



MINNESOTA STATE



Minnesota Statewide Veterans Conference
Friday, October 7, 2016
St. Cloud State University – Atwood Memorial Center Ballroom

Collect Impact: Veterans Services and the Community

- 7:30-8:30am** **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30-8:50am** **Welcome**
- 8:50-9:40am** **Keynote Address: Brigadier General Sandy Best**
Chief of Staff of the Minnesota Air National Guard
- 9:40-11:00am** **State and Federal Legislative Panel**
- 11:00-11:10am** **Break and Move to Break-Out Session 1**
- 11:10am-12:00pm** **Break-Out Sessions**
- Break-Out 1:**
You Are Not On Your Own: Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs - Your Partner in Serving Minnesota's Veterans
- Brad Lindsay, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs**
Dave Bellefeuille, Director – Education and Employment, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is a cabinet level state agency dedicated to serving Veterans and their families by assisting them in securing state and federal benefits. MDVA's Programs and Services Division consists of services relating to higher education, benefits, burial, claims, outreach and Veterans preference.

Key partnerships for the Department include Veterans Service Organizations, County Veterans Service Offices, other state and federal agencies who serve veterans, and a number of public and private service providers.

Break-Out 2:

Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services: What is VD-HCBS and How to Get Started on the Program?

**Elaine Spain, Program Development, MN River Area Agency on Aging
Renee Solomon-Wise, Business Development Manager, MRCI – Client Directed Services**

Jennifer Drganc, Vice President, MRCI – Client Directed Services

Veterans Directed-Home and Community Based Services (VD-HCBS), a self-directed program, is a preferred alternative to long term care for Veterans needing a nursing home level of care when available. This session explains the step by step process of getting enrolled in the program and share national statistics on satisfaction with the program. The Fiscal Management Services presentation focuses on the role and responsibilities of working with a Fiscal agency. Myths and challenges of self-directed programs will be addressed with the understanding that self-direction allows for greater control of services delivered for a Veteran and allows the Veteran to remain in the community living the way they choose. This dynamic and interactive session will be presented by Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging would present as a partnering entity working with Veterans Health Administration while MRCI-Client Directed Services would explain the role of fiscal management service provider of the program.

Break-Out 3:

Communicating Value about Your Program

Rachel Vilsack, Agency Performance Manager, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Performance reporting is a powerful way of communicating the value of your program. This session will provide an introduction how data can be used to communicate program outcomes, including using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) approach. If you're seeking funding through a competitive grant process, this session will also include strategies for how you can strengthen your proposal with performance reporting and evaluation of your own programs.

12:00-12:30pm

Lunch

12:30-1:15pm

**Lunch Keynote Address: John Kriesel
Anoka Country Veteran Service Officer, Past Minnesota House of
Representatives, Retired Minnesota National Guard**

1:15-1:30pm

Break and Move to Break-Out Session 2

1:30pm-2:20pm

Break-Out Sessions

Break-Out 1:

Minnesota's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program: Past, Present and Future

**Annette Kuyper, Director of Military Outreach, Minnesota Department
of Military Affairs**

Minnesota's Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program has become a national model for the synchronization of effort to unite community and company resources in support of service members of any branch, veterans of any age or era and military families. Learn more about the implementation and structure of this program, successes and lessons learned and future initiatives of expanding on the program across the state and nation. Participants will learn about the program and have an opportunity to discuss partnership and improvement opportunities.

Break-Out 2:

Veterans Employment Programs

**Jim Finley, Veterans Employment Programs, Minnesota Department of
Employment and Economic Development**

**Scott Mills, Director Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS),
U.S. Department of Labor**

Session description will be provided

Break-Out 3:

**Military Veterans and Service Members in the Minnesota Criminal Justice
System**

John Baker, Attorney, Baker Williams Law Firm

Are you working with a veteran or service member in the Minnesota criminal justice system? If you are what are the unique challenges they face? What tools are available for you in helping them? Attorney John Baker, who is retired from the U.S. Marine Corps and is Chair Emeritus of the Minnesota State Bar Association Military & Veterans Affairs Section will be discussing what those unique challenges are and will give you the tools to help work with veterans and service members. This presentation will help you understand what combat stress issues are including post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. It will also help you properly identify a military veteran or service member and understand military documents and lingo. The new Veteran Court and the

Veterans Sentencing Mitigation Statute will be discussed. There will also be a discussion about the collateral consequences of certain criminal charges has on active duty and reserve service members.

Break-Out 4:

Caring for Veterans, Military Members and their Families in our Communities

Christine Dawson, HeroCare Social Work Advocate, Regions Hospital
Jessie Rae Rayle, HeroCare Social Work Advocate, Regions Hospital

Region's hospital is an independent community based hospital that recognized the need for specialized care for veterans, military members and their families. Through community partnerships and state wide support, Regions Hospital was able to start a hospital based program known as HeroCare. The focus of the program is to provide advocacy specifically for veterans, service members and their families transitioning into community care. Priority focus is placed on connecting veterans, military members and their families to supportive resources at the federal, state and local level. We provide veteran peer support, veteran focused occupational therapy and coordinate veteran continuing care directly with veteran and military services to include VA hospitals, veteran readjustment centers, military directors of psychological care teams, county veteran service officers and numerous others.

2:20-2:30pm

Break and Move to Break-Out Session 3

2:30-3:20pm

Break-Out Sessions

Break-Out 1:

The Veterans Linkage Line (LinkVet) – Serving Minnesota Veterans 7 Days a Week

Jennifer Parta Arno, Distance Credentialed Counselor, Minnesota State Online Support Center

Dave Bellefeuille, Director – Education and Employment, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) created the Veterans Linkage Line 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) and website www.linkvet.org, to provide easy one-stop access to a variety of resources for Minnesota Veterans. MDVA staff collaborate with federal, state and community partners to link Veterans and their families with benefits and resources they have earned, and provide support and advocacy.

Under LinkVet support, MyMilitaryEducation.org provides information on State and Federal military education benefits and a connection to Regional Coordinators located on campuses throughout Minnesota.

Through a collaboration with Minnesota State and MDVA, student veterans access and receive support at campus Veterans Resource Centers, receive assistance with their military experience and transfer of credit through the Veterans Education Transfer System (VETS), and utilize GPS LifePlan, a career and life planning tool to help achieve their goals. Minnesota State Support is available 7 days a week providing answers and resources to our veteran and military students.

Break-Out 2:

Employment Resources for Veterans

Angela Sherburne, Program Manager-Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Briana Bonnin, Community Employment Coordinator, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Patty Meyer, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Managing reintegration, employment, and a disability has its unique set of challenges. In this session we will discuss VA, state and community vocational rehabilitation resources and programs for Minnesota Veterans. Learn how Minneapolis's Veterans Employment Resource Group (VERG) was formed to increase collaboration between Veteran service providers, and hear examples of increased positive employment outcomes for Veterans. Attendees will be able to identify challenges and resources for Veterans seeking employment that may have experienced reintegration issues, mental illness and other disabilities, homelessness, and/or a criminal record.

Break-Out 3:

Veterans, Service Members and Readjustment: The Role Vet Centers Can Play in Improving Mental Health

Eric Wittenberg, Readjustment Counselor, St. Paul Vet Center

Bryan Bodrog, Readjustment Counselor, St. Paul Vet Center

Rita Marques, Outreach Specialist, St. Paul Vet Center

Military veterans and service members, specifically combat veterans, are facing more readjustment issues than in the past. These stressors have greatly increased the number of veterans who commit suicide and increased the number of veterans who are in need of mental health services. Vet Centers have taken an active role by working closely with veteran groups in the community and on college campuses to improve services for this population. By attending this presentation, participants will learn about specific issues that military members are facing, how to interact with this population in different settings and how to accommodate their needs in mental health and recovery.

3:20-4:20pm

Closing Panel/Endnote – TBD

4:20-4:30pm

Closing Remarks and Door Prizes

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