

1700
MRQ
8 Jun 2009

From: Chairman, Family Readiness Committee
To: Chairman, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), Board of Directors
(BOD)

Subj: FAMILY READINESS COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 17 MARCH 2009

Ref: (a) FRC Charter

1. Per the reference, the Family Readiness Committee (FRC) convened at 0932 on 17 March 2009 at the Clubs at Quantico, MCB Quantico, VA.

2. Members Present:

LtGen D. Hejlik, CG II MEF, Chair
Ms. T. McLaughlin, MARFORRES
Ms. K. Faison, MARFORCOM
Ms. E. Montalvo, MCRC
Mr. K. Lum, MARFORPAC
CAPT M. Steiner, Chaplain of the Marine Corps (Rep)
CAPT D. Gibson, Medical Officer of the Marine Corps (Rep)
Mrs. A. Conway, Spouse, CMC
Mrs. E. Kent, Spouse, SMMC
Ms. M. Regner, L.I.N.K.S. Subcommittee Chair
Ms. L. Crowe, KVN Subcommittee Chair (Rep)
Ms. C. Fox, III MEF Rep
Mr. T. Larsen, Ex Officio, Director, MR
Ms. K. Lewis, Ex Officio, Deputy Director, Marine and Family Programs
(Acting), MR
Ms. A. Jones, Ex Officio, Recorder, MR

Members Excused:

Spouse, ACMC
I MEF Rep
Senior Enlisted Representative, II MEF

Others present:

MajGen M. Krusa-Dossin, MCB Camp Butler
Col K. Enzor, MCLB Barstow
LtCol C. Kilhenny, MR Division
CDR B. Johnson, MCB Quantico
Maj J. Krause, MR Division
Maj J. Keppeler, MR Division
Maj M. Sumner, MR Division
Maj M. Mellon, HQ CMC
SgtMaj K. Wilson, MR Division
Mr. G. Gordon, MR Division
Mr. J. Clarke, MR Division
Ms. G. Reed, MR Division
Mr. M. Tharrington, MR Division
Mr. P. Vosti, MR Division
Mr. D. Turner, MR Division
Mr. D. Swanson, MR Division
Ms. C. Lindsay, MR Division
Ms. L. Gahagan, MR Division

Others present continued:

Ms. L. Bass, MR Division
Mr. M. Swords, MR Division
Ms. B. Jones, MR Division
Ms. A. Wheeler, MR Division
Ms. G. Colombaro, MR Division
Mr. C. Martinez, MR Division
Mr. V. Taylor, MR Division
Mr. Seth Johnson, MARFORCOM
Ms. L. Philipp, II MEF
Mr. K. Quiner, III MEF
Mr. C. Roberts, MCIWEST
Mr. G. Macias, MCRC
Ms. M. Rau, WWR
Ms. F. Seybold, MCAS Cherry Point
Mr. T. Loughlin, MCB Quantico
Mr. W. Shropshire, MCRD Parris Island
Ms. M. Trevino, MCRD San Diego
Ms. K. Gray, MCLB Barstow
Mr. B. Boxx, MCLB Barstow
Mr. S. McElvine, Henderson Hall
Mr. S. Pauli, MCB Camp Butler
Mr. M. Michener, MARSOC
Ms. M. Bradford, MCAS Miramar
Mr. J. Sollis, MCB Camp Lejeune
Dr. K. Holmes, MCB Camp Lejeune
Mr. J. Cowan, MCB Camp Lejeune
Ms. K. Catlin, MCAGCC 29 Palms
Ms. S. Della-Corte, MCB Camp Pendleton
Ms. J. Mohrlock, MCB Camp Pendleton
Ms. J. Murphy, MCB Quantico
Mr. S. Norton, 8th & I
Dr. G. Bowen, UNC - Chapel Hill
Ms. M. Yorick, Flying Bridge Technologies
Mr. M. Kelly, Flying Bridge Technologies
Ms. S. Milstead, MCRC CG spouse
Ms. S. Flynn, MCCDC CG spouse
Ms. S. Hejlik, II MEF CG spouse

3. Review of 1 October 2008 Meeting Minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

4. Review of Outstanding Action Items. Ms. Lewis reviewed the outstanding action items from the 1 October 2008 FRC meeting. Seven action items were complete and one action item, to address Respite Care at installations with Navy-provided daycare (raised by Mrs. Kent at last meeting), remained open. Mr. Larsen stated the Town Hall meeting for Okinawa was scheduled for the last week of April 2009. Following Okinawa, a Town Hall would be conducted in Iwakuni. The Chair encouraged Town Hall attendance.

ACTION: MR to address the outstanding action item (noted above) with Mrs. Kent.

5. FRC Charter Revision. Ms. Lewis briefed the recorded and proposed FRC charter revisions. The recorded charter change to expand FRC voting membership to include I and III MEF representatives was discussed. During the conduct of pre-briefs for the meeting, the Chair, Mrs. Conway and Mrs.

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Hejlik suggested expanding FRC voting membership further to include "Representative, II MEF" to complement representation of the operational forces. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed change to formally disestablish the KVN and L.I.N.K.S. Subcommittees while continuing to raise the voices of volunteers. MR had recently concluded the first of 3 planned "volunteer stand-downs" conducted as a mechanism to formally disestablish the Subcommittees and raise volunteers' concerns for FRC review/action. Additionally, Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Amos were meeting with volunteers to gather feedback to be used in the development of family readiness policy, guidance, and programs.

DECISION/ACTION: The FRC approved the recorded and proposed FRC charter changes and formal disestablishment of the KVN and L.I.N.K.S. Subcommittees. MR was to revise the FRC Charter as follows and then route for decision and signature of the MCCA BoD Chair: 1) Add I, II, and III MEF Representatives to FRC Voting membership; 2) Reflect 3 FRC meetings/year in advance of MCCA BOD meetings; and 3) Reflect "Deputy Director Marine and Family Programs" in FRC Ex Officio membership.

6. Unit and Family Readiness Program (UFRP) Funding and Execution. Mr. Swanson briefed. Per an action at the last FRC meeting, MR drafted guidance to clarify the funding process for Unit and Family Readiness Funds (U&FRF). MARADMIN 0011/09 (FRO Guidance) was released 7 January 2009 and detailed MR, Installation MCCA and unit/command responsibilities for U&FRF, i.e. the "\$25/Marine/year." An installation UFRP funding responsibilities matrix, developed per information in the MARADMIN, was also presented. Noted highlights during the brief were: 1) Commanders were responsible for overall resource use and management while MCCA Directors were to provide accounting; 2) U&FRF were NAF, as requested by commanders; and 3) U&FRF could be used for volunteer reimbursement.

a. Discussion ensued regarding dollar limits for volunteer reimbursements. It was noted that even though the MARADMIN did not specify dollar limits, volunteer reimbursements could not exceed budget. Additionally, U&FRF were apportioned and intended for MWR as well as family readiness activities. It was also noted that the MARADMIN and Finance & Accounting Standardization Guides outlined the time limits for reimbursements.

b. Mrs. Fox stated III MEF was experiencing increased op-tempo and asked if additional U&FRF could be provided in support. Mr. Larsen responded and indicated the need to determine the sufficiency of currently available U&FRF (\$5M across the Marine Corps) and ensure its full expenditure before considering an increase.

c. Mrs. Montalvo inquired about the funding process for MCRC U&FRF, as in the past MCRD San Diego and Parris Island had supported MCRC. Mr. Larsen and Ms. Lewis indicated that MR managed MCRC's U&FRF but would meet with Ms. Montalvo to clarify the process.

d. U&FRF execution summaries were presented by installation and by MEF. It was noted that several factors affected execution including, but not limited to, when units began to provide U&FRF, whether or not units provided U&FRF in excess of \$25/Service Member minimum, etc. Additionally, it was noted that U&FRF would not roll over; however, opportunity for exception should be addressed with the commander. Ms. Lewis indicated going forward MR

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would provide U&FRF execution by specific expense categories for greater FRC visibility.

ACTIONS: 1) MR to meet with Ms. Montalvo to clarify funding process for MCRC U&FRF. 2) MR to provide U&FRF Execution Summaries at future meetings as appropriate.

7. Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

a. Mr. Martinez briefed. In FY08, there was an increase in incidents across the Behavioral Health Spectrum. MR was reviewing Central Registry data and Family Advocacy Program (FAP) processes to ensure accurate capture and reporting of domestic violence and child abuse data. Records at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton were reviewed during January and February 2009. Deficiencies were found in case management, the Case Review Committee (CRC) process, and risk determination. A noted deficiency was lack of follow-up on deployment-deferred cases upon return of the Marine. To address CRC deficiencies, the Incident Determination Committee review process was being piloted at MCRD San Diego, MCAS Miramar, MCRD Parris Island and MCAS Beaufort. Under the IDC model, installation ownership of determining family maltreatment was achieved by replacing FAP clinicians with the installation executive officer in the decision making process. Evidence-based DoD definitions were provided in determining whether cases met standardized abuse criteria.

b. The effective FY09 Transitional Compensation rates were also briefed. It was noted that prior to 14 April 2008, families were only eligible for Transitional Compensation benefits if the service member was separated due to domestic violence. Currently, however, families could receive Transitional Compensation benefits if any history of domestic violence existed upon separation.

8. Heroes and Healthy Families. Mr. Martinez briefed. MR and Camp Lejeune representatives planned to engage in the 11 June 2009 Heroes and Healthy Families Conference at Camp Pendleton to assess Marine Corps-wide implementation. Ms. Della-Corte noted that past conferences were very successful; an additional September 2009 conference (specifically targeted for spouses) was planned contingent upon funding. Mr. Larsen noted Rep. Sanchez provided \$1M of Congressional funding in support of the conference. Also, Mr. Larsen strongly encouraged command representatives to attend the June 2009 conference as observers. Ms. Della-Corte indicated Camp Pendleton representatives planned to meet with any observers in the days following the conference to review planning and community support requirements for a successful event.

9. Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP)/Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP) Functionality Assessment (FA)

a. Ms. Bass provided an overview of the recommendations and implementation plan from the TAMP/FMEAP FA that was conducted January 2009. Discussion ensued regarding the FA finding that a stigma existed whereby separating Marines were considered "disloyal." SgtMaj Wilson agreed the stigma did exist and indicated reluctance on the part of some SNCOs to assist separating junior Marines as a contributing factor. Further, he stated SNCOs were the target audience to break-down the stigma.

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b. Members extensively discussed alternatives to the classroom for TAMP. Mrs. Kent suggested an "awareness" video that portrayed real-life scenarios Marines may encounter while transitioning to civilian life.

ACTIONS: 1) At 2009 E-9 Summit and SgtMaj Symposium, MR to address methods and role of SNCOs in break-down of stigma associated with separation from the Marine Corps. 2) MR to consider alternatives to the classroom for TAMP, ex. Awareness video. 3) At the next FRC meeting, MR to present POAM and IPR status on TAMP/FMEAP program improvements.

10. Financial Health Quick Poll

a. Ms. Bass briefed. The Financial Health Quick Poll was last administered in July 2008 and had more than 9K Active Duty Marine respondents. Fifteen percent of Enlisted and 5 percent of Officers were classified as being in financial distress and had borrowed money from family or friends, skipped payments, and/or received financial counseling. Mr. Larsen noted the market downturn occurred after survey administration so current financial distress was likely worse. Discussion ensued regarding assistance available from the Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP) and the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS). MajGen Krusa-Dossin stated the NMCRS in Okinawa had increased outlays of assistance. The PFMP, available at all installations, provided financial counseling services, offered financial planning courses, and underwent a functionality assessment (FA) in November 2008. The next Financial Health Quick Poll was planned for May 2009.

b. Recent policy changes to address economic hardship in the Housing Sector were briefed. Policy changes with potential impact to Marines and their families were in: the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008; the Joint Federal Travel Regulation; and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 expended the Housing Assistance Program (HAP) to Service members and DOD civilians. Through HAP, the federal government would buy the permanent residences of eligible personnel following unsuccessful efforts to rent or sell. Ms. Montalvo stated MP Division provided a representative to sit on the new HAP panel.

ACTION: Mrs. Regner asked how many families had used the \$300 Quick Assist loans available from the NMCRS. MR was to coordinate with NMCRS and provide the requested information.

11. Career Advancement Accounts (CAA). Ms. Bass briefed. The CAA Pilot Project began in January 2008 and allowed military spouses to acquire training and job skills in 10 portable career fields. Camp Pendleton and Hawaii participated in the pilot. CAAs allowed spouses to obtain financial assistance for expenses related to post-secondary education and training in 10 portable career fields. As of 2 February 2009, 4,661 CAAs (with an estimated dollar amount of over \$15.5M) had been awarded across all Services. It was noted that OSD could not break-down figures by branch of service. Due to the overwhelming success of and interest in the Pilot Project, OSD planned to launch an expanded Military Spouse CAA Program (MSCAAP) on 15 December 2008 through Military OneSource. Through the expanded MSCAAP program, the total available financial assistance was to be a lifetime benefit of \$6K (vice \$3K annually with a 2-year maximum) for all career fields resulting in licensure, certification, credentialing or degree. However, at the time of the meeting, DoD had not launched MSCAAP. It was noted that \$30M was

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available for MSCAAP, and MR received unofficial information that the program would launch in April 2009. MR continued to follow-up on program status.

12. Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer (SFeX). Ms. B. Jones briefed. SFeX was launched in July 2008 and allowed users to search a consolidated list of "military friendly" scholarships and financial aid opportunities. SFeX required no registration and was provided free of charge. A number of search options were available including scholarship name and type, branch of service, etc. At the time of the meeting, there were 163 open and active opportunities and the site received approximately 400 hits per month.

13. Marine Corps Suicide Prevention Program

a. Mr. Swords provided an update on the Suicide Prevention Program. The suicide rate had significantly increased in CY08. In particular, the CY08 Rate per 100K of 19.0 was noted, as it was the highest since CY03 and close to the national average for the same demographic group in the civilian sector. Members discussed deployments, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as contributing factors in the increased suicide rate. Combat deployment was not considered a significant factor because the rate was approximately the same among Marines that had not deployed. Also, TBI and PTSD were not overrepresented in suicide cases. It was noted no unique threat had been identified.

b. Prevention strategies focused on early identification of Marines in distress and action by leadership. New prevention initiatives for CY09 and the primary stressors associated with Marine suicides were reviewed. It was noted multiple stressors were often found during investigations, indicative of the cumulative effects of stress.

14. Tri-Med Working Group. Maj Keppeler briefed. At the time of the meeting, Healthcare Town Hall Meetings had been conducted at Camp Lejeune, Beaufort/Parris Island and 29 Palms. MR drafted a letter to the ACMC listing the 10 briefed healthcare concerns (gathered from Town Hall meetings) and recommendations for elevation to the appropriate level. A Town Hall meeting was planned for Camp Butler followed by a Tri-Med Working Group meeting (date TBD). Discussion ensued regarding the frequency TRICARE updated their provider directory. While TRICARE claimed to continually update their provider directory, MR routinely received feedback from families indicating many of the listed providers no longer participate with TRICARE.

15. Closure of Barstow Medical Clinic. Due to the impact of medical services on quality of life (QOL), family and installation readiness, Col Enzor, CO MCLB Barstow, briefed the FRC (for information/awareness) on the planned FY10 closure of the Barstow Clinic. The decision to close the clinic was based on assumptions in BRAC 05. Col Enzor contended that the assumptions were no longer valid, and therefore, clinic closure required reconsideration.

a. Two specific reasons for closure of the Barstow Clinic were: 1) Marines and their family members were not significantly represented among clinic users and 2) According to the Navy, there were adequate medical services within a 30-mile radius of Barstow. Barstow's geographic situation and population demographics were also reviewed. It was noted that Barstow's population had a high percentage of "geographic bachelors" and more dependants than active duty.

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b. Members discussed how the clinic benefited Marines and families aboard Barstow, and the availability of medical services was critical to QOL and installation readiness. A co-op with the Army and contracting for uniformed physicians were discussed as options to maintain medical services aboard the installation. Mr. Larsen stressed the need to continue to work the issue and consider all options, not simply accept the decision to close the clinic and move on.

ACTION: MR to address closure of the Barstow clinic with CL and I&L.

16. Family Support Policy Status. LtCol Kilhenny provided an update on the status of policy documents for U&FRP, MCFTB, School Liaison, EFMP, CYTP, Family Advocacy, and Personnel Sponsorship. MR family support program managers were focused on policy production while these programs continued to be resourced, staffed, and trained. One policy had been signed, MARADMINS have been issued giving guidance and the remaining draft policies were in various stages of completion/staffing with specific completion deadlines for each. Mr. Larsen thanked the family support program managers for their tremendous effort and hard work while drafting the policy documents and incorporating comments. MR continued to coordinate with the commands to ensure program standardization across the Marine Corps.

17. Professionalization of MCFTB Training Material. LtCol Kilhenny briefed. Version 1 of MCFTB training materials were released to MCFTB Trainers in June 2008 but lacked professionalization. MR planned to contract for professional development of Version 2 MCFTB training materials - standardized Trainer's Guides and Handbooks. At the time of the meeting, MR expected to submit the Statement of Work to Procurement by 1 May 2009 and obligate contractor funding by the end of FY09. Discussion ensued regarding current availability of training material, specifically L.I.N.K.S. for Parents. L.I.N.K.S. Trainers at each installation had access to all L.I.N.K.S. training material.

ACTION: At next meeting, MR to provide an update on the status of training materials. Specifically, clarify material availability and format (CD, hard copy, online, etc).

18. FRO Evaluation Survey. Maj Sumner briefed. Per an action at the last meeting, MR staffed the FRO Evaluation Survey to MARFORPAC, MARFORCOM, MARFORRES, MCIEAST, MCIWEST, I, II, III MEF commanders for feedback on: 1) The unit-level requirement; 2) Survey rating scale; and 3) Methodology for facilitation. Generally, feedback received was positive and all respondents concurred with the value of a FRO survey. However, commanders identified issues regarding survey content, rating scale, and facilitation. In response, MR was working to resubmit revised survey questions and rating scale for subsequent commander review. Also, MR planned to offer commanders alternative facilitation methods, not requiring use of the Mass Communication Tool.

ACTION: MR was to revise the FRO Evaluation Survey and complete subsequent commander staffing.

19. FRO Management. Maj Sumner provided an overview of the FRO Guidance MARADMIN (0011/09) that was published 7 January 2009. It was noted that the majority of the MARADMIN focused on defining the commander/FRO/MCCS relationship. Commanders and FROs were the "supported components" and MCCS was the "supporting component." Also, the MARADMIN highlighted the necessity

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of communication between unit commanders, major commands, installation commanders, and MR in the development of effective policy.

20. Voice of the Volunteer. Maj Sumner briefed. During the January 2009 EOS Spouse session, participants recognized the importance of maintaining connection with volunteers and garnering their feedback. In response, 3 phases of Volunteer Focus Group meetings were planned in order to elevate volunteer feedback for FRC awareness/action. Focus groups would be guided by standardized questions targeted to solicit feedback in specific categories. At the time of the meeting, Fundamentals of Program Implementation (Phase 1) focus group meetings were complete. Discussion ensued regarding Phase 1 feedback on volunteer roles, responsibilities, and training. Volunteers expressed concern over lack of communication and loss of personal touch with family members. Also, many volunteers were unclear of their roles and responsibilities in the command team. Members discussed the Commanders Course as a venue to further clarify/define the roles and responsibilities of each Command Team member. The remaining focus group meetings were to address Relational Experiences (April-June 2009) and the Feedback Process (August-September). MR planned to update the FRC following completion of each focus group phase.

ACTION: MR to provide a subsequent Voice of the Volunteer update on the recommendations of the Program Implementation discussions. MR will also brief results of the Relational Experiences (Phase 2) and Feedback Process (Phase 3) focus group meetings at subsequent FRC meetings to better help volunteers understand what they should do now. MR must also address a limitation on reimbursing mileage for volunteers.

21. EFMP Update

a. Maj Krause provided an overview of the EFMP enrollment and assignment processes, continuation on location policy, family support services, respite care reimbursement rates, and HQ/installation staffing. Noted highlights were: 1) HQMC EFMP assignment coordinators carefully review all PCS orders to ensure availability and accessibility of adequate medical care and educational support; 2) The continuation on location policy did not preclude Marines from deploying; and 3) Installation EFMP staffing was to meet the FA staffing model in order to effectively accommodate caseloads.

b. Autism support was extensively discussed. The ACMC (both current and former) was the Marine Corps advocate on resolving care issues for families of EFMs with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Current TRICARE coverage was insufficient for complete ASD medical services, particularly Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). Following ACMC direction, MR proposed establishment of 2 Autism Support Centers at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton. It was noted that providing medical services was not a responsibility of the Marine Corps. Regardless, MR developed a statement of work (SOW) for proposals to provide ASD support at the centers, including ABA. Issuance of the SOW was contingent upon funding and ACMC approval. Mr. Larsen noted the capability of the support centers would expand over time. Initially, the support centers would handle 50 cases per year.

22. Status of Marketing Plan and Organizational Communication Contracts. Maj Sumner briefed. MR contracted with J. Walter Thompson (JWT) to evaluate the needs of Marines and families in order to develop an effective marketing campaign and organizational communication system for UFRP and MCFTB. At the time of the meeting, Phase I and Phase II of the effort had recently

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concluded. It was noted that the web-based survey, used in Phase II, had 14,625 respondents. In the way ahead, JWT was to complete development of the marketing campaign and provide beta tests for TBD units. Members discussed the critical importance of two-way communication between MR and FROs. MR would monitor JWT's recommendations to ensure facilitation of two-way communication.

23. Family Readiness Assessment Tool (FRAT). LtCol Kilhenny provided an overview of the FRAT followed by a demonstration by Dr. Bowen. The FRAT was a web-based assessment of responses reflecting Marine and spouse perceptions of informal and formal family readiness support in their lives. Assessments required approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and provided respondents an individual profile for resiliency and support dimensions and "one-click" help (e-mail link to FRO) for any "red" or "yellow" dimensions. For commanders, the FRAT generated a collective report of responses used to provide an assessment of the unit's family readiness posture and identify areas of concern. It was noted that the FRAT was not intended to be used as: a scorecard to measure commander performance in regards to family readiness; an MCCS scorecard; or a readiness checklist. Also noted was that the FRAT Administrator Site was a very powerful database that could produce large summary profiles at higher levels including installation, MEF, and entire Marine Corps. Preliminary results from a limited FRAT rollout to II MEF in February-March 2009 were reviewed. At the time of the meeting, the rollout was ongoing. With FRC concurrence, MR planned full FRAT implementation.

DECISION: MR was to proceed with full implementation of the FRAT.

24. Closing Remarks. Mr. Larsen encouraged command and commander feedback in the way ahead. The Chair thanked all attendees for their participation and commended MR's effort in developing family support policy. With no further comments offered, the meeting adjourned at 1344.

/s/
LtGen D. Hejlik
Chairman

A. D. JONES
Recorder