



# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TASK FORCE ON THE CARE, MANAGEMENT, AND TRANSITION OF RECOVERING WOUNDED, ILL, AND INJURED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

**St. Anthony Riverwalk Wyndham Hotel – San Antonio, TX**

## **Business Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, December 8, 2011**

The meeting began at 8:32am with an opening by Lt Gen Charles Green. Mrs. Suzanne Crockett-Jones, the non-DoD Co-Chair, could not attend due to a family issue. Dr. Phillips agreed to assist in running the meeting. He noted that this was the first meeting the Task Force had held outside of the Washington, D.C. area. After the Members introduced themselves to the audience, they discussed the installation visits that they had been on. In October and November, the Members visited Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (Germany), Kaiserslautern (Germany), Fort Knox (KY), Joint Force Headquarters - Indiana, Fort Carson (CO), the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit - Massachusetts, Joint Force Headquarters - Massachusetts, and Joint Base San Antonio (TX). The Task Force discussed their views of the sites, along with challenges for Service members, such as manpower issues in regards to case managers. At 10:21am, the Task Force took a break.

The meeting resumed at 10:31am with a panel on pre-separation VA case management. On the panel were Ms. Yvonne Santiago, VA Liaison for Healthcare, Ms. Diane C. Jules, LCSW, VA Polytrauma Supervisor, Ms. Linda Ray, LCSW, BCD, OEF/OIF/OND Program Manager, and Ms. Tamara Alms-Chapa, MSSW, LCSW, VA OEF/OIF. The panelists discussed how they interact with Service members and the warrior transition units, along with the challenges they face. They answered questions from the Members on their caseloads, how they interact with family members, and the multiple records systems that they use in order to process a Service member's information. The Task Force broke for lunch at 12:17pm.

The Members reconvened at 1:05pm with a panel of veterans discussing their views on pre-separation policies and programs. On the panel were PO1 Andrew Johnson (USN) and SSG Jon E. Arnold (USA Ret.). They mentioned challenges that they experienced or are experiencing, during the process of separating. They especially noted concerns with the timeline of receiving treatment after separating, their personal transition process, and the change from the mindset of returning to active duty to that of moving to civilian life.

The Task Force continued to a panel of post-DD214 case managers at 1:35pm. On the panel were SSgt Gallardo (USMC District Injured Support Cells), MSgt Schiller (USMC District Injured Support Cells), LCDR Sandra Cole, BSN, MPH (Navy Safe Harbor Non-Medical Case Manager), Mr. Dave Pennington (Navy Safe Harbor Program Manager), Mr. James Burbach (SOCOM Care Coalition Liaison), Ms. Jane Baskerville (SOCOM Care Coalition Liaison), Dr. Mary Ramos (Federal Recovery Coordinator), and Mr. Ignacio Garcia (AW2 Advocate). Each panelist discussed the general concept and process they carry out for their clients. The Members asked questions regarding their timeline for providing or obtaining services for their clients and numbers relating to case load. The SOCOM representatives noted that their model, while it has a



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high return to duty rate, would be difficult to reproduce because they are a small group focusing on one-on-one care. Their model would require a great deal of manpower and resources to replicate on a DoD-wide scale. All panelists stressed the importance of communication between different case managers and service providers. At 3:01pm, the Task Force took a short break.

The Members reconvened at 3:15pm with a panel on VA IDES support with Ms. Marcie Ramirez, Mr. Ric Santos, and Ms. Jennifer Long. The panelists were all current military service coordinators. Their role is to navigate Service members through all the steps of IDES and enroll all Service members that have been referred through a MEB. They discussed some of their location specific challenges and successes, along with their process for obtaining a complete copy of a Service member's medical records, which can prove challenging. The Members asked a number of questions regarding the latter topic, asking them to elaborate on the process along with if having a fully electronic process would be more beneficial than a mixed electronic and hard copy system. At 4:09pm, the Members took a break.

The meeting resumed at 4:21pm with the public forum, consisting of Mr. Jim Sampson (USAF Ret.) and Mr. Robert Felth (USMC, USCG Ret.). Mr. Felth noted his issues with the fact that he had been in multiple Services and locating records was difficult. He is concerned about others that have been in multiple Services going through the transition process. Mr. Sampson mentioned that there can be a great deal of traffic occurring when the Service members are given their last chance to appeal their medical ratings and that VSOs have a part in this process. Both the Members and Mr. Sampson stressed the importance of a Service member getting together their own records well in advance of retirement to facilitate the process.

Ms. Dailey concluded the meeting for the day at 4:35pm.

### **Friday, December 9, 2011**

The second day of the meeting opened at 8:30am with Ms. Dailey noting some administrative items regarding the upcoming installation visits to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune (NC), the Iowa Joint Force Headquarters, the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit – Rock Island (IL), Naval Medical Center – Portsmouth (VA), Joint Base Langley-Eustis (VA), Fort Stewart (GA), and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (CA). The Members discussed their availability for these visits based on their current schedules.

This was followed at 8:38am with a briefing regarding the Army WTU Cadre Training by Ms. Sherri Emerich (Chief, Department of Warrior Transition, Center of Health Education and Training), COL Dave Bair (G-3/5/7, Warrior Transition Command), COL Suzanne Scott (Chief Nurse, Warrior Transition Command), and LTC Andrew Grantham (Training Officer, Warrior Transition Command). They outlined how the training prepares the cadre and how the program fits in the larger training framework. The Members asked questions relating to the timeline of the training, what influenced changes in the training program, and the plans for measuring the effectiveness of the program. They also answered questions on class sizes, class structure, and points of concern regarding the comprehensive transition plan. The Task Force asked for some



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more specific numbers, which Ms. Dailey noted they could work to get as a briefing in February. The Task Force took a break at 10:21am.

The meeting resumed at 10:39am with a briefing by MSgt Timothy Eichman (USAF 802<sup>nd</sup> CES Explosive Ordnance Disposal) on the Family Liaison Officer program. He gave an overview of the program along with information such as his current case load, how FLOs interact with families, and the importance of having someone available to families to translate military jargon and what is going on regarding their injured Service member. He described some of his lessons learned and issues that affect recovery, such as being constantly visited by the chain of command, how wounded warriors are defined as compared to other injuries while on active duty, and resources available. The briefing concluded at 11:42am.

The next panel began at 11:43am with LTC John Uriarte (USA Ret., MSW, LCSW, BCD, Team Leader & Clinical Supervisor, San Antonio Vet Center) on the VA Vet Center Counselor program. He explained how the Vet Centers provide services to Service members and make certain that they are ready mentally to be able to return home, as well as deal with issues such as drugs, alcohol, and sexual trauma. He also mentioned bereavement, marriage/family therapy, and other services that they provide to families. The Task Force asked questions about the funding of the program and how they work with homeless veterans. The Task Force broke for lunch at 12:19pm.

The Member resumed the meeting at 1:18pm with a briefing by Lt Col Mark Packer, M.D. (USAF, Hearing Center of Excellence Interim Director), updating the Task Force on the Hearing Center of Excellence (HCE). The Task Force had received a briefing last year from the HCE and wanted to have an update on the center, specifically on staffing, concept of operations, different plans that were being enacted, standardization of purchases, their facilities, and the current challenges experienced by the HCE. The Members questioned him regarding topics such as the website and registry that are being created, pre-discharge screenings, diagnosing hearing damage from blast injuries, collaboration with the VA, their plan for full operational capability, and their plan to achieve effectiveness.

This was followed at 2:10pm by a panel on military and veterans service organizations with retired CDR René Campos (Deputy Director, Government Relations, Defense/Veterans Health Care, Seamless Transition, & Wounded Warrior Matters, Military Officers Association of America), retired MAJ James Cunningham (MOAA Alamo Chapter), and Mr. Joe Noonan (Supervisor of the San Antonio office for Disabled Veterans of America). They briefly introduced their organizations and noted challenges facing recovering warriors and their families after the Service members separate from the DoD, along with supports that are currently in place for these recovering warriors and their families. Ms. Campos noted that care coordination and management continues to be a challenge, resulting from under or over staffing a recovering warrior. Members asked questions about the differences of care for active duty and reserve components, how IDES will affect their role in representing a Service member when they get a disability rating, education of case managers, and availability of information.



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At 3:10pm, the Task Force heard from Mr. Dave Gonzales (ReaLifelines Representative, DOL) and Ms. Frances Desoto (Assistant Director Veterans Employment, DOL) to discuss employment services provided to recovering warriors by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs). They explained how DVOPS and LVERs support recovering warriors. Members asked about DVOPS declining numbers, funding challenges, tracking of members in RealLifelines, how they coordinate with Service wounded warrior programs, and staffing numbers.

The meeting was closed at 3:43pm by Lt Gen Green.

Verified by:

Department of Defense Co-Chair:

Lieutenant General Charles B. Green, M.D.



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Date: 25 Jan 12

Verified by:

Non-Department of Defense Co-Chair:

Mrs. Suzanne Crockett-Jones



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Date: 13 JAN 12



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Appendix A:

**Thursday, December 8, 2011**

Members Present:

- CSM Steven D. DeJong
- Mr. Ronald Drach
- Lt Gen Charles B. Green (DoD Co-Chair)
- LtCol Sean P. K. Keane
- MSgt Christian MacKenzie
- Dr. Steven Phillips
- Mr. David Rehbein
- Dr. Russell Turner

Members Not Present:

- Mr. Justin Constantine
- MG Karl Horst
- Mrs. Suzanne Crockett-Jones (Non-DoD Co-Chair)
- MG Richard Stone
- U.S. Navy and VA Positions Awaiting Appointment

Members Arrived Late:

- None

Members Left Early:

- None



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Members Left Early:

- LtCol Sean P. K. Keane



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Appendix B:

Sign-in Sheet:



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Last Name	First Name	Zip Code	Organization	Email
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Last Name	First Name	Zip Code	Organization	Email
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