



Transition Document - Tier 1

Headquarters

1011 Plum Street 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504

Website

www.dva.wa.gov

Director

John M. King
johnk@dva.wa.gov
360-725-2151

VISION

Washington State will be a national leader in providing cost effective, innovative services for veterans and their families in our Homes and communities.

MISSION

Serving Those Who Served

We are committed to serving veterans by:

- Advocating the preservation and enhancement of their rights and entitlements.
- Creating an environment that respects individual dignity and worth.
- Providing assistance in achieving a quality life.

GOALS

1. Improve the quality of care and services for veterans and their families.
2. Maximize resources to honor the nation's debt to veterans.
3. Review core processes to anticipate and influence future needs.
4. Become an employer of choice, by recruiting, training, and retaining the best talent, resulting in delivery of high quality services.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is divided into three divisions: 1) institutional service, 2) veteran services and 3) administrative services.

Institutional Services:

- Three State Veterans Homes are operated by WDVA. (Washington Soldiers Home, Orting- near Puyallup; Washington Veterans Home, Retsil- near Port Orchard; and Spokane Veterans Home)
- The State Veterans Homes have a combined bed capacity of 655 and provide care to skilled-level nursing and long-term care for honorably discharged veterans (and some spouses) who are, or may likely become disabled and medically indigent.
- Orting and Retsil also provide assisted living and domiciliary services.
- Each home uses an interdisciplinary team approach to providing nursing, clinic, rehabilitative therapy, therapeutic activity, and social services.
- By providing care in a State Veterans Home, 80% of the cost for these services is covered by federal and local revenues.

Veterans Services – Statewide Field Service Network:

Veterans Disability Services and Support

- Delivers critical services to the state's vulnerable veteran population living in both urban and rural areas.
- Network provides critical advocacy services and representation to ensure veterans and their family members are able to understand and navigate a complicated federal system. (The role of Federal Veterans' Administration (VA) is to adjudicate; it does not provide community claims support.)
- WDVA operates a statewide network that includes 28 sites with a total of 55 contracted professional, licensed war trauma counselors.
- The network includes over 125 contracted service officers to provide disability claims services.

Veterans' Community-Based Services

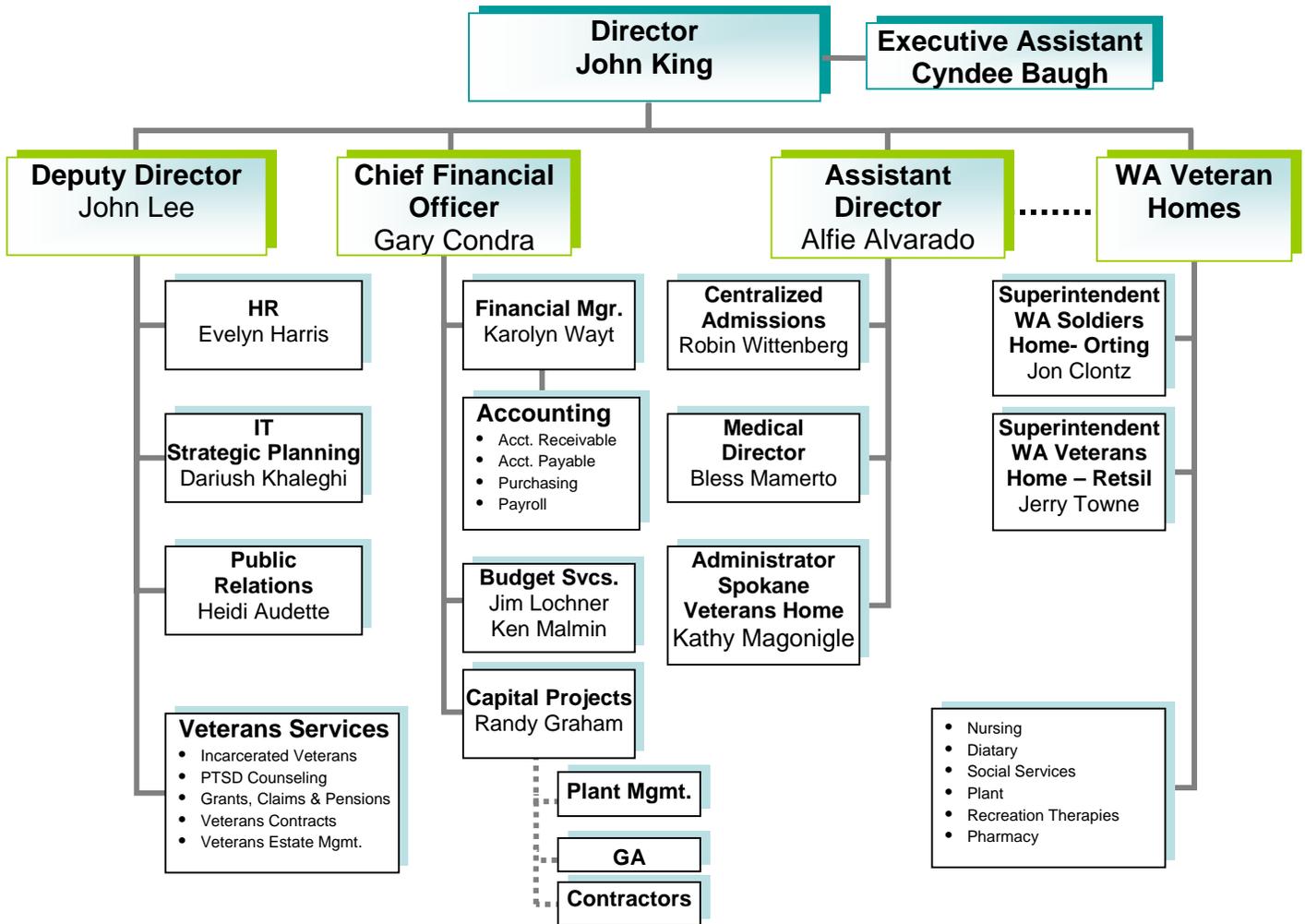
- Incorporates a statewide network that includes re-integration services for homeless and incarcerated veterans, outreach to minority and women veterans, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) treatment and readjustment for King County veterans.
- A centralized admissions team processes applications and assesses veterans (and some spouses) for admission to the State Veterans Homes.
- Veterans Estate Management Program provides fiduciary services for incompetent veterans.
- Outreach services to veterans in community nursing homes and those who are housebound.

Administrative Services:

- Legislative, veteran stakeholder, general public, and federal VA link for the department.
- Center of strategic and budget planning.
- Centralized support for all department products and services including financial, budget, accounting and payroll services, emergency preparedness, capital programs, human resources, public affairs, and quality assurance.
- Information technology support services including: network infrastructure, security, agency websites, hardware/software standards, portfolio management, project consulting, help desk services, contracts and development, and implementation and maintenance of priority information systems.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Department of Veterans Affairs Management Team



Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

At Large Chairman Richard Marin	American Ex-Prisoners of War Vacant	National Association for Black Veterans Raymond Miller	Washington Soldiers Home Rupert Markham
American Legion Vice Chairman William Schrier	Disabled American Veterans Michele Colpaert	Nationally Chartered Vet. Svc. Org. Vacant	Washington Veterans Home David Riggs
American GI Forum Frank Gavaldon	Marine Corps League Philip Ruhmshottel	Paralyzed Veterans of America Chuck Karczewski	
American Red Cross Mary Jo Cahill	Military Officers Association of America Frank Hensley	Veterans of Foreign Wars Dick Whipple	
At Large Dennis Primoli	Military Order of the Purple Heart Robert Harcum	Vietnam Veterans of America George Edmundson	

BUDGET BY SOURCE AND PROGRAM

State of Washington

2005-07 Agency Budget Levels by Program

Agency: 305 Department of Veterans Affairs

Dollars in Thousands

	03-05 Biennium	Carry Forward Level	Maintenance Level	Performance Level
Program: 010 Agency Administration				
FTEs-Annual Average	20.3	20.3	20.3	20.3
Fund - Appropriation Type				
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	3,097	3,142	3,191	3,191
042-1 Char/Ed/Penal/Reform/Institutions-State	11	10	10	10
Biennial Total All Funds - Program 010	3,108	3,152	3,201	3,201
Program: 020 Veterans Services				
FTEs-Annual Average	26.8	26.8	28.6	28.6
Fund - Appropriation Type				
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	5,178	5,212	5,257	5,427
001-2 General Fund - Basic Account-Federal	314	318	318	318
001-7 General Fund - Basic Account-Private/Local	1,683	1,692	2,106	2,106
XXX- New Account #1-Other				352
Biennial Total All Funds - Program 020	7,175	7,222	7,681	8,203
Program: 035 Institution Services				
FTEs-Annual Average	562.7	562.7	568.2	568.2
Fund - Appropriation Type				
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	13,518	13,728	14,480	14,480
001-2 General Fund - Basic Account-Federal	27,733	28,070	28,198	28,198
001-7 General Fund - Basic Account-Private/Local	28,150	27,768	27,895	27,895
Biennial Total All Funds - Program 035	69,401	69,566	70,573	70,573
All Programs				
Agency Annual Average FTEs	609.8	609.8	617.1	617.1
Agency Totals by Fund				
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	21,793	22,082	22,928	23,098
001-2 General Fund - Basic Account-Federal	28,047	28,388	28,516	28,516
001-7 General Fund - Basic Account-Private/Local	29,833	29,460	30,001	30,001
042-1 Char/Ed/Penal/Reform/Institutions-State	11	10	10	10
XXX-Z New Account #1-Other				352
Biennial Total All Funds	79,684	79,940	81,455	81,977

*Agency totals may slightly differ due to rounding.

WDVA – MAJOR ISSUES

1. Maintenance of existing bed capacities at the State Veterans Homes is vital to meet the future nursing care needs of a growing veteran population.

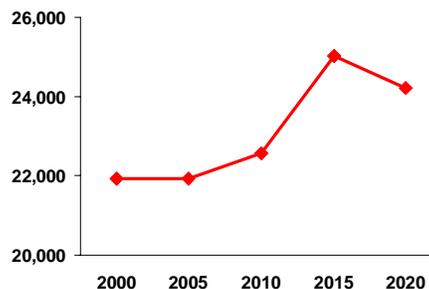
Background

- Demand for long-term care services by veterans in Washington State will increase dramatically over the next ten years.
- The number of veterans aged 65 to 84 will increase 30,000 (15%) and the number of veterans aged 85 and over will increase by 18,900 (222%) between 2000 and 2015. (Source: Federal VA Projections)
- There will be approximately 45,000 low-income veterans aged 65 and over in Washington State by 2015, an increase of 15% from 2000. National surveys and federal VA data reveal much poorer health conditions for low-income veterans as compared to the veteran population as a whole. Many have histories of homelessness, substance abuse and mental health diagnoses including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (Source: Federal VA Projections)
- WDVA provides long-term care services to a unique segment of the veteran population, with the ultimate goal of improving their quality of life. The population accessing services through a State Veterans Home represents only a fraction of the entire veteran population; however, **these are the most vulnerable and at-risk veterans in our state. Residents are 90% male and 95% are considered “medically indigent” or unable to pay for the cost of their care.**

Urgency

- Based on current use rates and projected population growth, it is estimated that **6,000 additional veterans will require long-term care services** over the next 10 years; approximately 25% of this new demand will come from low-income veteran households.

WA State Medically Indigent Veteran Population Age 65 and Over



Significance

- The two Western Washington homes (Orting and Retsil) have experienced bed-fill levels between 96% and 100% for the last 5 years. Community nursing homes experienced 83 – 87% fill levels.
- As certified Medicaid long-term nursing care facilities, the State Veterans Homes fill an important gap in the federal VA long-term care system.
- The State Veterans Homes receive federal VA funding (currently approximately \$57 per person / per day) that allows for services such as in-house mental health services, full-service pharmacy, and drug and alcohol counseling that are not typically provided in a community nursing home. **The net cost to the State of Washington for providing Medicaid-eligible nursing care at a state Veterans Home continues to be less than the cost for providing comparable care in a community nursing home.** Specifically, for the 05-07 biennium, the daily cost to the state for a veteran at the Veterans Home in Retsil is projected to be \$5.37 per person / per day less than in a community facility. This holds true even though over 90% of State Veteran Home nursing residents are Medicaid-eligible, compared to an average of 65% (Medicaid days) for nursing homes throughout the state.

Key Players

- Governor, Legislature, WDVA, OFM, Department of Social and Health Services, Federal VA

Status and Timeline

- Ongoing

Additional Information Available:

- WDVA Strategic Plan - <http://www.dva.wa.gov/AgencyInfo/Vision%20Goals.htm>
- WDVA Master Plan - <http://www.dva.wa.gov/MasterPlan/MasterPlanUpdates.htm>

Staff Contact

- Lourdes E. “Alfie” Alvarado-Ramos, Assistant Director – alfie@dva.wa.gov – 360-725-2155

2. Invest in nursing care facilities at State Veterans Homes to replace existing buildings.

Background

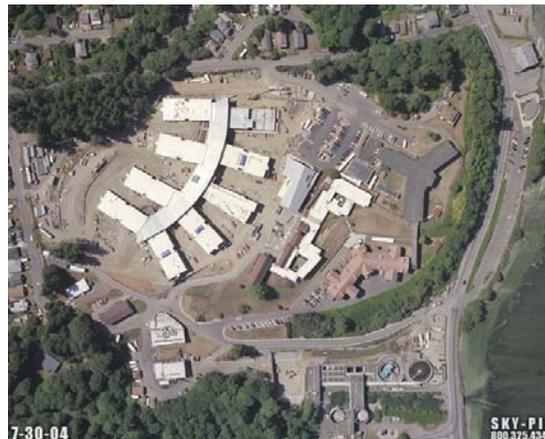
WDVA developed a Master Plan in 2000 to address the needs of our state's growing veteran population.

- Washington Veterans Home (Retsil): 2000 Master Plan outlined the need to replace existing nursing facilities and proposed the construction of a 240-bed replacement nursing facility at the Veterans Home, Retsil. In 2002 WDVA was awarded a \$32.5 million grant from the federal government representing a 65% match for the project. This project will be complete in January 2005.

Prior to Construction (June 2003)



July 2004



- Spokane Veterans Home: 2000 Master Plan outlined the need for a Veterans Home in Eastern Washington. The Spokane Veterans Home was purchased by WDVA in 2001. The facility included space for a kitchen, but a working kitchen had never been completed. Difficulties in maintaining food service contracts, led WDVA to request capital funds to complete the kitchen. The project was approved during the 2003 Legislative Session. On September 15, 2004, WDVA received conditional approval for the 65% federal match. Completion of the kitchen will increase resident quality of life.

Urgency

- Washington Soldiers Home (Orting): 2000 Master Plan identified the existing long-term care buildings as old and obsolete. The Master Plan recommended utilizing the facilities for a Transitional Residence Program to serve veterans in need of transitional programs to break the cycle of homelessness.

Significance

- Washington Soldiers Home (Orting): While the Transitional Residence proposal was endorsed by each Veteran Service Organization, it was met with opposition from several Pierce County Legislators and the Orting Community.
- With opposition for the Orting proposal, Washington's post 9-11 economic downturn, the 4% veteran population growth from 1990-2000, the aging of the veteran population, and the rising demand for long-term care beds by medically indigent veterans, WDVA revised the Master Plan.
- In 2004, WDVA recommended the replacement of the Orting nursing facility by 2011 with a new 120-bed nursing facility. The new facility would be constructed on higher ground to avoid the safety risk associated with potential lahar from Mt. Rainier, increasing the likelihood of receiving the 65% federal VA grant and obtaining development permits from local governments.
- The feasibility of this concept will be studied during the 05-07 biennium, including potential uses for remaining buildings at the Soldiers Home.

Key Players

- Governor, Legislature, WDVA, OFM, Federal VA

Status and Timeline

- Washington Veterans Home (Retsil) – Construction is scheduled to be complete in January 2005.
- Spokane – Summer of 2005
- Washington Soldiers Home (Orting) – Feasibility 2005-2007 – Potential Construction 2011

Additional Information Available: <http://www.dva.wa.gov/MasterPlan/MasterPlanUpdates.htm>

Staff Contact: Gary Condra, Chief Financial Officer – garyc@dva.wa.gov – 360-725-2202

3. Identification of preventive services and alternatives to nursing home care to meet the growing demand for long-term care of a rapidly aging veteran population.

Background

- Community-based services provide citizens with choices that maintain them at the highest level of independence and function, and at the lowest cost to the state.
- WDVA is moving toward coordinating access or providing veterans with the full spectrum of choices and services that will allow some veterans to remain in their homes or other community settings for as long as it is practical.

Urgency

- With the increasing number of older veterans, the demand for long-term care services will be greater than what the State Veterans Homes can provide. While some veterans will require the services delivered at a State Veterans Home, others could receive care through community based services.
- Upon completion of the new 240-bed nursing facility at Retsil, capacity will be available in older, existing buildings. While these older facilities are no longer suited for providing high-level nursing care, they do offer an appropriate location for short-term preventive programs for veterans in need. In addition to having available bed capacity, Retsil's location near Bremerton provides easy access to community health, social services, transportation and employment opportunities.
- WDVA will initiate a short-term rehabilitation program at the Retsil campus, directed at reintegrating homeless and disabled Vietnam veterans to the community as productive, healthy and independent members.
- By providing preventive services while these veterans are in their 50's and 60's, it will minimize or delay the need for more costly intervention services, including nursing home care, in later years. (The 2000 Statewide Master Plan estimated that a successful veterans transition program, at a Veterans Home, could result in an annual savings of at least \$4 million in public intervention costs.)

Significance

- WDVA's ability to obtain federal resources makes these options both practical and financially beneficial.
- WDVA will actively pursue federal VA funding for home-based care services for veterans with health care and daily activity assistance needs, but who desire, and can be most cost-effectively served, in their home.
- WDVA will work to enhance and expand other community-based preventative programs, including homeless and incarcerated veteran's assistance, employment training, mental health and PTSD counseling, and assistance to veterans in obtaining VA compensation and benefits.

Key Players:

WDVA, Federal VA, Department of Social and Health Services

Status and Timeline:

- 2005 - 2007

Additional Information Available:

- WDVA Strategic Plan – <http://www.dva.wa.gov/AgencyInfo/Vision%20Goals.htm>
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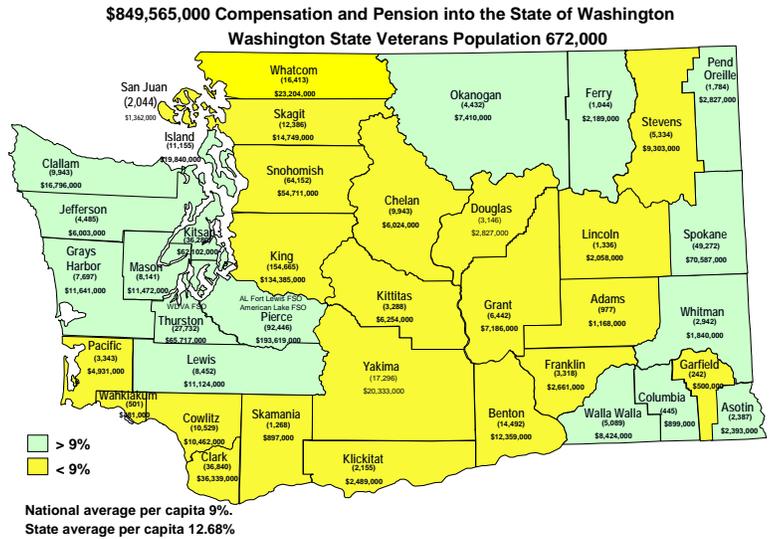
4. Improve the Economic Vitality of Veterans and their Families

Background

- In Washington State, 12.9% of the veteran population receives compensation or pension – nationwide the average is 9.5%. Veterans receive disability compensation or pension for injuries sustained while in the military or for some veterans who served during a period of war, based on their income level.
- As a result of strengthened Field Service efforts, Washington veterans receive over \$849 million in payments annually.

Urgency

- Compensation and pension are not only beneficial to the veteran and their family, they also have a positive economic impact on local communities. These dollars are typically spent locally, generating sales tax revenue for cities, counties and the state.
- If a conservative multiplier is applied to the funds received by Washington veterans, the impact on the economy is potentially a \$1.4 billion economic boost.



Significance

- Further development of the veterans Field Service Network continues to result in increases in the number of veterans receiving federal VA compensation and pension and the number of veterans who can remain financially self-sufficient.
- The veterans Field Service Network includes 22 employees and over 125 contractors and volunteers who diligently provide claims preparation services to veterans across the state.
- In federal fiscal year 03, the annual amount of compensation and pension received by veterans in Washington State grew from \$760 million to \$849 million.
- Washington is among the top five states for the percent of veterans in receipt of federal VA compensation or pension at 12.9%, while Texas leads the nation with 17%.
- WDVA's goal is to become the national leader with at least 17% of the veteran population receiving VA compensation and pension during the 2005-2007 biennium.

Key Players:

- WDVA, Veteran Service Organizations (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc), Individual Veteran Contractors, Veterans Community

Status and Timeline:

- Ongoing

Additional Information Available:

- WDVA Strategic Plan – <http://www.dva.wa.gov/AgencyInfo/Vision%20Goals.htm>
- WDVA Master Plan – <http://www.dva.wa.gov/MasterPlan/MasterPlanUpdates.htm>

Staff Contact:

- John Lee, Deputy Director – john@dva.wa.gov – 360-725-2152

5. Serving Washington's returning Guard and Reserve Soldiers.

Background

- Washington State has a large military presence, over three thousand National Guard and Reserve soldiers will return to Washington State from deployments to Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- Since 1984, WDVA has maintained a unique outpatient counseling program designed to provide confidential counseling services to men and women with war related re-adjustment and PTSD treatment needs. Services are provided through contracts with 28 specialized counselors, 9 of which are funded by King County funds.

Urgency

- A recently released survey of 1,300 soldiers of the 82nd Airborne 2nd Brigade, taken three months after serving one year in Iraq, demonstrated that 15% suffered PTSD symptoms. 11% of those serving in Afghanistan suffered PTSD symptoms.
- A comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be signed on November 5, 2004. Agencies include WDVA, the Washington National Guard (WANG), the Employment Security Department, the Veterans Health Administration, and the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Significance

- The MOU will focus on family support, financial assistance, health care, mental health services, employment, education, and claims services.
- While the Department of Defense and the federal VA are doing an admirable job in providing quality transition services, it is imperative that a network of services be available following active duty. The focus of this effort will be to maintain contact with our veterans following service in Iraq and Afghanistan, and be available when issues and challenges present themselves.
- WDVA and WANG will share data to ensure all Washington citizens receive a letter from the Governor, the Adjutant General, and the Director of Veterans Affairs thanking them for their service and encouraging them to seek their various veteran benefits and entitlements. It is anticipated that several follow up letters will be sent to each returnee to ensure every opportunity to access VA health care, claims assistance, employment services, and mental health services is provided.
- WDVA requested an increase of \$170,000 in the 2005-2007 budget to expand the PTSD counseling program to meet the higher volume of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Key Players

- WDVA, WA Military Department, Governor, OFM, Federal VA, Employment Security Department, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Status and Timeline:

- MOU will be signed Nov. 5.
- Letters will be sent as soldiers return.

Additional Information Available:

- WDVA PTSD Program - <http://www.dva.wa.gov/Benefits/PTSD.htm>

Staff Contact:

- John Lee, Deputy Director – john@dva.wa.gov – 360-725-2152