

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**  
**Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board**  
**Federal Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

April 16 – 17, 2019

**Attendees**

Committee Members Present:

Lt. Gen. (R) John D. Hopper Jr. (Chair)

Philip Mangano (Vice Chair)

Anthony Allman

Carolina Winston Barrie (Non-Voting)

James Battista

Robert Begland

Arthur Delacruz

Ray Delgado

Donna Deutchman

Howard Hernandez

Dan Rosenfeld

Jeffrey Scheire

Sarah Serrano

**Committee Members Absent**

Leticia Colchado

Kate Hoit

Sarah Mahin (Non-Voting)

Julian Manalo (Non-Voting)

Benjamin Winter (Non-Voting)

**VA Staff Present**

Dr. Lynda Davis, Chief Veterans Experience Officer

Betty Moseley Brown, Designated Federal Officer

Eugene W. Skinner Jr., Designated Federal Officer

Chihung Szeto, Alternate Designated Federal Officer

Meghan Serwin Flanz, Deputy General Counsel

Ann Brown, Director West Los Angeles (WLA) VA Medical Center

Michiko Dily

Eric Faulkner

Erik Gutierrez

Dustin Kanse

Paul McPherson

Rob Merchant

**Tuesday, April 16, 2019**

<p><b>Call to Order</b></p> <p>Eugene Skinner, Jr., Designated Federal Officer (DFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eugene Skinner welcomed attendees and notified them that he had been appointed Chair since Lieutenant General (R) John D. Hopper Jr.'s flight was cancelled. He noted that Lt. Gen. Hopper was expected to arrive later in the day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opening Remarks Veterans Experience Office and Customer Service</b></p> <p>Dr. Lynda Davis, Chief Veterans Experience Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Lynda Davis thanked attendees for their efforts and provided the following updates on Veterans Experience Office (VEO) activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Veteran Engagement Boards (CVEBs) have formed strategic partnerships and collaborations across communities to form common agendas across different groups.</li> <li>VEO is developing new Quick Start Guides on topics like Community Care and Urgent Care under the MISSION Act.</li> <li>An executive order will help Service Members apply for care before they become Veterans and will help new Veterans receive care as soon as possible. Toolkits will specify how to receive referrals for mental health and support through community partners, along with peer support.</li> <li>Expanded Department of Defense (DoD) resources will be made available to Veterans for one year after separation.</li> <li>MISSION Act implementation will bring many enhancements to the Community Care benefit, peer support, and the Caregiver program, which will be open to pre-911 Veteran caregivers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>WLA Integrated Project Team (IPT) Update/ Status</b></p> <p>Meghan Flanz Executive Director, VA West LA Campus Master Plan (VA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Meghan Flanz requested that the committee develop recommendations or questions for the principle developer, and she provided the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The principle developer is establishing a recommended community development plan and releasing a feasibility study on housing units. Before moving forward, the developer must address the historic preservation community board.</li> <li>The developer requires information from clinical leads regarding the benefits and disadvantages of having an outpatient clinic.</li> <li>The developer is considering changing the master plan name in an effort to attract Veteran tenants.</li> <li>IG report recommendations must be implemented by September.</li> <li>Two different laws for Veteran housing specify that services must be exclusively for Veterans. If land use is found to be inefficient and/or if the development did not meet the master plan definition as "Veteran-focused or centered," licenses will be revoked.</li> <li>The following issues were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need for clinical leads for the north campus to evaluate issues such as whether an outpatient clinic should be included</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal concerns</li> <li>• The process for Veteran tenant selection</li> <li>• Impact on clinical outcomes</li> <li>• Policing and security concerns on campus</li> <li>• Funding complications</li> <li>• Appointment access requirement per the MISSION Act (i.e., patients must be able to reach their primary care appointment in 30 minutes or less).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Greater Los Angeles (GLA) Survey of Health Experience of Veterans (SHEP) and Strategic Analysis for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Scores Briefing</b></p> <p>Ann Brown, Medical Center Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Ann Brown described what makes up SAIL and SHEP scores. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAIL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on a five-star system.</li> <li>• A compilation of many items VA has been measuring for quite some time (e.g., hospital-acquired infections, availability of appointments, happiness of their employees, happiness of Veterans, etc.).</li> <li>• SAIL consolidated individual metrics into one platform to see how VA performs across the system.</li> <li>• An attendee mentioned that SAIL is unfairly used within VA, since VA does draw comparisons to community metrics, typically.</li> <li>• SAIL uses a 12-month rolling average to level any variations because it is a variable system. It compares VA facilities and uses multiple tools, including those that are community-specific.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SHEP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to measure patient satisfaction at VA.</li> <li>• There are multiple SHEP measures, but it is based on Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS).</li> <li>• Medical centers and health care systems across the country use SHEP, so it does provide some inter-rater reliability between VAs and UCLA Ronald Reagan, or others within their catchment area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• She provided key items of interest for the GLA SAIL and SHEP scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLA scored well on these performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoidable adverse events.</li> <li>• Efficiency and capacity.</li> <li>• Patient experience.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• GLA's worst performing metrics were length of stay and throughput.</li> <li>• Additional indicators include avoidable adverse events, efficiency and capacity, mortality, care transitions, mental health, access, and length of stay and throughput.</li> <li>• VSignals is now operational across the department to supplement required data like SHEP and SAIL. VSignals is an artificially intelligent platform that can provide daily feedback within two days of someone coming in to receive service.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MISSION Act is coming, which will cause coordination issues; it will be difficult to maintain the standard and the quality of care provided at VA.</li> </ul>
<b>Veteran Surveys and VSignals</b>  Anil Tilbe, VEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Anil Tilbe introduced VSignals, a capability that has been rolled out to help VHA deploy surveys to Veterans, help collect their responses, and visually summarize analysis of the feedback provided by Veterans, caregivers and survivors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VSignals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deploys surveys digitally.</li> <li>Collects insights digitally.</li> <li>Visualizes feedback.</li> </ul> </li> <li>VSignals is used throughout VA (e.g., Board of Veterans Appeals, NCA, and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)) and VHA (e.g., outpatient services phase, telehealth services phase, etc.).</li> <li>Surveys are developed using an “enterprise designed thinking” approach.</li> <li>According to Veterans, the five key moments that matter to them include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In outpatient services, when they have labs and imaging work done.</li> <li>When they make an appointment, because of that specific interaction alone.</li> <li>When they come to a facility or a medical center to pick up a prescription.</li> <li>When they receive a prescription in the mail.</li> <li>The overall customer experience Veterans receive with any health care provider they interact with.</li> </ul> </li> <li>VA and VHA send more than 150,000 surveys a week; the response rate has been about 20%, which is above the industry average.</li> <li>More than one million comments have been received since VSignals was deployed across VHA.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>GLA Strategic Communication Briefing</b>  Meghan Flanz Executive Director, VA West LA Campus Master Plan (VA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Meghan Flanz provided an update on the GLA contract, which is building a useful, user-friendly website. The group has been striving to improve transparency and responsiveness.</li> <li>She described features on the site and their purpose. She asserted that VA lodged all their Master Plan-related materials on a VA website, though maintenance and updating it was a difficult.</li> <li>The group provided feedback on site features and details (e.g., Content management capabilities, user interface items, etc.).</li> <li>The group discussed new leadership in the Office of Public Affairs and how it affects initiatives and external communication.</li> <li>The group considered the potential of perceived corporate and/or government partnerships.</li> </ul>
<b>Whole Health Program Specifically for</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Tracy Gaudet provided attendees with information about the Whole Health program at VA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shet stated that the program is a huge opportunity to change the way VA delivers health care that aligns with the values of VA.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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**GLA Veterans Briefing**

Tracy Gaudet,  
MD

- It is a fundamental transformation of the definition of health care. The system of care in the U.S. is primarily focused on disease; the goal is for a Veteran to partner with a whole team designed around their need to optimize their health.
- Dr. Stone's VHA plan for modernization includes 10 lanes of effort centered around Whole Health and mental health. Working with mental health and suicide prevention is one of the lanes that is a challenging VA.
- The group discussed the benefits of a Whole Health model.
- The group heard from caregivers who firmly believe in Whole Health.
- The Whole Health cohort of Veteran's pharmacy costs significantly dropped while the costs of the non-Whole Health Veterans rose.
- Veterans using the Whole Health approach reduced their opioid use, while Veterans not using Whole Health increased their opioid use.
- Employees are more involved in the Whole Health approach with dietitians, psychologists, physical therapists, social workers.
- Veterans expressed their approval of the Whole Health approach.
- She addressed the impact on homeless Veterans and their sense of purpose while involved with the program.
- Ann Brown, Medical Center Director, presented GLA-related information on this effort. GLA was one of the 2012 Centers of Innovation and they made some progress with Whole Health, but progress decreased due to outside factors; however, they are working to improve initiatives through increased awareness and clinician involvement.
- The group discussed opportunities to expand and improve the Whole Health program nationwide.
- Ms. Gaudet informed the group that they have a detailed implementation guide that has evolved as flagships implement the program.

**Public Comment Session**

- Mr. Skinner welcomed the members of the public who provided the comments below.
- Dr. Robert Kamanski
  - The LA VA is much better than people think. I would rate this much higher than a 3. I can see a 4 or 4.5. I have been to Walter Reed right after the scandal and I know what I am looking for.
  - I am a life member of the Association of Military Surgeons. He sent me over there and I asked a lot of good questions and I know what I am looking for. I would bet the farm on it. As a farm boy, that I would rate you 4.5. I would talk to the VA Secretary about that.
  - I have been trained by the California Department of Natural Resources and in climate change science. Dr. Paris has done research and I read an EPA e-mail. I just wanted to know if you are ready for what is coming. There will be more diseases, more problems – this is coming from the EPA.
  - Thank you for taking care of us!

- Ms. Gail Opaltree
  - I am a military paratrooper Veteran, active duty grandmother.
  - Recently, through the MOVE! Program I lost over 140 pounds – thank you very much! I am a happy person these days. The way I did that was I learned gravy is not a beverage. Now, as you must already know, I am a VA comedienne,
  - As an elected CVEB member, I have currently been working with the 1887 Fund on the restoration of the chapel and the trolley building.
  - A lot of times people come to me because they say “You are such a sparkplug. You get things going.” I did a UPM for the DGA and have been doing motion pictures for 25 years. I can read a budget.
  - The restoration of the chapel is not really my project, but I want to advocate for it and I want to champion it. I am working on braided funding for jobs for Veterans so that they can work on this project and learn to become restoration experts and have a good, solid job that is going to be meaningful and creative and prideful. I would like to see that for Veterans.
  - I am working on braided funding with some people in San Jose that would include an orientation program and shadowing, because not all Veterans are not able to build a business on their own).
  - I am here to solicit your support with this project. Thank you very much.
- Mr. James McFee
  - I am a Vietnam Veteran and an end of life training volunteer at Twilight Brigade. I am here speaking on behalf of the organization and its founder and chairman of the board, Mr. Dannion Brinkley, who is himself a Vietnam era Marine Corps Veteran.
  - Earlier this year, the Twilight Brigade, after 21 years of service to over 25,000 Veterans, was one of the Veteran Service groups evicted from the West LA VA campus. The hospital’s leadership reaction to the criticisms of an Inspector General report relating to leasing policy activities that did not clearly benefit Veterans was a response not with the precision of an A-10 Warthog, but rather with indiscriminate carpet bombing, sweeping through and eliminating every organization from the campus. More than 50 years after Admiral James Zumwalt made the tough call to use Agent Orange in Vietnam, the unintended consequences of that decision are still being felt. I worry that the decision to kick Veteran Service Organizations out of their spaces at the West Los Angeles VA campus may also have long term unintended consequences.
  - I can appreciate that the Inspector General might take issue with whether hospitalized Veterans were benefiting from baseball fields and dog parks, but that should not be the case with the Twilight Brigade, which, for 21 years, had a coordinating office and training space here. Over those 21 years, thousands of individuals were trained as end of life care volunteers to serve at the bedside of

dying Veterans around the country. The donated hours of service of these trained volunteers is not something that you can measure easily on a spreadsheet because the delivery of compassion in your actions is priceless. I am one of those volunteers and I can tell you that not only did the training help me help others, it also helped me help myself. So many of us who served in Vietnam and Southeast Asia came home feeling disenfranchised and becoming a trained Twilight Brigade volunteer at the VA helped me heal some of those long held hurts and it helps me help my fellow Veterans.

- The Twilight Brigade was created to fill an unmet need in the VA system, bringing trained end of life or hospice volunteers in hospice units, nursing homes and VA facilities, as well as into local communities where Veterans have been able to stay in their homes. Their mission has always been to be there to serve so that no Veteran dies alone. This training is not something you can get from just watching an online video or reading a book. It is hands on, fully engaging training that equips those who go through it with the tools to give service effectively.
- For decades, it has been thought that Veterans desire to receive their care at VA facilities as part of the government keeping their promise of healthcare for life. That trend seems to be changing now, in part because the system has become a victim of its own success and can no longer deliver timely care to all entitled Veterans with efficiency and consistency. The trend now is to give Veterans the choice to seek medical care through local resources.
- With passage of the MISSION Act this last year, the VA is tasked with consolidating all its community programs and establishing new standards of care for both VA facilities and their community partners. How will this work? I know that most Veterans, like the rest of the population, want to stay in their homes, if possible, as they age. Are there specific programs within the VA system to help Veterans maintain their independence and their optimal quality of life while staying at home? Are their VA partnerships with local corporate and nonprofit organizations? How does the MISSION Act enhance this? How does the VA track outcomes and quality control of external partners?
- One of the great lessons of volunteering at the VA has been the observation of just how important the geriatric programs are at the VA to an aging Veteran population. How are the MISSION Act and other VA programs going to help reduce the likelihood of fragmentation of care for their older Veterans and especially their frail elderly? I worry that they are vulnerable to falling through the cracks.
- With all the proposed changes within the VA structure as a result of the MISSION Act and changes in leadership, how is the VA going to protect from any negative impact the care and delivery of care for their older Veterans who often have complex chronic disease and disabling conditions? After all, the VA has designated geriatrics and extended care as part of its foundation of services. If

these are decentralized and dispersed throughout the system in any fashion, how will quality control measures be consistently measured and assured? What mechanism does the VA have in place that will accomplish what we, the Twilight Brigade, have for the last 21 years?

- The VA's core values, I CARE (
  - Twilight Brigade
  - Twilight Brigade would like a response in writing as to
- Mr. Francisco Juarez
  - I am the southern area commander of American Veterans (AMVETS). I am the president of several organizations and have advocacy experience.
  - You will be receiving information from Ryan Thompson. This young man lives in Brentwood. He is not a Veteran, but he has had it up to here. He put together a timeline that shows all of the things that we have been calling land grab, only he has done it a lot better and he has delved a lot deeper and he shows collusion and he shows connections. I request that you not make any votes or any binding decisions until you have read that timeline, until you have engaged Mr. Ryan Thompson. He sought us out because of the minutes of the previous meetings that convinced him of wrongdoing. For example, one of the things that he pointed out is that this person, this chief that wrote a rebuttal to the 2018 OIG report came from Booz Allen Hamilton, which is where all of the Master Plan is going to, and he shows how that person was brought into VA and how that person said, 'Oh, they go along with the 2018 OIG report, but we are going to keep Brentwood School, we are going to keep the oil, and we are going to keep UCLA baseball.' And he says, 'No, that's not right.' And he has it all laid out.
  - This information is coming, and this information backs up everything that we have been telling you about the land grab. They have been telling you it is not right. They have been telling you that this land was specified for one purpose only and this complex Master Plan, which is actually just a settlement plan, that you, as a national Federal oversight board, have been manipulated and have been told to look at the different elements of the Master Plan. This Master Plan has been guided by people at Brentwood, by big money, by politicians who offer those people favors and nobody is thinking about the Veteran, but the Veterans themselves have been trying to tell you, but we have never been engaged. They brought you information about the beachfront property and the deed that was



cut the same day as this deed. It never got questioned. They never were told what is going to happen. The City of Santa Monica just tried to make a move on it the other day, but my grandson and I made it in time to go on record to tell them, 'Do not be messing with that property.' I do not know if they are going to or not and I do not know if this presentation today for the record is going to stop what is going on, but, Secretary Wilkie, please exercise caution in what you are going to decide to do with this land because this land is specified for one purpose only and that is in the terms, condition, spirit and intent of the 1888 deeds. I say deeds, plural because this deed is separate from the beach deed. Now, the beachfront deed references the residents of the home back then. That is a Master Plan! This is a settlement plan and you have not really engaged the larger demographic of Veterans. I see Veterans from out in Redlands and the San Bernadino area beginning to come. They were not invited to the design process. I see that my time is running out, but I just want to tell you, do not try to manipulate what you cannot manipulate, and the FBI will be coming soon.

- Ms. Sherelle McCary

- I am Commander Sherelle M. Lewis McCary. I am a retired naval commander with 35 years of military service, seventh generation military and fifth generation law enforcement. I am also the southern area council provost marshal for AMVETS, I am also the judge advocate for AMVETS Post 77 as well, I am also Deputy Chief of Staff of the DAVs Department and I am also known nationally in the DAV organization. I am here on behalf of the Twilight Brigade.
- I am a Twilight Brigader. I wanted you all to know this was something that I wrote from my heart: "Hello to everyone and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Twilight Brigade. These wonderful and very caring group of people have given a very deep and positive journey to all their patients. They have visited in the many years they have been up and running. I have seen them touch so many different lives and the profound love and true compassion for so many people who have been diagnosed with many different things, including their children. It would be a disservice to the lives they have touched for many years to get rid of an organization who has many different purposes and has touched so many lives on many different levels. It would be heartbreaking for those lives, as well as their own. So many people have been able to have a wonderful experience of their last walk on this earth do to the Twilight Brigade. Their intense training has given us a special journey on knowing how to handle death on so many different levels and a deep setting of understanding, but most importantly, taking nothing around us for granted. I am very compassionate about the Twilight Brigade and their selfless hard work and many hours of sitting with patients and taking a little of that patient with them when they leave this earth for the last time. It has been a very peaceful transition for their people. They love it. It is a Godly experience for all of us who

have been trained to work with these special patients. Please consider their compassion and selfless time of travel, and most importantly hard work and the way they all have given each person we have touched that last rite before dying. Thank you, sir and ma'am. Sincerely, Commander Sherelle M. McCary, United States Navy, retired."

- I came 100 miles to speak on behalf of the Twilight Brigade and I also champion other people who are here today because no one that has served this country should have to die alone! And these wonderful people, including my master trainer and the coordinator for the Twilight Brigade, who decided to just shut herself down for five months and she has not spoken to no one, I am here to speak on their behalf because this group of people is so very important and everyone here is very important. So to those you that have never served this country, all of us to that have served this country, if we were asked to go back into battle, we would go back into battle just to save your way of life and your beliefs!
- Ms. Shelley Whizin
  - I have been with the Twilight Brigade since 2011. When I took my first training at the Twilight Brigade in San Diego, California, I knew I was on to something very important. It changed my life.
  - I had been with a friend of mine who was dying of leukemia and she asked me to move into her home with her, her husband and her son. Somehow, some way, all I can explain it is grace just stepped into me to help them navigate the journey and I lived with her and her family for about a month. After that experience, I realized that it was possible to help prepare families when someone is dying, that it does not have to be a horrible experience. And I was hungry. I was really hungry to learn. Is there an end of life field? What is this? So I heard about the Twilight Brigade.
  - I took the training and I was hooked. I knew I was going to become a trainer after that. It affected my life and I knew that they could impact other lives. One of the reasons was to serve Veterans. My dad and one of my brothers were in the Navy and my other brother was in the Marines, so I come from a family of Veterans and I knew, by what they experienced and how the service had changed their lives, that I could do my part without having served or by serving in a different way. When I realized that the Twilight Brigade was here to serve Veterans, I knew that I had to be one of the trainers and I had to be able to teach other people how to be present – being present is important.
  - I do not know how many of you have ever been with anybody who is in their last breath, all I can say is it is a great privilege to be able to witness that transition from this world to wherever they go, and to be able to be there for that person is a very, very important. Many of the people that live here in Building 215 and Building 213 have PTSD. They are often estranged from their families and do not

have people visiting them, so the Twilight Brigade was created in 1997 to serve these Veterans. I am honored, always honored, to be a trainer, to hold the space for the people in the training because it is not just about the Veterans, it is about their own immersion. They spent three days in this room from Friday to Sunday night – 20 hours are spent for them to be certified volunteers to be with Veterans and others who are passing. What I discovered is every single person who enters that room, their life is changed forever because they deal with their own notions of death and dying and where else can you possibly spend three days talking about a subject nobody wants to talk about? That is something that is going to happen to every single person that they know, everybody in this room, everybody everywhere. We are designed and built with an expiration date and it is up to us to bring honor and dignity and regard to every person that lives in this life.

- In doing rounds at the VA, I noticed how isolated and lonely many of the Veterans were. They have a group of volunteers that may come every Saturday and they have been here for past 13 years and they do rounds in this building and in Building 215 and Building 213. They bring their new fledglings to shadow with them – they talk about shadowing – and it is a very important thing to do so that they can feel they know what to do. They get them trained, but they also need practical training. Not every volunteer signs up for the VA, partly because it takes forever to get a badge and a lot of people are discouraged.
- These people are trained and they are ready and able to be with people who are dying. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak.
- I mean, they have been here 21 years, so I think that says a lot.
- Ms. Kyle Orlemann
  - There is something that I would like to address to you that does not directly address the issues that are before you, but it affects everybody in this room. All of us know that there are many memorials all over the country to Veterans of different conflicts. You may or may not be aware that the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum downtown was dedicated in 1923 as a memorial to World War I Veterans. There's been a controversy that has come to light over the past few weeks that has gotten a lot of press where United Airlines is making a \$69 million development proposal and it would include naming rights. Supervisor Janice Hahn is leading the issue to try and prevent them from changing the name of that memorial and dishonoring the World War I Veterans in favor of an airline. There is a petition and it would be very helpful if any of you wish to sign it, you can get it from me or you can get it from my husband, who will have it at the back of the room.
  - You were talking about the job training opportunities for people and I would like to add another area that you should consider. There are going to be a lot of dogs, cats and other animals coming onto the campus. There are a number of

Veterans who feel a lot more comfortable dealing with four-foots than with two-foots and I would suggest that you give some serious consideration to having a job training facility that will have to do with pet care – grooming, walking, any of those kinds of things. The Veterans then would be able to deal with the four-foots and also learn to deal with the two-foots, and I think that would be good for everybody, if you could add that.

- There was a presentation earlier about the Whole Health Program, one thing I feel very strongly about. If you are talking about the Whole Health issue where the Veterans are on the campus, when they are integrating with their medical teams, when they are integrating with the other Veterans on the campus, the piece that you are leaving out is the 95% of the time that the Veterans are not on the campus, when they are at home with the civilians, with their wives, with their husbands, with the next door neighbors, with the kids, with the schoolteachers, with everybody in the community. They are the gateway folks. Get us into the Whole Health Program because they will do best with us. If we are not integrated into that program, you are not going to get the best effort in making the changes that they need to make in their lives. If they do not have the backup to learn how to be healthy themselves, we are less effective at making sure that our Veterans stay here on this side of the grass and healthy. It will also prevent homelessness. It will also work tremendously to reduce the suicide rate, since most of us know that the suicides, the 22 a day that everybody is talking about, are mostly Veterans who are 50 years old and older. It is the Vietnam and Korea Veterans that are suiciding. If they have the support at home, they can help cut that.
- You were also talking about the publicity. I would like to point out to you that the national magazine for Vietnam Veterans of America, the *VVA Veteran*. This is the January/February 2019 issue and you can also get it online at [www.vvaVeteran.org](http://www.vvaVeteran.org). It has a main article in here about welcome change at the West LA VA. You might recognize the picture that is listed in the article because it was taken in this room of all of you when you were here the last time. It is an extremely positive article. I am very proud of it. The reason that this article happened is the California state President of Vietnam Veterans of America is a gentleman by the name of Steve Mackey. Steve is a Vietnam Veteran. His wife, Elaine, is also the California President of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. Both of them are on the national boards for their respective organizations and Elaine is expected to be elected national President in July at their upcoming convention for Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, nationally. Steve and Elaine are two of the best-known advocates for Vietnam Veterans in the United States. As some of you know, Elaine has been fighting a battle against cancer. She has been in remission for two years. Last Tuesday, Elaine Mackey was diagnosed with leukemia and she died hours later. Steve and Elaine have been very dear friends and mentors to us for a long time. Most of us

	<p>in the room know them or know of them. Elaine's viewing is going to be next Wednesday, a week from tomorrow evening and the funeral will be in Riverside next Thursday morning. If any of you are interested in coming, these are people that have devoted their entire lives to this community and if you can be there, I would really appreciate it a whole lot. If you need any further information, please see us afterwards. Read the article. This would not have happened if it not been for Steve and Elaine. They are the ones that made this article happen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. John Medlin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not represent any group, organization or anything else. Fifty years ago, this month, I started working with trying to keep people in Vietnam alive. Twenty-two years ago, I started coming to this Veterans Hospital. For the last 22 years, I have gotten excellent care and had no complaints.</li> <li>• This is my first time even knowing about your organization and about 10 or 15 years ago I remember seeing the demonstrations out at Wilshire and San Vicente. What you guys are going through now, I congratulate you for. You have had to make a commitment to make this place better. Is everybody going to like you? No, but you guys are making the effort and I congratulate you for doing that.</li> <li>• Regarding the call center and getting it computerized, please keep people involved. I like to talk to a human being, not press a button.</li> <li>• I am looking at the page you were distributing today, the SAIL results. Where do I get to see them on an ongoing basis?</li> <li>• What is the percentage of females being treated at the West LA facility?</li> <li>• I am very blessed that I live in Santa Monica. It takes me less than 30 minutes to get to the West LA Hospital and that is taking the big blue bus.</li> <li>• What is the proposed annual lease cost or revenue expected from the Brentwood School?</li> <li>• What is the annual budget of the West LA Hospital?</li> <li>• What studies are currently underway to plan for fewer wars? That is 50 years expiration for the current Veterans. What are they doing now? Hopefully they will have fewer wars.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mr. Skinner thanked the speakers for their comments.</li> </ul>
<b>Wrap Up</b> DFO/Chair/FAC Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Davis thanked attendees who contributed comments; she also provided information in response to several comments.</li> <li>• Ms. Deutchman commented on the altered branding of "To his orphan." Starting in 2015, IAVA asked that this branding be changed. In 2018, the Director of the VA Center for Women Veterans suggested that it gradually be changed to read, "To care for those who shall have borne the battle and their families and their survivors."</li> </ul>

## Tuesday, April 16, 2019

- Dr. Davis asserted there is a respect and sensitivity to communicate that VA is concerned about all Veterans, any gender, any state of identification, etc.

## Wednesday, April 17, 2019

### Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Lieutenant General (R) John D. Hopper Jr., Committee Chair

- Lt. Gen. Hopper informed attendees that meeting minutes will include a video recording of all briefings and discussions. Lt. Gen. Hopper also suggested that the group review the subcommittee structure and its organization; this is in response to team members moving on to a different assignment and their role in identifying potential replacements.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper reminded the group that the charter will get renewed this year.
- Committee members made the following recommendations:
  - Mr. Allman suggested the committee schedule a briefing from Breitburn and the VA Chief of Police regarding public safety data. He also suggested a presentation on the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Program.
  - Mr. James Battista suggested the committee request a presentation from the Bureau of Land Management to discuss the lease agreement and related finances. Ms. Flanz offered to coordinate the discussion.

### Lease Revenue Funds Briefing

Meghan Flanz Executive Director, VA West LA Campus Master Plan (VA)

- Ms. Meghan Flanz reported on the lease revenue funds. Generally, revenue that comes to federal agencies and is based on leases of their land goes to the U.S. Treasury; that was the rule until the West LA Leasing Act of 2016, which has a provision about leases that allows revenue to stay with the campus to be used for the renovation and maintenance of the land.
- She discussed laws surrounding enhanced-use leases and conveyed that Brentwood and UCLA are not enhanced-use leases.
- The committee discussed in-kind considerations, which are elements, in addition to money, the lease holder provides to pay the land owner for the lease:
  - According to Ms. Flanz, Brentwood School and UCLA leases are worded in a way that identifies services that they provide to Veterans as in-kind consideration.
  - She noted that the Brentwood School and UCLA leases call out different categories of consideration, including multiple categories of in-kind consideration.
- The committee discussed fair market value for the property. Ms. Flanz noted that the school received an assessment of the fair market value, VA received an assessment, and then, since the two assessments were far apart, there was a third, independent assessment conducted to reconcile the two.
- The committee discussed potential uses for the area between the two buildings:
  - Ms. Flanz described a preliminary discussion with the developer regarding the underutilized area and the opportunity to create a healing exterior space to

	<p>complement the healing nature of the interior. UCLA landscape architects and architects from their School of Architecture developed preliminary plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She provided a preliminary cost estimate of \$3M-\$4M to implement the plan. She also noted that the Principal Developer does not intend to develop the exterior space.</li> <li>• The committee discussed the potential to use the space to promote a Whole Health solution (e.g., use the area for yoga, Thai Chi, gardening, and other therapeutic purposes).</li> <li>• The committee discussed funding options and maintenance requirements.</li> <li>• The committee discussed maintenance options.</li> <li>• She discussed the potential opportunity for a corporate partnership and related details that must be considered, including the structure of the lease and legislative assistance in terms of naming rights. Mr. Delacruz expressed the importance of philanthropy for large corporations and the importance of telling a powerful story to evoke interest. Mr. Mangano introduced the idea of involving the Secretary's office in developing strategic partnerships.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper requested information about other potential projects and their funding. Ms. Flanz responded by conveying that the Principal Developer's community plan, which is preliminary, includes several open spaces and gardens. Funding for the spaces and the willingness of the Principal Developer to include funding is unknown.</li> <li>• The committee discussed the lease revenue account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Allman requested information on the possibility of interest accrual on the account, but Ms. Flanz asserted it would not be possible since federal money is generally held by the U.S. Treasury; the use of a bank is not possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Follow-Up LA METRO Purple Line Briefing</b></p> <p>Kasey Shuda, Construction Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Marlon Walker, Manager of Construction Relations for the METRO Purple Line extension, and Glyssa Alcazar, Senior Communications Officer for the Purple Line extension, provided the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Walker provided an example illustration of the work they have been doing over the last year, called "advanced utility relocation work."</li> <li>• He provided a summary of the upcoming work already scheduled including working location and hours.</li> <li>• He provided an artist's rendering of the VA Hospital station, detailing where it will be and the location of the parking lot. There will be a north side and a south side entrance.</li> <li>• He provided photographs for discussion on how they will have to conduct tree relocation and tree rehabilitation on campus.</li> <li>• He discussed METRO's Green Construction Policy, noting they have a stringent construction policy when it comes to environmental stewardship.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He discussed METRO's robust Veteran hiring program. METRO's goal is for 6% of their annual hiring to provide jobs for Veterans; they are currently at 7%, so they are exceeding their goals and expectations.</li> <li>• Ms. Deutchman requested a discount program for all homeless Veterans or all campus Veterans, and Mr. Wilisch noted that they would consider the idea.</li> <li>• Mr. Scheire noted that the scope is not only just Veterans, but also caretakers, family members, etc.</li> <li>• Mr. Allman stated that he wants to see the nationwide METRO bike share program prior to the station becoming operational.</li> <li>• Mr. Hernandez requested information in terms of funding. Ms. Flanz stated that they do not have approval from the lawyers for METRO or VA. The goal is to have an escrow account controlled by VA, but available to the Principal Developer, which will assist with building and amenity costs, rather than holding the money with the U.S. Treasury.</li> <li>• Ms. Kristie Hernandez, the Director of UCLA's VA Relations Office, invited attendees interested in UCLA Veteran events and programs to their site and provided the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UCLA Student Veterans of America and UCLA Veteran Resource Center is hosting a domiciliary beautification barbecue and game on Friday. They just held their Jackie Robinson Day and Fantasy Baseball Camp, which was a great success. They had over 150 Veterans join them, and they provided barbecue dinner, free T-shirt and batting practice with UCLA's baseball team.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper thanked Ms. Hernandez for her comments and announced a 15-minute break.</li> </ul>
<b>General Discussion</b>  Lieutenant General (R) John D. Hopper Jr., Committee Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Mangano made a motion to make an emergency recommendation based on the discussion on prioritization of resources for campus development.</li> <li>• Mr. Hernandez seconded the motion.</li> <li>• After some discussion, the motion was revised.</li> <li>• Further comments will be addressed in the cover letter.</li> <li>• The motion passed unanimously.</li> </ul>
<b>Subcommittee Work</b>	Subcommittee members met in separate sessions.
<b>Master Plan with Services and Outcomes Subcommittee Recommendation Brief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper suggested a standard recommendation naming protocol.</li> <li>• Ms. Flanz provided a copy of the Land Use &amp; Event application, which must be completed by anyone who wants to use land, whether it is a short-term permit or for the purpose of a revocable license. Entities who want to use space on this campus must submit this application form 90 days in advance, although they are sometimes approved with less than 90-days of notice.</li> </ul>



Anthony Allman,  
Master Plan with  
Services and  
Outcomes  
Subcommittee  
Chair

- Mr. Allman read recommendation one:

Implement a dual track land use application review process prior to executing new short-term permits and revocable licenses at VA WLA. This recommendation is in direct response to recommendation 3 found in the VA OIG report #1800474300: "The acting Under-Secretary for Health, in conjunction with the Director of the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, create a process to allow the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board an opportunity to provide input to the executive leadership on West LA campus land use."

The Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB) recommends the Secretary of the Federal Advisory Committee provide an opportunity to submit formal comment as to whether third-party land use applications at VA WLA are principally Veteran-focused. Additionally, VCOEB recommends that no short-term permits or revocable license agreements are executed without receiving formal comment from the Federal Advisory Committee. The current land use approval process requires third parties to submit a VA GLA Health System Land Use & Event Proposal form to the Office of Asset Management at least 90 days in advance. The VAGLAHS Land Use Committee then offers a formal recommendation to the medical director before proceeding to the Network Contracting Office and Office of General Counsel. This process lacks community engagement, since there is no public comment period. Furthermore, there is no oversight, since VAGLAHS is not required to report revocable license agreements to Congress. Their recommendation seeks to remedy both shortcomings with input from VCOEB for the Medical Director's consideration.

VCOEB requests that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct VAGLAHS to provide third-party land use applications with the intent to execute short-term permits for revocable licenses to the Federal Advisory Committee for public discussion. VCOEB will report back to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Under-Secretary for Health and the VAGLAHS Director what they concur or do not concur for each application.

VCOEB requests that land use applications are distributed at least 15 days prior to the next scheduled meeting in order to enhance informed decision-making. This recommendation does not attempt to usurp VA's decision-making authority.

VCOEB acknowledges that all land use approvals are inherently governmental decisions. Rather, this recommendation offers the department an avenue to comply with OIG recommendation three, improving transparency between VAGLAHS leadership and the Veteran community in Los Angeles.

	<p>Finally, VCOEB requests that all current and future short-term permits and revocable licenses be added to the Freedom of Information Act Reading Room within 30 days of approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed various aspects of the recommendation and process in great detail. Ms. Deutchman clarified that they are not necessarily approving the rubric they have been given by approving this recommendation.</li> <li>• Ms. Flanz stated that, according to Lori Moore, who chairs the committee, they receive 50 to 60 of these applications per year; they come in regularly, spaced out over the calendar year. Mr. Battista added that the applications could potentially be sent out prior to the meeting for all to review, which would help facilitate discussion.</li> <li>• Motion was made and seconded. Committee voted.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper noted the vote passed with seven voting “Yes” and three voting “No.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outreach and Community Engagement with Services and Outcomes Subcommittee Recommendation Brief</b></p> <p>Arthur Delacruz, Outreach and Community Engagement with Services and Outcomes Subcommittee Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Delacruz delivered the four recommendations that have been forwarded by the Outreach Community Engagement Subcommittee.</li> <li>• Ms. Deutchman started with recommendation four, since it goes back to the question of how to they define “principally benefiting Veterans.” Ms. Deutchman conveyed there is no way to communicate the clear and objective purpose to the public. Therefore, he recommended that a metrics be developed for measuring what it means to principally benefit Veterans and their families.</li> <li>• The West LA Leasing Act “principally benefits Veterans” and their families has meaning with respect to services provided by a person or entity under a lease of property and land sharing agreement. It defines it in three ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide exclusively to Veterans and their families.</li> <li>• Designed for needs of Veterans and their families, as opposed to the general public. Any benefit of those services to the general public is distinct and separate from the intended benefit to Veterans and their families.</li> <li>• Excludes services that only benefit Veterans and their families in the generation of revenue.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ms. Deutchman recommended adding further measurement to the second item, since it is potentially open to interpretation and there has been controversy about its usage in the media. She recommended that the following criteria be measured to address those requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what degree does the program have a Veteran-centric mission as measured in its mission statement?</li> <li>• To what degree does the program have a Veteran-centric purpose as measured in its purpose statement, program description and/or online material?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Of the hours the program is open, what percent of those hours are Veterans and their families being served in a program distinct from non-Veterans and their families?
- What percent of the training, jobs and program-related benefits are directly for Veterans and their families exclusively?
- What is the cost-benefit ratio in terms of the amount of space to be used relative to the number of Veterans served per year?
- Mr. Delacruz motioned the vote and Mr. Allman seconded it, but additional clarification was requested.
- Mr. Delacruz stated that they must have a conversation about whether the people on the Board are able to deliberate and vote in firm, fair, and consistent manner.
- Mr. Delacruz added that they must decide if this is too rigorous, if this process is too complicated, if this process has too much fidelity, and if this process has too many unnecessary details.
- The committee discussed the scope of the measurements (leases, enhanced-use leases, licenses, or any type of land use). Ms. Deutchman stated that it only applies to wherever the term “principally benefiting” applies. Mr. Scheire expressed that the public does not differentiate between an enhanced-use lease, a lease, a land agreement, or any other mechanisms within a contract. Ms. Flanz added that the fact that the public is confused does not allow them to vary the requirements set by a statute and does not allow them to unilaterally apply a statutory definition to something that is not covered by the statute. Further definitions, such as “land use,” were discussed by the committee.
- Ms. Deutchman suggested modifications to the recommendation.
- After further discussion, Lt. Gen. Hopper encouraged the committee to adopt a simple and direct understanding, since there are numerous complexities.
- Mr. Allman requested information on how this recommendation would impact the group of Jewish military Veterans who were evicted and criteria by which they were removed. Ms. Flanz deferred to Ms. Ann Brown, who outlined criteria.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper noted the recommendation was approved with 5 voting “Yes,” 2 voting “No,” and 2 abstentions.
- Mr. Delacruz began a discussion about recommendation one, which would create a GLA change management initiative, GLA change management team, and GLA change management resources to enhance and coordinate communication across the West LA VA campus.
- Mr. Delacruz summarized the details for the committee.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper requested a motion. Mr. Scheire motioned. Mr. Delacruz seconded. The committee further discussed the recommendation:
  - Mr. Delacruz noted that this is not the final version, so there are incremental changes.

- Lt. Gen. Hopper noted that there are potential conflicts of interest if committee members might be interested in providing support.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper noted that the motion passed unanimously with 9 “Yes” votes.
- Mr. Scheire introduced the next recommendation:
  - Create a communications portal/content management platform to enhance knowledge management and increase engagement with the LA Veteran community and rebuild trust that has been lost. It goes on to say: Trust has been lost in their LA community and that has been reinforced at their subcommittee over the last 19 months and their experience here.
  - To rebuild trust with Los Angeles community, they must over-communicate and be accountable to the things they say and do. The local web site communications are not appropriate given the scale of the VA in Los Angeles, modern technology, information expectations, and usability.
  - Mr. Scheire provided outcomes, objectives, and VA actions and quick wins that could be executed. He also outlined immediate actions to improve outreach and communications.
  - The recommendation is to create a communications portal/content management platform to enhance knowledge management and increase engagement with the LA Veteran community.
- Ms. Deutchman made a motion that the recommendation be approved. Mr. Allman seconded the motion. There was discussion.
- Mr. Allman stated that he does not think there’s anything controversial in this, noting that he believes VA is already making steps to fulfill the intent of the recommendation.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper noted that the motion passed unanimously with 9 “Yes” votes.
- Mr. Delacruz discussed the fourth recommendation out of the OCE: Require the selected principal development team to demonstrate:
  - Improvement and reliable standards are being employed to design both housing and housing services programs.
  - That metrics are used to measure the effective implementation of these standards biannually to report out to the Secretary of VA and the standards and the results of the metrics are made public.
- Mr. Delacruz noted that VA and the current Secretary of VA stand in a unique position to create a historic community of Veterans who believe that best practices are only valuable if they provide a venue and an understandable means for widespread dissemination.
- Lt. Gen. Hopper requested a motion. The motion was made by Mr. Rosenfeld and seconded by Mr. Delgado. There was discussion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Allman agreed that more data would be beneficial. He would like to see the Principal Developer present questions could be asked. Multiple committee members agreed that the Principal Developer should be included.</li> <li>• Ms. Deutchman introduced an alternative motion and asked for a second.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper requested that Ms. Deutchman state the motion clearly before anyone seconds. Ms. Deutchman clarified her position.</li> <li>• Mr. Delacruz reminded the committee that they received the draft RFQ with 24 hours to comment. The RFQ not contain any metric requirements.</li> <li>• Mr. MacPherson, the Director of the Enhanced-Use Lease program at the VA in Los Angeles, explained that the Principal Developer's efforts belong to his office and they were responsible for producing the RFQ and selecting the principal development team. He provided additional information on his office and process.</li> <li>• Mr. Hernandez recommended that the Board table this recommendation until they have an opportunity to have the Principal Developer present the RFQ or RFP in June or early July.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper reminded the group that the motion on the floor was to vote on this recommendation in its original form. It was not withdrawn or tabled.</li> <li>• The committee discussed the issue further.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper noted that the motion did not pass with 3 "Yes" votes and 6 "No" votes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Way Ahead/Next Steps/Future Actions /Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Lieutenant General (R) John D. Hopper Jr., Committee Chair</p> <p>Eugene Skinner, Jr., Designated Federal Officer (DFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper commented about replacing members they will lose in September; they anticipate an announcement will be in the Federal Register on May 1. At that time, those that are interested in the process can volunteer and complete their replacements. Lt. Gen. Hopper noted that financial expertise would be welcome on the Board.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper discussed the possibility of a meeting in the last part of July or first part of August.</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper offered to meet with Mr. Mangano and subcommittee chairs to discuss committee structure, subcommittee structure, and consider modifications. Lt. Gen. Hopper requested that committee members review the charter.</li> <li>• The following attendees provided final comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Flanz thanked the board for their clear commitment and dedication to their work.</li> <li>• Mr. McPherson mentioned he is looking forward to their next meeting to discuss topics surrounding the final vote. He expressed his appreciation for all the work that the committee did.</li> <li>• Mr. Delacruz thanked the Board for their patience with his political statement at the end and added that he believes they make statements of conviction and a way forward in their own way. He requested that in the future, the Board focus on more deliberation and posturing moving forward instead of consuming information. He expressed his belief that the next meeting should</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

	<p>be centered on an outcome that ensures they create a community that is meaningful to Veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms. Deutchman added that it is good when there are mixed votes as opposed to always only going with unanimous votes. However, she noted, once they vote, they all must be behind the result.</li><li>• Mr. Rosenfeld referenced the tragedy at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France. He stated he would introduce a motion at the next meeting to urge the department to take steps to protect and stabilize the historic value of buildings and their intended use.</li><li>• Lt. Gen. Hopper thanked everyone for their time, the quality of the discussions, the recommendations they passed, and adjourned the meeting.</li></ul>
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/s/ John D. Hopper, Jr.

John D. Hopper Jr.

Chair,

Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board

Federal Advisory Committee