Purpose:
The Veterans Advisory Council (VAC) will serve in an advisory capacity to assist the Dayton VA Medical Center in personalizing, humanizing, and demystifying the healthcare experience. Members of the council will be a working task force to assist the Medical Center to always put Veterans and families first.

Mission:
The VAC will partner with the Medical Center and align its mission to the Veterans Healthcare Administration’s (VHA) Blueprint for Excellence, integrating the patient voice into hospital operations by promoting key principles of Relationship Based Care.

Scope:
The scope of work for the VAC will actively promote and create new and unique opportunities for communication and collaboration that emphasize responsible and personalized Veteran-centered care.

Objectives:
The primary objectives of the Veterans Advisory Council are:
- To provide ongoing feedback that aids in establishing organizational priorities and to address Veteran service issues
- To assist in promoting effective practices in response to Veteran/family needs and priorities
- To improve the Veteran experience as measured by Veteran satisfaction survey scores, personal letters, and other data-gathering tools
- To educate the VAC to become community good-will ambassadors for the Medical Center

Membership:
The VAC will consist of Voting members and Advisory members. Advisory members will serve in an advisory capacity only, and will be prohibited from voting within the VAC.

Voting Members:
- Up to 13 Veterans with the goal of maintaining 13, including at least one member per Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC):
  - 1 Veteran Team Leader*
  - 1 Member from Lima CBOC
  - 1 Member from Middletown CBOC
  - 1 Member from Richmond CBOC
  - 1 Member from Springfield CBOC
  - Remaining number of members from Dayton
*The VAC will vote on selecting a Veteran Team Leader who will meet regularly with the Facilitator to discuss agenda items and provide input to leadership.

**Advisory (Non-Voting) Members:**
- 4 Dayton VA Medical Center Leadership staff:
  - Medical Center Director
  - Associate Medical Center Director
  - Associate Director for Patient Care Services
  - Chief of Staff
- 3 Dayton VA Medical Center staff:
  - Facilitator: Chief, Community and Public Relations Service or designee
  - Veterans Experience Officer
  - Relationship Based Care Coordinator

**Becoming a Member:**
Veterans interested in becoming a member of the VAC will need to complete an application or speak to a current VAC member. The Veteran Team Leader will review the application and present it at the next scheduled VAC meeting. VAC members will review the application and will vote to approve/disapprove temporary membership.

If the Veteran’s application is approved, the Veteran will be invited to attend a VAC meeting. She/he will be asked to sign a Privacy Statement prior to receiving HIPAA training. After the meeting, the Veteran can decide if they choose to seek permanent membership. If the Veteran chooses to do so, the Veteran Team Leader will solicit feedback from current VAC members, and the Team Leader will have final approval or disapproval of the permanent membership.

In the case that there are no openings on the VAC, applications will be kept on file with the Veteran Team Leader until an opening arises.

**Membership Eligibility Criteria:**
As a member of the Veterans Advisory Council, the Veteran must:
- Have previously utilized services at the Dayton VA Medical Center
- Communicate effectively and work well with others in a group setting
- Treat others with dignity and respect; Listen to, consider, and respect the viewpoints of others
- Provide suggestions and express criticism in a constructive manner
- Be available to attend monthly meetings
- Utilize experiences in a constructive manner that contributes to the work of the council
Membership Exclusions:
Dayton VAMC employees are prohibited from becoming members of the VAC. Veteran members who have acute exacerbation of their health conditions, or are hospitalized, or receiving aggressive medical treatment will be asked to take an excused leave of absence. A healthcare provider recommendation will be needed for their return to the council. Their place on the council will be held until their return.

Recruitment:
Recruitment guidelines for new membership for the Veteran Advisory Council include:
- Using current members to assist in the new membership recruitment process
- Providing information about the Council on the consumer portal of the hospital’s website
- Providing brochures in all patient areas, and other offsite locations, to recruit new membership
- Soliciting personal recommendations by Medical Center staff and members of the council

Attendance Expectations and Guidelines:
Guidelines for meetings and participation include:
- Members are expected to participate in meetings, with a minimum attendance of 9 out of the 11 monthly meetings in the calendar year
- A member may be dismissed following two consecutive unexcused absences
- Participants will be encouraged to serve on other hospital committees that would be beneficial to the work of the Council and regularly communicate the work of the committees to the Veterans Advisory Council

Terms of Service:
The terms are subject to change by charter review. The current terms of participation include:
- Membership is indefinite. However, members may resign at any time.
- Members may vote to dismiss any fellow member with two or more unexcused absences.
- Members may also vote to dismiss any fellow member who is not in alignment with membership eligibility criteria.
- Members who resign or are dismissed must sit out 1 year before applying for reinstatement.
- Members must inform the Facilitator or the Team Leader if they are unable to attend meetings.
- Members are required to register as a hospital volunteer which includes a background check and orientation that permits the member to receive volunteer benefits.
- Members also must attend a day of the Reigniting the Spirit of Caring class or designated Relationship Based Care training.
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**Ethics:**
VAC Members will uphold stringent standards of ethics and responsibilities in accomplishing the objectives and scope of the council by:

- Being active participants at all meetings
- Maintaining patient and program confidentiality
- Protecting information that is privileged, confidential, or otherwise protected from disclosure
- Treating others with dignity and respect by listening and honoring Veteran perspectives
- Incorporating the unique knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds into furthering the agenda of the Council

Issues not to be addressed or considered by this Council include, but are not limited to:

- Personal financial or compensation and pension issues
- Special Interests
- Support Group and/or Therapy
- Personal Health Issues

**Training:**
Council members will be provided with Volunteer Orientation and training, including annual HIPAA and Privacy training.

**Compensation:**
Members will serve as VAMC volunteers and will not receive compensation for their service on the council or travel to and from meetings.

**References:**

- “Partnering with Patients and Families to Design a Patient and Family-Centered Health Care System.” Institute for Healthcare Improvement, April 2008.

- “Blueprint for Excellence.” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), September 2014.

**Recession Date:** The Charter will be subject to review on an annual basis, with a Recession Date of January 2018.
Addendum: January 2016

FY16 Goals:
During the Winter Retreat in December 2015, VAC Members committed to working on the following goals in FY16:
- Creating a VA Choice/Choice First Flyer - Created by Veterans for Veterans – Choice Going Away
- VAC Members to serve on various committees, including Caring and Healing Committee
- VAC to serve as representatives on the 150th Anniversary Events
- VAC Successes Report - FY15
- Create a VAC Webpage – Created, Adding Charter and Application
- Expand VAC to CBOCs by creating Veteran CBOC Stakeholder Meetings – Lima and Springfield Active. Middletown Scheduled and Richmond in Progress.

Addendum: January 2017

FY17 Goals:
During the Winter Retreat in December 2016, VAC Members committed to working on the following goals in FY17:
- Continue and expand the Veteran Stakeholder meetings at the CBOCs
- Support the 150th Anniversary events