

**Veterans’ Service-Related Ailments Task Force
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2022, 12pm-2pm**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

- a. Meeting called to order by Summer Padoan at 12:15pm.
- b. Roll call taken and quorum established with 8 members at roll call.
- c. IDVA staff members present: Kourtney Hopkins.
- d. Kwame Crawford present as guest.

Senator Wilcox	Absent
Representative Kifowit	Present
Representative Swanson	Present
Director Prince or designee	Absent
COL John Fulk	Absent
Christopher Spears	Absent
Nikita Richards	Present
Kimyada Wellington	Present
Michael Iwanicki	Present
Michelle Ramlow	Absent
Summer Padoan	Present
Eric Peterson	Present
William Sutton	Present
VACANT	
VACANT	

2. Reading and Approval of Minutes from October 16, 2022

- a. Michael Iwanicki-motion to approve
- b. William Sutton-second
- c. Padoan-Minutes are approved

3. Old Business

a. Review draft report

- i. Padoan -VA Contract Compensation and Pension Examiner-Reviewed draft shared by Summer Padoan. Report covers information from OIG report and reviews 4 recommendations. Will be sent out to the group for edit/review purposes. Any questions before moving on?
- ii. Padoan -Veteran Outreach Group- Mike helped me build this draft. Reviewed draft via share screen. Reviewed the four different recommendations.

iii. Nikita Richards-I would just like to mention one other possible recommendation to be added? Also, feel free to add me to this particular work group. Can we recommend street advocacy or a street outreach group? Not necessarily a VSO, but a navigator to go into communities of marginalized groups. Giving presentations to hard-to-reach groups, instead of us expecting them to come to an event or program.

iv. Padoan -Would you see this as a task of the coalition or separate program to work with at risk populations? Would it be a 'Train the trainer' type program?

v. Richards- What I am thinking is how the medical community has outreach groups such as the American Cancer Society going out into the community and creating ambassadors to help spread the word, these individuals would help veterans complete the claims.

vi. Kwame Crawford- Like a mobile group. Do we have any recourses at the state or VAC level that have a mobile vehicle that can facilitate something like that?

vii. Padoan – it varies and depends. Some VACs have vehicles to do different outreach events. I think this is a great thing we can include in the recommendations. Whether those outreach groups can come to events or if can we get the information to the veterans to get them connected and they can be that third party initiator.

viii. Richards- Another piece would be the tracking piece when they go into these communities to help with claim process. After outreach is conducted, we need to track it. A follow up system is needed, and we need to know if these events and efforts were effective. Such as, did this person follow through with the claim? Just making sure we have a tracking measurement tool of these efforts.

ix. Padoan -the state will want to see that data and ensure the funds are going to a program that has good outcomes. I am going to make a comment on the document, and we can see where we want to include that.

x. Representative Kifowit- The Taskforce report should be broad; we don't need a lot of detail. We can certainly include any and all, but it does not have to be finite. When we give the report, the agencies will look at it and determine next steps from there. I don't want people to think we have to create the program, but we can provide a direction for the program.

xi. Padoan - Thank you, I wasn't sure how detailed we have to be. We can be more general rather than minor details achieve the same goal with a different direction. Great job but I wanted to clarify that a little.

xii. Padoan- thank you and thank you Nikita.

xiii. Richards- thank you, everyone.

xiv. Padoan- Any other suggestions or feedback? None heard.

xv. Padoan -VHA Primary Provider- shared draft via Webex. One recommendation reviewed. Any discussion questions, comments? None heard.

xvi. Padoan - I will turn over for the next group. Representative Kifowit you have been leading but sounds like you are driving. Do you have anything to share?

xvii. Representative Kifowit-I submitted our report last meeting, no changes from that.

xviii. Padoan - Any additions or anything?

xix. Representative Kifowit- I did not, I will pass it over to Will if he has any updates.

xx. Sutton- I don't have any changes, the program itself how it is written it is a great foundation that can always be changed later. It is a good foundation to use to start the process and growing it into something better.

xxi. Padoan -Any discussion on the Return to Illinois program we discussed last month? None heard.

4. New Business

a. Make changes to draft report (if needed)

b. Vote to approve draft

i. Padoan- I will make the changes to the draft we discussed.

ii. Kourtney Hopkins- I can consolidate and send out

iii. Padoan - next step to write out introduction and co-chair section. Will and I will write our message from Co-Chairs. Regarding the Executive Summary- is that copied from the original summary?

iv. Iwanicki- executive summary is a consolidation of each method and discussion on each issue we are trying to address.

v. Padoan - We have the introduction as well. Volunteer for Executive summary or Introduction?

vi. Representative Kifowit- We don't need both. That is not my volunteerism. Executive Summary would be fine. Or not all. Taskforces come in all different forms. We could put a cover sheet on it.

vii. Iwanicki- Doesn't seem like a significant report where it would warrant an executive summary.

viii. Sutton- I make a motion we don't worry about the Executive Summary

ix. Iwanicki- Second

- x. Padoan - Getting rid of intro and executive summary?
- xi. Iwanicki-just the Executive summary
- xii. Padoan –we need someone to write the introduction.
- xiii. Sutton- We can copy and paste the legislation
- xiv. Padoan - Referring to the reason why were formed
- xv. Iwanicki- I will help with that.
- xvi. Padoan - motion to exclude Executive Summary and keep the introduction. Do we want to take a vote?

Senator Wilcox	Absent
Representative Kifowit	Yes
Representative Swanson	Yes
Director Prince or designee	Absent
COL John Fulk	Absent
Christopher Spears	Absent
Nikita Richards	Yes
Kimyada Wellington	Yes
Michael Iwanicki	Yes
Michelle Ramlow	Absent
Summer Padoan	Yes
Eric Peterson	Yes
William Sutton	Yes
VACANT	
VACANT	

- xvii. Padoan - Motion passes, exclude Executive summary, and include Introduction.
- xviii. Iwanicki- I will help with that.
- xix. Padoan - Will and I will work together message from the Co-chairs.
- xx. Hopkins- deadline?
- xxi. Padoan - Mike, what is reasonable?
- xxii. Iwanicki- I can have that done in a few weeks, easy.
- xxiii. Padoan -we voted and approved on requesting the extension. At the same time, we have the goal of having the skeleton draft prepared by December 1st in case extension is not approved.

xxiv. Iwanicki- I can have it done by December 1st focusing on why we were created and what did we attempt to do.

xxv. Padoan -Formatting of legislation that formed us. Kourtney I would say we plan to have those two sections and the rest of them by November 28th or should we go the 21st.

xxvi. Padoan -we will pass it around internally for feedback and final vote at next meeting. Next Monday too soon to have that section done?

xxvii. Iwanicki- Good question, I will have to check my schedule. It is not that hard.

xxviii. Padoan -Tentatively plan to have those section by the 21st send to Kourtney to combine and send out to TF members.

5. Member Updates

a. Padoan - any other updates or points of discussion?

b. Richards- Awesome to see so many veteran advocates. Special congratulations to Representative Kifowit on being reelected.

c. Padoan - veto session coming up, aside from the Taskforce initiative, if any of you have members of legislative committees, the Military Veteran Assistance Act signed last year but there are some counties who are not taking the changes in stride. This something that can be discussed with legislative representatives and local organizations.

d. Eric Peterson- I deal with a lot of veterans who are in crisis. A lot of times I get them to the VA and the VA staff will say they will have someone contact me and give additional information to pass along to treatment provider and to this day nobody has ever called me back. Does this fit in anywhere here in this group? If a veteran is bringing in another veteran into the VA and they have helpful information to pass along, how do they do that if the VA doesn't accept the information?

e. Padoan - You are not asking for information, but you want to give information that would be pertinent to their treatment. Technically, depending on the situation, they can't even confirm that they know that veteran-that may be an issue with why they are not calling back. I don't know a good resolution for that. Is there is something the veteran can put on file that you are a third-party release?

f. Peterson- It has proven to be an obstacle. An Active NG veteran needed hep and had nowhere to go. The only place I could get him into was in Indiana. We don't want to be a revolving door. I would like to pass along information, but we never get that opportunity.

g. Richards-thank you bringing this to our attention, it happens more that we can understand.

h. Peterson- everyone is doing the best they can do within the limitations. I try to take the initiative. We are the ones responding and getting the veterans to the help we need. We have trust established and when we get them to the VA, we have information we need to pass it along. The veteran on their own may not share that information. Five days later the veteran is released and back where they were. I

would really like to keep the veterans in Illinois and use VA services that are here in Illinois. I wanted to bring this up or if there is a way to bring this into the TF.

i. Padoan - Sounds like it would have fit with the Suicide Prevention Taskforce. I have a couple of thoughts- the VA up here in north Chicago takes active duty and active NG/Reservists. If they are within a certain distance, they could consider coming up here? You could also check with your local facilities and look into establishing a MOU that you are there representing as an organization and help make sure that that cycle doesn't keep going? If the veteran signs off as you being their contact maybe there is something that can be developed between you and the facility? Any other ideas or comments on that?

j. Richards- what about drug court or veterans court process?

k. Peterson- I don't deal too much with veterans court.

l. Richards- consider mimicking their process. Pick their brains on how they developed those relationships as third party advocates and liaisons.

m. Peterson- we have done that locally with police departments and local hospitals. I do not have the same support at the VA.

n. Padoan - maybe reach out to the advocates of those facilities?

o. Padoan - Any other updates?

6. Adjournment

a. Richards-Motion to adjourn

b. Representative Kifowit- second

c. Meeting adjourned at 1:08pm

7. Next scheduled Meeting is December 12, 2022, 12:00pm-2:00pm

8. Resources provided in chat: