



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Department for the Aging*

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**June 30, 2009**

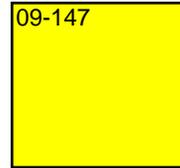
**SUBJECT**

**VDA ID NUMBER**

[Working with Veterans](#)  
(Ellen Nau)

**09-147**

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*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Department for the Aging*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Executive Directors  
Area Agencies on Aging

**FROM:** Ellen M. Nau, Human Services Program Coordinator

**DATE:** June 30, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Working with Veterans

Please review the attached report summarizing the work of the Administration on Aging, State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and various caregiving groups with our nation's veterans. I would like to compile information on Virginia's aging network's involvement with veterans. Please forward to me by COB Friday, July 17, 2009, a summary of any activities your agency engages in with veterans and the agencies that serve them. Any collaborative projects you have with local Veterans Affairs Offices and VA Hospitals should be included in your report. I can then forward the information to the Administration on Aging. A fitting project as we celebrate another Independence Day for our nation! Please send your information to [Ellen.Nau@vda.virginia.gov](mailto:Ellen.Nau@vda.virginia.gov). Thank you!

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country." - George Washington

## Aging Network and Veterans Programs Collaborations to Serve Veterans and their Caregivers

Since its inception, the National Family Caregiver Support Program has established numerous partnerships with other home and community based services programs at the state and local levels. Key among these collaborative activities has been efforts to target and serve Veterans and their caregivers. This document describes some of the activities in the states in which caregiver programs, whether funded by Title III E of the Older Americans Act or through other funding sources, are partnering with Veterans Administration programs to serve Veterans and their caregivers.

Collaborative activities in eleven states are profiled ranging from joint publication of news letters and co-presenting on available services at statewide conferences to ensuring that caregiver and consumer assessments include inquiries about Veterans' status. Several states report reciprocity with respect to referrals and regular communication between case management and social service staff of both the caregiver program and the Veterans' program.

### **Florida**

In Florida, collaborative activities between Aging Network and Veterans services are happening at both the state and local levels. The Department of Elder Affairs partners with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information, outreach and referrals for aging veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides articles for publishing in the Department of Elder Affairs bi-monthly publication, *Elder Update* which has a readership of about 80,000 people. In addition, the Elder Update publication is available to online readers at [http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/pubs\\_elderupdate.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/pubs_elderupdate.php) Each publication (with the exception of the emergency preparedness edition in May) contains information related to veterans affairs.

In addition to these state-level activities, several Area Agencies on Aging in the state are working collaboratively to serve Veterans. For example:

- The **Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Cost** partners with the Veterans Hospital in Palm Beach County to provide RSVP volunteers to serve Veterans. There are currently 76 volunteers averaging approximately 4,500 hours per quarter.
- The **Aging Resource Center in Miami-Dade** and the **Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward** are in the process of negotiating an agreement with the Veterans Administration to provide participant directed services to veterans at risk of nursing home placement and spend down to Medicaid. The program is targeted to begin July 1, 2009 and is expected to provide Veterans the opportunity to receive an expanded range of home and community-based services to enable them to remain in their homes and community.
- **ElderSource in Jacksonville** has an Information and Referral Specialist coordinating with a Veterans organization to be able to outreach to clients who are

Veterans, or to spouses and/or widows of Veteran.

*For more information, please contact:* Christine Kucera at [Kucera@elderaffairs.org](mailto:Kucera@elderaffairs.org)

## **Iowa**

In Iowa, the Area Agency on Aging Family Caregiver Specialists work with the county/local VA offices to either refer caregivers to those offices or contact the VA to find answers for the Caregivers. The AAA Caregiver Specialists report a good working relationship with the local VA offices.

Approximately two years ago, a representative from the Veterans Affairs gave a presentation to the FCG Specialists at a quarterly meeting. This presentation included information about eligibility requirements, specific services provided, and what information is needed to process claims for Veterans who wish to apply for benefits. The meeting helped establish a good working relationship between AAAs and the local VA offices and enhanced the Specialists' knowledge about the benefits offered.

*For more information, please contact:* Nicki Stajcar at [Nicki.Stajcar@iowa.gov](mailto:Nicki.Stajcar@iowa.gov)

## **Maine**

In Maine, the Area Agencies on Aging statewide coordinate services and benefits for veterans in collaboration with the Veterans' Homes throughout the state, the Veterans' Hospital at Togus, and the Veterans' Administration. Coordination is done via the ADRCs, the *Partners in Caring* state-funded respite program, the SHIP and the Family Caregiver Program. Additionally, the following activities are occurring at various AAAs throughout the state:

- Some AAAs have Veterans' Advocates who come to their agency on a scheduled basis to meet with Veterans and their caregivers.
- Community Information staff at the AAAs obtain and distribute updated information regarding Veteran's benefits.
- Some of the AAAs have adult day programs in which Veterans participate.
- The community social worker for the Veterans' Administration in southern Maine serves on the Southern Maine Agency on Aging Advisory Committee and provides education about benefits to the committee and agency staff. He serves as a resource for the agency on ways the Administration can assist older adults and their family caregivers.
- Information about Veterans' services and benefits is included in the *Resource Directory for Older People in Maine* and *Connections* the resource book for family caregivers in Maine. These books are distributed by the Office of Elder Services -DHHS and the Area Agencies on Aging.

*For more information, please contact:* Jan Holloran at [Jan.Halloran@maine.gov](mailto:Jan.Halloran@maine.gov)

## Massachusetts

Across the state of Massachusetts, local VA offices, regional VA hospitals and local Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Programs (MFCSPs) report a reciprocal relationship regarding referrals and information sharing. All local MFCSPs offer their services to caregivers of Veterans or Veteran caregivers under the eligibility guidelines of Title III-E.

Additionally, local Family Caregiver Support Programs in Massachusetts report a range of activities that, although may not be necessarily described as partnerships, are examples of collaborations between the two networks to support Veterans:

- The Family Caregiver Support Program at **Old Colony Elder Services** on the south shore always inquires, during the course of assessment, whether a caregiver/receiver is a Veteran. If the consumer is a Veteran, and is not receiving or is unsure of what assistance may be available, he or she is referred to the local Veteran's agent and is also encouraged to speak to a social worker at the Brockton VA to determine if benefits or services are available. The VA, in turn, has also referred caregivers of veterans to the Caregiver Support Program at Old Colony Elder Services.
- The **MFCSP in northeast Massachusetts** reports that 13 Veterans are enrolled in the Adult Day Health and the Day Away (Alzheimer's) Program at Briarcliff Lodge. Ten Veterans are funded through the VA in Bedford and three through the Boston VA office. Eight of the veterans are in the Alzheimer's specific program.
- **Minuteman Senior Services** in metro-west Massachusetts has been working collaboratively with the Bedford Veteran's Hospital, which runs a research and educational program in conjunction with Boston University, to assist families and Veterans in their area. The MFCSP has referred families to this program since they learned about it in 2008.

The MFCSP also works with the Pension Program Administrator at Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), Department of Veteran's Services, to assist families in the application process for both Federal and Massachusetts Veteran's benefits. EOHHS processes all the applications and follows up with families regarding the status of their application and eligibility.

Additionally, the lead staff person responsible for benefits and Home Care Programs at the Bedford VA Hospital is available to assist families currently connected with the VA Hospital with questions, services, and support.

- Since 2003, the **Boston MFCSP** has had an ongoing relationship with the VFW - Parkway hospital located in West Roxbury. They have a large population of Veterans ages 80 and older. The MFCSP sends its monthly newsletter to the social workers at the hospital for distribution to the.

The VFW-Parkway Hospital has also included the Boston MFCSP in Health Fairs which take place approximately every 18 months. Many of the referrals from this source are older husbands who are caring for ill wives. They are usually homeowners who are not used to receiving any services or participating in organized senior activity groups.

- The **Highland Valley Elder Services** (MFCSP) in western Massachusetts has actively engaged the Veteran's services community on behalf of the caregivers of veterans as follows:
  - ✓ Inclusion of the local VA Medical Center (Leeds) in caregiver training and education opportunities;
  - ✓ Joint visits to the VA medical center for HVES staff to learn the Veteran's system and available resources;
  - ✓ Collaborative in-service trainings between HVES and the VA medical center to share resources;
  - ✓ Joint trainings with the VA medical center with other human services agencies; and
  - ✓ Joint planning under the auspices of the Pioneer Valley Aging & Disability Resource Consortium (PVADRC) to involve the VA Medical Center and the Veteran's Agents from twenty-four towns in building care and caregiver capacity in the region.

*For more information, please contact:* Sheila Donahue-King at [Sheila.Donahue-King@state.ma.us](mailto:Sheila.Donahue-King@state.ma.us)

### **Minnesota**

A caregiver advocate working in the southeastern region of Minnesota is funded by title III E, county sources, United Way and grant from the VA and reports a strong working relationship with the Veteran's Service Workers in both Dodge (rural) and Steele (rural with a sizable city) counties. The caregiver advocate often meets Veterans that may have not yet been identified as needing services or who need to be referred for services. VA representatives in both counties have been very responsive to meeting the needs of the older Veterans identified.

*For more information, please contact:* Melissa Montour at [Melissa.Montour@semcac.org](mailto:Melissa.Montour@semcac.org)

### **Missouri**

Missouri provides respite services to individuals, including Veterans, through the State's Aged and Disabled Waiver and through some of the Area Agencies on Aging utilizing Title III E funding. Respite through the state's Aged and Disabled Waiver program requires the individual to be 63 years of age or older, Medicaid eligible, and be assessed at Nursing Home level of care. State staff coordinates state-funded Respite Services with VA-funded services that may be coming into the home (e.g., home health, in-home, etc).

Area Agencies on Aging in Missouri report active partnerships with VA facilities including collaborative efforts in which the VA cross-trains its resource consultants as well as the case managers. Veterans are assisted through one AAA's in-home services program until they can get their in-home services approved through the VA, and the in-home provider would bill the VA for those services.

The Missouri State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, housed within the Area Agency on Aging, provides benefits packets to the Veteran/Spouse within nursing homes to inform them for what services they are eligible. Please click on the following link for the forms: [http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ombudsman/Veterans\\_benefit\\_packet.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ombudsman/Veterans_benefit_packet.pdf)

*For more information, please contact:* Randy Rodgers at [Randy.Rodgers@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:Randy.Rodgers@dhss.mo.gov)

### **New Hampshire**

New Hampshire has been making progress getting to know the services and individuals who work with Veterans at the Manchester VA Center in New Hampshire. The National Guard has also reached out to human services programs (including Older Americans Act) to help serve returning OEF Veterans.

The Caregiver Program lead at the State Unit on Aging has also attended one information sharing forum with the VA and National Guard in New Hampshire which was hosted by the newly formed position of Military Liaison in the DHHS Bureau of Community Based Care Services. New Hampshire has found that the VA is very open to working with Health and Human Services, the ServiceLink sites (New Hampshire's ADRC's) and other agencies around the state.

*For more information, please contact:* Cathy Creapeaux at [CLCreapaux@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:CLCreapaux@dhhs.state.nh.us)

### **Oklahoma**

Although Oklahoma does not currently track Veteran status, they plan to add it to their intake assessment and then upon approval by the state's NAPIS Task Force add it to the AIM database in order to track the number of Veterans served by Title III programs in the state. The AAAs in Oklahoma collect qualitative information to substantiate that Title III programs serve Veterans numbering in the hundreds each year. Indeed, senior Veterans are eligible to receive all of the same services offered to anyone 60 and older and many are caregivers or care recipients. Transportation is also provided to many Veterans to and from the VA hospitals in the state.

*For more information, please contact:* Beth Batman at [Beth.Batman@okdhs.org](mailto:Beth.Batman@okdhs.org)

## Oregon

In select areas of Oregon, Veterans can be served by the state's Oregon Project Independence (OPI) program who are, in turn, reimbursed by the VA association for their share of cost for the services. Additionally, the VA offers respite care to family caregivers at a rate of 30 days a year for 6 hrs per day. Caregivers are enrolled in the Family Caregiver Program, if they qualify, so the respite care provider may be paid in a timely manner. If caregivers do not qualify for the Family Caregiver Program, the state pays for services with general revenue funds and the VA reimburses the program at the rate charged by the respite care provider.

In Washington County, Oregon, the Family Caregiver Support Program is collaborating with the local veterans unit and a home health agency to address the needs of Veterans. Through this collaboration, the partners are adapting an existing caregiver training series which is offered free of charge to include caregiving information focused on helping the Wounded Warrior.

*For more information, please contact:* Judy Bowen at [judy.bowen@state.or.us](mailto:judy.bowen@state.or.us)

## Tennessee

The **Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability** has partnered with Hospice of Chattanooga to outreach to rural Veterans. Through this partnership, information is being provided about senior centers in rural areas, Veteran identification and available services. Veterans will also be provided with more detailed information when service coordinators do home visits. The AAA has also shared their Resource Guide and program flyers to the local VA Medical Clinic's social workers to distribute to Veterans that come in for treatment.

The **First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability** is coordinating the Family Caregiver Support Program with Veteran Program Activities. On the LTC Screening that is completed, clients are asked if they are a Veteran or a dependent of a Veteran and if the client has VA income benefits. If the person is a veteran and is not receiving services – they are referred to the VA to assist them in obtaining VA benefits or services.

*For more information, please contact:* Tabitha Satterfield at [Tabitha.Satterfield@tn.gov](mailto:Tabitha.Satterfield@tn.gov)

## Texas

In Texas, a number of the state's AAAs report a range of collaborative activities to support Veterans, highlights of which include:

- **The Area Agency on Aging of Central Texas** is currently proving services for AoA's Nursing Home Diversion Grant. At the same time they have partnered with the VA to provide the same services for veterans and their caregivers under the

Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services. Caregiver support is an integral part of both of these programs.

- The **East Texas AAA** receives VA referrals every day from either VA clients themselves, VA Hospitals, or Home Health Agencies. The AAA of East Texas serves eligible VA clients in their Caregiver Support Program for 12 weeks at 4 to 6 hours per week. The AAA tries to use the same Home Health Agencies that the VA was using to eliminate any confusion for the clients.
- At the **South Plains Texas Area Agency on Aging** the Caregiver Specialist is also a Benefits Counselor and maintains regular contact with the Veterans Administration. The AAA sends referrals to, and receives referrals from the Veterans Administration, for clients who are Veterans. Maintaining regular contact with the VA Benefits Counselor enables both entities to better identify Veterans who may be in need of Caregiver services and to identify those caregivers who may need services from the Veterans Administration.
- The **West Central AAA** has a special Information and Referral project through the 211 (which is managed by the AAA) to conduct outreach to Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans. Veterans are then linked to private resources available through a TRIAD grant which comes from a private foundation. The AAA partners with the Alamo United Way/211 to access the funding and provide the referrals to specially trained call specialists in San Antonio.

*For more information, please contact:* Patricia Bordie at [patricia.bordie@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:patricia.bordie@dads.state.tx.us)