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*The Homeless Programs Office (HPO) newsletter contains news and information about VA's ongoing effort to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans.*



## **Executive Director's Message | Around HPO**

### **Health Update | Staff Spotlight | Fact of the Month**

*Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance.*

## **Message From Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office**



Practicing intentional gratitude and appreciation is always important, but this time of year really brings those reflections into sharper focus.

Every person deserves a safe and affordable home. Without it, every other aspect of their life suffers — their health, employment, and overall well-being.

I'm grateful for the team we have working to end Veteran homelessness and improve the lives of those who have served. And I'm truly appreciative of our collective efforts to help our Veterans find housing and

stay housed — today and every single day of the year.

**State of Women Veteran Homelessness**

## State of Women Veteran Homelessness

This past month, we looked at the State of Women Veteran homelessness by sharing a few stories from women who have served and how homelessness affected their lives.

Over the years, we've spotlighted Veterans [Kimberly Carrillo](#), [Natasha McCoy](#), and [Alex Dobson](#), and they illustrated just how homelessness can impact the lives of female Veterans.

Thankfully, these women are among the over 1 million Veterans and their family members whom VA has connected with permanent housing or with services that prevented them from falling into homelessness since 2010. This includes more than 25,000 female Veterans served in fiscal 2023 through VA's Homeless Programs.

But we recognize that VA needs to accelerate efforts to provide [housing solutions](#), [health care](#), and [community employment services](#) to address some of the unique challenges faced by nearly 2 million female Veterans — the fastest growing segment of the Veteran population — and their families.

[Read the full message.](#)

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## Around HPO

### [Infographic: American Indian and Alaska Native \(AI/AN\) Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)

AI/AN Veterans serve in the military at a higher rate per capita than any other race or ethnicity, with more than 140,000 Veterans identifying as AI/AN. Too often, they do not access or are unaware of the support available to end their homelessness. [Read our infographic](#) to learn what VA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Native American Programs are doing to combat this.



### [Veteran Finds Second Chance as VA Carpenter](#)

Before Army Veteran Daniel Martin found his calling as a mentor and carpenter, he struggled with homelessness and didn't know if he'd ever be given a second chance. With help from VA, Martin transformed his life. Now, he repairs drywall, hangs doors, and generally beautifies the hospital for patients, staff, and visitors. [Read his story.](#)

### [USICH Elects HHS and USDA Secretaries as New Leaders of Federal Homelessness Strategy](#)

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) harnesses the collective power of 19 federal agencies that coordinate federal homelessness strategy and support state and local efforts to prevent and end homelessness.



Recently, USICH elected two members of the White House Cabinet to lead federal homelessness strategy: Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra and Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack. [Read more.](#)

Photo credit: VA/Robert Turtill



### [HUD Releases \\$50 Million to Address Youth Homelessness and Improve Housing Placements for People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

HUD recently announced new resources to support their efforts to address homelessness, including among youth, people in unsheltered settings, and people in rural areas. Included in those resources: a technical assistance strategy to assist 62 Continuum of Care communities and 139 Public Housing Authorities to address rural and unsheltered homelessness. [Read the press release.](#)

### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Improving Access and Outcomes for Women Veterans](#)

On this month's *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast, we speak with Lourdes Tiglaio, the director of VA's Center for Women Veterans, and Tracy Emmanuel, the deputy director for the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing Program to better understand homelessness among women Veterans. Our guests talk about the unique challenges and barriers that homeless women Veterans face when accessing services and what VA is doing about it. [Listen to the episode.](#)

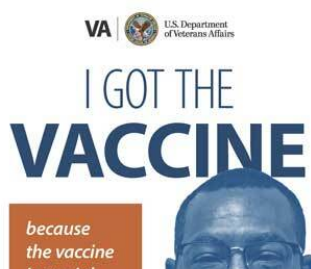


### [Bonus Podcast Episode: A Fireside Chat with Greater Los Angeles on VA's One Team Approach](#)

As part of VA's 2023 Homelessness Goals, VA has adopted a One Team Approach to enhance how housing and supportive services are delivered to homeless and at-risk Veterans. In this virtual interview, host Doug Tetrault from the Technical Assistance Collaborative talks with John Kuhn, deputy medical center director, and Sally Hammitt, chief of community engagement and reintegration service at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System on how Los Angeles is implementing the One Team Approach locally. [Listen to the episode.](#)

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## Health Update



Fall is well underway, and with it, a host of respiratory viruses that increasingly spread as we gather indoors with family and friends. The CDC is reminding the public to take precautions against these airborne illnesses, including respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). People infected with RSV [usually show symptoms](#) (runny nose, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, fever)



(runny nose, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, fever) within four to six days after getting infected. RSV can also cause more severe infections such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia, especially among infants and the elderly.

This year, the CDC has recommended multiple, new immunizations to protect those most at risk of getting very sick with RSV: infants, toddlers, and [adults 60 years and older](#).

[Call your local VA medical center to see if the RSV vaccine is available to you.](#)

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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Rhonda Barnes-Bell

In her role as a vocational development specialist, Rhonda Barnes-Bell helps connect Veterans to employment opportunities by sharing job leads, scouting out job fairs, and helping them improve their computer skills through Tech for Troops. She believes that housing and employment go hand in hand, and by helping Veterans find a job, she's also helping them stay housed.



[Learn more about Barnes-Bell's role](#) as well as what inspires her to continue the work she does.

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## HPO Fact of the Month



From 2018 to 2022, total homelessness among women Veterans increased by nearly 7%, an uptick that occurred even as the overall population of unsheltered Veterans dropped nearly 7%. It's a concerning trend given that VA estimates that females are on track to make up 18% of all U.S. Veterans by 2040.

Female Veterans not yet connected to VA should know that you and your family matter, and you deserve a safe place to call home. Visit the [VHA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about initiatives that support safe, stable housing for female Veterans.

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