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Department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Report

TO: Department Executive Committee
FROM: David K. Cook, Sr., Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Chairman
DATE: April 4, 2020
SUBJECT: Department Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Report

The Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee met on Saturday, March 14th, 2020 at Department HQ. Seven (7) members of the Committee and one (1) guest were present. Since there was not a quorum the meeting was adjourned immediately, and discussion followed.

Reading of the previous committee minutes occurred with no additions or corrections recommended.

The committee discussed the Ohio Veteran Treatment Court Program. A questionnaire will be sent out to Veterans Courts within the state of Ohio to help this committee determine the need and how The American Legion can assist the Courts efforts. After the questionnaire responses are reviewed, the Committee will draft program guidelines to be presented to the DEC. The Committee also drafted a resolution that calls on the national organization to add Veteran Treatment Court to the Consolidated Post Report. The committee voted to approve and submit this resolution to the DEC by an email vote.

The committee reviewed the (1) 2019 National Veteran Affairs Suicide Prevention Annual Report, (2) 2019 American Legion Mental Health Survey Executive Summary, (3) The Suicide Prevention Plan for Ohio 2020-2022 reports and held a thoughtful discussion on The American Legions role in suicide prevention. The committee discussed submitting two resolutions: (1) to call on the National Organization to study veteran suicide within our membership and to make recommendations on how we can implement prevention efforts within our membership and (2) for The Department of Ohio to be committed to offer and to host suicide prevention training opportunities to its' members and to support the Ohio Suicide Prevention Plan. The resolutions in discussion are not ready to be presented to the DEC at this time, this committee will continue to review the data and make recommendations.

The committee received updates from Pat Grzybowski (1st) and Darell Bishop (5th) regarding the Washington Conference.

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The committee discussed the upcoming Department Commanders' VHA visits to Ohio VA Medical Centers and Ohio Veterans Homes. The committee wants to create opportunities for local veterans to provide the Department Commander with their unique experiences receiving VA health care. The committee discussed potential questions for our Department questionnaire. The committee also stressed the importance of visiting the Community-Based Outpatient Clinics.

The Committee held a lengthy discussion was held regarding the VA&R Department Awards. Despite written and verbal notices requesting nominations, the Department has not received any nominations. The committee will review the nomination process, award guidelines, and work aggressively to solicit qualified nominations from the Post and District.

Post Service Officer School will be held on Saturday, November 7th at 8 a.m. A notice will be sent out in the fall. The committee recommends that the training includes a guide for PSO to connect veterans with local resources.

Lastly, the VA Medical Centers and the Ohio Veterans Homes are now closed to the public and our voluntary services representatives. However, we are currently coordinating efforts with The Gifts for Yanks Committee to fulfill request which we have received this past week.

This concludes my report.