



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
November 15th, 2016**

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Dan Bullis, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Dan asked for all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged. A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the Commission as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

II. Approval of Minutes

Jim Campbell, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the October 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes. Wayne Miller, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the October 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

III. Post-Traumatic Stress: Factors Leading To It, Current Research, and Veterans Administration Efforts to Address Health & Wellness – Elspeth Cameron Ritchie, MD, MPH, COL (ret) Chief, Mental Health, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

PowerPoint: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/PTSDforCVANov2016.pdf

The new Montgomery County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) will have primary care and a mental health clinic. Dr. Ritchie predicts the facility will be used heavily very quickly and the need for mental health services may potentially grow quickly as well.

A moral injury, which is different from PTSD, may stem from direct participation in acts of combat, such as killing or harming others, or indirect acts, such as witnessing death or dying, failing to prevent immoral acts of others, or giving or receiving orders that are perceived as gross moral violations.

Questions/Comments:

- **What is the VA's position on using service animals as alternative therapy?** The VA has classified service dogs as prosthetics. The VA is cautious regarding service animals as the animal needs to be trained properly and there are questions regarding the animal's care if the Veteran is unable to do so. Warrior Canine Connection uses service animals as a therapeutic tool where the Veteran assists in training the dog and the Veteran does not take care of the dog long-term.
- **Does group therapy work?** Wayne Miller reported that there are 14 Vietnam Veterans in groups that meet and have good attendance. The Sexual Trauma group fizzled out. The OIF/OEF Veterans are more likely to mix men and women in their groups. WWII and Korean Veterans can meet together, but do not mix well with Vietnam Veterans. Marital family counseling is better for the younger generation. Wayne added that the Silver Spring Vet Center has been guaranteed space at the new CBOC. There will be more mental health resources available at the Gaithersburg CBOC than at any other CBOC in the country.
- **Will alternative therapies be made available at the new CBOC?** There are not enough resources, space or funding for alternative therapies. Dr. Ritchie added that if a service is available, they will steer the

Veteran towards that resource. For example, the Prince George's County Vet Center has a yoga group.

- **STEER and Deflection Model:** Mike Subin noted that the County's Department of Police is instituting a new STEER and Deflection model that will engage, evaluate and defer individuals with mental health issues so they may receive treatment instead of going into the prison system. Dr. Ritchie said the DC's Crisis Intervention Office Program has a similar system.
- **Has there been more discussion regarding removing Disorder from PTSD?** There was some pushback as some people were worried the government would take away their disability payment. It was noted that a RAND Study stated removing Disorder would have little effect or no effect on eliminating or mitigating the stigma or having people identify themselves as having PTSD.
- **Are there any voluntary or mandatory psychological evaluations available to service members once they separate from service?** Individuals are evaluated prior to entering the service and it is hard to get into the military if they have a previous psychological diagnosis. Service members receive a post-deployment health assessment, a reassessment and are assessed again at their annual exam as well when they receive services at the VA. Although, service members may not fill out reports accurately.
- **What is being done to encourage early treatment and to reduce stigma?** There are different places to receive treatment, such as the Vet Centers which do not go into your medical records.

IV. Introduction to Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) Sexual Assault Unit Investigations and How They Work With The Sexual Assault Team & Family Justice Center – D/Sgt. Jordan Satinsky, Sexual Assault Unit, MCPD-FamilyJustice Center

PowerPoint: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/SatinskySexualAssaultCVA.pdf

Family Justice Center Brochure: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/resources/files/brochure4-21-09.pdf

The Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) is a comprehensive one stop center for victims of family violence and their children. The center co-locates multiple agencies to provide coordinate advocacy, law enforcement, civil legal services and social services for wrap-around support for families. Agencies and services include the Department of Police, the State's Attorney's Office, Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP), Abused Persons Program, House of Ruth, therapeutic and victim advocates, and crisis services. The FJC is located at 600 Jefferson Street, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20850.

Once the FJC was established, there was a rise in reported cases from 200 sexual assault cases per year to 400 cases per year.

The Special Victims Investigations Division is comprised of several sections responsible for investigating rapes, sexual offenses, domestic violence, and crimes against children. The Child Abuse/Sexual Assault Section is responsible for investigating rape, sexual offenses, and physical and sexual abuse committed against children under the age of 18 by a suspect who cared for or had custody of the child. The Child Exploitation Unit investigates crimes similar to the Child Abuse/Sexual Assault Section when the crimes are committed by a stranger. The SVID is located off of Calhoun Drive.

The County has several areas of military private housing including enlisted homes off of Georgia Avenue and several towers in Silver Spring that are used for enlisted personnel only. There have been cases received by those in the military who do not want to report it within the military. Oftentimes, the charges do not go forward due to concern regarding their employment within the military. DoD has become more involved in sexual assault reporting and will order victims to disclose when they have been sexually assaulted. FJC typically will not work with DoD on cases and try to keep them as separate as possible. Detectives/investigators do not move forward with a case unless the victim wants to proceed. The State of Maryland does not have a statute of limitations.

The victim and the case are immediately reviewed by detectives, the State's Attorney's Office, victim advocates, and a sexual assault nurse. Prior to the Family Justice Center, a victim may have had to tell their story 8 or 9 times. Now the case is transferred seamlessly to other units.

Stranger rapes occur maybe once a year in the County. With 99% of cases the suspect is known to the victim.

Since the Family Justice Center was created, there has been an increase in prosecutions and arrests have gone up 80%.

D/Sgt. Satinsky has suggested to the State that a 40-hour sexual assault training be mandatory for all investigators. Currently only basic training is available.

There is a new initiative regarding initial forensic medical evaluations. Currently, there is only one central location per county where a victim can receive a forensic medical evaluation. In Montgomery County it is at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. An evaluation can take between four to eight hours, or longer if the victim has had drugs or alcohol. The victim is sent home via cab. They would like to have a mobile team that would respond to the victim and/or have these services available at all hospitals.

Questions:

- **Definition of sexual assault?** For reporting purposes, in legal terms there is a Federal Bureau of Investigation runs a voluntary data capture service most police depts put in data. About a year or two ago def of rape was female victim – penis into a vagina. Frequently Asked Questions about the Change in the UCR Definition of Rape December 11, 2014 The FBI has implemented an important change in the definition of rape that is used in the collection of national crime statistics. PERF has been working to keep its members apprised of how this change will affect local police agencies. Following is a set of questions asked by jurisdictions and answers the FBI provided to PERF: Q: In 2012, the Department of Justice announced a change to the definition of Rape for the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's (UCR) Summary Reporting System (Summary). How does the new definition differ from the old one? A: The old definition was "The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will." Many agencies interpreted this definition as excluding a long list of sex offenses that are criminal in most jurisdictions, such as offenses involving oral or anal penetration, penetration with objects, and rapes of males. The new Summary definition of Rape is: "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."
- **Same sex or transgender cases?** D/Sgt. Satinsky recently gave a presentation to the LGBT community to let them know the Family Justice Center is available to assist them. There was a spike in cases shortly after the outreach. The Sexual Assault Unit identifies the person however they want to be identified in terms of gender.
- **Volunteer transportation program to assist victims?** There are a few volunteers who will assist victims with providing clothing, support and transportation.
- **How do you determine a false charge?** False charges can be determined through the detective process. There are also three factors involved besides rape. One is the force or threat of force. If there is not enough articulation of force, charges cannot move forward. Any citizen can file charges through the Commission's office. If a rape case is filed, it is automatically forwarded to the State's Attorney's Office and the Sexual Assault Unit, where the detective process is initiated. If a rape charge is determined to be false, the suspect is notified and it is up to them if they wish to file charges.
- **Information regarding the County's sex offenders list?** The Sexual Assault Unit receives weekly updates. The website is a joint project managed by the County and the State. For more information, call 240-773-5400.

V. Chairman and Vice-Chairman Report:

The Tribute to America's Veterans Concert was held on November 10th. LCpl Morty Davis, Korean War Veteran, was the keynote speaker. Randy Stone was the Master of Ceremonies.

The Walter Reed Society is assisting a new group that is redeveloping the old Walter Reed campus location. Cultural DC - a nonprofit that serves to make space for art in DC. It has done a lot to ensure that as DC is redeveloped and that art and culture remains a part of the DC community. Cultural DC's efforts to join forces with Ward 4 residents and businesses to present "Walter Reed Dreams". Walter Reed Dreams will be a community-driven arts and culture tribute as part of the redevelopment of the Walter Reed campus. Several of the projects are directly related to Veterans and Armed service members - for example an installation piece at Walter Reed main gate that will turn the lights purple and over a one-year period will blink one time for each recipient of the Purple Heart in our Nation's history; and another that will decorate the fence with yellow ribbons inscribed with memories of Walter Reed.

The Commission's 2016 Annual Report is now available online:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/CVA2016AnnualReport.pdf

VI. Announcements:

Joanna Starling, Montgomery College, reported that Montgomery College was recognized as "Best for Vets" by the Military Times. Press release: <http://mcnews.montgomerycollege.edu/2016/11/montgomery-college-recognized-as-best-for-vets-by-military-times/>

Stan Siedel announced that the annual Homeless Resource Day will be held this Thursday, November 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg.

Jim announced that Jane McCarthy will be the guest speaker at the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) luncheon held tomorrow.

Hazel Gross announced that Elks Lodge 15 had a special program for Veterans and their friends. The program included a viewing of the Honor & Gratitude event. They will share the DVD with other groups.

Adjournment: 7:45 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, December 20th, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, 9th Floor Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully submitted:

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager