

Portland Leadership Meeting Notes

Taskforce met early in the morning for a meeting at the VA. Presentation by Dr. Lynn Van Male about PTSD pleased participants. Also presentations by Tinnitus/Hearing and Multiple Sclerosis experts pleased the taskforce. Taskforce participants and VA officials toured the VA facilities, including World Class Hearing Clinic on P-5.

Afternoon meeting was well attended with a wide array of discussion. Homelessness is a continuing problem in the metro area. Everyone in attendance agreed that soldiers who fought in distant lands must not live without shelter in their homeland. Chaplain Thompson applauded the efforts of volunteers in supporting their mission.

Discussed how more positive stories are needed to showcase the good things going on in soldiers lives. Suicide has become a growing problem, but new tools are saving lives. The Reintegration Team has deployed multiple times and in doing so have saved the lives of war veterans considering suicide.

Former ODVA Service Officer led discussion of his views of how veterans' services should be handled statewide. He strongly believes a QA program is necessary to ensure accuracy across the board. Multnomah County elected official agreed that the economic impact veterans have on communities is significant. Urged that a higher priority be taken in service of military veterans.

Discussion also was led by LTC Thompson of the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team with regards to mental health and support. Information was shared about the "Give an Hour" program, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides a national network of mental health professionals providing free counseling services to returning veterans and their loved ones. Combat veterans also have access to VET Centers across the state for PTSD issues.