States Daughters of 1812		A
Paralyzed Veterans of America		A
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.		A
Project Healing Waters and Fly Fishing, Inc.	P	
Salvation Army, The		A
Silver Star Families of America, The		A
Soldiers' Angels	P	
Sons of AMVETS		A
Sons of the American Legion	P	
United Daughters of the Confederacy		A
United Veterans Services	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	
Veterans Voices Writing Project		A
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.		A
Women Marines Association		A
Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association		A
YMCA of the USA		A

VA and Other Staff Present:

- William Ball, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Palo Alto Health Care System
- Mary Barcikowski, Administrative Officer/NAC Meeting Planner, VA CDCE, VACO
- Jonathan Barczyk, Public Affairs Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, VA Maine Healthcare System

- Elizabeth Cazares, Voluntary Service Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, South Texas Veterans Health Care System
- Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D. Director/NAC Designated Federal Officer, VA CDCE, VA Central Office (VACO)
- Tyrone Green, Program Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Marcena Gunter, Voluntary Service/Public Affairs Officer/NAC Meeting Planner, VA St. Louis Health Care System
- Virginia Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Lawrence M. Kelly, Treasurer, VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Partners, Inc.
- Sandra Kriebel, Member, Membership Subcommittee
- Joyce Kuwae, Voluntary Service Specialist/NAC Meeting Planner, VA Maryland Health Care System
- CarolAnn Miragliuolo, Senior Advisor, VA CDCE, VACO
- Karen O'Neal, Chief, Voluntary Service, Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC), Erie, PA, and Co-Chair, Partnership Subcommittee
- Anne Parker, Blue Star Mothers of America, Chair, Recommendations Subcommittee
- Ronald Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight, Co-Chair, Partnership Subcommittee, and Member, Volunteer of the Year Subcommittee
- Vicki Sarracino, Soldiers' Angels, Chair, Recruitment Subcommittee
- Kevin Stanford, Program Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO
- Prince Taylor, Deputy Director/NAC Alternate Designated Federal Officer, VA CDCE, VACO
- Gary Thomas, IT Customer Support, Louis Stokes VAMC, Cleveland, OH
- Nathan Witt, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA CDCE, VACO

Meeting Goals and Objectives: Mr. Kleindienst asked participants to review the goals and objectives for the 75th Annual NAC Meeting and Conference:

- Provide the NAC an opportunity to conduct business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
- Present member organization representatives with an overview of program goals and objectives, as well as changes and challenges subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Foster full and open communication among the member organizations, their representatives, and VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement, VA Central Office, and field staff.
- Provide the NAC member organizations with educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs, with a special emphasis on transitioning roles and reintegrating volunteers into service within VA Medical Center facilities.
- Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the attitudes, actions, and protocols governing all NAC members and organizations and its representatives.

- Furnish the NAC member organizations with the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Arrange for the NAC review of, and action on, credible recommendations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Honor the national recipient of the 2021 James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.
- Honor the recipients of the 2021 American Spirit Excellence Award and all NAC awards.
- Recognize and salute the 2020 recipients of each of these awards who were unable to be officially acknowledged due to the cancellation of last year's NAC.
- Highlight innovation as the driving force for volunteer programs of the future, to ensure their ability to adapt to changing conditions, and to meet the needs of Veterans, families, and caregivers in partnership with the VA and the VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement.

Assistant Under Secretary for Health (AUSH) for Operations, Ms. Renee Oshinski:

Ms. Oshinski praised Dr. Clark for her leadership abilities and expressed pleasure that CDCE was under the purview of VHA Operations. She informed attendees that VHA was defined by its people, not by buildings or signs. VHA's partnership with Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and volunteers worked as a multiplier of the goodness it can accomplish. Ms. Oshinski voiced understanding of how difficult it had been during the pandemic with people wanting to volunteer but being unable to do so. She encouraged everyone to look for opportunities to bring things back to normal. One way to achieve that end was for as many people as possible to get vaccinated. Last, Ms. Oshinski commended member organizations for finding new ways to serve during difficult times.

VA Secretary, The Honorable Denis McDonough: Secretary McDonough communicated to attendees that Veterans were better served, and VA was a better organization, because of the service of the NAC and its member organizations. Over the course of 75 years, millions of Americans had volunteered to help Veterans and VA, contributing more than 737 million hours of time and care for those who had served this nation in uniform. Secretary McDonough outlined his vision, which focused on four fundamental principles: advocacy, access, outcomes, and excellence. Secretary McDonough discussed his observation that the pandemic had intensified the integrated nature of the VA health care system, and he continues to lead efforts that determine how well different components of VA collaborate to best serve Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

The NAC recessed from 1:50 p.m. to 2:05 p.m.

Introduction to the VAVS Name Change: Mitra Gobin, Chief, CDCE, James H. Haley Veterans' Hospital, discussed the name change from VAVS to CDCE. At the national level, VAVS was previously part of the VHA Office of Communications. After an extended period of discussion and examination, the name was changed from VA Voluntary Service to VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement to better reflect

the scope of programming and was realigned under the Office of the AUSH for Operations. The name change did not affect CDCE's mission or purpose. The new name allowed CDCE to be better identifiable and understandable to its civilian counterparts, and to prospective donors and strategic partners. CDCE consists of three pillars: voluntary service, partnership solutions and philanthropic engagement.

Subcommittee Reports:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): Patricia Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary, reported that the EC was in the process of revising the SOP to incorporate references to CDCE. It hoped to finalize the revisions at the fall EC meeting and present the revised SOP at the 2022 NAC.

The EC had voted to recommend to the NAC the following revisions proposed by the Partnership Subcommittee:

- Page 3: add "g. whether the potential member has a standing approved Code of Conduct and Ethics" under "Application for Membership"
- Page 12: insert "(i.e. Platinum level Guide Star)" under "e. Positive rating from a non-profit "watchdog" organization"
- Page 12: add "g. Code of Conduct and Ethics"
- Page 12: insert "e. Must provide a Code of Conduct and Ethics along with application" under "All applicants will demonstrate the following"

Ms. Kranzow moved the adoption of the aforementioned changes to the SOP as recommended by the EC. Mary Morgan, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Membership: Ms. Morgan reminded members that due to COVID-19, the EC had approved an extension of membership for one additional year for current members. The extension would expire at the end of the fiscal year on September 30. NAC had seven categories of membership: Service, Associate Service, Donor, Associate Donor, Adjunct, Strategic Engagement, and Honorary. It had recently received membership applications from three organizations: Student Veterans of America (SVA), Warrior Rising, and the Combined Arms Institute. All three were applying as Strategic Engagement members. The Subcommittee recommended membership for SVA and Warrior Rising but not for the Combined Arms Institute because its services at present were mostly limited to Texas.

Sandra Kriebel, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary, moved to accept SVA and Warrior Rising for NAC membership. Gabe Cinquegrana, Sons of the American Legion, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Recruitment: Vicki Sarracino, Soldiers' Angels, reported volunteer hours were lower than usual which was largely expected due to COVID-19. There were decreases in volunteers across all age ranges, even ages 55-64 and 65-74, which typically saw increases. Through the first and second quarters of FY2021, total volunteer hours were down 2,714,015 from FY2020.

The Subcommittee had crafted a survey of all NAC member organizations asking them about how best to retain volunteers. Ms. Sarracino expressed disappointment with

the response rate; only 17 organizations responded. 84 percent of respondents stated they were still communicating with volunteers. When asked what type of virtual projects were being utilized, the responses included making handmade masks, creating administrative tasks for volunteers, and assisting the VA to support the virtual programs being deployed. When asked if there were positions waiting for volunteers, six of 17 stated they had open positions. When asked if they had continued recognition programs, 10 stated they continued their program, often virtually.

When organizations were asked about the things they struggled with during the pandemic, the top three responses were keeping volunteers engaged, volunteer access to the VA, and limited interaction with VAVS. The top three successes were increasing and adjusting the programs to assist the needs of the VA, creating virtual assignments and trainings, and finding donors who were interested in combatting food insecurity or COVID-related assistance. When surveyed on information the organizations wanted to share to help others, responses included making sure to keep in contact with volunteers, working to help them find other ways to support the VA, soliciting input from volunteers about their experiences, and recognition of the difference between competing with other organizations and complementing them.

The Subcommittee had prepared a document on equity in volunteering, which contained eight strategies: shifting to new language for volunteers, building new relationships, understanding the importance of socioeconomic status, embracing skill-based opportunities, recruiting from those using the services, partnering to engage the groups of youth, removing barriers, and creating an inclusive organizational culture.

Anne Parker, Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., made a motion to accept the Recruitment Subcommittee report. Mona Gunn, American Gold Star Mothers, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Gallina reported that the quality of nominations was much improved from previous years. There were three finalists for Male Volunteer of the Year, and four for Female Volunteer of the Year. The nominees were so close in terms of the judging criteria that for the first time Mr. Gallina could recall, the Subcommittee decided to award Male and Female Volunteer of the Year to two nominees each. The Male Volunteers of the Year were Gabe Cinquegrana, Sons of the American Legion, and Roger Hull, Soldiers' Angels. The Female Volunteers of the Year were Donna Ray, American Legion Auxiliary, and Carol Adams, Soldiers' Angels. The Subcommittee's goal for 2022 was to increase the number of quality nominations from NAC members.

Sandra Kriebel, VFW Auxiliary, made a motion to accept the NAC Volunteer of the Year Subcommittee report. Joseph Dooley, United Veterans Services, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Partnership: Karen O'Neal, Chief, Voluntary Service, Erie VAMC, Erie, PA, noted that in addition to the proposed changes to the SOP the NAC had already discussed, the Subcommittee was presenting the NAC with two recommendations:

1. The NAC membership recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approve the proposed standardized listing of in-kind donation values to promote a consistent and more accurate reporting of donation values.

2. The NAC membership recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approve the inclusion of VA volunteer drivers in the VA Drug Free Workplace Program.

Ronald Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight, moved to approve the aforementioned recommendations. Mona Gunn, American Gold Star Mothers, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

Recommendations: Anne Parker, Blue Star Mothers of America, announced that the Subcommittee had received eight recommendations from four organizations.

Sons of the American Legion

1. *Discontinue the automatic inactivating of volunteers after 11 months of inactivity in the Voluntary Service System (VSS) database program.*
2. *Allow a volunteer's hours to remain with the organization they are affiliated with after they become inactive in the VSS database program.*
3. *Develop an annual award, both national and local, for NAC member organizations.*

Blue Star Mothers of America

1. *Programs initiated by Central Office, such as Compassionate Contact Corps, should be made available at all hospitals without the hospital being able to decide whether to implement the programs unless there are local policies or manpower issues that prevent the facility from adopting them.*

VFW Auxiliary

1. *Allow and implement more creditable projects for volunteers to do outside of the VA, as long as Veteran/staffing privacy issues are not involved.*
2. *Add a column on the Annual Joint Review (AJR) for meeting attendance at VAVS Committee meetings.*

Military Women Across the Nation

1. *Allow facility volunteers to adopt a social gathering (coffee-klatch) with members having similar interests to gather in-person (when protocols allowed), or virtually periodically.*
2. *Expand assistance to Veterans who are not tech-savvy with volunteers who are able to guide them through the VA's online resources.*

The aforementioned recommendations were presented to the EC the preceding day. A decision was made not to move any forward to the Secretary.

Terri Gothard, Marine Corps League Auxiliary, made a motion to accept the Recommendations Subcommittee report. Mona Gunn, American Gold Star Mothers, seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition or abstention.

My Life, My Story: Thor Ringler, National Program Manager, Kavitha Reddy, Associate Director, Employee Whole Health, Sheena Prasad, Program Support Assistant, Seth Jovaag, Writer, and Jennifer Sluga, Community Care Counselor, presented the My Life, My Story (MLMS) program, which encourages Veterans to share their stories. MLMS was launched at three pilot sites and local staff referred interested Veterans to the program. The MLMS team assigned a volunteer who interviewed the Veteran over phone or video and reviewed the story with the Veteran. The MLMS team mailed copies to the Veteran and added the story to the VA medical record. The similar What's on

Your Mind? project, which was aimed at VA employees rather than the Veterans themselves, had been introduced at five pilot sites.

The NAC recessed for the day at 3:44 p.m.

Thursday, May 27, 2021 - 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Welcome & Platform Orientation: Dr. Clark welcomed attendees to the second day of the NAC meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Whole Health Afternoon Refresh: Mr. Gobin discussed ways attendees could attend to their health throughout the meeting and led them in a whole health exercise.

Advisory Committee Management Office Report: Jeffrey Moragne, Director, VA Advisory Committee Management Office, presented the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) 101 presentation noting federal statute governs the establishment, termination, and management of federal advisory committees (FACs). FAC requirements include:

- A signed and filed charter
- A designated federal officer (DFO)
- Public meetings announced in the Federal Register 15 days in advance with an agenda
- Balanced membership
- Records maintained and available for public inspection

Mr. Moragne noted the NAC is different from other VA FACs in that it had a unique charter with membership composed of Veterans service and other organization representatives who speak openly about the value of their organizations. The charter allowed member organizations to fund NAC events and activities during the Committee's meeting.

Additionally, he noted members may testify or speak on FAC matters only in their personal capacity, and they are expected to clarify that they are providing their personal opinion rather than speaking on behalf of the VA or the FAC.

VA FAC best practices included:

- Mastering the Committee calendar
- Knowing one's role as a Committee member
- Using subcommittees to do the heavy lifting
- Dedicating meeting time for Committee discussion
- Cross-committee collaboration
- Using the Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-Based (SMART) template to craft recommendations
- Using VA Library Services for data and information services
- Conducting annual field visits
- Engaging subject matter experts
- Consulting the DFO on FACA and ethics questions

Fraud, Waste & Abuse: The Role of VA's Community Partners: Tracy Davis Bradley, Ph.D., Acting Chief Compliance and Business Integrity Officer, Office of Compliance and Business Integrity, spoke about VHA's fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA) campaign. Fraud is intentional misconduct. Waste is misusing money or resources, even if unintentional. Abuse is behaving improperly or misusing one's position or authority. FWA is a critical challenge for VHA requiring support of all staff to help address compliance and business integrity. The VHA Code of Integrity emphasizes that everyone has a role to play in preventing FWA.

VHA crafted the following FWA campaign goals:

- Foster a culture of integrity and FWA awareness in which employees feel empowered and comfortable reporting any FWA.
- Improve the understanding of what constitutes FWA, including who is involved in preventing, detecting, and addressing FWA.
- Clarify where employees should report FWA.
 - Direct supervisors
 - Local integrity and compliance officer
 - VHA helpline
 - VA Office of Inspector General

The NAC recessed from 1:02 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Social Work: Shared Goals: Jill DeBord, LCSW, Executive Director, Care Management & Social Work (CMSW), informed the NAC that CMSW provided leadership and oversight for a vast array of personalized case management, clinical interventions, and supportive programming across VHA and in collaboration with community partners for Service members, Veterans, their families, and caregivers. Over 17,300 social workers provided services in all clinical programs across the continuum of care. VA had the largest social work graduate training program, with approximately 1,500 field placements through more than 230 colleges and universities. She presented information on the mission of Fisher House Foundation which assists in providing temporary housing for families during a Veteran's episode of care with 49 Fisher Houses across the VA. Additionally, Ms. DeBord noted the Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program facilitated a comprehensive, person-centered, recovery-oriented program for Veterans, their families and caregivers, and VA employees who experienced intimate partner violence. She also informed membership that the National Social Work Program maintains a field-based social work leadership council that serves in a consultative capacity.

Ms. DeBord presented information about CMSW's release of a National Action Plan to Address Racism in the VA Social Work Workforce in June 2020. In January and February 2021, social work chiefs completed voluntary and confidential listening sessions with leaders and frontline staff. The information collected would be presented in a white paper and each of CMSW's six Tiger Teams had appointed a representative to work on the Action Plan.

Ms. DeBord then summarized action taken around the White Ribbon VA Initiative which is aimed at eliminating sexual harassment and assault.

The other side of CMSW's program office dealt with post-9/11 transition and case management. There were 48 VA Liaisons for Healthcare strategically placed at 21 Military Treatment Facilities, and another five virtually supporting other Department of Defense (DoD) installations. VA Liaisons for Healthcare provided Service members with real-time, personalized transition of care from DoD to VA healthcare and facilitated education about healthcare and benefits. The Post-9/11 Military2VA Case Management Program had 140 Transition Care Management program managers, both nurses and social workers, over 400 case managers, and 100 transition patient advocates.

Ms. DeBord listed the following priorities for 2021 and beyond:

- Expand screening for social determinants of health
- Support staff with the new electronic health record
- Establish centers of innovation
- Expand focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Incorporate the Action Plan to Address Racism in the VA Social Work Workforce
- Maximize data sources to enhance social work clinical programming across VA

National TeleOncology Peer Training Support Program: Boyd Loehr, RN, BSN, MSHM, Telehealth Training Program Manager, Office of Specialty Care Services, VHA National TeleOncology (NTO), reported that approximately 14 percent of Veterans who came to VA for health benefits had taken advantage of the convenience of telehealth, a statistic that had exponentially increased during the current global pandemic. In March 2020, daily clinical telehealth visits grew to almost 12,000, a sixfold increase. During the COVID-19 pandemic, VA provided uninterrupted care to Veterans undergoing cancer treatment through its innovative TeleOncology program. This virtual care kept Veterans safe by reducing their COVID-19 exposure and provided a human connection invaluable during stressful times. The Peer Training Specialist (PTS) program was a novel, collaborative, national initiative by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), CDCE, and NTO. Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE) Veteran volunteers were hired from the VBA Veterans Readiness and Employment program for a six-month engagement with NTO. The NPWE volunteers worked 32 hours per week serving as a peer-to-peer trainer for NTO Veteran customers on a variety of pre-selected digital tools. This peer support enhanced the NTO customers' VA experience and empowered them to improve their personal health in a meaningful way. The foundational work was complete, and initial spoke sites had been identified. The first two PTS programs were finishing orientation, and evaluative measures had begun. Engagement with Veteran patients was expected to begin in early June 2021.

Beyond COVID: Creating a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (J.E.D.I.)

Nation in VA: Sophie Califano, Deputy Chief Consultant for Preventive Medicine, National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had magnified existing disparities and inequities in health care. Those health disparities and inequities did not exist in a vacuum. VA cared about the health of the nation and the Veterans it served, and had to do the work, even if it did not know the best way forward. The effect of the pandemic had been disproportionate, with a far

greater impact on the poor, elderly and people of color. According to a vaccine acceptance survey, the overall acceptability of a COVID-19 vaccine was moderate with black or African-American respondents being less likely to want the vaccine. Ms. Califano allowed that medical professionals had not necessarily earned the trust of the African-American community citing the Tuskegee experiment and instances of forced sterilization which still paint perceptions of public health efforts. Additionally, she noted part of this problem stems from the fact that people of color are underrepresented in the medical profession.

Policies, programs, and practices designed to improve health could put some people at increased risk of health and social inequities. Reviewing policies, programs, and practices could help identify those that support equal access to health. People live in their communities, not in hospitals or clinics, so it is important to work with community and faith-based leaders to better partner within communities.

Ms. Califano invited Tammy Finney, Bill Browning, Gregory Gray, and Karla McGhan to share reflections on the J.E.D.I. Task Force's work.

Voluntary Service Report: Dr. Clark reminded attendees that leadership, collaboration, and impact continues to provide the VAVS and CDCE strategic framework as it has since she took on her role in 2013. She expressed how her job includes the need to dream about what more could be done for Veterans, families, and caregivers through the caring hands of volunteers. The previous year Dr. Clark formulated the VAVS 2020 Vision & Modernization plan, which she never laid out because of the pandemic; nevertheless, every aspect of the plan was achieved because VAVS remained connected to its framework. While some derided "reimagine" as a "jargon nonsense word," Dr. Clark believed it was necessary during the pandemic to reimagine how volunteers could contribute to the health and well-being of Veterans. She defined reimagining as what one did when the road ahead was gone, and one had to find a path through the trees.

Dr. Clark noted that CDCE existed to build a sense of community: a community of individuals who had learned to communicate with each other, whose relationships went deeper than their masks of composure, and who had developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, delight in each other, and make others' conditions their own. Dr. Clark challenged the NAC to lead with compassion, collaborate with intention, and make an impact with purpose.

The NAC recessed for the day at 3:22 p.m.

Friday, May 28, 2021 - 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mr. Kleindienst called the meeting back to order at 12:00 p.m.

75th VAVS Anniversary Video: Attendees watched a video commemorating VAVS' 75th anniversary.

An Introduction to Innovation: Suzanne Shirley, Director of Community Engagement, VHA Office of Innovation Ecosystem (IE), said her office provided four critical elements needed to create a foundation for operationalizing innovation in a health care setting:

1. Workforce capacity to actualize innovation
2. Resilient organizational infrastructure
3. Innovation-nurturing culture
4. Strategic partnerships and collaborations

VHA IE portfolios included:

- VHA Innovators Network
- Care & Transformational Initiatives
- Diffusion of Excellence

The Diffusion of Excellence portfolio hosted a “shark tank” competition, where medical center directors and other VA leaders had the opportunity to invest in the ideas that were pitched. The Innovator’s Roadmap was a sub-site under the VHA IE website providing tools, resources, and connections for internal and external stakeholders to foster innovation and collaboration.

NAC Shark Tank: Dr. Shereef Elnahal moderated a mock shark tank in which the NAC heard the following four proposals:

1. Transportation Services Tracker, presented by Corky Draconi, Program Support Assistant, VA Central California Health Care System
2. Fall Festival Bags, presented by Joyce Kuwae, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA Maryland Health Care System
3. Freedom Sings USA, presented by Michael Dobbs, Chief, Voluntary Service, Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System
4. Employee Wellness Center, presented by Adelina Sowell, Chief, Center for Development and Civic Engagement, Orlando VA Healthcare System

Dr. Ginny Creasman, Dr. David Omura, Mr. Kleindienst, and Ms. Morgan served as the sharks, and favorably received all four proposals.

The NAC recessed from 1:19 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Student Leadership Council (SLC): Tyrone Green, Program Specialist, CDCE, explained that the SLC was a national program focused on developing student volunteers and making them strong servant leaders both on a local and a national scale. The program’s inaugural class included 46 amazing young people. Mary Golden, Chief, Voluntary Service/SLC National Lead Mentor, VA Central California Health Care System, added that students underwent an extensive nomination, interview, and selection process to participate in the program. The participants reflected the country’s rich diversity and would be featured in a diversity magazine. SLC integrated a robust leadership curriculum and mentorship. Volunteer mentors were proven leaders from VA and other federal agencies as well as many NAC member organizations. Each student would be assigned a service project to help their selected Veteran population. Nabila Sultan and Praket Nigam, SLC Student Ambassadors, and Alexia Lunningham, Chief, Voluntary Service/SLC Public Relations Lead, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, discussed their experiences with the program. Ronald Graves, Chief, Voluntary

Service/SLC Director of Products and Innovation, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital, reiterated to attendees that SLC was looking for organizations to help support the program.

Stella Award: Dr. Clark presented the Stella Award to **Dennis Peterson**, Product Line Manager, VA Veteran Relationship Management-Enterprise Program Management Office, Office of Information and Technology, CDCE Portal Team.

The NAC recessed from 2:16 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., during which time a video presentation on the VA Secretary's Center for Strategic Partnerships was shown.

James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship Presentation: Christopher Slawinski, Fleet Reserve Association, and John P. Brown, III, AMVETS, presented the James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship for \$20,000 to **Brooke Jackowski**.

Executive Leadership Award: Dr. Clark and Dr. Melissa Heinlein presented the Executive Leadership Award to **Karen Flaherty-Oxler**, M.S., RN, Medical Center Director, Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Special Recognition Awards: Mr. Kleindienst presented the Special Recognition Awards to past EC chairs **W.G. "Bill" Kilgore**, **Ronald Rolfes, Jr.**, and **Charles Gallina**.

NAC Awards 2020: Mr. Kleindienst and Dr. Clark acknowledged the NAC award winners from the previous year:

James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship for \$20,000: **Danielle Nam**, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

NAC Male Volunteer of the Year: **H. Lee Davis**, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, VA Maryland Health Care System

NAC Female Volunteer of the Year: **Sandra Carter**, Soldiers' Angels, South Texas Veterans Health Care System

VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence: **Tammy Finney**, Columbia VA Health Care System

VAVS American Spirit Awards:

Volunteer Supervisor of the Year: **Nicole Ogburn**, Durham VA Health Care System

Civic Organization Recruitment: **Jennifer Conzemius**, Tomah VA Medical Center

Corporate Recruitment: **Rachel Childress**, VA Maryland Health Care System

Senior Recruitment: **Craig Doane**, Charles George VA Medical Center

Faith-Based Organization: **Joyce Kuwae**, VA Maryland Health Care System

NAC Awards 2021: Mr. Kleindienst and Dr. Clark presented the awards as follows:

NAC Female Volunteers of the Year: **Donna Ray**, American Legion Auxiliary, and **Carol Adams**, Soldiers' Angels

NAC Male Volunteers of the Year: **Gabriel Cinquegrana**, Sons of the American Legion, and **Roger Hull**, Soldiers' Angels

American Spirit Awards:

Civic Organization Recruitment: **David's Drive 831**, Coatesville VA Medical Center, and **Greater Boston Food Bank**, VA Bedford Healthcare System

Corporate Recruitment: Cheeriodicals and FICP, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

Faith-Based Organization Recruitment: Knights of Columbus, Chillicothe VA Medical Center

Senior Recruitment: **Naples Activity Center**, VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System

Student Recruitment: **Ananya Gourishetty**, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical

Center, and **Alison Moon**, **High Schoolers for Front Liners**, VA Maryland Health Care System

VSO Recruitment: **American Red Cross**, Charles George VA Medical Center

Volunteer Supervisor of the Year: **Sarah Carnes**, Librarian, VA Bedford Healthcare System

Unsung Hero: **Jamie Russell**, Voluntary Service Specialist, Chillicothe VA Medical Center

VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence: **Denise Cunningham**, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System

Integrated Health: Ben Kligler, M.D., MPH, Executive Director, Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, explained that whole health was an approach to health care that empowered and equipped people to take charge of their health and well-being. The whole health model balanced three pillars which when combined would help drive the continued success of the transition to personalized, proactive, patient-driven care.

- The pathway: engaging Veterans in their mission aspiration purpose with Veteran partners and whole health coaches

- Well-being programs: encouraging self-care, decreasing reliance on provider-delivered care, and complementary and integrative health approaches
- Whole health clinical care: cultural transformation of how clinical health care is delivered by focusing on the wants and needs of the Veteran

Strategy 2.1.4 of the VA Strategic Plan FY2018-2024 called on VA to significantly improve VA health outcomes by shifting from a system primarily focused on disease management to one based on partnering with Veterans throughout their lives and focusing on whole health. Congressional support for the whole health approach was strong; the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 expanded research, education, and delivery of complementary and integrative health (CIH) to Veterans, and created a pilot program on the integration of CIH and related issues for Veterans and their families. VHA Policy Directive 1137, signed by the Under Secretary for Health in May 2017 mandated that VA provide a mechanism to offer CIH therapies with evidence of promising or potential benefit either within the VA facility or the community. The #LiveWholeHealth blog series highlighted self-care resources that Veterans could experience at home.

Closing Remarks: Mr. Kleindienst and Dr. Clark thanked all in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m.

Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D.
Director, VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement
Designated Federal Officer, National Advisory Committee

Date