

Minutes

November 21, 2017

Veterans Policy Advisory Committee

A meeting of the Veterans Policy Advisory Committee (VPAC) convened at 11:00 AM in the 3rd floor conference room of the BB&T Building, Columbia, SC.

A notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The following members were present:

William L. (Bill) Bethea, Jr. (Chairman), Col (Ret) Dan Beatty, Major General (Ret) George Goldsmith, Col (Ret) Barringer F. Wingard, Jr., Major General Van McCarty (for Major General Robert E. Livingston, Jr., SC Adjutant General), Sergeant Major (Ret) Howard Metcalf (Director, SC Veterans Affairs), John Magill (Director, SC Dept of Mental Health), and Todd Humphries (Ex Officio, President, SC Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers).

Guests attending were Secretary of State Mark Hammond, Shannon Wiley (General Counsel Office of the Secretary of State), Dr. David Omura (Director Dorn VA Medical Center), Sterling Boyd (Dorn VA Medical Center), Susan MacPherson (Columbia Chamber of Commerce), Ron Demonet (Veteran Scholarship Forever), Dwight Bradham (Veterans Affairs Officer for Aiken County), Scott Jaillette (Senator Lindsay Graham's Office), Tom Robillard (Military Officers Association of America, VP for SC Legislative Affairs), Charlie Farrell (Executive Coordinator SC Military Base Task Force), Haidee Stith (SC Military Base Task Force), and Sandy Claypoole (Program Manager SC Military Base Task Force).

Bill Bethea called the meeting to order. No members of the press were in attendance.

The minutes from the October 17th meeting were approved.

Secretary of State, Mark Hammond

General Counsel, Shannon Wiley

Charitable Giving – Role & Scope:

- Charities receive tax exempt status in recognition of their vital role in supplementing and providing services on behalf of government.
- In 2016 Americans gave over \$390 billion to charity.
- Charities solicit donors through many different channels. In addition to the more common methods of direct mail, telemarketing, and drop off donation boxes, online fundraising and commercial co-venture campaigns are increasingly used.

SC Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act:

- The Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act was enacted in 1994 in order to regulate the manner, conditions, and procedures in which organizations solicit charitable funds in South Carolina.
- The Secretary of State is the administrator of the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act.
- Under the Act, charitable organizations soliciting in South Carolina are required to file yearly registration statements and annual financial reports.
- Professional solicitors and commercial co-ventures must also register annually and file financial reports that are countersigned by the charity.
- These registration and financial reporting requirements provide accountability and transparency to state regulators and charitable donors.
- The Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act provides a registration exemption for veteran's organizations that have a congressional charter, unless the organization uses a professional fundraiser.
- Although a charitable organization must apply for the registration exemption on an annual basis, this exemption exempts the charity from paying a filing fee or filing an annual financial report.
- Veteran's organizations that may qualify for exemption include chapters of the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion.
- In addition to enforcing registration and reporting requirements, the Secretary of State may pursue administrative actions against charities and professional fundraisers for misrepresentation, failure to make required disclosures, and failure to use donations for stated charitable purposes.
- Violations of the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act may result in fines, suspension, and injunctive actions.

Veterans-Related Charity Fraud

- The FTC reports that charities fraud is on the list of the top six complaints for seniors.
- This group includes veterans who may be especially inclined to donate to organizations that focus on supporting service members and veterans-related causes.
- The number of support organizations associated with military or veterans-related causes is large, and they often have very similar names – so much so that it may be hard to distinguish among them.

Dr. David Omura, Director Dorn VA Medical Center

Mission: Veteran focused, performance driven health care

Vision: The William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center will be recognized as a leading medical center in SC and one of the best in the nation. We will be at the forefront in areas of efficiency, innovation, quality, patient centered care and employee satisfaction.

Columbia VAMC Overview

- Opened in 1932 at its current location
- 2206-bed Level 1c primary, secondary, and tertiary care medical center
- Over 1M outpatient visits
- Nearly 4,000 inpatient admissions
- FY17 Budget over \$530M

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

- Anderson
- Greenville
- Spartanburg
- Rock Hill
- Florence
- Sumter
- Orangeburg

Expansions and New Facilities

- Orangeburg and Sumter Expansions
- Rock Hill/Orangeburg/Sumter/Florence New Facilities
- Parking Garage
- Mental Health Inpatient Psych Unit
- Mental Health Center of Excellence
- Fisher House
- Prosthetics Center
- Center for Rehabilitative Services
- Outpatient Optometric Center
- OR Suite Renovation
- Primary Care Annex/Expansion

Accomplishments

- Tele-Primary Care at Florence CBOC
- Hep-C Initiative
- Mental Health Access
- Mobile Cardiology Unit
- 3 Palmetto Gold Winners
- Provider Agreements
- Compensation and Pension

Rural Health Grants

- Dorn VAMC applied for 9 FY17 Office of Rural Health Grants of which 7 were approved
- Estimated 3.86M in funding

Moving Forward

- Greater Choice for Veterans
- Modernize our Systems
- Focus Resources More Efficiently
- Improve Timeliness of Service
- Suicide Prevention

Dwight Bradham, Veterans Affairs Officer for Aiken County

- In 2016 in Aiken county, claims were increased by 935%. Average success rate for claims is between 78% and 83%
- Veteran demographics are changing. Currently in the claims system there are over 5,000 Vietnam veterans in Aiken County. Starting to see more and more from veterans from the Gulf War, OIF, and OEF. Seeing more rise in minorities and females.
- Adapting the way we work with veterans based on age group. With older veterans there is a need for more face to face time and explanations of how things work. With younger ones, they can find out a lot of answers on their own.
- Appointments are being scheduled 6 weeks out
- Migration of veterans to the southern and western regions of the US
- Military retirees are looking at states with the best tax incentives for military
- USC Aiken has a program where veterans can enroll in school and by the time they start classes the veterans are already receiving their GI benefits
- Savannah River Remediation and Nuclear Solutions are incorporating STEM opportunities so students in the local area can work in internships with the possibility of employment later on
- Aiken County Veterans Council is a coalition of 28 different veterans service organizations
- Many businesses are looking for military personnel to hire because of their work ethic
- Entire state will have access to Vetraspec database within next year
- Over 11,000 veterans in Aiken County
- Works as funeral service coordinator for veterans

Ann Shippy, SC Ambassador for the Women's Veterans

- About 2.5M female veterans who have served since America was founded
- WIMSA (Women In Military Service To America) sits at the entrance to Arlington Cemetery and is the only national monument to women's service throughout history

- Built in 1997
- Digitized computer system that allows you to register online
- The organization is 74% privately funded
- SC has over 47,000 female veterans, but only 6% are registered at the memorial

Charlie Farrell, VALOR (Veteran and Armed Forces Legal Out-Reach)

- Attorney General Alan Wilson has been working on this pro bono service for lower ranking military and veterans
- Will establish legal clinics for minor legal needs
- The Attorney General's office will provide a person to serve as coordinator

Bill Bethea announced there will not be a meeting in December. The MBTF staff will create a list of discoveries from the previous VPAC meetings. We will also look at the possibility of varying meeting times and locations, as well as the possibility of conference calls. We will continue to work on the Military Retirement Exemption Bill when the legislature goes into session. Bill also said that we still do not have the other two legislators for VPAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Claypoole