

## **A Kickoff meeting was held in Los Angeles on March 4, 2016 Local VA Leaders and Veteran Advocacy Groups**

A kickoff meeting was held in Los Angeles on March 4, 2016, with our local VA leaders from the Veterans Hospital Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), Veterans Advocacy Groups, and Community Stakeholders to discuss ways to improve communication and outcomes for Veterans who call LA home. The meeting was the first step towards establishing the Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) model which enables Veterans, Veteran Advocacy Groups and Community Stakeholders to have a voice in providing input, giving feedback, and identifying goals for improved service delivery for Veterans and their families.

The community meeting attendees were charged with forming a steering committee to re-convene within the next 30 days to determine the way ahead and who may want to lead the formation of a CVEB.

Several groups and individuals volunteered to participate on the steering committee to recommend a framework structure for the board, ways to improve participation and priorities that will promote the Veterans' voice. Once formed, the CVEB will develop a charter, finalize the board membership and focus on several items; employment, education, healthcare, community engagement, caregiver support, mental health, homelessness, housing, and transportation, to name a few.

The steering committee members include:

Nathan Graeser, USC Collaborative  
graeser@usc.edu

Ernest Cowell, LA Cemetery Support Foundation  
ernest.cowell@gmail.com

Jennifer Turchen, Brentwood Village Chamber of Commerce  
jennifer.bvcc@yahoo.com

Larry Frank, President LA Trade Tech  
franklb@lattc.edu

Kim Kovacs, UCLA/Executive Director Federal Relations  
kkovacs@support.ucla.edu

Steve Peck, President US Vets  
sjpeck@usvetsinc.org

Jon Sherin, Vets Advocacy  
jon@veteranadvocate.org

John Kraft, California Dept, of Veterans Affairs  
john.kraft@calvet.ca.gov

Jay Handle, Chair West LA Neighborhood Council  
sgrest@aol.com

Yesenia Monsour, Kaiser

yesenia.v.monsour@kp.org

Anthony Allman, Veteran, UCLA Graduate  
allman@pos-rep.com

Richard Valdez, DAV/Legislative Director  
richarddav12@aol.com

Antonio Chapa, County of LA  
achapa@mva.lacounty.gov

Larry Van Kuran, Kaiser  
vankuran@ix.netcom.com

Katherine Ku, MTO  
katherine.ku@mto.com

Blas Villalobos, Office of the LA Mayor  
mayor.veterans@lacity.org

Joanna Bomba, Home for Good  
jbomba@unitedwayla.org

The first CVEB meeting will be held on April 18, 2016, at the West LA Campus, 11301 Wilshire Blvd., Main Hospital Building, Room 1281, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. No RSVP required. We look forward to your feedback, recommendations, and engaging in an open dialogue about issues affecting Veterans and their families.

Additional information on the CVEB model and the locations of other boards can be found here: <http://www.va.gov/nace/myVA/index.asp>.