

Past Meeting Summaries

- **June 1-3, 2011 • Town Hall Meeting and Site Visit Ft. Harrison, Helena, Montana**
Began with the Veterans' Rural Health Advisory Committee hosting the town hall meeting to discuss issues and concerns facing Veterans living in America's rural communities. The town hall included an information fair, and representatives from VA Montana HealthCare System and the VA Benefits Administration. Ms. Teresa Bell, provided the ORH staff with a tour of the more than \$7 million, 24,000 square foot, 24-bed facility, which will allow Veterans' in need of acute psychiatric care, and residential rehabilitation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or substance abuse to get care at the VA campus near Helena, Montana. Previously, Montana's Veterans in need of inpatient recovery care for PTSD, substance abuse, and acute psychiatric treatment travelled to VA facilities in North Dakota, Wyoming, or Idaho. The new mental health facility allows VA Montana to provide the region's Veterans with a full array of comprehensive mental health services.
- **May 1, 2011 • Town Hall Meeting, Uvalde, Texas**
A Veterans community forum was held at 1:30 p.m. on May 1, 2011 at the Willie de Leon Civic Center in Uvalde, Texas. Approximately 50 people were in attendance, including: Congressman Francisco Canseco, 23rd District of Texas; Roger Roehl, South Texas Veteran Health Care System, San Antonio; Mary Beth Skupien, Director, Office of Rural Health, DC. The Veteran discussion included lodging for health services, access to health services, mental health services, and oral health care. Follow up statements and action plans in response to the Veteran discussion were then given by Congressman Canseco, Roger Roehl, and Mary Beth Skupien. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.
- **October 13, 2010 • Site Visit and tour of the DC VAMC with in depth EMR Presentation**
The Washington DC VA Medical Center is a tertiary care hospital serving Veterans in DC and parts of Virginia and Maryland. The facility treats over 50,000 Veterans and has over 500,000 outpatient visits each year. The hospital has 171 beds and the Medical Center operates a Comprehensive Nursing and Rehabilitation center (CNRC) with 120 beds. Four community based outpatient clinics (CBOC) are also a part of this Medical Center.
- **March 2-3, 2010 • Site Visit and tour of Mountain Home VAMC, Johnson City, Tennessee**
The Mountain Home VAMC, which is affiliated with East Tennessee State University, primarily serves Veterans from Tennessee but sees patients from Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky. The facility offers a wide range of services to Veterans, especially those in the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology program. There are also community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Knoxville, Morristown, and Rogersville, Tennessee and in Bristol and Norton, Virginia. The closed session

concluded with a tour of the Mountain Home VAMC campus as well as a brief visit to the hospital.

- **March 3-4, 2009 • Site Visit and tour of Phoenix VA Health Care System, Phoenix, Arizona**

Committee members participated in a Site Visit to the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS), which serves Veterans in central Arizona at its main medical center and outpatient VA Health Care Clinics. The 700,000 square foot center is a clinical referral level 1b facility, and has seven VA Health Care Clinics (VAHCC) and an In Home Care Program. The center offers a range of health care services, including ambulatory care, clinical, geriatrics and extended care, inpatient care, mental health and behavioral science, and research services. There are currently 130 inpatient beds for medical and surgical patients, 104 beds for nursing home patients and 48 inpatient beds for mental health patients.

- Understand how policy affects rural Veterans, their families, and the rural communities where they live;
- Be familiar with services provision and benefits issues as they pertain to rural Veterans;
- Have experience working on Veterans' policy issues at the local, state and regional level; and/or
- Bring the Veteran experience