

Alex Arriaga is named Veterans' Services director for Worcester

By Julie Craven, Special to the Telegram & Gazette

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WORCESTER — Alex R. Arriaga, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a Purple Heart recipient, has been named director of Veterans' Services in the city Department of Health and Human Services, the city manager has announced.

“I am excited to begin this new opportunity which will allow me to continue pursuing my passion of helping fellow veterans and connecting them to the resources they need,” said Arriaga, who started in the new role Tuesday. “I look forward to collaborating with Commissioner of Health and Human Services Dr. Matilde Castiel as we continue to serve veterans in the City of Worcester.”

Arriaga previously served as employment and training manager for Veterans Inc. of Worcester, working in various roles in Worcester, Shrewsbury and Devens since 2014. He was named Employee of the Year in 2019.

Arriaga said he is eager to improve services for veterans.

“I am looking forward to being able to include diverse populations and provide outreach to leaders in each community. The military is a hidden gem no matter who you are. If you make the resolve to protect the nation, we all bleed green and will sacrifice our lives for the person next to us.”

Arriaga, who came to the United States at 14 after being raised in the Dominican Republic, said he didn't have a specific career objectives when he was young. Then he met a recruiter and felt the drive to join the military.

From 2001 to 2007, he was a combat engineer in the Army National Guard and served in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005 and 2006.

During his time serving, Arriaga suffered severe head injuries from missile eruption. He said it was a tough time for him.

After the injury, Arriaga said, he felt he had a lot left in him and found his calling serving others who have served in the military.

“Alex brings a wealth of personal and practical experience to this position through both his military service as well as his professional work in veterans services,” said Augustus. “His passion for his country, the veterans community and his city made Alex an ideal choice for this position.”

Arriaga received a bachelor’s degree from Anna Maria College and an associate degree in criminal justice from Quinsigamond Community College.