

THE GOVERNOR'S FOCUS ON SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Veterans Focus Meeting December 6, 2012 Minutes

Attendees: Kimberly Alexander-Bratcher, Dr. Will Barnes, Ken Blackman, Ph.D., Toney Bond, Lynn Davis, Laura Drakeford, Li Fang, Ph.D., Samuel Hargrove, John Harris, Unita Knight, Harold Kudler, M.D., Darlene Leysath, Heather McAllister, Mike McMichael, Katrina Miller, Thea Monet, Lawrence Rouse, Ph.D., Wes Ryder, Nicole Smashum, Jeff Smith, Belivia Spaulding, Regina Sweeney, and Gerald Waller

- Dr. Fang welcomed everyone.
- Dr. Will Barnes, one of the speakers, retired from the DE National Guard as a chaplain in August and relocated to Winston-Salem. Currently, he is working with the Department of Defense (DoD) Suicide Prevention Office. Dr. Barnes started off his presentation with information on spiritual resiliency from the August 2010 issue of the Military Medicine Supplement. He noted the importance of spiritual resiliency and the fact that July 2012 marked the highest number of military suicides ever. Of these suicides, nearly 52% had never been deployed. One of the biggest challenges when folks go to war is survival—how to perform mission and get back safely. But when they return, everything changes, and it is the resilience of the human spirit that gets them through. The Army administers a comprehensive soldier fitness survey that looks at eight factors of the mind (spiritual, psychological, behavioral, and social) and body (physical, nutritional, medical, environmental); the survey represents the first time that the Army is looking at the whole soldier. Equally important to the soldier are the family, organization, and community systems. The DoD has embarked on a faith-based initiative, *Partner in Care*, that is trying to build bridges between the military and community. *Partner in Care* takes into account the five dimensions of comprehensive soldier fitness and as well as the spiritual component (the spiritual module is based on the Domain of The Human Spirit or DOTH):
 - (1) spiritual strength: core values and beliefs concerning purpose and meaning in life
 - (2) self-awareness (reflection/introspection): ability to reframe positively life stressors, expectancy of successes, and overcome obstacles
 - (3) social awareness: social relatedness (respect), ability to connect with others (empathy), and to love and to be loved (compassion)
 - (4) self-motivation: demonstrates a belief (expectancy), ability to cope with situations (confident), influence outcomes (optimism), and create change (hope)
 - (5) self-regulation (self-control): emotion (delay gratification), cognitive (self-valuation), and behavior control (autonomous control)
 - (6) sense of personal ownership: stop and think, take a knee, deep breathingDr. Barnes presented a graphic describing Force Fitness (see the next page for the graphic; his PowerPoint presentation is on the Focus website).



- Dr. Blackman asked who the case managers are in this model. Dr. Barnes acknowledged that this is a challenge for all military branches and is particularly difficult for the Guard and Reserve since it is the commander's responsibility to take care of those in his unit. The conundrum is to figure out what it takes to give soldiers what they need to stay healthy. This model can be extended to academic institutions, which haven't always built the support systems that student veterans need. The college/university "communities" need to engage the soldiers and determine the supports needed to keep them healthy. Dr. Kudler asked how we can take this model and make it concrete, whether it is a LME or community. Dr. Barnes said that 18 states have joined *Partner in Care*, with over 1500 faith-based organizations .
- Dr. Lawrence Rouse, President, James Sprunt Community College (JSCC) in Duplin County, brought a team of colleagues to present to the Governor's Focus. Dr. Rouse noted that Duplin County is rural, the 10th largest county, and sparsely populated (60,000). It is surrounded by military installations and feels the impact of military keenly. JSCC is 1 of 58 community colleges in the State and one of the smallest. It does have an impact on the community as it is the only college in the county. They are interested in training and retraining the unemployed and underemployed and offer customized training programs to local industry. They house the

WestPark Business Technology Center, which includes the Eastern Carolina Food Ventures Incubator Kitchen and the Small Business Incubator. Other programs include a barber school, the Duplin Early College High School, the Duplin Career Academy in the high school (i.e., agribusiness, computer information technology, health sciences, and diesel mechanics), a male mentoring academy, and the Center for Leadership Development Academy. They are concerned about global education and the economy and have gone green. Their graduation rate is increasing (7th highest in community college system). JSCC has expanded its partnering with community organizations—it is collaborating with Duplin County on a \$2M Golden Leaf grant, working with the public schools, and is looking into expanding into other towns.

- Darlene Leysath, the Executive Director of The Cornerstone CDC, is a veteran-run non-profit organization. Its goals are to (1) create rural collaborative targeted wellness services designed to bridge gaps and create vital connections to the VA at the community service level, (2) connect rural veterans to needed support services that are available but not fully accessible, and (3) develop a rural veterans centered service model based on a best practice understanding of what services work for this population. Cornerstone is collaborating with Eastpoint LME on a rural veterans health initiative
- Toney Bond, Vice President of Student Services (veteran) and Mrs. Regina Sweeney are working with the 45 enrolled veterans and their 30 family members who receive tuition assistance through federal financial aid programs.
- Unita Knight (veteran) heads continuing education. She is interested in human resource development, which includes employability skills, career planning and assessment, the nationally recognized Career Readiness Certificate, and technology awareness. Another area of interest is basic skills, including the GED, an adult high school (AHS) diploma program, and English as a second language (ESL).
- Prof. Gerald Waller discussed green energy and the implications of this technology for veterans—job creation and economic development. Duplin County has the largest solar farm in country, and he referred folks to their standalone website, www.ncgreentech.com. NC is one of the top ten green friendly states. Prof. Waller is working with faculty and staff to review the MOS and determine how the community college can enhance the base skills that folks have (e.g., weatherization, electrical grids) in order to place them into jobs that utilize these skills.
- Lynn Davis is the director of the business technology center. Each of 58 community colleges has a business technology center. Since these centers are funded by the legislature, there is typically no charge for these courses. The sustainable farming series started 2 years ago. Duplin and Sampson counties grow 1/6 of the world's food supply. JSCC programs are geared to enhancing skills to work in agribusiness. For example, they work with Eastern Carolina Organics and have a

course on how to generate \$1M with one acre of land. They also teach skills related to budgeting, market analysis, etc. JSCC is the only community college in the state with an incubator kitchen (Hillsborough and Asheville have incubator kitchens but not at the community college). As a regional center, they try to help people get started in the food business.

- Dr. Kudler promoted the development of small demonstration projects, to determine what works and what doesn't. He also mentioned that December 7 is Pearl Harbor Day and to remember all veterans and their families.
- Mr. Harris announced that Dr. Sheila Kennan, Fayetteville State nursing department, recently received a grant to provide holistic services for veterans. He also reported that the Governor signed more letters to veterans, bringing the total to 43,505. The welcome home letters include links to resources in the state. In November, CARELINE received 435 calls related to the military or veterans. The majority of these calls, 303, related to Medicaid; 91 additional callers wanted a referral to their local social services agency. Mecklenburg and Cumberland counties had the most calls, 58 and 37 respectively. Eighteen callers were OEF/OIF.
- SB 597 reporting is on hold. Dr. Kudler has reviewed the report and will speak to a legislative committee on Monday about the report and next steps. He also noted that Duke and Joining Forces are putting the VA-generated medical history on a card to be input into the electronic record. Dr. Kudler and Dr. Mike Lancaster met to discuss an incentive program being developed by Blue Cross Blue Shield, which will result in reimbursement at a higher rate if best practices are used. The challenge is to overcome built-in disincentives. The VA is working with the Indian Health Service to expedite payment of clinical services. Blue Cross Blue Shield is partnering with the University of North Carolina to create a Physician's Assistant master's degree program. This new program is designed for returning military veterans, allowing them to build on the experiences they gained while on active duty. Incoming Governor Pat McCrory has selected his first public event as governor to be with veterans on January 5. With former Governors Jim Hunt and Jim Martin as honorary co-chairs, he will attend a fundraiser for the Veterans Leadership Council Cares.

The next Focus meeting will be on Thursday, January 24, 2013, in the Wright Building conference room 131, on Dix campus.

2013 meetings, Wright Building, conference room 131, Dix campus:

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| • February 28 | • July 25 |
| • March 28 | • August 22 |
| • April 25 | • September 26 |
| • May 23 | • October 24 |
| • June 27 | • December 5 |