

MINUTES

May 1, 2008

Oregon Military Department, Room 202

Veterans' Services Task Force *Aging Veterans and Retirement Subcommittee*

Meeting commenced at 4:25 p.m.

Attendees – Dan Estes, Richard Matthews (DHS), Jerry Lorang, Mac MacDonald, Jose Samaniego (PVA), Jim Keller, Sasha Pollack, and Paula Brown.

Chair Dan Estes opened the meeting by making reference to a previous discussion in which Sasha Pollack agreed to gather some information on certain benefits that are offered by other states. Sasha stated that she was not able to get some of the information but did have a spreadsheet for educational benefits of many states and she will forward that to Paul Evans for the use of the whole committee. She noted that Wisconsin was a state with very generous educational benefits.

The Chair then mentioned a discussion with Jack Heims of Portland VAMC. Heims stated that he has information that shows health care need projections for at least the next ten years. The Chair then stated that though the education discussion that took place in the whole group today has the least impact on this subcommittee it still is worth visiting and he opened things up for feedback.

Some of the items that arose were –

- Outcome of the whole committee discussion regarding what benefits veterans may still be entitled to once they are incarcerated- educational aid and/or health care – could this bring more federal dollars into the state and help with what state is currently paying.
- Currently, ODVA works with the Dept. of Corrections to identify incarcerated veterans and provide outreach to determine if they may be entitled to benefits. Also, ODVA has conducted outreach to state hospitals. It will be determined if there is a need for these programs to grow and if ODVA should look at county facilities as well.
- Currently, there is no system in place for agencies, departments, or facilities to report on number of veterans and putting in such a system could be very costly. The group agreed that it would be more favorable to develop this process without legislating it. The question should be “Were you ever in the armed forces?” Or

identifying that there are benefits these people could be entitled to if they were ever in the armed forces. Finding those who are not using the benefits to which they are entitled is cost effective for the state.

The Chair then circulated a handout that he compiled of recommendations that have come from the committee so far. The Chair stated he was circulating the document to the group at this point for review and feedback. Review and discussion of the listed items began.

Specific discussion surfaced regarding veteran service officers and regulation of the quality and accountability. The proposal to have all service officers work through ODVA/state – costs? What possible streamlining can be done? Can information be shared, or can a one-stop shop be created? Can there be a go-to person? Is there a way to protect senior veterans from scams?

The group determined that work needed to be done with the federal VA to improve the process and the length of time it takes for claims. What can be done on a state level?

The Chair then pointed out that it was 5:00 and time to return to the whole group committee room and the meeting was ended.