



Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners

MISSION STATEMENT

Cheboygan County officials and staff will strive to provide public services in an open and courteous manner and will responsibly manage county resources.

January 26, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approve Agenda
5. **CITIZENS COMMENTS**
6. **SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT REPORTS**
 - A. Certificates of Appreciation
 1. Barbara Rotter – Board of Canvassers
 2. Mary Street – ZBA
 - B. Cheboygan County Road Commission Project Update
 - C. Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency – Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition
 - D. Veterans Services 2014-2015 Annual Report
 - E. Dr. Ed Timm – Presentation on Enbridge Line 5
7. **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**
8. **OLD BUSINESS**
9. **NEW BUSINESS**
10. **BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**
11. **CITIZENS COMMENTS**
12. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**
13. **ADJOURN TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR**

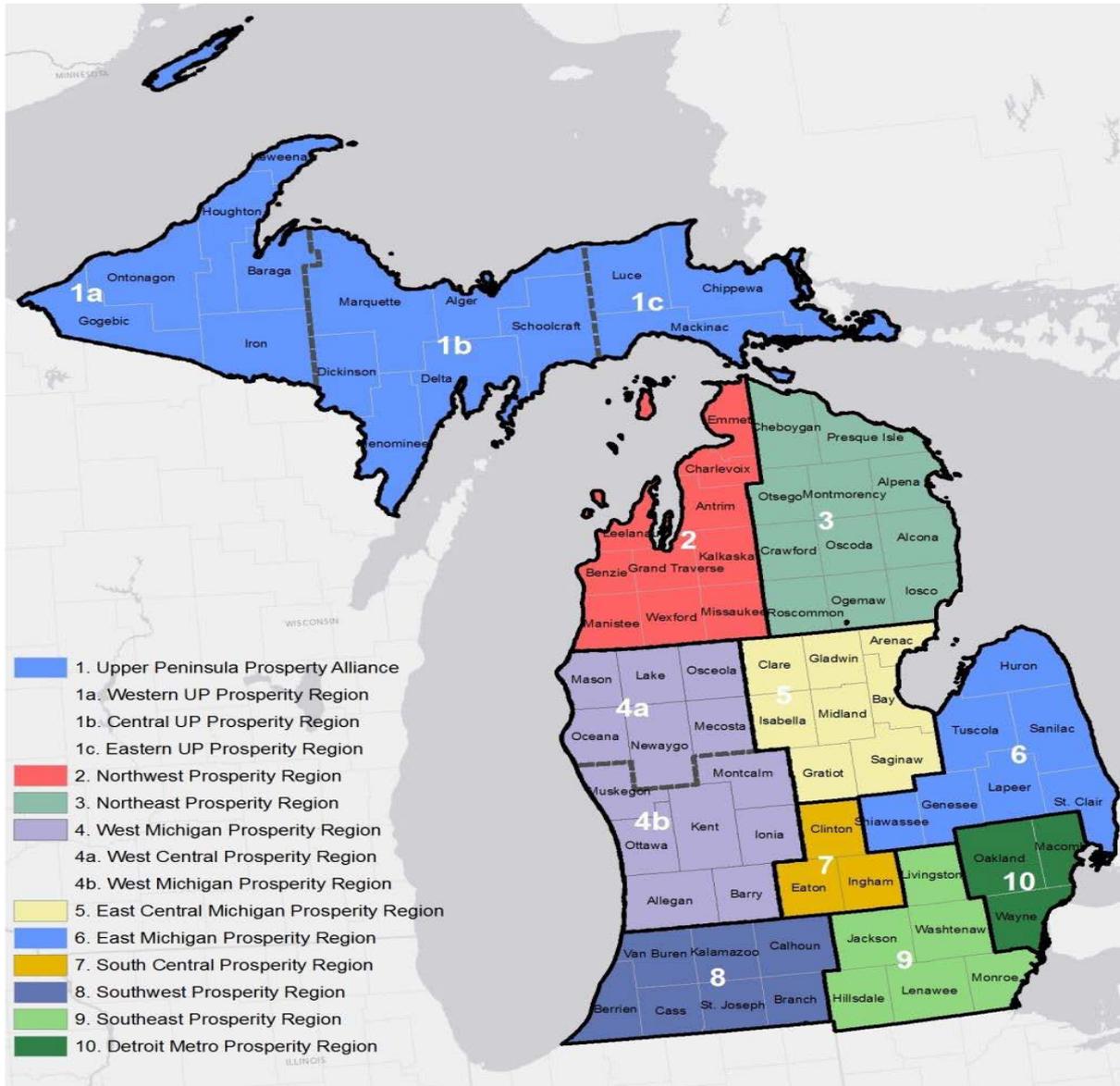
Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition



INTRODUCTION

- The Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition (NMVC) is the organization established to institute the Veterans Community Action Team (VCAT) model in Northern Michigan within Prosperity Region 3.
- The VCAT model is a national best practice that has been piloted, implemented, and sustained for almost five years in San Diego and San Antonio by service providers, advocates, volunteers, and others who demonstrate their support every day. They come together in large and small groups, building working relationships for connecting veterans to services and acting on issues that are important to veterans and their families.
- This model aims to institute a community-based Veterans Services System of Care by establishing broad-based coalitions of Veterans service organizations; health, employment, education and quality-of-life community services providers; and other stakeholders.

State of Michigan Prosperity Regions



OUR STORY

- Since 2002, approximately 2.6 million service members have separated from the active military and the Reserve Component forces and transitioned to civilian life in their communities after serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.
- Here at home, Michigan boasts the 11th largest Veterans' population in the country with nearly 700,000 Veterans, comprising 7.1% of the state's population.
- Moreover, the first Congressional District of Michigan, which includes northern lower and all of upper Michigan, is ranked 15th in the nation in veteran population.
- Michigan ranks last in the amount of federal benefits received per Veteran and the state's Veterans' unemployment rate (11.2%) is higher than the national average (8.3%).
- On the immediate horizon, we expect 10,000–20,000 Veterans to return home to Michigan each year through 2016. These returning Veterans and the much larger existing population of aging Veterans have multifaceted needs, generally met by a number of independently administered services, including health care, vocational rehabilitation, employment and training, education, care giving, social services, housing, family support, and independent living assistance.
- Current public and private initiatives providing services to Veterans and their families have limited resources, not only to administer their programs but to integrate those services with other programs being offered in the community and to make Veterans aware of benefits they may be eligible for but do not know about.

OUR POPULATION

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Veterans</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Otsego	24129	2179	9
Cheboygan	25726	2719	10.5
Crawford	13904	1611	11.5
Oscoda	8379	1095	13
Alcona	10578	1702	16
Iosco	25429	3474	13.7
Ogemaw	21234	2343	11
Roscommon	24014	3162	13
Alpena	29091	2800	9.6
Presque Isle	13052	1503	11.5
Montmorency	9350	1323	14
Totals	204886	23911	11.6

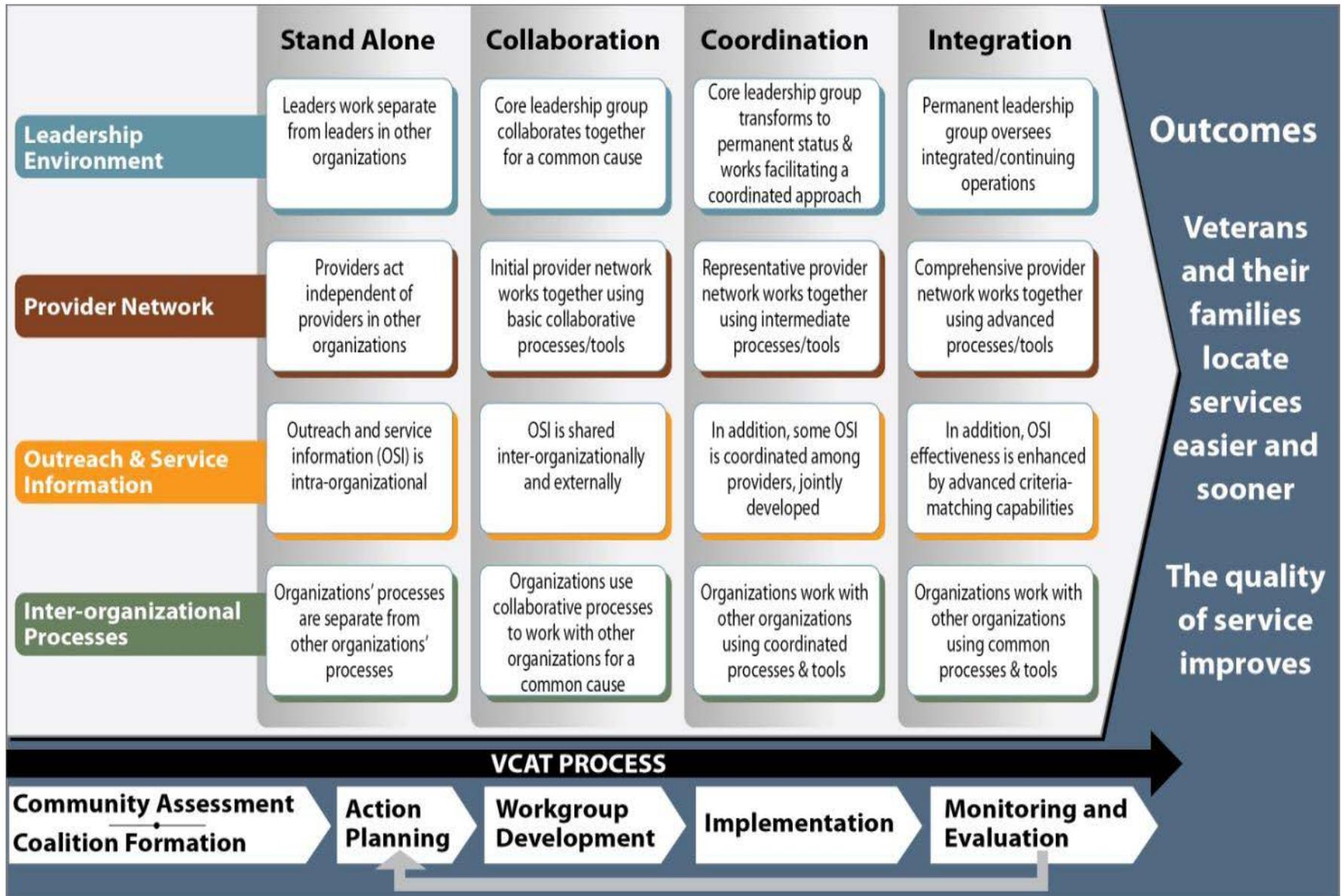
OUR PLAN

- PLAN: The plan is to conduct community assessments and establish working partnerships among community leaders, organizations, and providers who deliver services or have missions to support Veterans.
- GOAL: To establish a Veterans services system of care, characterized by a comprehensive network of service providers, empowered with knowledge, information, and tools and effectively ensuring that all Veterans and family members who these providers encounter are accurately and timely connected to the appropriate service providers and fully served.

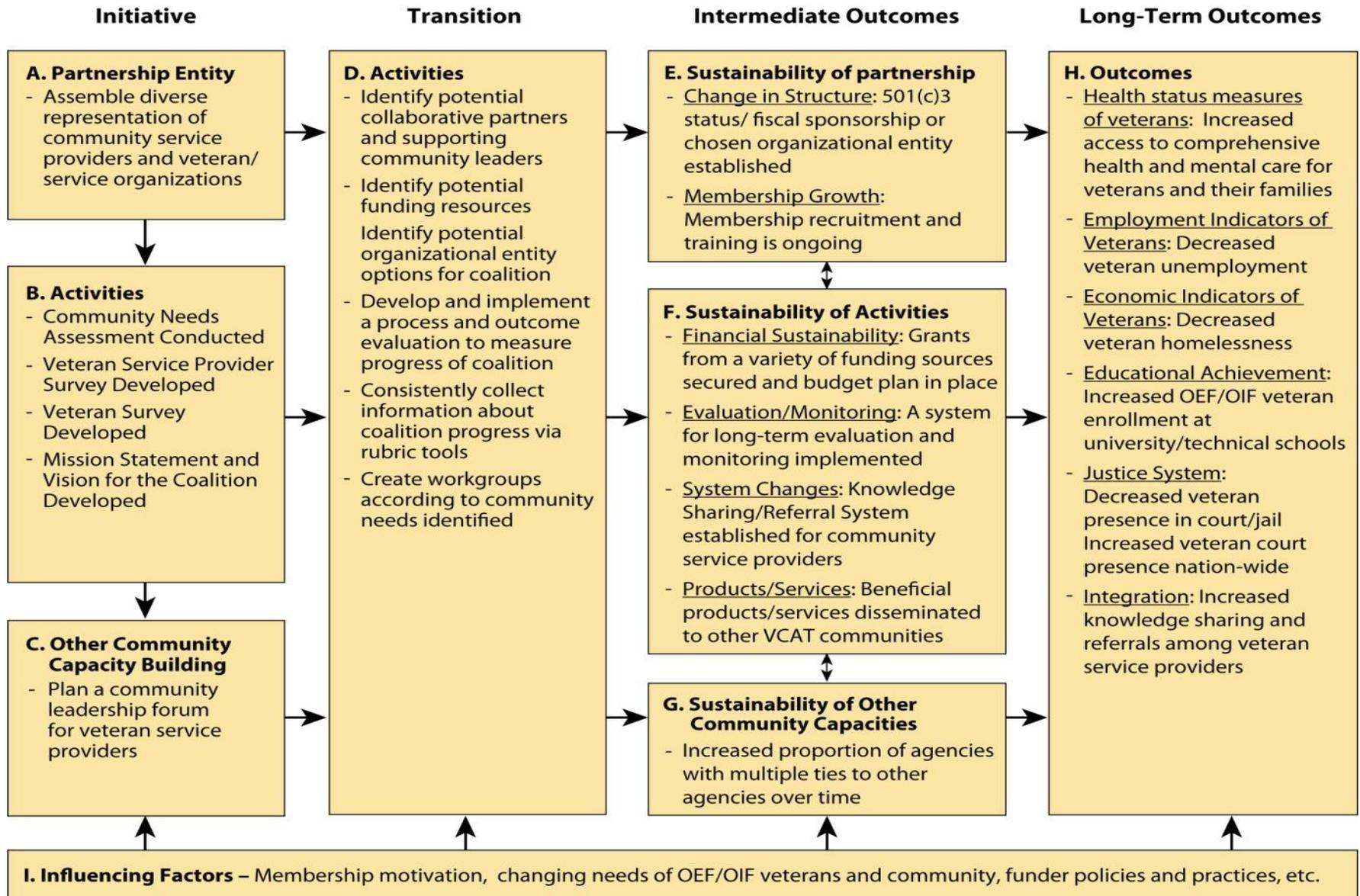
OUR PURPOSE

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition (NMVC) is to serve the needs of the veterans and their families within the 11 counties in Northeast Lower Michigan. We intend to improve the collaboration and coordination among community service providers in all sectors (non-profit, county, state, federal, informal councils, veteran organizations and groups) so that delivery of services is more comprehensive and veteran family-centric
- **Vision:** The vision of the is to honor and care for U.S. veterans and their families through a comprehensive and integrated system of community providers.
- **Mission:** The mission of the NMVC is to improve the support of veterans in NE Lower Michigan by:
 - a) Inspiring and encouraging collaboration and cooperation among service providers and veteran service organizations. (Collaboration Goal)
 - b) Advocating on behalf of veterans and their families for better integration of services. (Support Goal)
 - c) Improving communication between veterans and providers to disseminate information and determine needs. (Communication Goal)
 - d) Provide leadership and guidance that would affect local changes and serve as a model for other communities to emulate. (Leadership Goal)

VCAT PROCESS & MODELS



VCAT FRAMEWORK



FIRST TEN STEPS

- 1) Assemble a core group of coalition members (steering committee).
- 2) Conduct a community assessment.
- 3) Develop a compelling story.
- 4) Engage with recognized leaders.
- 5) Develop a coalition charter.
- 6) Establish coalition leadership.
- 7) Establish our workgroups (i.e. Outreach, Legal, Healthcare, Event, Education, Funding...)
- 8) Recruit new members continuously.
- 9) Organize events that showcase the network.
- 10) Monitor and evaluate.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Presented By

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State of Michigan
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Cheboygan County Department of Veterans Services



ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

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VETERANS DIRECTOR MELLISSA HOKANS

VETERANS@CHEBOYGANCOUNTY.NET

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Cheboygan County Department of Veterans Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2014/2015

Mission Statement

To advocate and assist veterans and their families in obtaining any and all county, state and federal benefits to which they are entitled in a timely detailed process.

“People over Paper”

Vision Statement

To strengthen Cheboygan County by promoting a higher quality of life for Cheboygan County Veterans and their families.

Introduction

Cheboygan County is fast becoming one of Northern Michigan’s leading veteran populations. VA Benefits have been granted to over 2,600 veterans in Cheboygan County and that number is rapidly increasing. VA Benefits not only improve the veteran’s life, but also the local economy. Over \$17 million dollars in federal benefits in 2014 alone was awarded to Cheboygan County Veterans. In the last two years this department has dealt with multiple changes and adaptations that have greatly affected the service to the county veterans. It is so important to strengthen and support our county veteran’s office. Our Director does not take that task lightly and brings over a decade of expertise, integrity, and vast knowledge to serve the veterans and their families. The process to obtaining VA benefits is becoming a daunting task for all involved. Benefits are being sought after by an aging population as well as a technologically advancing generation. It is important that the veteran’s office can convey that level of trust, ethics, respect and knowledge base unconditionally to every veteran and/or family member that walks into the office as well as throughout the community and state. The Veteran’s Office is staffed to strengthen the foundation of success. It is a privilege and an honor to be able to go forward in handling the intricate needs of Cheboygan County’s Veterans.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2015

It cannot be undocumented that the veterans office remained open for service to all county veterans throughout a six month staff vacancy. Claim work was handled on a daily basis as represented in proceeding graphs. Accredited veterans service officers from Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion were secured, at no cost to the county, to assist with advanced veterans claim work. In addition to servicing all veterans and their family members, Administrative Assistant/Director maintained all administrative processes, as well as attended community outreach events throughout the year. Director began the accreditation process in July.

LONG TERM GOALS

Executive Summary

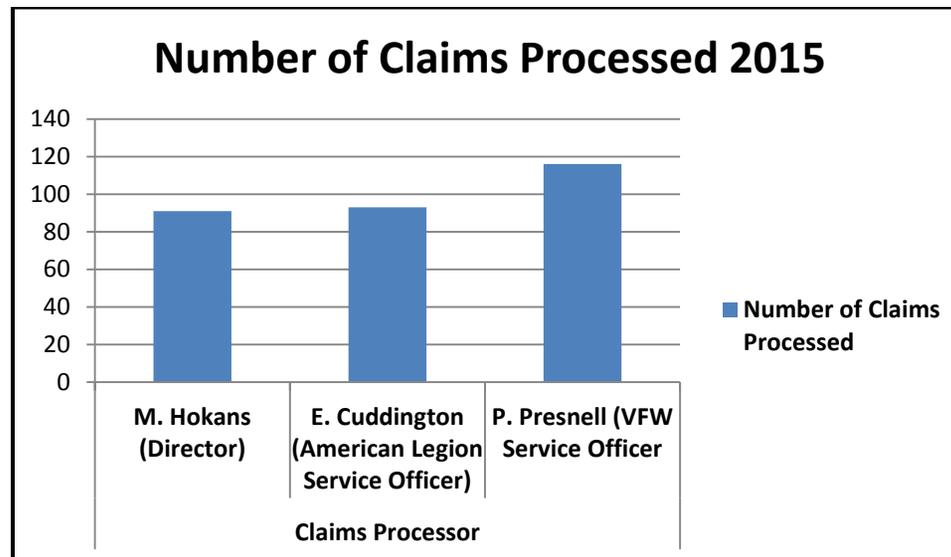
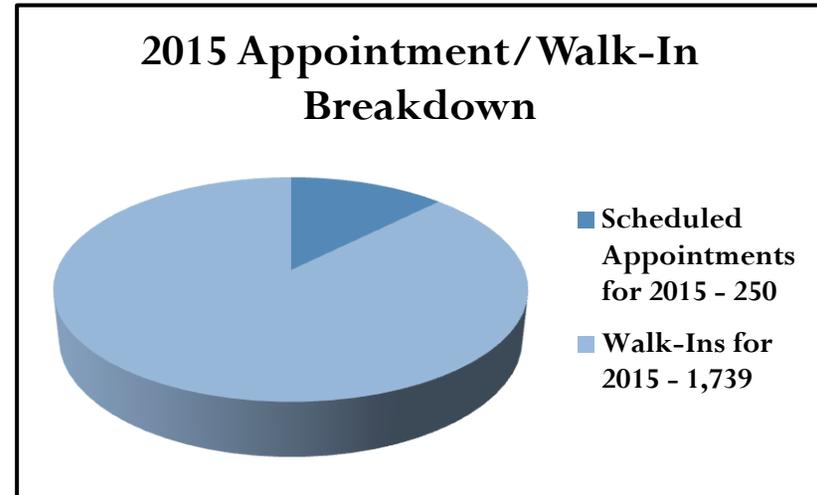
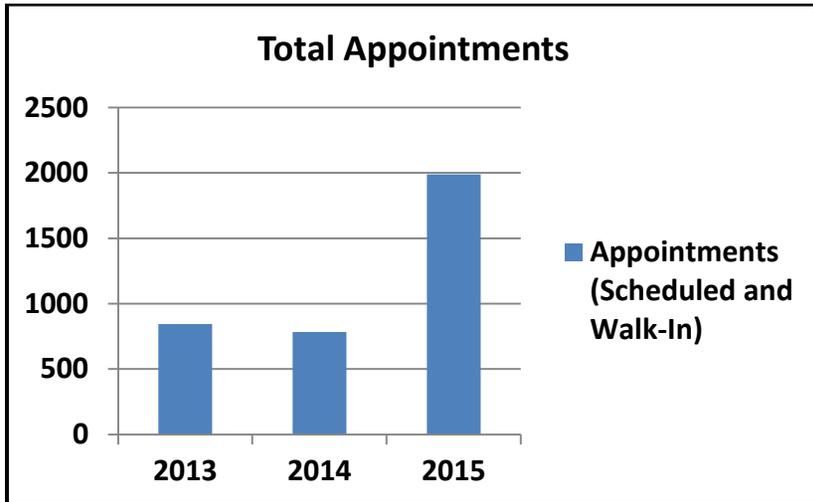
The number one priority of this office is to process veterans claims. The office will streamline the claims filing process to ensure proper claim progression, professional management of records and correspondence. Staff will be educated and accredited to remain current with all VA benefits.

2016/2017 GOALS

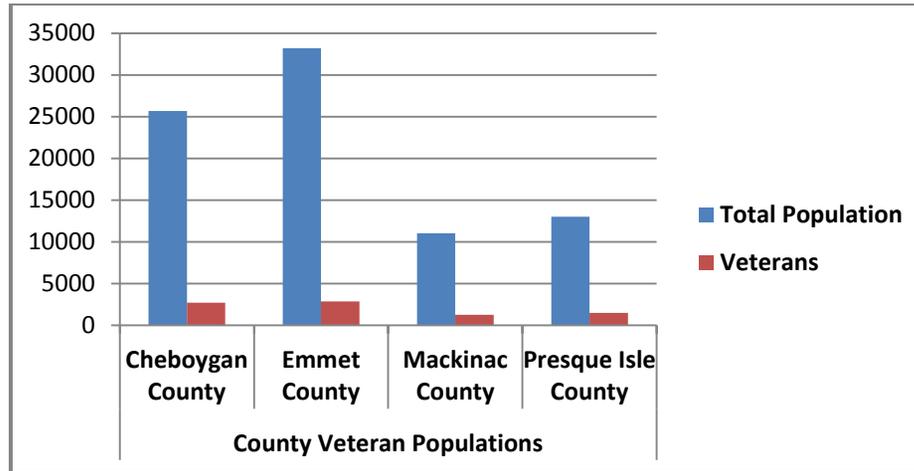
- Director to complete accreditation education from 2015
- Director to maintain membership in MACVC (Michigan Association of County Veterans Counselors) through required continuing education
- Director to obtain National Accreditation through NACVSO (National Association of County Veterans Service Officers)
- Director to complete necessary computer program education
- Director to update all administrative responsibilities from 2014/2015
- Community Outreach Education

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE STATISTICS

Cheboygan County Department of Veterans Services



COUNTY VETERAN DEMOGRAPHICS



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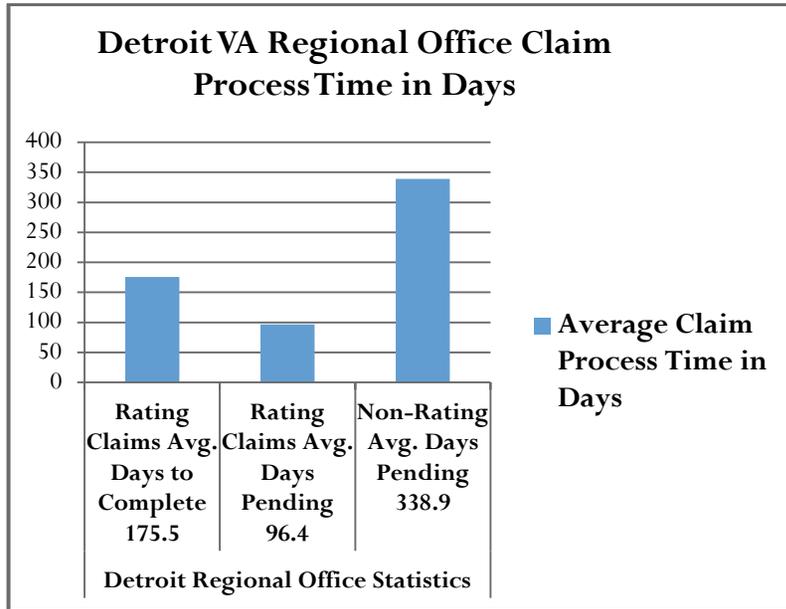
VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY % OF TOTAL POPULATION ²	
CHEBOYGAN COUNTY	13%
EMMET COUNTY	11%
MACKINAC COUNTY	14%
PRESQUE ISLE COUNTY	14%

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY ³ (MONEY COMING INTO THE COUNTY THROUGH VA BENEFITS)	
2012	\$13,198,000.00
2013	\$17,144,000.00
2014	\$17,724,000.00
2015	AVAILABLE MAY 2016

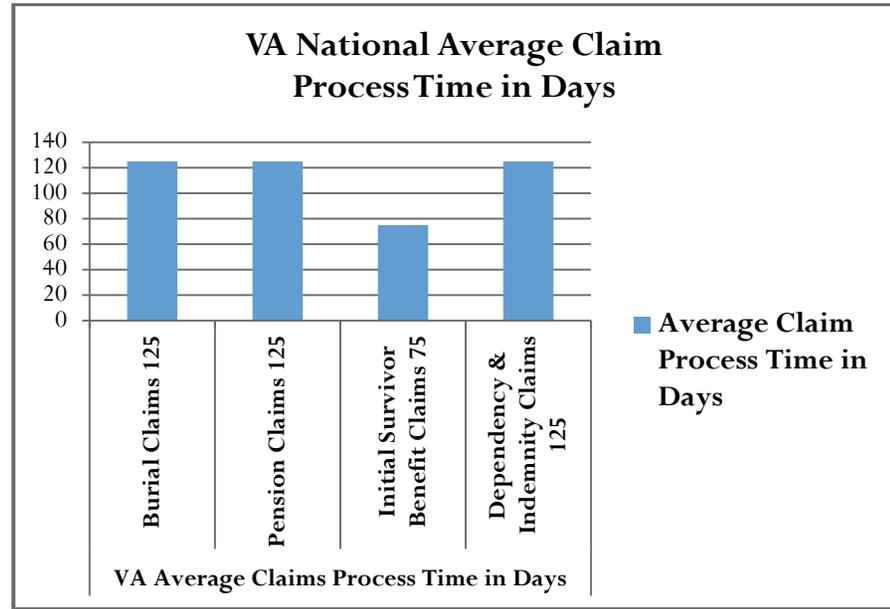
¹ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/26031.html>

² MVAA Veterans in Northern Michigan Basic Demographics

³ <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Expenditures.asp> (GDx)



4



5

Services Provided by Cheboygan County Department of Veterans Services Office

- Disability Compensation Claims
- Service Connected and Non-Service Connected Pension Claims
- VA Health Care Enrollment Claim
- Burial Benefit Claims
- Death Pension Claims
- Dependent and Survivor Benefit Claims
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Claims
- Military Records Request Claims
- VA Home Loans Certificate of Eligibility Claims
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Claims
- Automotive and Special Adaptive Equipment Claims
- DAV Van is now coordinated through Straits Regional Ride
- Emergency Financial Assistance Claims

⁴ http://benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/aspire_dashboard.asp Midwest District

⁵ http://benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/aspire_dashboard.asp

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND

- Funded Solely by Donations
- Must Have DD-214 with Honorable or Other than Dishonorable Discharge
- Must Provide Proof of Cheboygan County Residency
- Must Provide Financial Disclosures
- Maximum Payout \$250

SOLDIERS RELIEF FUND

- Funded by Cheboygan County General Funds
- Must Have DD-214 with Honorable or Other than Dishonorable Discharge
- Must Have Served at least 90 Days Active Duty
- Must Provide Proof of Cheboygan County Residency
- Must Provide Financial Disclosures
- Maximum Payout \$500

MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND

- Funded by Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (State)
- Must Have DD-214 with Honorable or Other than Dishonorable Discharge
- Must Have Served at least 180 Days Active Duty to Include One Day of Wartime Service
- Must Provide Proof of Cheboygan County Residency
- Must Provide Financial Disclosures

The Cheboygan County Department of Veterans Services provides financial assistance for emergent needs only to qualified veterans and their families for temporary assistance for emergencies or hardships concerning shelter, food, utilities, automobiles, and other circumstances. Assistance MUST be for an emergency and not for the relief of an inconvenience, want, or desire, and, cannot be used for long term problems or financial difficulties. Our office works closely with the Department of Human Services, Salvation Army, emPower utility assistance program, and other utility assistance programs to make certain the veterans receive the help they need. There are three assistance funds available for use and each has specific eligibility requirements for the veteran or family member to qualify. Only complete applications are reviewed by a committee. This process is not instant, and takes an average of two to four weeks to complete. If approved, assistance is always paid directly to the vendor.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTS

VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND

2014

Balance 1/1/14: \$15,339.76

Total Donations 2014: \$4,520.00

Total Expenses Paid 2014: \$249.08

Balance 12/31/14: \$19,610.68

2015

Balance 1/1/15: \$19,610.68

Total Donations 2015: \$4,030.43

Total Expenses Paid 2015: \$210.00

Balance 12/31/15: \$23,431.11

SOLDIERS RELIEF FUND

2014

Original Budget: \$5000

Total Expenses Paid: \$909.33

Total Per Diem Paid: \$180.00

Total Expended: \$1,089.33

Available Budget End of Year:
\$3,910.67

2015

Original Budget: \$5140.00

Total Expenses Paid: \$610.53

Total Per Diem Paid: \$160.00

Total Expended: \$770.53

Available Budget End of Year:
\$4,369.47

MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND

FY 14/15

Balance 10/1/2014: \$1,559.87

Total Deposits/Allotments: \$3,188

Total Expenses Paid: \$3,690.48

Total Mileage Paid*: \$402.66

Administrative: \$500.00

Balance 9/30/15: \$154.73

FY 15/16

Balance 10/1/15: \$154.73

Total Deposits/Allotments: \$1,188

Total Expenses Paid: \$0

Total Mileage Paid: \$51.27

Administrative: \$500.00

Balance 1/26/16: \$791.46

*It is important that Veterans start the claims process with their county office and an accredited Service Officer in order to ensure proper submission and records keeping.

*No two claims or compensation benefits are the same.

*Claims are a lengthy process and can take several months to years to receive a decision. The VA currently has 78,113 rating related backlogged claims and 360,593 total pending claims.

6

PROCESS TO FILING A CLAIM

Intent to File
 Veteran has 1 year to assemble all supporting documentation required; saves filing date but lengthens process

Fully Developed Claim
 Submitted as a complete claim to the VA. The more complete, the faster the rating decision.

Supporting Documentation
 All Medical & Supporting evidence, i.e. medical nexus letter, medical records, marriage certificates, death certificates, etc.
Can vary by type of claim

DD-214
Military Discharge
Must have this to initiate a claim

Type of claim filed depends on military service record

SF-180
 To request a copy of the Veteran's DD-214 from National Archives

Veterans Director/Service Officer compiles necessary documentation for formal submission of a claim

Power Of Attorney
 Submits Claim via VA computer software or by mail

VARO
 Veterans Administration Regional Office

Rating Specialist
 Reviews Claim Submission

Rating Decision/Award Letter sent to Veteran. Veteran can either accept the decision or disagree and file an appeal.

Agrees with Decision

Disagrees with Decision

NOD
 Notice of disagreement filed

CAVC
 Court of Appeals of Veteran Claims

BVA
 Board of Veteran Appeals

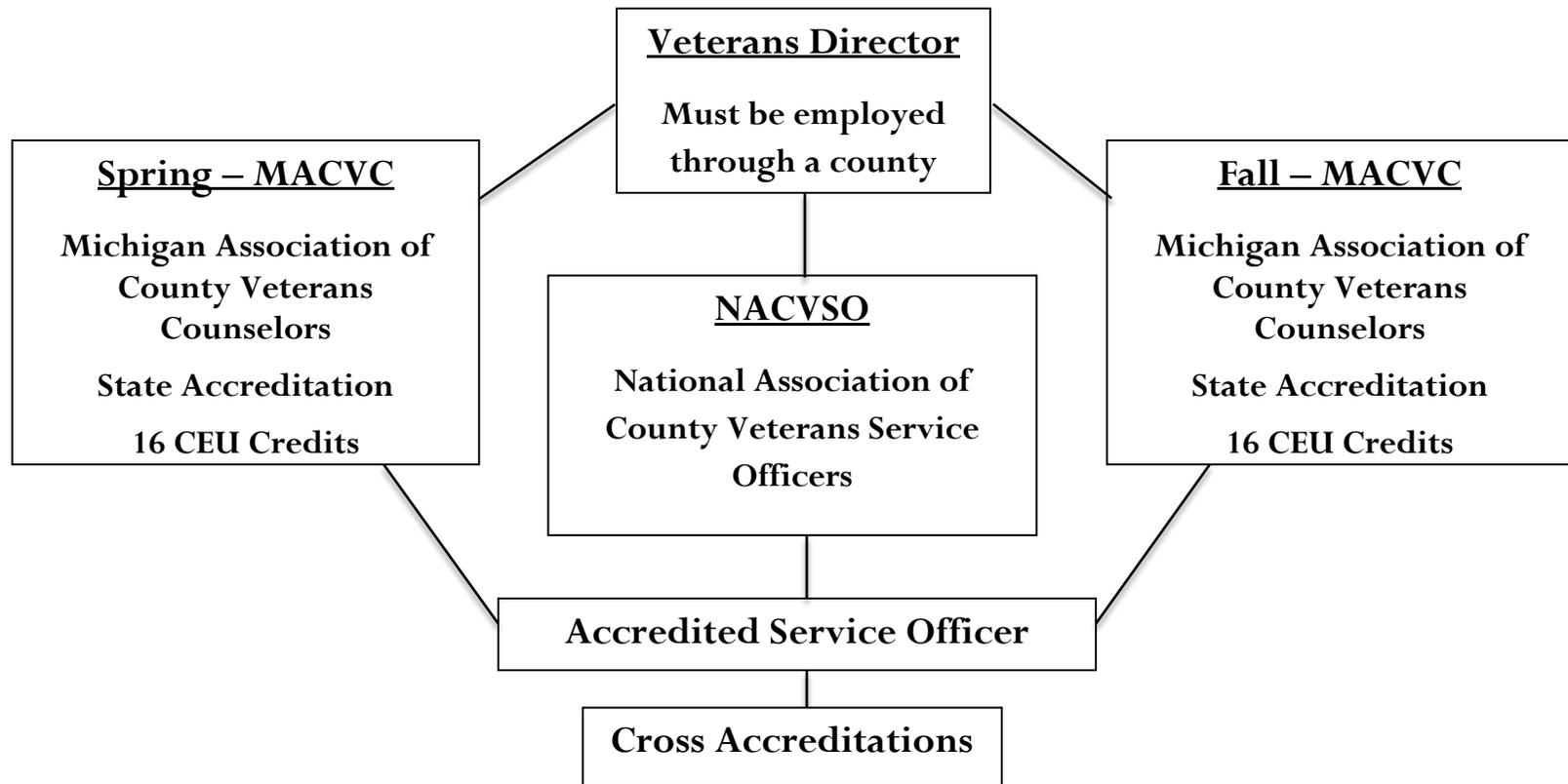
SSOC
 Supplemental Statement of the Case

I-9
 Disagrees with the DRO
 2+ Years

DRO
 Decision Review Officer investigates the disagreement and either changes the decision or concurs and sends the disagreement to the SOC (statement of Case) to investigate how the decision was reviewed and arrived at under the law.
 1 Year

⁶ http://benefits.va.gov/reports/detailed_claims_data.asp

STEPS TO BECOMING AN ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER



The VA is an ever changing environment so accreditation requires ongoing education.

All claim work should be processed through an accredited service officer to ensure confidentiality, proper claim progression, and professional management of records and correspondence.