

# **VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION**

## **WISCONSIN PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2011-2012**

Virginia Kodl, Chairman

Phone: 715-669-5432 ❖ e-mail: [kodlvirg@discover-net.net](mailto:kodlvirg@discover-net.net)

[POD: Veteran/Military Support and Advocacy](#)

Our purpose is to initiate, sponsor and participate in programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families; ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives, physically, mentally, socially and vocationally.

### **DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN OBJECTIVES**

1. Objective: To continue to educate Unit members and support programs to assist the homeless veterans, both male and female. Today it is estimated that 1 in 4 homeless are veterans and that includes approximately 6,500 women veterans.

#### **Action Steps**

- a. Instill in the Unit members the problems of the homeless veterans. Besides having physical problems many have both mental illness and substance abuse problems.
  - b. Call the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and ask for the homeless coordinator. Ask what your Unit can do to help the homeless veterans. Find out if and when they will hold a stand down in their area. Volunteer to assist.
  - c. Contact your local officials to see if they have a homeless shelter and if any veterans are there. Help assist them.
  - d. Contact your elected officials on every level about public issues affecting homeless veterans.
  - e. Contact the American Legion VA&R Chairman as well as the SAL to try to organize programs to help the homeless. Triple your efforts.
2. Objective: Promote and assist in raising funds to support the National Creative Arts Festival. The American Legion Auxiliary is a co-sponsor of this program and needs to raise \$150,000 as our share.

### **Action Steps**

- a. Promote and publicize the annual competition that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy. This Rehabilitation Program helps the veterans after disease, disability or life crisis achieve satisfaction in their lives.
  - b. Increase the donations in each Department as we fulfill our promise to Honor our Veterans by Engaging the American Legion Family in Service not Self for God and Country.
  - c. Attend the competition if possible each year at a local facility. The National competition is being held in Fayetteville, Arkansas, October 17-23, 2012.
  - d. Hold fund-raisers at the unit level to make possible the continuation of this very worth-while program in rehabilitation.
3. Objective: Increase awareness of the Ride to Recovery (R2R) event. Ride 2 Recovery benefits the mental and physical rehabilitation of our country's wounded veterans and features cycling as the core activity. Assist the VA committee when a ride is scheduled for your area by serving as site coordinators, hosting fundraising and meals for wounded warriors, and promoting community support.

### **Action Steps**

- a. Sponsor a wounded warrior for the R2R. Join the ride as a contributor.
  - b. Information – More than 200 injured veterans and their supporters will ride 270 miles in six days – averaging 54 miles per day. U.S. veterans and soldiers will be cycling through Central Minnesota as part of the Ride 2 Recovery Great Lakes Challenge on Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> through Saturday, August 28, 2011.
  - c. Support Spinning Recovery Labs and outdoor cycling programs at military and VA locations around Wisconsin to help injured veterans overcome obstacles they face. Cycling is an important part of the veteran's recovery and rehabilitation.
  - d. Cost of improved bikes are from \$1,500 to \$15,000 – special designed cycling improves health issues/mental issues. Get involved with "Project Hero" which was incorporated in 2010 and limits number of bikers to 200 riders per event.
  - e. Cycle Fest events – Administrative costs paid for by United Health Care.
4. Objective: Increase volunteer services within a VAMC or outpatient clinic by 10 volunteers, also increase volunteers from Field Service and Home Service programs in each Unit.

### **Action Steps**

- a. Assist in placing new volunteers recruited from the online national recruitment campaign.

- b. Inform members of volunteer opportunities through monthly mailings, articles in the Auxiliary newspaper and also by word of mouth.
- c. Try to recognize each volunteer for their services by holding an annual recognition luncheon or some little token of appreciation.
- d. Educate members about opportunities available through Veteran Affairs Medical Centers/Outpatient Clinics, Field Service or Home Service volunteering.
- e. Accumulate hours of service to our veterans - Definition
  - 1. Hospital Service – volunteering at VA Medical Centers or Outpatient Clinics by supplementing the work of Medical Center staff through patient contact and/or non-patient contact assignments. Reap the benefits from serving others. Junior members can earn hours at VAMCs.
  - 2. Field Service – anything done directly for a veteran outside of a VAMC or a volunteer’s home. This includes hospice, stand downs, state veteran’s home, veteran cemeteries or gravesites, transportation, yard work, assistance with tax preparation, etc. You are required to complete a Field Service Orientation course offered by your Department before you begin accumulating volunteer hours. Junior member may earn Field Service hours under supervision of a senior volunteer.
  - 3. Home Service – work done in your own home for the benefit of homebound, sick or injured service members and veterans. This includes sewing, babysitting while the veteran attends medical appointment, making quilts or afghans, baking cookies, and shopping for active-duty military/veterans and/or their families. The person who benefits from your service cannot be related to you. Junior members can earn Home Service hours.

**Programs of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation that we can and should participate in**

- 1. **VA Medical Center and Outpatient Facilities** – enables the facility and program administrators to stretch their resources with our volunteering and donations so they can concentrate on the delivery of core services.
- 2. **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival** – Promote the annual competition that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy and raise the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation’s veterans after disease, disability or life crisis. Must strive to increase monetary support.
- 3. **Homeless Veterans Initiatives** – Work jointly with the VA Homeless Veterans Program, the American Legion and National Coalition of Homeless Veterans to encourage active participation in homeless veterans’ initiatives.
- 4. **Welcome Home Celebrations** – Provide assistance to our local VAMC in supporting returning servicemen and women and their families in the community. The VA

supports this initiative by providing them with information about the opportunities available to them through the VA system.

5. **Fisher House** – Provide volunteer resources and annual donations to the Fisher House.
6. **Support American Legion Programs** – Promote The American Legion’s legislative efforts that support programs at the Department and Post level to increase awareness of and participation in programs and resources to assist transitioning service members from military service to civilian life while maintaining the highest quality of life.
7. **Freedom Flights** – Help fund any WWII Veteran who wishes to fly to Washington DC with other veterans to see the World War II Memorial and reunite with fellow veterans.
8. **National Recognition Programs** – To annually salute America’s heroes: more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who are cared for every day in VA Medical Centers during the week of February 14 annually.
9. **National Volunteer Month (April)** – Recognize and celebrate the important work that volunteers do every day on behalf of veterans.

#### **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Awards**

1. **Honoring Their Service Award** – A citation plaque will be presented to the Unit that implements and carries out the Most Outstanding Event that brings honor and recognition to our veterans and/or service members at any VAMC or VA facility, veterans home, Fisher House, vet centers, homeless veterans shelter or any facility where more than 60 percent of the residents are veterans. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Pictures and newspaper articles may be included but not to exceed six pages. Entry cannot be in bound book or hard cover. Cover sheet must include Unit name and number, address, Unit Chairman’s name, address and phone number, date and location where the event was held. Must be submitted to VA&R Chairman Virginia Kodl by May 15, 2012.
2. **Field Service Volunteer Hours Award** – a citation plaque will be presented to a Field Service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, for Junior and senior members. Units should send their nominees to Field Service Chairman Penny Joren by May 15, 2012. The Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee.
3. **Home Service Volunteer Hours Award** – A citation plaque will be presented to a home service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2011 to March 13, 2012, for Junior and senior members. Units should send their nominees to Home Service chairman Judy Kuta by May 15, 2012. The Unit is required to certify hours of any nominees.
4. **Unit VA&R Program Awards** – A citation plaque will be presented to a Unit Chairman reporting the Most Outstanding Overall VA&R program as per the goals

stated in this Plan of Action. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Units must submit their entries to VA&R Chairman Virginia Kodl by May 15, 2012.

5. VAVS Volunteer of the Year Award – This award will be made to the nominee who has given extraordinary service to our nation’s veterans through the ALA VA&R program and the VAVS program. This nominee must serve in an established VA assignment and be defined as a regularly scheduled volunteer. In addition we will be looking for an individual who is actively involved working with veterans in any one of the following areas: outpatient clinics; nursing homes; homeless veteran programs; hosted veteran-related functions outside the VA; or visiting veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS). The Department VA&R Chairman Virginia Kodl or ALA Department director of hospital volunteers Bev Tutas will make nominations for consideration.
6. 100 Percent VAVS meeting attendance – An “Attendance Card” will be awarded to each representative and deputy who has 100 percent attendance to VAVS committee meetings at her assigned facility.
7. 10,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award – A special volunteer citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$100 donation will be sent, in the eligible volunteers’ name, to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund. The volunteer must have accrued 10,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA facility.
8. 20,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award – A special volunteer citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$200 donation will be sent, in the eligible volunteers’ name, to the National Creative Arts Festival Fund. The volunteer must have accrued 20,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA facility.
9. Hour Bar Recognition for Field, Home and Hospital Volunteers – Volunteers are recognized when specific hour milestones are reached: 50, 100, 300, 500, and 1,000. After the first 1,000 hour bar is awarded, the next bar will be earned in 1,000 hour increments.

## **Resources**

1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers provided through the Auxiliary.
2. Gulf War Benefits and Programs, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Vietnam Veterans-Guide to Agent Orange Benefits, What to do Before a Veteran Dies, Women Veterans-Identifying Risk, Services and Prevention: brochures available through The American Legion.
3. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival: [www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov](http://www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov).
4. Ride2Recovery: [www.ride2recovery.com/](http://www.ride2recovery.com/)
5. Program page for VA&R: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for additional resources