

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, April 5, 2023 10:00 a.m.
Iowa Veterans Home, Whitehill
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

Commission of Veterans Affairs Members

Present: Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, The American Legion
Darlene McMartin, 1st Vice Chair, Public Member at Large
Orene Cressler, Member, Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veterans Service Officers
Kenneth Lloyd, Member, Paralyzed Veterans of America
George Mosby, Member, Iowa National Guard
Gregory Paulline, Member, Vietnam Veterans of America
Mary Van Horn, Member, American Veterans (AMVETS)
Gary Wattnem, 2nd Vice Chair, Reserve Officers Association
Todd Jacobus, IVH Commandant, IDVA Executive Director

Absent: Steve Hyde, Member, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Carol Whitmore, Member, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Iowa Veterans Home/Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Staff Members

Present: Nathan Wilson, Operations Executive Administrator, IVH/IDVA
Robert Stavnes, Public Service Manager, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Karl Lettow, Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Melissa Miller, Trust Fund Administrator, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Penny Cutler-Bermudez, Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Iowa Veterans Home
Polly Roll, Executive Secretary, Iowa Veterans Home, Recording Secretary

Guests Present: Randy Johnson, American Legion State Commander
Mysty Stumbo, Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator
Linda Rouse, Iowa Workforce Development
Kristi Catrenich, Des Moines Regional Office
Heidi Rhodes, Des Moines Regional Office
Roger Elliott, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 490
LTC Ryan Sextro, Iowa National Guard
Kurt Thielen, Veterans Affairs Central Iowa Director
Dan Kuester, Veterans Affairs Central Iowa
Brenda Safranski, Senator Joni Ernst Office
Jim Peterson, American Legion
Jamie Johnson, Iowa City Veterans Affairs
Maria Bilharz, Cerro Gordo County Veterans Affairs
Wayne Marek, Des Moines Vet Center
Al Lorenzen, God Speed Equine
Kelly Lorenzen, God Speed Equine
Terry McCollough, IVH Resident
Adam Akers, Franklin County Veterans Affairs
Dylan Boles, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Intern
Krista Beck, VFW Post 8879
Jay Blakley, Iron Hawk Medical
Sergeant Major Pete Moeller, NGB Casualty Operations
Kyle Hall, Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce

Kevin Huseboe, Marshall County Veterans Affairs
Michael Mortensen, President – Iowa Association of County Commissioners & Veteran Service Officers
Michael Braman, Veterans of Foreign War
Brett McLain, Story County Veterans Affairs
Linda Rouse, Division Administrator, Iowa Workforce Development
Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development Director

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE UNAPPROVED UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

APPROVED: _____ Date: _____
Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Call to Order

Chairperson Ledvina called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Ledvina followed by a moment of silence for our departed Veterans, POWs, those missing in action (MIAs) and those on active duty at this time.

Welcome

Chairperson Ledvina welcomed everyone. Guests introduced themselves.

Roll Call

Polly Roll took roll call.

Presentation, LTC Ryan Sextro, Warrior & Family Services

LTC Ryan Sextro, Iowa National Guard, State Family Programs Director, gave a presentation on the Army Family Outreach Services program. This is an unfunded federal program. They receive about \$3,000 annually to provide cell phones and automation support to their regional coordinators. The requested funding this year is to provide the unique programming for the Veterans throughout the 99 counties of Iowa.



Army Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) Support Coordinators provide Military Survivors with social and emotional support and help to navigate the benefits process. We ensure the seamless transition for Survivors from the initial support provided by the Casualty Assistance Officer to long-term, ongoing referral assistance. Our services are regional and available at locations closest to the Survivor's current residence. Although SOS is an Army program, any Survivor requesting help will be assisted.

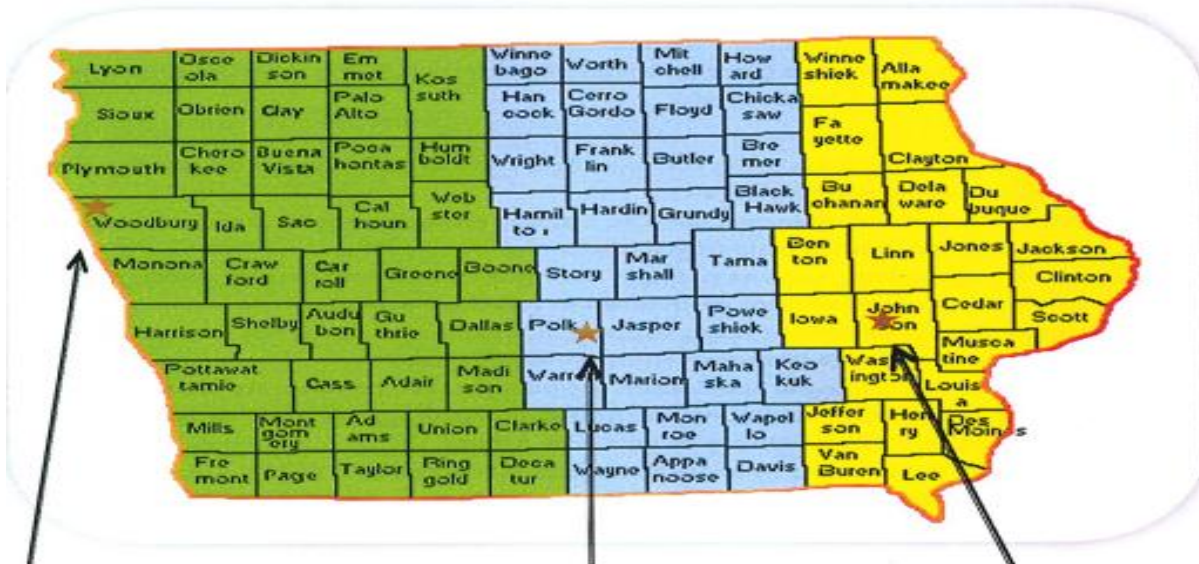
Example of Assistance Available:

- **Liaison to DoD agencies & benefits coordination such as Defense health agency and Defense Finance & Accounting Services**
- **Liaison with non-Federal agencies, such as Tragedy Assistance for Survivors, Gold Star Wives, Gold Star Mothers & Gold Star Fathers**
- **Milestone Managements, such as changes in benefits, entitlements, financial stability and recertification of enrollment of children in full-time education**
- **Outreach events, bereavement team support, life skills and resiliency education, financial counseling, estate planning, monthly newsletters**
- **Referrals to grief counseling & specialized support groups, community resources, State Agencies, and government and nongovernmental organizations, such as Military OneSource and the US Department of Veterans Affairs**
- **Annual outreach to Survivors in order to keep them connected to the Army Family and provide updated information about benefits**

In 2022 SOS hosted two consolidated events open to all Survivors across Iowa. The 2022 Retreat had 154 Survivors registered and 118 attended. The 2022 Suicide Loss event (Day of Healing) had 23 Survivors registered and 21 attended.

SOS currently hosts a book club for Survivors that has 14 to 18 active participants as well as a regional holiday painting event that had 11 participants in 2022.

The requested funding will support one consolidated event which will rotate annually among the three regions and be open to all Survivors. Regional and local events will continue to be provided by each Regional Coordinator. Having one consolidated event will allow the Regional Coordinators to focus on their regional duties and local events. The intent is to provide all Survivors access to a larger event which introduces them to other Survivors experiencing similar difficulties, as well as highlight additional opportunities for engagement and support.



Cory Van Sloten

Western Iowa

272 Survivors(86 Inactive)

IA ARNG Readiness Center
3200 2nd Mech Drive
Sioux City, IA 51111

515-331-5548 (O)
712-535-1810 (C)
cory.l.vansloten.ctr@army.mil

Mysty Stumbo

Central Iowa

346 Survivors(101 Inactive)

Camp Dodge, BLDG 3465 (W41)
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 40131

515-252-4852 (O)
515-778-0334 (C)
mysty.r.stumbo.ctr@army.mil

Jenna Davis

Eastern Iowa

293 Survivors(85 Inactive)

Iowa City Readiness Center
4540 Melrose Avenue
Iowa City, IA 52246

515-727-3386 (O)
515-321-8090 (C)
jenna.e.davis2.ctr@army.mil

*Inactive numbers count other branches of services also

Requesting \$35,000 from the license plate fund. A motion was made by 1st Vice Chair McMartin to approve; Commissioner Van Horn seconded; all approved.

Presentation, Division Administrator Linda Rouse, Iowa Workforce Development

Linda Rouse, Division Administrator of the Iowa Workforce Development spoke on serving Veterans and the new Veterans portal.

- There are 18 Iowa Work centers across Iowa. They connect the job market with employment opportunities
- Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist are located in all but three of their offices. They can connect Veterans with training program opportunities, schooling, on the job training opportunities, etc. Encourage Veterans that are looking for a new career to reach out to one of the centers.
- There are three local Veteran employment representatives in the state; east, west and one in Des Moines. They meet and explain to employers why they need to be hiring the transitioning service members and Veterans.
- Under Director Townsend’s leadership, they were able to hire five Home Base Iowa Career planners. The career planners can meet with Veterans and transitioning service members. They also work with transitioning service members and Veterans who want to relocate to Iowa.
- Linda spoke on the new Veteran portal - [Veterans Portal \(iowaworksveterans.gov\)](http://Veterans Portal (iowaworksveterans.gov)). The IowaWORKS for Veterans Portal is the pathway to finding new opportunities in Iowa. If you’re a Veteran, transitioning

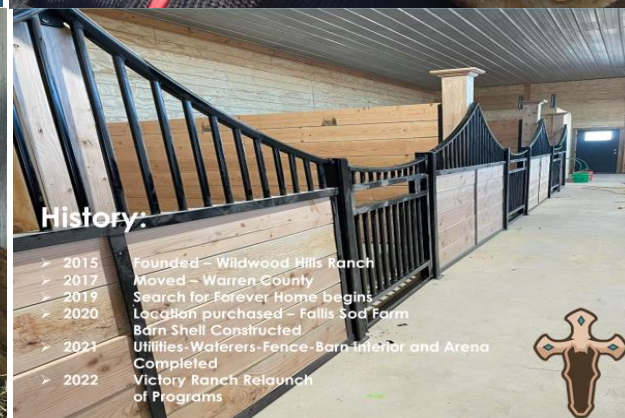
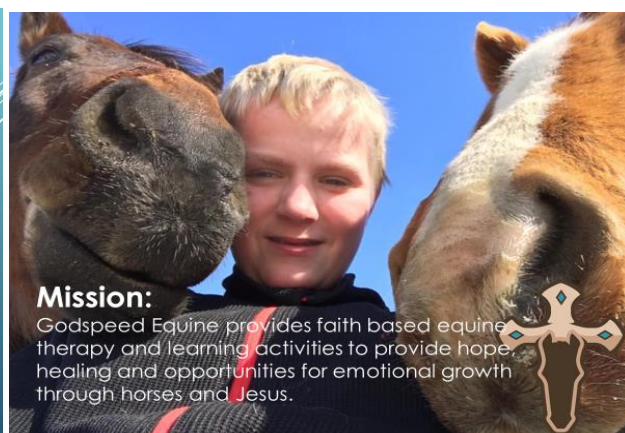
service member, or a military spouse, the portal is your gateway to Iowa’s largest job bank as well as training and workshop resources to improve job-hunting skills. Additionally, Veteran-friendly employers can use the portal to speed up recruitment by sorting through the database of skilled Veteran resumes. Whether you’re looking for a new “home base” or you already call Iowa home and want a new job opportunity, the Veterans Portal can help.

- They are doing a great job connecting employers with Veterans. There are also incentives to hiring Veterans, including tax credits.

Presentation, Al & Kelly Lorenzen, GodSpeed Equine

Al and Kelly Lorenzen spoke on GodSpeed Equine. They have a heart to work with Veterans and first responders. They are taking steps to increase awareness.

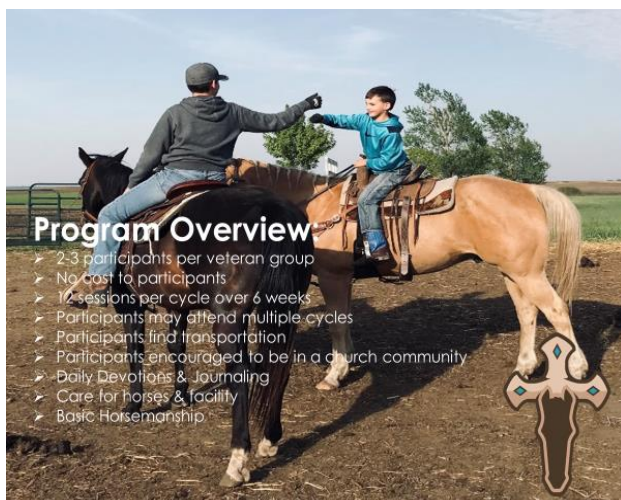
- GodSpeed Equine is located at Victory Ranch, a 22-acre working ranch in Dallas Center, Iowa.
- GodSpeed Equine is a faith-based, non-profit helping people find hope and healing through equine therapy. The outdoor environment and use of horses lend a unique, positive dimension to the experience.
- The program works to create a self-discovery process for students, which leads to personal transformation. The 6-week character-building program consists of two sessions per week. Participants engage in Christian devotions, journaling, basic horsemanship, feeding, grooming, saddling, and riding; a coach/mentor helps them process and overcome challenges. The program is free of charge.
- Students in the programs work toward goals while learning patience, humility, healthy communication, anger management, coping skills and problem-solving as they grow and heal.
- Equine therapy uses the connection between people and horses to enhance physical and emotional healing.
- They need volunteers that can relate to Veterans.
 - The VA have sent Veterans in the past.
- Below is their PowerPoint presentation.





Benefits of Equine Assisted Therapy:

- Trust
- Anxiety Reduction
- Decreasing Isolation – Depression
- Mindfulness
- Self Esteem
- Impulse Regulation
- Self-Acceptance
- Social Skills
- Assertiveness
- Boundaries



Program Overview

- 2-3 participants per veteran group
- No cost to participants
- 12 sessions per cycle over 6 weeks
- Participants may attend multiple cycles
- Participants find transportation
- Participants encouraged to be in a church community
- Daily Devotions & Journaling
- Care for horses & facility
- Basic Horsemanship



Program Opportunity:

- Veteran volunteers needed
- Training offered
- Veteran volunteers assist with sessions

Al & Kelly Lorenzen

www.godspeedequine.org

<https://www.facebook.com/kagodspeedequine>

al@godspeedequine.org

kelly@godspeedequine.org

Presentation, Krista Beck, VFW Post 8879

Krista Beck gave a presentation on the Women Veterans Appreciation luncheon. This luncheon will be held June 8, 2023, from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Funds are being requested to go toward this event.

- Last year, this event was held at a local restaurant with approximately 20 people participating. The goal is to have 75 people participate this year, with the hopes to double it next year.
- The luncheon is free for all women Veterans and women still serving. There will be representatives from women’s clinics that deal with suicide intervention, trauma, etc., attending.
- The keynote speaker is Major Lillie Miller, Captain of Des Moines Police Academy.
- Attendees will receive contact information for various services for themselves or to share with others.
- Women Veterans Day is celebrated on June 12.
- Requesting \$1,500 from the License Plate fund. A motion was made by Commissioner Wattnem to approve; Commissioner Cressler seconded; all approved.

Presentation, Sergeant Major Pete Moeller, Enlisted Association of the Iowa National Guard

Sergeant Major Pete Moeller spoke on behalf of National Guard Casualty Operations.

- The Army National Guard provides full support to Casualty Operations, providing Notification Officers within four hours of initial casualty reports and Assistance Officers for as long as the family needs them. The Army National Guard conducts Casualty missions for all soldiers in the Army's Active Component, Reserve and National Guard. This service honors our country's bravest by providing the necessary help and guidance to their families during a most difficult time.
- As provided by law, an honor guard detail for the burial of an eligible Veteran shall consist of not less than two members of the Armed Forces. One member of the detail shall be a representative of the parent Service of the deceased Veteran. The honor detail will, at a minimum, perform a ceremony that includes the folding and presenting of the American flag to the next of kin and the playing of Taps. They conduct

over 100,000 army funerals and 500 casualty assistance and notification missions annually across all 54 states and territories to the United States Army, Army Reserves and the National Guard.

- Military Funeral Honors program
 - There is a requirement to respond to congressional of why service members did not receive military funeral honors, which is usually one of two reasons:
 - They may not have known they were eligible for military honors; or
 - They were told they already received military honors by other organizations
 - Every Veteran, more or less, that has an Honorable Discharge paper, are authorized for military funeral honors.
 - For any members served, they are authorized two uniformed service members to come and provide and honor.
 - Other organizations can provide honors; however, the service member of the family is still authorized military honors after the fact.
 - They have gone back five – ten years after the service member has passed and have conducted funeral honors at the cemetery after the anniversary of their death date. It still has to occur if the family is requesting it.
 - The Secretary of Defense is working hard over the next two years on a messaging campaign to make sure every Veteran knows that they are authorized for military honors and has a way to also communicate this at their local funeral home or other organizations.
- The State of Iowa has a very unique program. The Iowa National Guard – The Military Funeral Honors program, Casualty Operations program and Survivor Outreach Services program all rank in the top five percent nationally against all 54 states and territories. They take this very seriously and do an excellent job.
- There are relationships with Veteran organizations on how to work together on how to do the funerals together. Sometimes they are not welcome in certain communities.
- The family can request that there be military funeral honors with a Veteran service organization and the Casualty Operations in which they work together to honor the deceased Veteran.
- If there is a DD-214 or Statement of Service, you should receive a flag. If you get any type of “kickback” on getting a flag, reach out to the National Guard Casualty Operations and they can help you.

Jay Blakley, Combat Engineer Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom

Jay works independently as a Veterans Health Advocate with Iron Hawk Medical.

- The name Iron Hawk comes from a US Army task force that operated in the Anbar Province in Iraq 2005, Jay was deployed there and served under Battalion Commander Todd Jacobus. 2nd Platoon, A Co. 224th EN BN was a vital part of Taskforce Ironhawk. They were assigned to disarm improvised explosive devices (IEDs) throughout the streets of Ar Ramadi, which was one of the most hostile environments in all of Iraq.

Confrontation in multiple forms was a daily occurrence for this group, yet they always found a way to stay motivated, keep pushing, and accomplish their missions. Several months, losses, injuries, and close-calls later, this group still stood tall. They had disarmed more IEDs and saved more lives than anyone thought possible.
- During deployment, Jay experienced musculoskeletal injuries to his back, shoulder and feet. He was also on the receiving end of several IED blasts leading to mTBI and PTS. With his injuries and diagnosis, he has ample experience in the VA Healthcare System and he is finding ways to help Veterans better navigate that system in the area of Pain Management.
- Since Jay returned, he has been able to go back to school, raise a family and work in the healthcare helping Veterans. He has experienced the benefits of OrthoCor Medical which utilizes a technology called Pulsed Electromagnetic Field therapy. The VA connected Jay up with this system.
 - OrthoCor Medical specializes in the application of Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) therapy, a non-narcotic approach to pain management and injury recovery. If you suffer from post-operative, acute, arthritic, or chronic pain, their devices may be able to help alleviate pain.

- OrthoCor Medical is committed to applying medical expertise to the development and use of pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) technology to help patients manage pain and regain their active lifestyles.
- Their mission is to improve patient quality-of-life through the development and delivery of drug-free, non-invasive and mobile medical devices that alleviate pain, restore physical function and contribute to an active lifestyle.
- OrthoCor Medical was founded in 2007 by Dr. Jagit Gill. The concept for Active System was conceived by Dr. Gill in cooperation with Dr. Darryl Barnes at The Mayo Clinic and engineering graduate students at the University of Minnesota. They discovered pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) technology could be utilized to help patients reduce and relieve knee pain. After further research, they were issued a patent and the first iteration of the Knee Active System was born. This device was classified as a Class III FDA cleared medical device in 2009.
- Over the next ten years, nine Active Systems (including the knee, back, and foot systems) were developed and launched to treat the nine major parts of the body. The Active System devices were reclassified as Class II devices with Special Controls in 2015 and reclassified again to non-thermal shortwave therapy in 2019. In 2022, the Orthocor Advanced System was launched combining our signature PEMF technology and new 9-axis motion sensing technology to create a new device able to pair to a smart device application.
- Below is the OrthoCor Medical flyer that Jay handed out. Contact Jay with any questions on OrthoCor.

OrthoCor MEDICAL

**OPIOID-FREE.
RAPID RELIEF.
ACTIVE THERAPY.**

INTRODUCING THE ORTHOCOR ACTIVE SYSTEM

OrthoCor Medical's Active System helps patients manage their pain and swelling, while accelerating their bodies' healing processes. The OrthoCor Active System utilizes a technology called **Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF)** therapy providing patients with a non-narcotic, non-pharmacological alternative to reduce or eliminate their pain. PEMF works at the cellular & molecular levels, encouraging the body's natural healing process.

CLINICALLY PROVEN PEMF TECHNOLOGY

- PEMF works at the cellular level encouraging the body's natural healing process. This helps to address the root causes of pain, resulting in long-term pain and swelling relief.
- An effective, non-invasive, non-opioid treatment for chronic, arthritic and postoperative pain and swelling.
- PEMF therapy is clinically proven to provide rapid and sustained pain relief, with no reported adverse side effects.

ORTHOCOR MEDICAL'S ACTIVE SYSTEM BENEFITS

- Rapid and Sustained Pain Relief**
Unique combination of PEMF and thermal therapy provides pain reduction by addressing the root causes of pain.
- Alternative Treatment to Opioids**
Drug-free alternative treatment for pain management means a decrease in opioid prescriptions and patient dependency.
- Promotes Patient Compliance**
Easy to use, non-invasive, and wearable device drives patient compliance and satisfaction resulting in faster recovery.
- OrthoPods provide a warm, soothing treatment experience for the patient.**
- Complements Other Pain Treatments**
The Active System has broad applications across acute/chronic pain, post-operative pain, arthritis and inflammation and edema.
Can be used to accompany and complement other pain management protocols and treatments.

9 ACTIVE SYSTEMS FOR THE MAJOR AREAS OF THE BODY

SHOULDER, ELBOW, HAND/WRIST, ANKLE, CERVICAL, LUMBAR, KNEE, FOOT, UNIVERSAL

ACTIVE SYSTEM ELEMENTS

- ORTHOCUFF**
Fully adjustable design for ultimate fit & mobility.
- ORTHOPODS**
Patented, Disposable Pods Provide Heat & Irritate Therapy.
- ORTHOSOURCE**
Easy to Use 2-Hour Daily Treatment.

www.orthocormedical.com

VA Regional Office Update

Heidi Rhodes, Veteran Service Center Manager, from the Des Moines Regional Office, gave the Regional Office update on behalf on Tracie Pinkston, Regional Office Director.

- Heidi started in November 2022.
- Tracie Pinkston is leading virtually from Phoenix, Arizona. She plans to relocate with her family to Iowa in May.

- The Regional Office staff came to the Iowa Veterans Home on March 29, 2023, to honor the Vietnam Veterans on Vietnam Veteran's Day.
 - Staff from the Regional Office handed out pins and stickers as they interacted with the Vietnam Veterans in the Malloy LRC.
 - This was a great event with 69, seven were women, Veteran residents attending. There were a few community members that also attended.
 - There was a program with Todd Jacobus being the Keynote speaker. Veterans/residents also had a chance to share their story. Heidi told the story of a resident that is unable to speak for himself.
- PACT Act
 - 80% of their fiscal year goal is complete for PACT Act position hiring.
 - Since Heidi came in November, there have been 52 claim processors for Iowa.
 - The Veteran Service Center processing claims that Heidi is over, had close to 100 staff about one year ago. They are currently at 183 in her division and the total RO is at 212 staff. They expect to grow.
 - They were approved for two more contact reps with one of which will be an out base position. They have one person in Iowa City and three in Des Moines. They are looking for another location to best serve the Veterans in Iowa.
 - The deadline to get the retroactive payment back to August 10, 2022, is to file before August 10, 2023. If filing for an increase, they need to put in for it. Denied previously, file again.
 - Veterans are going out to advertising attorneys for help. This is not necessary as the Veteran service organizations are advocates for the Veterans and are there to help. Get the word out on this.
- Just completed three-week CBOC tours
 - Supervisor and a public contact rep went out on these tours.
 - They did nine total CBOCs. Eight of the nine were successful events.
 - There were about 100 claims.
 - A lot of interaction with Veterans.
 - Pushing PACT Act and reaching the rural areas.
 - Looking to do a summer tour.
 - Going forward – do a press release.

VA Medical Center - Iowa City Update

Jamie Johnson presented the Iowa City Veterans Affairs Update:

PACT Act/VBA & VHA Claims Clinic Partnership Tour

- They have partnered with the Des Moines RO VBA staff to conduct claims clinic tours to each of our CBOC locations as part of rural outreach efforts in support of the PACT Act. The week of March 13-15 the tour made stops at:
 - Quincy: Saw 8 Veterans and filed 6 claims
 - Burlington: Saw 3 Veterans and filed 1 claim
 - Galesburg: Saw 8 Veterans and filed 4 claims
- Last week the tour made stops at:
 - Decorah: Saw 21 Veterans and filed 6 claims
 - Dubuque: Saw 24 Veterans and filed 9 claims
 - Waterloo: Saw 36 Veterans and filed 16 claims

Native American and Alaska Native Veterans

- VA is now exempting eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from copayments for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022. Veterans seeking copayment exemption should submit copies of VA Form 10-334 and official tribal documentation to begin receiving this new benefit.
The copayment exemption:

- Retroactively reimburses eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from copayments for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022.
- Eliminates future copayment collection of copayments for health care and all urgent care visits for eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.
- We are engaging all VA partners, including tribal, federal, state and local communities, to ensure that all American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans know of this new policy and have the information they need to participate. To learn more, visit www.va.gov/health-care/copay-rates or call 1-800-MyVA411.

Hiring Event

- They are hosting a hiring event today in their main facility. They are hiring for a variety of positions including Nurses, MSA's, Radiology positions, Engineering positions, etc. There are referral bonuses of up to \$3,000 for certain positions, so please spread the word to anyone you know who might be interested or a good fit. They anticipate hiring additional staff a priority for the next several months to get back to fully staffed.

National Disabled Golf Clinic

- They currently have about 200 Veterans signed up for our event in September. One in three are first-time attendees. Still have room to add 40 - 50 more Veterans in the next few months.
- They are always looking for volunteers for the event.

Annual VA Baby Shower is coming up in May

- The annual VA Baby Shower is coming up in May. There are 43 Veterans registered to take part which is the highest number they have had in over five years.

Construction Updates

- Over the past 6 weeks they opened their new MOHS and Cardiology Clinics, Virtual Resource Center and new Primary Care and REC Space.
- 2W for IR/Cath/EP: Construction should be awarded by March and will start by May, will involve five phases to update IR and Cath equipment and build a new EP lab as well as new recovery bays and staff support areas.
- Women's Clinic in Building 50: Expect construction to be start fall 2023, may take 20 months.
- Ambulance Garage: Currently in design, construction expected to award November 2023 and complete by fall 2024.
- 9E Med/Psych: Planning to award construction in this month, complete by May 2024. Will wait to occupy and relocate 9W into this space for 9W renovation to follow.
- 9W Patient Safety Renovation: Scoping project for design to be awarded by April 2023. Will begin construction when 9E is complete. This project will update 9W to refresh the space and correct some potential risks that have been identified since it was opened.
- Waterloo CBOC: Construction is scheduled to be complete in early June 2023. If all goes well, hope to move in before July.
- Galesburg CBOC: Currently in design with a winter 2024 move.
- Decorah CBOC: Currently in design with a winter 2024 move.

Des Moines VA Medical Center Update

Kurt Thielen, Acting Director, gave a professional background of himself and then gave an update for the Des Moines VA Medical Center.

Professional background

- Mr. Thielen has been with the Department of Veterans Affairs for more than 15 years. He currently serves as the associate director for the Minneapolis VA Health Care System in Minneapolis. He is a retired US Air Force officer who served as a weapon system officer in F-4E/Gs and F-15Es in the Philippines, Alaska,

Virginia and England. He deployed to numerous locations worldwide to include Korea, Okinawa, Japan, Guam, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Italy, accruing 2,500 hours of flight time in fighter aircraft. He retired from the US Air Force in 2007.

- Mr. Thielen received his Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering in 1986 from the University of Minnesota and his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Golden Gate University. He is a graduate of Leadership VA and the Senior Executive Service Career Development Program.

VA Medical Update

Marshalltown Outpatient Clinic

- Central Iowa Veterans Affairs Medical Center will start construction on a nearly 12,000 square foot facility to serve Veterans in and around Marshalltown with a groundbreaking ceremony in June, on the hill behind Walmart in Marshalltown. The completion of this facility is expected in the summer of 2024. Services to be maintained at the new site are:
 - Primary care
 - Mental health
 - Physical therapy
 - Eye
 - Podiatry
 - Women's health
 - Audiology
 - Specialties offered through telehealth

Des Moines Warehouse

- August 2023 estimated turnover.
- October – move into the new space.

Construction Project - Primary Care

- Phase 1 - Construction and revamp of the first floor of the main facility of the Primary Care in Des Moines is estimated to start April 2024. Oncology will be going in there. Phase 2 – Estimated to start December 2024.

National Veterans Golden Age Games

- Central Iowa Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the City of Des Moines have been selected to host the 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games May 20 - 25, 2023, at various venues around Iowa's capital city region.
- The National Veterans Golden Age Games, presented annually by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, will see more than 700 Veterans compete across Central Iowa from Pleasant Hill to West Des Moines. Competitions will include track and field events, swimming, golf, pickleball, pool, shuffleboard, bocchia, fitness for life, air pistol, table tennis and many more.
- The main venue for competitions will be the Iowa Events Center. There are three categories of competition: ambulatory, wheelchair and visually impaired.
- These Olympic-style games allow Veterans ages 55 years and older who are enrolled in the VA a chance to maintain "Fitness for Life," the motto of the games.

CBOC Tour

- The CBOC tour was a success. This included Mason City, Fort Dodge and Carroll.

A concern was brought up about patients not being offered the mileage sheet. This needs to be offered and given to them. This is being checked into. The patient has to provide proof that they received community care.

Iowa Veterans Home Update

Andrea Maher, Quality Management Director at the Iowa Veterans Home gave a presentation on quality improvement. Below are the "talking points" of the PowerPoint presentation all listed below:

- QAPI stands for Quality Assurance (QA) and Performance Improvement (PI)
- Good Faith Attempt- The regulation F865 discusses the idea of "good faith attempts". It states that if a facility has identified and made a good faith attempt to correct an issue that has also been identified by surveyors on the current survey, the facility will not be cited for QAA.

- Surveyors become aware of the issue as soon as it should have,
 - the issue was one the facility should have been tracking because it was high risk, high volume or problem prone,
 - there was a negative outcome to a resident that should have alerted the facility to the issue,
 - there has been sufficient time to address the issue by implementing changes and evaluating their effectiveness,
 - the efforts made show an honest, diligent attempt to correct the issue.
- Monthly there is a QAPI meeting to discuss survey results, Plan of Corrections from past surveys, Department Data, CMS Indicators and our Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs).
QAPI/QAA Committee members: 43 plus supervisors who are now invited to attend if it works into their schedule.
 - To Do After Rounding 1. Identify frequently noted issues/themes. 2. Prioritize issues (e.g., by level of urgency, threat, ability to resolve). 3. Conduct follow-up to show responsiveness to the issues raised (note: this may involve following up with employees individually, developing an organizational report that outlines the input collected and proposed solutions—potentially utilizing the priority levels developed in step #2— or including the findings as a component to be communicated during the next rounding session). 4. Consider ways to acknowledge outstanding employee/unit efforts (e.g., thank you notes or other rewards/recognition). 5. Identify training or coaching opportunities for employees/units. Plan next rounding session.
 - CMS provides online guidance to consumers to help compare different types of Medicare providers, e.g. nursing homes.
 - The nursing homes that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) certifies regularly report clinical information about each of their residents. CMS uses this information to measure parts of nursing home performance, like if residents have gotten their flu shots, are in pain, had one or more falls that resulted in a major injury or are losing weight. These measures are often called quality measures, and Medicare posts each nursing home's scores for these measures on the compare tool on Medicare.gov, and here. By comparing scores, you can see how nursing homes may be different from each other.
 - CMS created the Five-Star Quality Rating System to help consumers compare nursing homes more easily and to help identify areas about which you may want to ask questions. The Nursing Home Care Compare website features a quality rating system that gives each nursing home a rating of between 1 and 5 stars. Nursing homes with 5 stars are considered to have much above average quality and nursing homes with 1 star are considered to have quality much below average. There is one Overall 5-star rating for each nursing home, and separate ratings for health inspections, staffing and quality measures.

HEALTH INSPECTIONS:

CMS total the points from all surveys, but places more emphasis on recent inspections. A nursing home's star rating is then assigned using the following criteria:

- **The top 10% of nursing homes** with the lowest health inspection scores in each state get a health inspection rating of 5 stars.
- The middle 70% of nursing homes get a rating of 2, 3, or 4 stars, with an almost equal number of nursing homes in each rating category.
- The bottom 20% get a 1-star rating.

STAFFING: Ratings were calculated based on two measures: RN hours per resident day and total staffing hours (RN, LPN, nurse aide) per resident day. Beginning in January 2022, staff turnover and weekend staffing measures were added into the calculation. This information was used in the Nursing Home Five Star Quality Rating in 2022.

QUALITY MEASURES: Data and risk adjustment are important parts of calculating the quality measures. Scientists involved in research/statistics on the measurement of quality in nursing home care have advised CMS on the methods of risk adjustment, and CMS believes that this is the best science available at this time. Detailed understanding of the adjustment procedures isn't necessary for the average user of Nursing Home Compare. Long-stay resident quality measures show the average level of a nursing home's performance in certain

areas of care for those who stayed in a nursing home for **101 days** or more. Residents in a nursing home for a long-stay are usually not healthy enough to leave a nursing home and can't live at home or in a community setting.

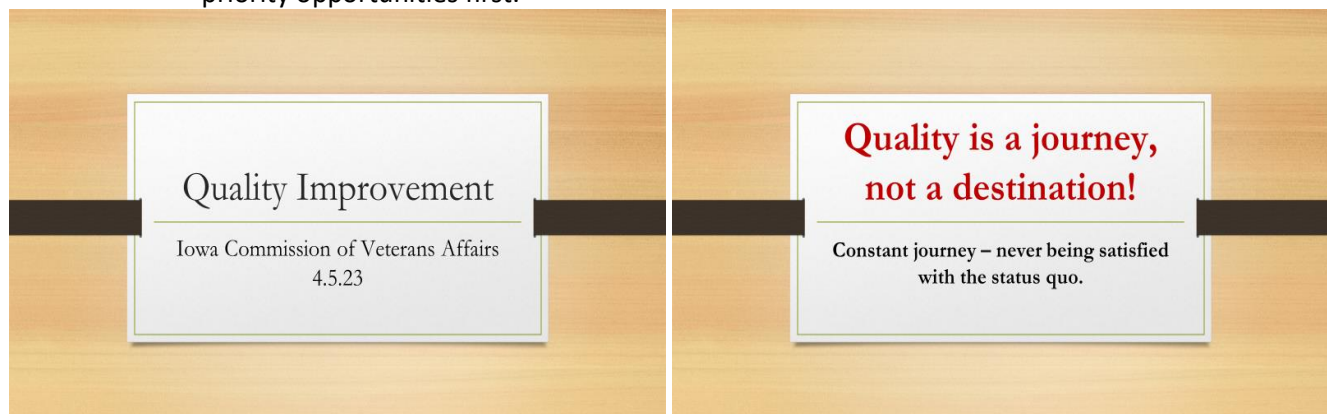
There are two CASPER reports essential to the QAPI process:

1. Facility quality measure report that provides data for each of 17 Quality Measures facility wide data for each of 17 Quality Measures. This is an overview of the MDS data submitted for your residents during a specified time period.
 - Numerator: actual number of residents impacted by that QM during the report period.
 - Denominator- number of residents potentially impacted by the QM condition during the report period (sometimes exclusions apply so not counted in to the denominator).
 - e.g. Antipsychotic QM excludes schizophrenia, Tourette's syndrome and Huntington's Disease.
 - e.g. Catheter in the Bladder excludes residents with neurogenic bladder or obstructive uropathy.
 - Each quality measure has a comparison group state and national average. These percentages can assist with identifying the goals you would like to achieve with improvement of your home's quality measures.
 - The last column is the Comparison Group National Percentile. Where does IVH rank in the country? 0 being good and 100 is bottom of the barrel.
 - Any percentile 75 or above is STARRED.
 - Prior to annual DIA survey, the surveyor pulls the CASPER report and highlights any percentile 75% or above. They are told to concentrate on those areas.
2. Resident level Quality Measure Report. This report identifies all residents who trigger for a problem.
 - Review trending over time.
 - Determine opportunities for improvement.

Creating a culture to support **QAPI** efforts begins with **leadership**.

How do we know if we are doing a good job with QAPI?

- QAPI Self-assessments helps measure our progress each year to make sure we are growing and getting better.
- This tool helps us measure where we are at with creating an effective QAPI program.
- Our Goals:
 - We want more involvement in QAPI from all service lines!
 - Frontline staff should know how they impact our quality of service
 - Prioritize attendance at After Actions, joining a chartered PIP, or identifying gaps in service and taking that information to their supervisor
 - QAPI Boards on units/in departments and across from Canteen to display our data
 - Offer more Quality training opportunities for staff
 - Required annual training , QAPI at New Employee Orientation
 - We need to work on an objective way to prioritize our facility's PIPs iso we address the highest priority opportunities first.



Why Measure Quality?

- ❖ A strong Quality program can help identify areas where improvements can be made
- ❖ Demonstrates the level of performance to
 - Residents and their families that providing quality care is important to the mission of the organization
 - Outside payers and governing agencies
- ❖ An effective QAPI program can transform the lives of nursing home residents through continuous attention to quality of care and quality of life

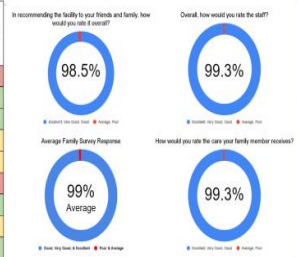
What is Quality Assurance & Performance Improvement (QAPI)?

- A data-driven, proactive approach to improving the quality of life, care and services in nursing homes
- Involve members at all levels of the organization
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Address gaps in systems or processes
- Develop and implement an improvement plan
- Monitor effectiveness of interventions

Monthly QAPI Meetings

Goal Ranges (unless otherwise specified)
0-79%
80-94%
95%

Audit	Pressure Injuries	New Areas	Healed Areas	Compliance with new interventions with records showing improvement	Provider notification with no improvement in 12 wks	Care plans accurately reflect current care status, goals, interventions
June	11	6	1	20%	91.2%	63.6%
July	33	10	0	71.4%	85.3%	100%
Aug	41	9	16	100%	73.3%	96.2%
Sept	28	2	8	100%	83.3%	85.9%
Oct	26	11	15	77.8%	82.4%	88.7%
Nov	17	2	5	100%	100%	73.6%
Dec	12	3	4	100%	100%	100%
Jan	11	3	7	100%	100%	69%
Feb	6	2	0	100%	100%	100%



Performance Improvement Projects at IVH

- Infection Control: Hand Hygiene prior to Meals, UTT's & Catheters
- Falls
- Kitchenette Sanitation/Dishwasher Temps
- Deprescribing of Medications
- *More concentrated effort coming*- Unlabeled/Undated Food in Kitchenettes
- *Upcoming!!* Resident Diagnosis terminology in Point Click Care
- *Upcoming!!* Resident Room turnover

March QAPI Highlights

Good afternoon Supervisors,

We had our March QAPI meeting on 3.16.23. All slides can be reviewed here:

Meeting Highlights to share with your teams

- Survey Corrective Action Plans have been approved by the VA [except for](#)
- Anti-gravity/Pressure temperatures are signed daily by nursing staff in meeting with
- Kitchenette task logs are signed off daily by nursing staff after audits/unlabeled foods are tossed out in the kitchenettes
- *All IVH staff are responsible for labeling & dating food!
- Fire Marshall visit March 18 & 2
- Sleep Preceptor training coming out in April
- DIA Survey Feb 27 - March 3: no concerns!
- Resident Satisfaction Survey results coming out soon
- Infection Control: Don't forget hand washing prior to meals!
- Nursing: Don't forget to address Bed Holds when a res is transferring out of facility

IVH remains a Five-Star rated facility
Care Compare Five Star Rating of Nursing Homes
Providing Nursing Reports for February 2023

- Can you share the QAPI Highlights at monthly staff meetings?
 - Can you display the QAPI Highlights on your unit?
 - Can you commit to following-through on issues brought to you?
- Creating a culture to support QAPI efforts begins with leadership.

Medicare.gov

Find & compare providers near you.

Not sure what type of provider you need?
[Learn more about the types of providers.](#)

Welcome

Find nursing homes including rehab services near me

Find and compare Medicare-certified nursing homes based on a location, and compare the quality of care they provide and their staffing. A nursing home is a place for people who can't be cared for at home and need 24-hour nursing care.

MY LOCATION *
Marshalltown, IA 50158

NAME OF FACILITY (optional)
Facility name

Search

Show past search results

Publicly Reported Data- Care Compare

Medicare.gov

MY LOCATION *
Marshalltown, IA 50158

SELECT PROVIDER TYPE *
Nursing homes

NAME OF FACILITY (optional)
Facility name

Filter by: Distance 25 mi or less | Overall rating v | Other ratings v | View All Filters

- Iowa Veterans Home
12 mi | 100 Surveys | 5.0 stars | 100% positive | 3475 102-1827
- Grandview Heights Inc
12 mi | 100 Surveys | 4.5 stars | 80% positive | 3475 102-4331
- Accura Healthcare of Marshalltown
19 mi | 100 Surveys | 4.0 stars | 70% positive | 3475 102-4523

Monthly CMS Care Compare 5-Star Rating



Care Compare Five-Star Ratings of Nursing Homes Provider Rating Report for March 2023

Ratings for Iowa Veterans Home (16A002)
Marshalltown, Iowa

Overall Quality	Health Inspection	Quality Measures	Staffing
*****	*****	****	*****

Monthly CMS Care Compare 5-Star Rating



Care Compare Five-Star Ratings of Nursing Homes Provider Rating Report for March 2023

Ratings for Iowa Veterans Home (16A002)
Marshalltown, Iowa

Overall Quality	Health Inspection	Quality Measures	Staffing
*****	*****	****	*****

Health Inspection

Health Inspection Rating Cycle 1 Survey Dates:

May 20, 2021

Health Inspection Rating Cycle 2 Survey Dates:

February 28, 2019

Health Inspection Rating Cycle 3 Survey Dates:

November 9, 2017

Total weighted health inspection score for your facility: 4.7

State-level Health Inspection Cut Points for Iowa				
1 Star	2 Stars	3 Stars	4 Stars	5 Stars
>81.17	36.68-81.17	17.34-36.67	5.34-17.33	0.00-5.33

Please note that the state cut points are recalculated each month, but the total weighted health inspection score for your facility is compared to the cut points only if there is a change in your score.

Monthly CMS Care Compare 5-Star Rating



Care Compare Five-Star Ratings of Nursing Homes Provider Rating Report for March 2023

Ratings for Iowa Veterans Home (16A002)
Marshalltown, Iowa

Overall Quality	Health Inspection	Quality Measures	Staffing
*****	*****	****	*****

Monthly CMS Care Compare 5-Star Rating



Care Compare Five-Star Ratings of Nursing Homes Provider Rating Report for March 2023

Ratings for Iowa Veterans Home (16A002)
Marshalltown, Iowa

Overall Quality	Health Inspection	Quality Measures	Staffing
*****	*****	****	*****

7 Long-Stay MDS QMS included in the Five-Star Rating

Percentage of Residents:

- Experience one or more falls with major injury
- High-risk residents with pressure ulcers*
- With UTI
- With a catheter inserted and left in bladder*
- Need for help ADL has increased
- Receive an antipsychotic medication
- Ability to move independently worsened*

*Risk-Adjusted QMs <https://www.cms.gov/Medicaid/Quality-Indicators/Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityData/NHQMQualityMeasures.html>

2 Claims-Based QMs Included in the Five-Star Rating

Long-Stay Measures

- # of hospitalizations per 1,000 LS resident days*
- # of ED visits per 1,000 LS resident days*
- *Risk-Adjusted QMs

CASPER Reports

Measure Description	CMS ID	Date	Num	Denom	Facility Observed Percent	Facility Adjusted Percent	Comparison State Average	Comparison National Average	Comparison National Percentile	
Thick/Inappropriate Pms (24r-1)	NC1003	C	0	307	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%	0.4%	3.9%	11
Flu vaccinations (1)	NC1003	C	0	307	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	3	
Falls (1)	NC1003	C	180	307	58.6%	58.3%	58.3%	43.0%	89*	
Falls w/Injury (1)	NC1003	C	10	307	4.8%	4.8%	4.2%	3.5%	69	
Approach Medic (1)	NC1003	C	2	7	28.6%	28.6%	2.2%	1.8%	89*	
Antibiotic Med (1)	NC1003	C	0	307	0.0%	16.2%	14.6%	17.4%	77*	
Antipsychotic/Depres (1)	NC1003	C	5	307	1.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	73	
Antipsychotic/Depres (1)	NC1003	C	5	307	1.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	73	
Resident Level Report										

QAPI Self-Assessment 2023

- We want more involvement in QAPI from all service lines!
- Offer more Quality training opportunities for staff
- We need to prioritize our facility's performance improvement projects so we address the highest priority opportunities first

QAPI + Leadership = Success

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and Iowa Veterans Home Update – Todd Jacobus

Commandant Todd Jacobus gave the following presentation.

- Iowa Veteran Demographics. According to “Veterans Data Central”, Iowa has 185,671 Veterans, which represents 7.7% of Iowa’s adult population:
 - 7,798 (4.2%) served during WWII;
 - 18,752 (10.1%) served during the Korean War;
 - 69,255 (37.3%) served during the Vietnam War;
 - 31,378 (15.6%) served during Gulf War I;
 - 28,965 (22.7%) served during Iraq & Afghanistan; and,
 - 42,147 served between conflicts.
 - Our resident census here at the Iowa Veterans Home fairly closely mirrors our statewide numbers: 6 (2%) served during WWII; 37 (11%) served during the Korean War; 204 (59%) served during the Vietnam War; 14 (4%) served during Gulf War I; 28,965 (22.7%) served during Iraq & Afghanistan; and, 75 (22%) served between conflicts. (<https://veteransdata.info/states/2190000/IOWA.pdf>)
- Update on Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Coverage of Iowa Veterans Trust Fund Grants:
 - Governor Reynolds has approved more than \$443,713 to cover a backlog of Iowa Veterans trust fund transfer approved between March 3, 2021, and November 3, 2022, before the program was temporarily suspended due to insufficient funds.
 - Governor Reynolds directed her staff to these funds to the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs from Iowa’s allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) through the American Rescue Plan Act.
 - As of March 31, 2023, the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs has distributed checks totaling \$38,325 to Veteran Service Organizations who performed Military Funeral Honors between March 3, 2021, and November 3, 2022.
 - As of March 31, 2023, the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs has distributed checks totaling \$127,537.53 in trust fund grant applications payments.
 - As of March 31, 2023, the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs has distributed a TOTAL of \$165,862.53 of the \$443,713 (37%) allocated by I-Gov.
 - Currently, the IDVA / Iowa Veterans Home Finance Bureau have approximately 50 applications for which we are awaiting invoices. All qualifying application invoices are being processed for payment as soon as the Department receives them.
- Iowa Veterans Trust Fund Update: there is currently \$38,884,377.17 Iowa Veterans Trust Fund PRINCIPAL has accumulated \$293,280.15 in interest. Those funds are available now to cover grant applications.
 - Prior to July 2022, the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund received monthly interest payments of between \$2,000 and \$9,000. Since July 1, 2022, we have had substantially larger interest payments.
 - July 2022 - \$23,798.37
 - August 2022 - \$46,127.71
 - September 2022 - 18,117.62
 - October 2022 - 52,387.46
 - November 2022 - 59,474.22
 - December 2022 - 115,062.81
 - January 2023 - \$98,669.79
 - February 2023 - \$114,875.29
 - During the first eight months of State Fiscal Year 2023, the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund has generated \$528,513.27 in interest.
 - Why was there such a spike in the interest funds available? The State Legislature changed the investment language during the 2022 legislative session. The Iowa Veterans Committee - under the leadership of then-Representative Sandy Salmon and Representative Martin Graber - made the recommendation to adjust the investment strategy of the Trust Fund. The original language

required that the principal be preserved at all costs with no risk allowed. The new language allows the principal to be invested similar to IPERS, which allows a nominal return on investment.

- House File 2501, sponsored by Representative Martin Graber and Senator Mark Lofgren was signed into law by Governor Reynolds on April 21, 2022.

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=HF2501>

- As of March 31, 2023, there is \$418,665.82 in the license plate fund. We need to build a plan for using these resources to support Iowa Veterans.
- Governor Reynolds signed Senate File 514 “State Government Alignment Bill” into law on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 3:00 pm. The document is 1,349 pages in length. The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs portions of this law are included on pages 1,094-1,102.
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/90/SF514.pdf>
- Staff Surveys. There have been two staff surveys at the Iowa Veterans Home over the last 23 months. We have used the results of the survey to organize a monthly leadership development program where leaders learn about staff concerns, discuss best practices, and share ideas on how we can improve in the areas identified. The leadership team visits each bureau quarterly, we have a Morale Committee, we adjusted the nursing staffing policy based on comments and input received from stakeholders, we requested authority to award bonuses and increase wages in order to recruit and retain nursing staff, we implemented a weekend package available for staff, and we have a three-day work week available at all levels. The staff surveys contributed to these actions. Bottom line is that we will continue to do surveys, we value staff input, and we will act based on those surveys.
- Staff Town Hall Meeting. There was a Staff Town Hall meeting on February 17, 2023. There were 32 attendees along with our Bureau Chiefs. The IVH consists of residents, staff and volunteers. Our leaders want input and feedback so that we can improve; please talk with our leaders!
 - There is frustration that too much information is put out by email; many staff do not have time to read it.
 - We will do a better job of getting out into the facility to visit. We will do a better job of “face to face” and try to do fewer virtual meetings.
 - We will resource clothes closet for residents.
 - We will provide training on Call Lights / Medication Stations hardware and technology so that we are all capable of responding when necessary in addition to training to allow non-nursing staff to transport, feed, etc.
 - We will have another Town Hall Meeting in the May 2023 timeframe. We appreciate the feedback and input so that we can continually improve. Commissioners are welcome to attend.
- The Iowa Department of Inspection & Appeals (DIA) conducted an annual unannounced survey (inspection) of the Iowa Veterans Home on February 27 - March 2, 2023. The survey was supposed to conclude on March 3, 2023, but concluded a full day and a half early.
 - **Significant to note is that the Iowa Veterans Home received a DEFICIENCY FREE SURVEY.**
 - This is the SECOND CONSECUTIVE deficiency free survey of the Iowa Veterans Home - the previous survey being in May 2021.
 - The survey inspected the following areas at IVH:
 - Human Resources
 - Training Records
 - Quality Assurance Program
 - Infection Control in All Areas
 - Meal Preparation - Quality & Delivery
 - Resident Council Interview
 - Resident and Family Satisfaction Interviews
 - Staffing Review
 - Pre-Admission Screening & Resident Review (PASSR) Assessment
 - Psychotropic Medication Guidelines
 - Recreational Program Review

- Care Planning
 - Medication Administration
 - Review of the Dependent Adult Abuse Program
 - Delivery of Resident Care
 - Review of Resident Diets
 - Other areas
- This was an excellent learning experience for Todd. It is important that each of you, who represent Veterans Service Organizations on the Commission, are aware that the leadership team and staff at IVH are doing great work.
- This survey shows that the Iowa Veterans Home maintains the highest levels of care for our residents. Commissioners, please help us communicate this message to our Veterans Community through the organizations you represent.
- The Resident Council meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am in the Malloy Leisure Resource Center. Thank you to the Council (President – Craig Hoepfner, 1st Vice President – Jim Smith, 2nd Vice President– Duan Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer – Mark Towne and Sergeant at Arms – David Johnson) for inviting me to meet with them, and the 12 additional residents who participated, on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, and for bringing the following issues to me to discuss with the group:
 - Concerns (and frustration!) about COVID-19 precautions and frequently changing of mask requirements. Answer: We understand the frustration and challenges, but have decided to eliminate masks when our COVID-19 infection rates are low and then add masks when the infection rates increase. Many of us here at IVH are vulnerable to infection, and precautions are intended to protect each other.
 - Concerns about shortage of nursing staff and impact on residents / care. Answer: We share these concerns and are actively engaging initiatives that will enhance our nursing corps. Please let us know specifics on where we are not meeting expectations in terms of support and care.
 - Desire to see Gift Shop Open on Weekends. Answer: At this time, we do not have adequate staffing to support this.
 - Limited hours of canteen. Answer: Beginning April 12, 2023, the Canteen will be open on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00 am-1:00 pm.
 - Exorbitant cost of soda and snacks in vending machines. Answer: We agree that drinks and snacks are not being sold “at cost”. I do not know if IVH receives “profit” from sales. We will research this and will hopefully be able to reduce costs for our residents.
 - Concern about limited number of hours for Incentive Therapy (IT) positions (nursing level / independent living). Answer: We pay minimum wage for IT position support. We need to limit the number of hours worked in order to keep resident income levels below the Medicaid threshold so that our residents don’t have an increase in their out-of-pocket expenses to live here.
 - Inability to hear / understand announcements over the speaker system. Cannot hear when inside rooms with door closed. Answer: I understand that it is easier to understand some speakers than others. We will ask those making announcements to speak with a strong voice and to clearly enunciate the message.
- We are grateful to Marshalltown Police Chief Mike Tupper for his “identify frauds catfishing, and how to protect ourselves” presentation on Thursday, March 2, 2023, in the Malloy Leisure Resource Center. This was in response to a few of our residents being targeted by online fraud. Chief Tupper’s presentation was recorded by our Education team, and we will use that as a resource in the future.
- We had an outstanding National Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day program at the Iowa Veterans Home on March 19, 2023. Thanks to the Des Moines VA Regional Office for hosting this event at IVH.
- Although their commission assignments are current through June 30, 2023, this is the last meeting for the Commissioners outlined below. Thank you for your dedicated service to Iowa and to Iowa Veterans through your service on the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs.
 - Steve Hyde, Military Order of the Purple Heart;

- Orene Cressler, Iowa Association of County Commissioners & Veteran Service Officers (IACCVSOs)
- Carol Whitmore, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Iowa Veterans Affairs – Cemetery and Benefit Update

Robert Stavnes gave updates on the following:

Cemetery

- Hired cemetery technician – 70% helping with scheduling in the office and 30% outside supporting the groundkeepers when they need extra help.
- Will be advertising for grounds keeper.
- Memorial Day Program
 - Volunteers from Prudential, Wells Fargo and other great companies offer their time to come and help put up flags on Memorial Day and take them down.
 - Requested for Governor Reynolds presence and to be the keynote speaker. This will be confirmed either way by the Governor’s office a week before.
 - There will be a guest speaker ready to speak.
- Long term projects – recapitalization effort
 - Cemetery will be 15 years old next year.
 - Running on same budget and on the same equipment.
 - Internet and telephone awarded to a company that will get awarded 55 days to install.
 - Study done to help with the irrigation challenges. The well has a lot of iron content in it. The iron content has stained some of the concrete platforms.
 - There is an individual in the Council Bluffs area that has serviced the cemeteries in the past. He has given a good quote to get this cleaned up.
 - Study on irrigation challenge results:
 - Build a retaining pond where water is pumped in with the iron settling and then pump the water back out; or
 - fix the filtration problem which is part of the original design that may be cost prohibited. Going to get pumphouse inspected.
 - Knights of Columbus members come out and help mow. They do a great job!

Benefits Office

- Fully staffed.
- Hired Ben Dales. He was a service officer with the VFW. Ben will assist with Veterans that need help and will also help Robert in coordination with Mike Mortensen to see what we can do to better assist the County Veteran Service Officers with training and focused efforts.
- Dylan Boles is a Public Policy graduate student at the University of North Iowa. He is helping with data analysis. Dylan’s professor and Robert are hoping to make this a continuing relationship where graduate students can be exposed to this part of state government. He will be working through Memorial Day.
- Melissa and Kevin are supporting/managing grants and funds.
- John Ralls is the Veterans Benefits Specialist. He is coming to the Iowa Veterans Home on Mondays. He is working closely with the IVH Finance Office and re-examining the claims of all the resident Veterans to ensure they are getting every benefit that they deserve.

Approval of Minutes

1st Vice Chair McMMartin made a motion to approve the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Quarterly meeting minutes of January 4, 2023. Seconded by 2nd Vice Chair Wattnem. Motion carried. Approved unanimously.

Commissioner Cressler made a motion to approve the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Special meeting minutes of February 8, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Lloyd. Motion carried. Approved unanimously.

Old Business

Chair Ledvina spoke on the legislation. Mike Mortensen and Chair Ledvina have been “up the Hill” to fight the good fight. Mike spoke on the Iowa Code change bill:

- This bill will redefine the Veterans in Iowa with providing more guidance between the relationship between State of Iowa and the counties relating to training and services. Talk to your Senators about Senate File 444 – Iowa Code changes is a necessity for Iowa Veterans.

New Business

- Need to encourage License Plate Application projects. This will be discussed at the VSO County School next week.
- Trust Fund meeting April 6, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. Melissa Miller will be sending an email with details.
- License Plate applications have all been approved.
- Commissioner Van Horn discussed the following items:
 - June 23, 2023, the Final Salute will be held at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. There will be more details coming.
 - Memorial Day Weekend - The Marine Corp League hosts their Car Show at the Primary Care facility at Southridge on Army Post Road.
- Commandant Jacobus spoke on Veterans Casting Away Disabilities event, May 7 – 12. It is held at Honey Creek Lodge in Rathbun. This is being organized by a nonprofit including Curt Sickles, former employee at the Iowa City VA and Randy Brown, former executive director at the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs. They bring in disabled Veterans that want to fish provided free of charge.
- There will be a luncheon/meet and greet with Former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. at the Beaverdale Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Urbandale. Governor Hutchinson has declared his candidacy for President of the United States and would like to meet with Veterans across the country to learn of their issues and concerns.
- 1st Vice Chair McMartin spoke on a free Veterans Concert – May 19th, in Council Bluffs at Westfair Amphitheatre. This is sponsored by the Kanesville Riders. The Wake Foundation is financially supporting this concert. Offering four tickets for each Veteran.
- 1st Vice Chair McMartin was contacted by a group in Southwest Iowa in regard to a possible Veterans Home in Southwest Iowa, Glenwood. We are the only state that has one Veterans home.
- 1st Vice Chair McMartin attended the Heart Health Women Zoom presentation. They are encouraging women to use the VA hospital and for Veteran women to know their VA benefits.

Public Comments

An American Legion member spoke on a drug, MDMA, waiting on FDA approval, that has shown improvement with PTSD and suicide. Veterans that have gone through this program have had great results. A group from South Carolina presented this at a PTSD/suicide seminar at a national convention in Washington, D.C.

Next Commission Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 5, 2023, at Camp Dodge.

Adjournment

Commissioner Van Horn motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Cressler. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.