



MEDIA RELEASE

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

May 23, 2024

VETERAN PEER ACCESS NETWORK MERGES WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Network linking veterans with services will transfer from Department of Mental Health

LOS ANGELES, CA – On May 21, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 to approve a recommendation submitted by Supervisors Barger and Horvath instructing the L.A. County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) to take the lead on future collaboration and coordination with the state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs.

This includes taking the lead with respect to other county departments and their veteran programs. The Board instructed MVA and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to develop a plan transferring the Southern California Grantmakers contract for the Veteran Peer Access Network from to DMH to MVA by Oct. 1.

The motion further states that the MVA call line will be integrated into the VPAN Support Line with staff from both departments serving on a new Veterans Service Triage Line to “centralize all calls related to veterans benefits and services.”

“This Board motion—which continues a six-year trend of unanimous motions on behalf of veterans—represents a significant step forward in integrating the services offered by the county to veterans and their families by centralizing the mission,” said MVA Director Jim Zenner.

This motion also addresses other initiatives in which the department and its partners at the local, state and federal level are currently engaged:

- Pursuing equitable outcomes and increased access for underserved veteran populations
- Establishing partnerships with cities and other jurisdictions to increase access
- Identifying veterans and their families at-risk of becoming unhoused
- Instructing all county departments to add the question “Have you every served in the U.S. military?” as a standard field in all their screening and intake questionnaires so that those individuals can be more easily identified for linkage to services and benefits

In addition, the Board passed another motion extending the Veteran Suicide Review Team pilot by one year while the co-chairs develop a list of recommendations for the pilot to become permanent while adding MVA to DMH as the primary co-lead.

Press inquiries should be directed to W. Regen Wilson, 323.823.6896, wwilson@mva.lacounty.gov.



The LA County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) provides assistance to L.A. County veterans, active service members and their families with resources, programs, services and state and federal benefits, including: compensation and pension claims, burial benefits and services, medical and mental health referral, education and vocational rehabilitation, home loans and grant applications, employment and job placement assistance, DMV veteran designation, legal service referrals, appeal processes, programs for incarcerated veterans, as well as aid and attendance.

###