**ND Cares Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
 **April 4, 2024**  
  
 Attendees: Shelly Sizer, BG Jackie Huber, Dr. Weintraub,  
 Pam Sagness, David Becker Joyal Meyer, Michelle Panos  
 (All virtual)  
  
 Absent: Bryan Watters, Cindy Whitesell, Lonnie Wangen,  
 LTC Ann Willoughby

**1. Opening.**  Chairman Shelly Sizer briefly opened the meeting, and the minutes of the Feb.1, meeting was approved.

**2.** **Presentation:** None.

**3. New Business**

* **Executive Committee Updates**
  + **NDHHS – Behavioral Health:** Pam Sagness provided on update on the transition of the Human Service Centers to Community Based Clinics. People will be triaged ‘in’ as opposed to triaged ‘out’. They also are continuing to work on expanding our 1915i which is additional services for adults like transportation and respite. Pam is set to give an update on the HSRI and Schulte reports and what has been, and what is yet to be implemented. Avel Tele-mental health services in law enforcement began in January in the southwest region of the state. Dickinson is not participating because they are already within 45 miles of the local Hunman Service Center. The Minot and Devils Lake regions are getting setup with equipment. Lastly Pam stated that the NDHHS will support the TWV Veterans Suicide Symposium. Michelle mentioned that Melissa Markegard is invited to a meeting with Molly Herrington about creating a safe storage professional development for state employees.
  + **NDHHS**-**Health:** Joyal Meyer reported that so far this year there has been 29 suicides through death certificates, as of March 12th and 28% or 8 of the 29 suicides were current or former veterans. If it keeps on at this pace, then the number will be higher this year than in years past.
  + **Regional VA, Fargo:** Dr. Weintraub talked about the expansion of the PACT Act that allowed veterans to become eligible for VA healthcare early were there was toxic exposure to air pollution, chemicals, solvents, asbestos, nuclear weapons, radiation,

chemical weapons and biological weapons. If a veteran served generally in the Middle East, South Asia and some places, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Uzbekistan and others. So, if your boots were on the ground in any of those places, you're eligible for VA healthcare – income doesn’t matter. The same goes if a veteran deployment in support of certain missions: Operation Enduring freedom, Freedom Sentinel, Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Inherent resolve and Resolute Support. People who were previously not eligible are now priority groups 6. Some in priority group 8 will move up. The VA is still struggling to find a spot for the Fisher House. The VA’s budget this year is lean. They have started a “Choose VA” campaign trying to encourage veterans who are enrolled in eligible to use our services rather than use the private sector. Valor, out of Texas, is the new contract company for the Dickinson and Williston clinics and will begin in July.

* + **ND National Guard**: BG Huber reported that she is leaving later today heading to the Southwest border to do a visit with our 817th Engineer Company that's supporting missions sets in the California region of the border. A proclamation was signed at Minot AFB for the Month of the Military Child attended by Lt. Gov. Miller. There are also activities going on for Sexual Assault Prevention Awareness Month. The annual 5K/10K run Race to Zero is scheduled for April 13 in Bismarck.
  + **Army Reserve Ambassador:** David Becker reported that April 23rd is the Army Reserves 116th birthday. He also stated that the new coordinator for this region has been coordinating a lot of different virtual briefings for the ambassadors on many different topics, which is a complete change from what it has been in the past.

**4. Old Business:** Michelle reported that Dakota Nuts and Candy is interested in becoming an ND Cares Community and the new mayor of Lincoln would like to know more about ND Cares. Currently running on TV/Radio is a new TV ad for the Veterans Home, the Compact Act and new radio ad for expansion of the PACT Act. She is also thinking about a Hidden Wounds Overpass ad and one for the TWV Suicide Prevention Symposium in Sept. This is the last year where our monthly ND Broadcasters Association cost is $4000 and during the next contract negotiation it may go up. Most other agencies pay $5000. The NDVA, NDHHS and ND Cares have worked to complete the application for the FOX suicide prevention grant. If we are successful, the ND Cares NDBA contract will be used to heavily promote 988 targeting veterans. Michelle will also be working on the 2024 version of the ND Military Databook in time for the upcoming legislative session. For the Governors Challenge, Michelle reported that the ND Hospital Association agreed to help distribute the providers quick reference guide and will allow us to speak at their yearly conference in October. Two of the several outcomes from the Governor’s Challenge Suicide Mortality Review Academy are the creation of a coroners’ conference and hopefully a coroner’s association, and the other is to explore starting a Loss Team of suicide loss survivors that accompany coroners to a scene (or shortly after) to interact with the immediate loss survivor to offer support. She then gave a brief update on the TWV Suicide Prevention Symposium planning, SAVE Trainings and peer support. There is a meeting schedule with the state’s Chief People Officer to discuss developing a professional development webinar for all state employees about lethal mean safe storage. Lastly, she reported that we are working on more CALM training in partnership with Jamestown University and the Priority Group #3 team is working with the local Vet Center on ways to reach licensed firearm dealers with prevention information.

**5. Upcoming Events**

Michelle highlighted some of the events listed below:

1. **STAR Behavioral Health Providers:** [**March-April Training**](https://starproviders.org/providers-tier-training/)
2. **FirstLink:** [**April- June Trainings**](https://myfirstlink.org/trainings/)
3. **VA COMPACT Act Stand Down:** April 30, AMVETS, Bismarck
4. **Western ND Honor Flight:** April 14-15
5. **Month of the Military Child**: April.
6. **NDNG ASIST Training:** Free, May 8-9, NW Human Service Center, Williston. Email: [**alzeller@nd.gov**](mailto:alzeller@nd.gov) to register.
7. **Military Women’s Conference**: May 11, Minot Municipal Auditorium, Minot. Register buy May 1. Contact Jim Davenport 701-822-3242
8. **Hidden Wounds Bridge Dedication**: May 16, 2:00 Buffalo Mall, Jamestown
9. **ACOVA:** May 16-17, Fairfield Inn, Jamestown
10. **AMVET State Convention:** May 17-19, Ramada by Wyndham, Fargo
11. **Behavioral Health Conference:** Sept 16-19, Bismarck Event Center (Virtual, In-Person)
12. **Fargo VA Community Mental Health Summitt:** Aug. 14, Fargo Armed Forces Reserve Center
13. **TWV Suicide Prevention Symposium:** Sept. 30, Minot

1. **NEXT MEETING DATES**

The next Coalition meeting date is June 6,2024, and the next Executive Committee meeting date is May 2, 2024.