

OCTOBER 2022

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



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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



Hollywood and Veteran homelessness don't intersect often. But recent headlines remind us of something we have known for a long time—no matter an individual's income level, housing status, or privilege, one threat remains universal: domestic abuse.

In the United States, about 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men report experiencing [intimate partner violence](#) (IPV)—a specific type of domestic violence that refers to physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as stalking, between intimate partners.

Tragically, research suggests that Veterans are twice as likely to experience IPV compared to the general population.

Like all victims, Veterans who experience IPV are impacted in ways that may be difficult to recognize. In addition to more visible injuries, victims of IPV are [more likely to report](#) having asthma, cardiovascular disease, central nervous system disorders, chronic pain syndromes, diabetes, difficulty sleeping, gastrointestinal disorders, along with a host of other negative mental health outcomes.

[Read Monica's full message.](#)

Around HPO



[New VA award to recognize Veteran-serving organizations for outstanding achievement](#)

VA's Veterans Experience Office (VEO) will be hosting an award that recognizes Veteran-serving organizations for outstanding achievement, including organizations supporting Veteran families, caregivers, and survivors. Starting November 1, 2022, visit [Challenge.gov](#) and click on Active Challenges for more information on the VEO Community Catalyst Award, or read the full announcement [here](#).

[Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Jobs, Jobs, Jobs](#)

On this month's episode of the *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast, we are joined by Dr. Carma Heitzmann, National Director for Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services with the VHA Homeless Program Office to learn more about how VA helps homeless and formerly homeless Veterans get jobs. [Listen to the full episode.](#)



[Seeking Veterans for the Midterm Elections](#)

The [Vet the Vote campaign](#) is seeking to recruit 100,000 Veterans and military family members to be poll workers in the 2022 midterms and other future elections. Participating Veterans can receive around \$150 per day serving as a county poll worker. If you're interested, [click here to learn more and sign up today.](#)

[Boston VA helps homeless Army Veteran](#)

Today, Army Veteran Cynthia Perkins runs a fledgling startup that creates customized journals to give people a meaningful space to write about and heal from their own pain—success she was able to find due in part to the support she received from VA in the form of housing, health care, and employment services after experiencing chronic pain and military sexual trauma. [Read the full story.](#)



[Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a serious yet preventable public health problem that may disproportionately affect Veterans. During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we remind Veterans that VA is here to help. Our [Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\)](#) and [Grant and Per Diem \(GPD\)](#) programs provide housing and other services for Veterans experiencing domestic violence and IPV. If you need assistance, talk to your local [VA Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program Coordinator](#) or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.



[From Pain and Addiction to Social Worker... With Help From VA](#)

After Veteran James Sapp separated from the Army in 2007, he was prescribed opioids to lessen the chronic pain he experienced as a result of his injuries—but he later discovered that the widely prescribed drugs could only “take the edge off,” and were also taking a devastating toll on his life. [Read his story of success](#) after reaching out to VA for substance use treatment, eventually becoming a social worker who helps other Veterans thrive.

HPO Health Update

While seasonal influenza (flu) viruses are detected year-round in the United States, flu viruses typically circulate during the fall and winter during what’s known as the flu season. The exact timing and duration of flu seasons varies, but flu activity often begins to increase in October. Since the start of the COVID pandemic, the timing and duration of flu activity has been less predictable.



As we approach flu season, [learn the similarities and differences between the flu and COVID-19](#) as well as ways to protect yourself and others. Learn about getting your [flu shot](#) or [COVID-19 vaccine](#) through VA.

HPO Staff Spotlight: Jeffrey Gluff, MLIS, AHIP

“I see the National Center as a giant think tank. It's an ever-evolving organization that comes up with innovative ways to combat Veteran homelessness, and the research priorities change every year.”

As a research coordinator for the [National Center on Homelessness among Veterans](#) (NCHAV), Jeffrey Gluff sees immense value in engaging directly with the Veterans who are impacted by the programs VA creates – and understands the

importance of raising awareness of the services available to ensure that as many Veterans can benefit from them as possible. He enjoys getting to solicit new ideas that serve the evolving priorities geared toward ending Veteran homelessness.

[Read Gluff's full spotlight](#) to learn more about the work he does for NCHAV.



HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know employment decreases the risk of suicide, provides an improved quality of life, and increases self-confidence and independence?

In support of this, VA offers services that increase the likelihood of employment success for Veterans who have experienced homelessness through [Homeless Veterans Community Employment Services \(HVCES\)](#). HVCES has deployed more than 150 Vocational Development Specialists who serve as Community Employment Coordinators (CECs), at most VA Medical Centers across the country.

To connect with a Community Employment Coordinator near you, [click here](#).

