

# **Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes**

**April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)**

The Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) convened public meeting, which primarily focused on programmatic updates from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Federal and community partners on April 11, 2023, at the Baltimore VA Medical Center.

## **Committee Members Present:**

Brandon Wilson, Director of Veterans Services of the Carolinas, ACHV Chair

Ann Oliva is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, ACHV Vice Chair

Dr. Robert E. Accordino, Faculty, Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School

Kathryn Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

Dr. Toni Jackman, Adjunct Associate Professor, Health Information Management and Technology Graduate Program, University of Maryland Global Campus, and Faculty, Health-Related Professions, College of Southern Nevada

Thomas J. Lyons, Former Deputy Commissioner for Veterans' Services for Boston; Founder of the Semper Fidelis Society of Boston, a Marine Corps

Wendy McClinton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Black Veterans for Social Justice

Kathryn C. Monet, Chief Executive Officer, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

Dawanta Parks, Program Manager, Project Liaison, Denver Office of Economic Development Denver Construction Careers Pilot, Bayaud Enterprises

Quandrea Patterson, Associate Director of National Legislative Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Josh Protas, Vice President of Public Policy, MAZON, DC Office

Colonel D.J. Reyes, National Veterans Rights Advocate, Senior Mentor Program Coordinator, Tampa, Florida, Veterans Treatment Court

Darryl J. Vincent, Chief Operating Officer, U.S. VETS

Donald Whitehead, Co-Founder, Racial Equity Partners

T. Evonne Williams, Manager, Shallow Subsidies, Swords to Plowshares

## **Committee Members –Absent**

Patrice Livingston, Veteran and Owner of Job Shop Focused on Research and Development

## **Ex Officio Members – Present**

Ivan Denton, Director, Office of National Programs, Department of Labor

Dr. Susan Black, Veterans Benefits Administration

Yashika D. Neaves, Ph.D., Chief, Strategic Plans and Initiatives, Military-Civilian Transition Office, Defense Support Services Center, Department of Defense

Monshi Ramdass, Military Veteran Agricultural Liaison, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, Office of the Secretary

Jeff Olivet, Executive Director, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)

## Ex Officio Member – Absent

Greg Crawford, Correctional Program Specialist at the National Institute of Corrections

Heather Denny, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Team, Department of Education

Stacey Owens, MSW, LCSW-C, Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Norm Suchar, Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, Department of Housing and Urban Development

## Committee Support Staff Present:

Anthony Love, Designated Federal Officer, ACHV, VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO)

Leisa Davis, Alternate Designated Federal Officer, VHA HPO

**\*Additional attendees may present for a portion or all of the meeting and/or attend for situational awareness. Some, but not all, attendees identified themselves by name. Attendees are not required to identify themselves. The following were identified by their full or partial name:**

Burney, Jelessa	Thompson, Abraham
Clark, Sean	Vines, Gloristine
Clow, John	Watts, Michelle
Culver, Charles	Wehrer, Michael
Diaz, Monica	Wiseman, Hillary
Dickerson, NaShid	Wrzeskinski, Tess
Eckman, Jonathan	
Friede, John	
Garner, Tramecia	
Gingell, Madolyn	
Gomez, Roberto	
Green, Sharon	
Haney, Jackson	
Koetz, Cameron	
Lee, Deborah	
Mitchell, Heather	
Mustafa, Bilal	
Nash, Jeff	
Moragne, Jeff	
Pittman, Teresa	
Ricks, Shonelle	
Rogers, Ari	
Salazar, Heather	
Savage, Rasheed	
Sheetz, Rebecca	
Sharpe, Joe	

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)

## Welcome Remarks

### Brandon Wilson, Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Chair

- Provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda
- Introduced new ACHV Members that were appointed in 2023
- Introduced the Federal Ex Officio Members

## SECVA Video to Advisory Committees

- Importance of Advisory Committees and the work they do to assist Veterans
- Focus on Veteran outcomes through data

## Welcome Remarks

### Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO)

- Welcomed the newly appointed ACHV Members and the Ex Officio Members and thanked them for their service
- Nationally, the total number of Veterans experiencing homelessness has [decreased by 11% since January 2020](#).
- During 2022, VA permanently housed more than 40,000 homeless Veterans, providing them with the safe, stable homes that they deserve. This exceeded the department's [goal](#) to house 38,000 Veterans in 2022 by 6.3%.
- Homeless Programs Goals
  - Permanently house at least 38,000 Veterans experiencing homelessness
  - Ensure that at least 95% of the Veterans housed in 2023 do not return to homelessness during the year. And of that who return to homelessness VA will ensure that at least 90% are rehoused or on a path to rehousing by the end of 2023.
  - Engage with at least 28,000 unsheltered Veterans to help them obtain housing and other wraparound services. This represents a more than 10% increase in the number of unsheltered Veterans reached during calendar year 2022.

## Key Takeaways From the Baltimore VAMC

### Jonathan Eckman, Baltimore VAMC Director

### John Clow, LCSW-C, Assistant Chief of Social Work Community, Integration Service, Baltimore VAMC

- Shared appreciation for the invitation and strong collaboration with the following community partners
  - New Vision House of Hope
  - Sheppard Pratt
  - Calhoun Project Phase SSVF
  - Baltimore Station
  - Helping Up Mission
- Snapshot of the Community Integration Services (Staff: 95)
- Baltimore VAMC Goal: 618 Goal  
(Surpassed goal in 2022, resulting in 624 Veterans Housed)

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

**April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)**

- HUD-VASH (9 Counties) (Tenant-Based: 1,200/Project Based Vouchers: 75)
- Community Resource and Referral Center
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans
- GPD Beds: 199
- Contract Housing: 25 Beds
- Veterans Justice Outreach
  - (Treatment Court: 3 Courts; 15 Counties) (Justice Outreach) (Group Therapy)
- Safe Haven
- Employment Services
- Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans

## **Rebecca Sheetz LCSW-C, VISN 5, Network Homeless Coordinator**

### **Snapshot of VISN 5**

- Geographic Service Area (DC, MD, WV, and small sections of VA, PA, KY, OH)
- VA Medical Centers (DC, VAMHC Loch Raven, Perry Point, Martinsburg, Huntington, Clarksburg, Beckley)
- Community-Based Clinics: 28
- Vet Centers: 19
- Rural Mobile Unit: 1
- Full-Time Staff: 12,000
- Medical Care Budget in FY 2022: \$2.5 Billion
- Veterans Served in FY 2022: 247,594

### **Key Takeaways From Former the ACHV Members**

- Collaborate with other Federal Agencies
- Collaborate with VA Advisory Committees
- Keep employment on the forefront as a priority
- Continue to include community partners in the meetings
- Continue to include Veterans with Lived Experience Panel in the meetings and other forums to acquire feedback
- Master the meeting schedule two years out for planning purposes
- Continue to raise awareness for additional assistance for Women Veterans
- Continue to raise awareness about the important role for Peer Support
- Continue to identify and fill critical gaps
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to expand outreach to connect Veterans experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to homeless program services

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)

## HUD-VASH Aging and Disabled Homeless Veterans Initiative Deborah Lee, MSW, LCSW, LCAS, HUD VASH Regional Coordinator, VHA Homeless Programs

### Key Takeaways

- January 2023: GEC/HUD-VASH Community of Practice Calls
- January 2023: Serving Aging and Disabled Veterans: A HUD-VASH Guidebook Release on VA SharePoint Site
- February 2023: 12 Training Modules Released in VA's Travel Management System
- 2023: Funded Positions (VISN Geriatrics Specialists/PBV Enhancement Teams)
- 2023: East and West VA Conferences

### Veterans with Lived Experience

#### Key Takeaways From Formerly Homeless Veterans

Overall, there were some common themes amongst the panelists that included:

- Lack of early identification of mental health, substance abuse and incarceration and learning about VA services after a number of years (after discharge) led them to homelessness
- Expanding outreach to share more information about VA Services (before exiting the military and incarceration)
- Veterans Telling Other Veterans About VA Services
- Vital Role of Peer Support Specialists and the need to hire Veterans (with lived experience in this role)
- More collaborative outreach efforts amongst VA and community partners
- Assistance with navigating the VA Systems to get enrolled in the VA system
- Increased outreach to assist Women Veterans

An overview of the responses from the Veterans Panel is noted below:

- **Do you remember receiving any information before you were discharged from the military about VA (how to get enrolled, what benefits and services might be available to you as a Veteran)? If so, what information did you get that was most important or helpful?**
  - Only received information about completing a physical was provided
  - Did not receive any information about how to enroll in VA services
- **How long after discharge did you enroll in VA?**
  - Connected to VA prior to being discharged; Referred to VA by a shelter and ultimately received a HUD-VASH Voucher (based on assistance from a HUD-VASH Case Worker)
  - Connected to VA 26 years after discharge. While incarcerated, a Veterans Advisory Group was formed in prison, and we were able to enroll (with the assistance of an Outreach Coordinator)
  - Connected to VA 35 years after discharge
  - Connected to VA 10 years after discharge (referred to domiciliary program)

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)

- **What VA and community programs helped you the most?**
  - HUD-VASH and Mental Health (Homeless Shelter assisted with the referral)
  - The comprehensive VA Services (HUD-VASH, Healthcare, Mental Health, Compensated Work Therapy) were the lifeline and foundation need for wellness, health, and successful re-entry into the workforce. As a direct result, I completed the National Peer Support Certification, training and other workforce development activities. These opportunities and 10 years of work experience with the Mental Health Case Management, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator allowed me to learn and grow in ways that necessitate me giving back and helping other minority/rural Veterans navigate through the VA Health Care System.
  - Mental Health, Substance Use, Perry Point and Community Partners (MC Vet, Baltimore Station, Helping Up Mission, etc)
  - Domiciliary Program at Perry Point Medical Center and the 12 Step Program
  
- **What could have helped prevent you from becoming homeless?**
  - Receiving VA Disability Compensation (when the application was initially submitted)
  - Early diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Trauma Brain Injury (TBI), Depression (prior to military discharge to receive the proper treatment) could have prevented uncontrollable and violent behavior that resulted ultimately led to acquiring a prison sentence
  - All Veterans said having access to information about the VA services earlier would have been most helpful
  - No knowing where to go ultimately lead me to make bad choices so more information (ahead of time) could have helped
  
- **What would you like to say to other Veterans who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness?**
  - Contact VA for help (HUD-VASH was a great experience)
  - Serving as a Certified Peer Support Specialist, I would share my battle with homelessness and how homeless programs were beneficial
  - VA has improved dramatically since the Vietnam Er and continues to improve its outreach efforts, so utilize the services that you earned.
  - If you have not signed up, go to the nearest VA Medical Center to learn about the services and enroll
  
- **If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs was attending the meeting, what would you like to say?**
  - Women Veterans need to receive the same level of respect, services as male Veterans
  - More assistance is needed for Women Veterans and children
  - More work is needed to share reach Veterans so they can utilize their benefits

# Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans (ACHV) Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023 (9:00 am – 4:30 pm EST)

- Do something to reach homeless Veterans so they can be connected to homeless programs (before they are discharged). Also, provide assistance to ensure they get information on how to acquire DoD documentation needed to apply for service-connected benefits. It is very difficult process to navigate alone.
- Train and hire more Peer Specialists (with lived experience) because they can identify with Veterans experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness by sharing their person story
- Collaborate with community outreach workers
- Expand prison outreach to raise awareness about VA services
- Provide more opportunities to listen to feedback from Veterans (with lived experience)
- Make the process easier (sometimes it is hard to navigate all the processes without assistance – especially to challenge the claim decisions)
- Provide more mental health service (it is often a stigma associated with it)  
Provide more opportunities to listen to feedback from Veterans (with lived experience)

## VA Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program, VHA Homeless Programs

Sean Clark, JD, National Director, Veterans Justice Programs

Madolyn Gingell, LCSW

National Coordinator, Legal Services for Veterans

### Key Takeaways include:

- Establish and administer legal services grant programs
- Further Veterans' legal services access through the continued growth of Medical Legal Partnership model within VHA
- Outreach, training, and coordination designed to expand access to legal services to Veterans
- Component of Veterans Justice Programs, VA National Homeless Programs Office

### Summary of Committee Requests for Information and Responses:

The Homeless Program Office will work with the appropriate points of contact to acquire information and share them with the Committee.

### Adjournment

Brandon Wilson, Chair, ACHV adjourned the meeting on April 11, 2023.

I hereby certify, that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

---

The minutes will be formally considered by the committee at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.