



Nevada Department of Veterans Services Veterans In Care (VIC)

Overview:

The purpose of this concept paper is to introduce a new initiative of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS), "Veterans In Care", rolling out in the summer of 2016. However, before introducing "VIC" it is worth revisiting the history of caring for veterans and taking a step back in time to the inception of NDVS (formerly the Office of Veterans Services), to just share historical department information.

The commitment of supporting veterans actually began in 1636, with the Pilgrims of Plymouth passing a law to ensure disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony, and spans many years of programs and services for our veterans. (See attachment #1, Culture of Caring".)

The Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) was established in 1943 and titled "Nevada Office of Veterans Service Commissioner" with a Veteran Services Officer to serve those 12,080 who served during WWII. (See attachment #2, "A Trip Back in Time".) Over the past 73 years the Department has undergone tremendous growth (see attachment #3, NDVS Mission Expansion"), and during 2015 Nevada Governor Sandoval declared the commitment to have Nevada be the "Most Veteran Friendly State in the Nation".

The outreach and program expansions of the NDVS are now set to serve the nearly 300,000 veterans in our state, with many programs and services (see NDVS Program Chart, attachment #4) . The NDVS Vision, Mission and focus remains the same for all programs and services (see attachment #5), and on a yearly basis new initiatives are discovered, developed, and deployed.

History of Care Facilities in Nevada:

In 2003, the Nevada State Veterans Home in Boulder City was established to provide long term care services, therapy and support to our aging and wounded warriors, creating a home of "culture and caring" specific to veterans, spouses and gold star parents of veterans. This home typifies the valuable environment of military culture and camaraderie for those who served our country. NDVS submitted a grant request to the Veterans Administration in 2006 for a second home in northern Nevada and was approved, pending the

required state match. This state match was met in 2015, once again with the blessing of the Nevada State Legislature, Governor Sandoval and Veterans groups and organizations. It will be constructed once the Congressional appropriation is available in the State Veterans Home program of the Federal VA budget.

While waiting the opportunity to build the home in the north, it became evident to NDVS that we likely have many veterans in care facilities and settings throughout the state, who have not had the recognition or benefits that would be initiated in a designated "Veterans Home". It raised the question....how many veterans do we not know about and how can we reach out to locate them?

Creation of "Veterans In Care"- VIC:

The newly established "Veterans In Care" (VIC) initiative was launched in May of 2016, with the mission to reach out to all skilled care facilities (SNF), residential care/assisted living facilities (RCF/AL) and outreach to over 400 providers in the state. The next step will be to reach out to community based care (CBC) service facilities and programs to locate our veterans needing and receiving care and services. This will allow NDVS to collect data that had not been researched before. A letter was sent to all licensed administrators of SNF and RCF/AL facilities in Nevada, requesting information on the location of our veterans in their facilities, how many are receiving benefits and how many are enrolled in the VA medical center system. We are continuing to reach out to providers to assure we have a broad response.

The vision of VIC at this time encompasses three (3) components: Benefits and Programs; Veteran Culture Education and Training; and Quality of Life Recognition and Communication.

Benefits and Programs:

A primary goal is to advise and educate veterans and their family of potentially untapped Federal VA benefits for which they might be eligible. Eligibility requirements have changed over the years and many of our aging veterans do not realize they may be eligible for benefits not previously accessible. This outreach involves our Nevada Veteran Advocates (NVA) and our Veterans Service Officers (VSO) of the Veterans Advocacy & Support Teams (VAST). The VSO of the NDVS are specialists in evaluating, educating and assisting our veterans and their family members, at no cost to the veteran.

In addition, veteran burial benefits and availability in the two Nevada State Memorial Veterans Cemeteries are not well understood. A veteran may be buried at no cost and there is an option for an additional very low cost for spouse burial.

Veteran Culture Education and Training:

Facilities that are not veteran specific may or may not understand the influence and impact of a veteran's service experience on their aging process or health care needs. Certainly for those individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementias, many behaviors are misunderstood when they actually may be influenced by past military experiences. Individuals who have served in the military are not always willing to ask for help when needed, and even more importantly, depending on which period of time served, may have "cultural bias" toward certain care providers.

NDVS recognizes that the opportunity to have training on military culture and how it affects successful care giving strategies has not been consistently available to facilities. A key component of VIC is to partner with other state agencies and VA health partners to bring this training to the care facility setting and their front line staff.

Quality of Life Recognition and Communication:

This third component of VIC is expansive. Veterans in community care settings often times are not recognized. A primary initiative of acknowledgement and recognition of their service to our country is being developed. The Director of NDVS will be issuing personalized certificates of gratitude to veterans in care for being "Nevada Heroes". These certificates of recognition will be presented in ceremonies within the facilities where the veteran is located when possible. Preliminary data has noted there are between 20 to 50 veterans in many community facilities. Expansion of this recognition initiative will also include additional acknowledgement for those of outstanding service by our Governor, Legislators and Congressional Representatives.

There is a goal to create a multi-facility newsletter from NDVS where our Nevada resident heroes can be highlighted and their families can tell their stories.

Ceremonies and recognition will span beyond the traditional Veteran's Day and Memorial Day holidays, with the engagement of veteran volunteer groups, schools with ROTC programs and other volunteers to support special events in facilities that request such programs.

Outreach Overview Summary:

The VIC program has a potential of working with 849 community facility partners, each facility type identified in the Division of Public and Behavioral Health licensure data base noted below:

- Skilled Nursing Facilities-45
- Residential Facilities for Groups/Assisted Living Facilities-361
- Adult Day Care Facilities-21
- Rural Hospital Distinct Part SNF-11
- Hospice Facilities-4
- Hospice Agencies-61
- Personal Care Agencies-189
- Home Health Agencies-157

Program support staff will:

- Develop and maintain the location and contact list of all community based care facilities
- Coordinate participation of facilities in VIC
- Schedule VSO and NVA visits for education and claim applications
- Prepare recognition certificates for all veterans residing in the facilities that respond
- Coordinate recognition events
- Manage meeting schedules and calendars between the department and providers for services and events
- Prepare and distribute the VIC newsletter to veterans in facilities
- Coordinate interagency meetings for the NDVS and community partners
- Coordinate and work with volunteers and other NDVS support staff to assure program goals are met for benefit assistance, education and recognition for our veterans

To Date:

The elements of VIC are ambitious and timely. Preliminary data as of June 1st, 2016 has found a response from just 40 facilities that identified 555 veterans in community care settings. The goal is to ensure that all veterans, no matter where

they live receive support, information and recognition. We anticipate the discovery of up to 5000 veterans that we may have not reached before. As the VIC program expands, the reach will include veterans receiving care and services through Hospice, Home Health, Personal Care Agencies, Adult Day Care Centers and many other community partners.

NDVS has expanded multi agency outreach and support for our veterans in care beyond what was initially anticipated with regard to the State veteran's homes and other health and wellness programs. NDVS is honored to be expanding health and wellness initiatives to locate, support and recognize our veterans in community living settings, and to serve those professionals caring for our veterans.

For more information contact:

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Culture of Caring for Veterans

- 1636: the Pilgrims of Plymouth pass a law ensuring disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony
- 1865: “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan” – President Abraham Lincoln’s 2^d Inaugural Address
- 1811: First Veterans Hospitals and expanded benefits and pensions not only for Veterans, but for their widows and dependents
- 1917-1918: WWI Veterans Programs. Pensions, insurance, vocational rehabilitation
- 1941-1944: WWII Veterans Programs. Vast increase in Veterans programs, most significant the GI Bill Education Program which had a dramatic impact on the American way of life
- Programs continued to increase over the years. With an outpouring of public support, a “Sea of Goodwill,” the state role in connecting veterans to federal, state, and private benefits and services continue to grow



A Trip Back In Time

Chapter 189, Laws of Nevada 1943

Preamble to Statutes Creating the Office of Veterans Service Commissioner

Whereas, The people of the State of Nevada have always been steadfast in their loyalty to the country and pride of state, and in the spirit of war and National Emergency or unflinching in their sacrifices for the common good; and

Whereas, Thousands of the sons and daughters of Nevada, imbued with love of country and the courage born of the tranquil deserts and purple hills of Nevada, have entered into the military forces of the nation; and

Whereas, We who love and honor these gallant youths are pledged to secure them on their return to the pursuits of peace after final victory, to the fullest extent, the benefits and privileges conferred on them by a grateful government, both state and National; and

Whereas, Much legislation benefiting servicemen and women and their dependents, designed to fit them once again into the ways of peace without undue hardship or economic loss, will be enacted by Congress and the legislatures of various States; and

Whereas, To avoid the confusion that attended the demobilization of servicemen following World War I, it is deemed necessary and proper to provide a means of preserving our new generation of benefits new generation of veterans the benefits and privileges that are now being, and will hereafter be, accorded to them in the way of adjusted compensation, hospitalization, insurance, pensions, disability compensation, rehabilitation, employment preferences, vocational training and education; and

Whereas, The Prompt securing of our new veterans of all of the benefits and privileges accorded them will result in a well-ordered return to civilian life, will ultimately save to the state of Nevada many thousands of dollars, and will fulfill in part our duty to preserve and protect the rights of those who defend our liberties; now therefore,

The people of the state of Nevada, represented in Senate and Assembly, do in act as Follows:

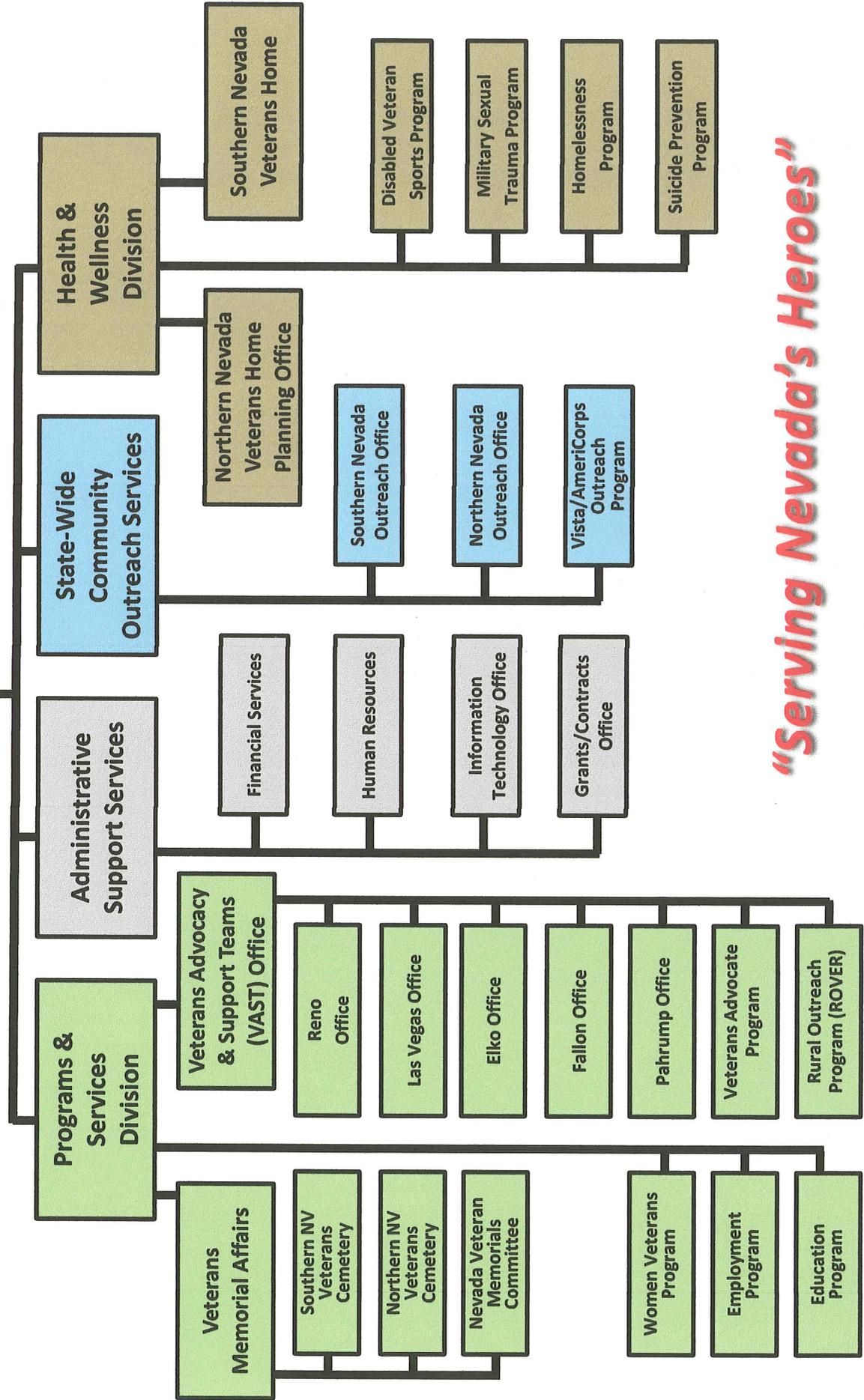
NDVS Mission Expansion

1943	1947-1960	1961-1989	1990-2001	2002-2011	2012-2015	2016 -2017	2018-2019
12,080 Veterans	22,822 Veterans	96,147 Veterans	159,861 Veterans	216,044 Veterans	228,027 Veterans	221,971 Veterans	215,335 Veterans
NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO	NN VSO
	SN VSO	SN VSO	SN VSO	SN VSO	SN VSO	SN VSO	SN VSO
	Scholarships	Scholarships	Scholarships	Guardianship	NNVH Planning	NNVH Planning	NNVH
		Guardianship	Guardianship	NN Cemetery	NN Cemetery	NN Cemetery	NN Cemetery
			NN Cemetery	SN Cemetery	SN Cemetery	SN Cemetery	SN Cemetery
			SN Cemetery	NSVH	NSVH	NSVH	NSVH
				Women Vet Prg	Women Vet Prg	Women Vet Prg	Women Vet Prg
				Suicide Pvt TF	Suicide Pvt TF	Suicide Pvt TF	Suicide Pvt TF
				Rural VSO Svcs	Rural VSO Svcs	Rural VSO Svcs	Rural VSO Svcs
				GZI Mngt	GZI Mngt	GZI Mngt	GZI Mngt
				Com. Outreach	Com. Outreach	Com. Outreach	Com. Outreach
				Homeless Vets	Homeless Vets	Homeless Vets	Homeless Vets
				Incarcerated Vets	Incarcerated Vets	Incarcerated Vets	Incarcerated Vets
				Grant Prg Mngt	Grant Prg Mngt	Grant Prg Mngt	Grant Prg Mngt
				IT Outreach	IT Outreach	IT Outreach	IT Outreach
1 Staff (1 HQ)	3 Staff (2 HQ)	8 Staff (2 HQ)	28 Staff (2 HQ)	219 Staff (6 HQ)	223 Staff (6 HQ)	231 Staff (10 HQ)	356 Staff (11 HQ)

Nevada Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Service Commission

Communications & Legislative Director



"Serving Nevada's Heroes"

Nevada Department of Veterans Services

Vision:

Nevadans across the state celebrate the legacy of America's heroes and work together to ensure **veterans and their families understand and connect to opportunities that improve their lives**

Mission:

Provide service to and advocacy on behalf of veterans and their families. Through our four major programs assist veterans prepare and submit **claims for benefits**, provide **skilled nursing care**, provide dignified **burial support**, and help veterans **successfully integrate** into Nevada communities

Who We Serve:

Veterans, active service members, National Guard and Reserve, their families, and their survivors

"Serving Nevada's Heroes"