

**Testimony- 4/12/18: Agenda Item IIIB**

**Wendy Simons, Deputy Director of Health and Wellness- Nevada Department of Veterans Services**

- I want to complement Robert Kidd and the Perry Foundation for the wonderful collaboration and co-creation of Bravo Zulu as a component of NDVS' VIC (Veterans In Care) program. The BZ course offering, in this series, were provided at no cost to the participants and for those who completed all 4 in the series a certificate from Governor Sandoval was presented.
  - The VIC program has three elements: Information on benefits and services, education and training on the military experience for the aging veteran's caregiver, and recognition of our "hidden heroes".
  - As of this date, we have visited and honored 1546 veterans in 102 recognition ceremonies in facilities of all sizes.
- The educational component of VIC was developed as we went along with the VIC initiative. We saw how the care model in our own state veteran's home was different than in non-state veteran's homes where there was a lack of understanding of how the military experience affects aging veterans.
  - The community care staff often didn't even know if their charges were veterans, let alone understand how this might affect their care. Those who have participated in military culture training demonstrate a renewed appreciation for veteran residents and have a more personalized approach to interacting with them.
- Bravo Zulu continues on this year with Dr. Jennifer Carson facilitating and a condensing of the program into two full days in Reno (5/17&18) and two days in Las Vegas (5/7&8) with the coordinating support of the Nevada Geriatric Education Center of UNR's School of Medicine- Sanford Center for Aging.
- Bravo Zulu was also shared nationwide through a submission for the Lincoln Innovative Award program of National Association of State Directors of Veterans Services last November.
- Finally, I believe that any caregiver or care provider training program needs to be more than just mechanics of "how to" skills. As we have discovered through our Boulder City Veterans Home as well as the extensive outreach of VIC, learning about and understanding the life history or story of an individual who is receiving care is the foundation of quality communication, respect and dignity of serving our dependent population. That then sets the stage for the more technical skills training being successfully implemented. It keeps the person front and center of the clinical or ADL task.