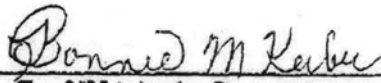


MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

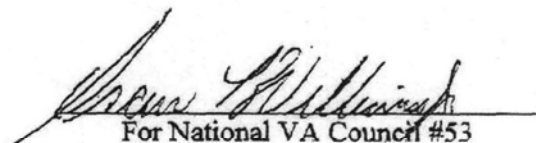
The following constitutes an Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, National Veterans Affairs Council #53 (NVAC) concerning VHA Mental Health Initiatives.

1. The parties agree to henceforth to refer to Mental Health Initiatives as the “Mental Health Access.”
2. A copy of the June 1, 2007 guidance memorandum from the VA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, which lists some options that the Department may use to enhance mental health care access to meet the needs of veterans and. their families, is attached to this MOU for informational purposes.
3. The parties understand that the general goals of the Mental Health Access Memorandum are to enhance mental health care access and capacity within VHA for veterans. The parties understand that the Department may meet these goals by, but not limited to, utilizing existing personnel, hiring additional personnel, and/or by using fee-basis service, as necessary.
4. No bargaining unit employees in mental health service will be downgraded or lose their jobs as a result of the use of fee basis mental health services in connection with the Mental Health Access Memorandum.
5. Appropriate local bargaining shall take place at individual facilities and may include substantive bargaining that does not conflict with this negotiated MOU.
6. This MOU shall be in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement, laws and regulations in affect at the signing of this MOU.
7. Bargaining unit employees in mental health services may volunteer to provide coverage of mental health access services at their duty station.
8. The appropriate management official shall provide a copy of this MOU to the Local Union President upon their receipt.



For VHA in the Department

2-7-08
Date



For National VA Council #53

02-07-08
Date