

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: How long ago was the Veteran and Family Advisory Council Formed?

A: The first meeting was held in January, 2010.

Q: How many members are on the council?

A: Presently, the council consists of twelve Veterans and three family advisors. Advisors participate from Sonora, Livermore, Monterey, and Palo Alto presently. In addition, a nurse, a physician, and the Veteran and Family Centered Care Coordinator staff the meetings.

Q: What is the aim of the council?

A: The mission of the Advisory Council is to *partner* with health care staff to:

- ◆ strengthen communication among Veterans, families & staff
- ◆ assist in identifying ways to improve safety, satisfaction, and quality of care
- ◆ allow staff to listen to and honor Veteran and family choices

Q: How are council members selected?

A: Veteran and family members are identified, screened, and selected based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Previously used, or have a family member who has previously used, services at VAPAHCS
- ◆ Shares insights and information about experiences in ways that others can learn from them
- ◆ Sees beyond his/her own personal experiences
- ◆ Shows concern for more than one issue
- ◆ Listens to, considers and respects the viewpoints of others
- ◆ Provides suggestions and expresses criticisms in a constructive manner
- ◆ Available to attend monthly meetings at the Palo Alto facility
- ◆ Ability to share experiences in a constructive manner that contributes to the work of the council

(Note: Members who are actively receiving care for an acute episode, or are hospitalized, or receiving aggressive medical treatment may be asked to take a leave of absence from the council. A healthcare provider recommendation will be needed to return to the council.)

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Q: What are council members' commitments?

A: Council members are expected to:

- ◆ attend a half day orientation prior to the first council meeting
- ◆ consistently attend monthly meetings
- ◆ actively participate in meetings
- ◆ prepare for council meetings, if there are materials that need review
- ◆ uphold standards of ethics and maintain patient confidentiality

Q: When and where are the meetings held?

A: Presently, the monthly meetings are held at Palo Alto on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 10:00-1:00 pm

Q: How are agendas set?

A: The Coordinator works with staff, the Veteran and Family Centered Care Steering Committee, and the Council itself to identify priorities and topics for council input. Staff is asked to come prepared with questions, rather than presentations as we foster partnership.

Q: Do council members have to be registered with Volunteer Services?

A: Yes, council members register with Volunteer Services and need to complete the typical Volunteer Services on boarding process.

Q: Are members of the council paid?

A: No, the members do not receive compensation for their services on the Veteran and Family Advisory Council.

Q: How will success of the council be measured?

A: The council's success is part process and part outcome. The process of listening to the Veteran and family voice is important in and of itself. Creating an arena for staff to hear different perspectives, incorporate suggestions and work together to improve the services and care we provide is part of being successful. Our aim is to become a credible, valuable body that truly helps staff succeed in providing better care and services for all Veterans.