

SEPTEMBER 2022

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

COVID-19 Response | 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



Before a recruit can become a United States Marine, they must overcome the Crucible: a 54-hour challenge featuring more than 45 miles of marching—all while managing food and sleep deprivation.

Our Navy's sailors are trained to navigate 8,000-ton ships across some of the world's most dangerous waters.

To graduate Ranger School, soldiers face 62 days—which often begin at 3:30 AM—of exercises designed to push their mental and physical limits in all potential combat environments.

Veterans have been trained to do hard things.

But sometimes, the hardest thing to do is ask for help.

We see this every day in our work to combat Veteran homelessness. Stigma, pride, or feelings of shame can prevent Veterans from accessing the services they have earned and deserve—even when they are in urgent need. Other Veterans avoid seeking help based on their beliefs that “others have it worse,” or “need the help more.”

This Suicide Prevention Month, please join me in urging all Veterans: [“Don’t Wait, Reach Out.”](#)

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

Around HPO

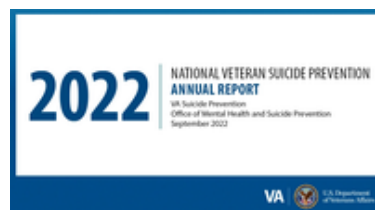


[Suicide Prevention Month: Don't Wait. Reach Out.](#)

Housing instability and homelessness increase the likelihood of suicide among Veterans. If you or a Veteran you know needs support—in the form of healthcare, housing, employment, stress management, or anything else—[get help today](#). Suicide is preventable. Together, we can help all Veterans access the services they need.

[2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#)

This week, VA released the [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), which shows that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006. For more key findings, [read the full press release](#).



[Glastonbury Woods Apartments Will Become Housing for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Community Solutions, a national nonprofit, has purchased Glastonbury Woods apartments to house more than 70 Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Watch as Jaha Martin, Social Worker at the Nashville VAHCS Homeless Programs, [discusses how the new housing will impact local Veterans](#).

[How GPD Has Evolved to Meet Veteran Needs](#)

For Veterans facing homelessness, accessing transitional housing with supportive services can be life-changing—and that is exactly what the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program



has been providing since 1994 through grants to nonprofit and government organizations. Learn more about [how GPD has evolved to meet Veterans' needs](#).



[Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Supporting Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma](#)

Ten percent of Veterans served by VA Homeless Programs in fiscal year 2021 had a documented history of military sexual trauma (MST) – and for women Veterans, that statistic jumps to 43%. On [this month's Ending Veteran Homelessness podcast](#), host Shawn Liu speaks with three experts in the field about how MST impacts survivors, how advocacy can support recovery, and what VA is doing to help.

[Battling Two Frontiers: Substance Use Epidemic During a Pandemic](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic created significant additional challenges in combatting the opioid epidemic – requiring increased awareness and creative approaches to identify, outreach, engage, and treat Veterans. For [National Recovery Month](#), we're sharing a podcast series featuring subject matter experts discussing the need to advance awareness and reduce the mortality associated with opioid use disorder. [Listen now](#).



HPO Health Update



[Long COVID](#), which occurs when people can have ongoing or new symptoms after having COVID-19 that do not go away or get worse over time, can affect anyone who has had COVID-19. If you have new or worsening symptoms 4-12 weeks after having COVID-19, you may be experiencing Long COVID.

The best ways to prevent getting sick are vaccination and masking. For more information and to learn what VA is doing about Long COVID, [read our latest fact sheet](#).

HPO Staff Spotlight: Karen Guthrie

“Trauma-informed care is a perspective that asks, ‘What happened to you?’ rather than a more traditional question, ‘What’s wrong with you?’”

Karen Guthrie has served as the director of the Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program since 2008, only a couple of years before the then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki would announce that ending Veteran homelessness would be a national priority. The expansion of the homeless programs and other

opportunities to collaborate both within VA and with community partners led to an impressive expansion of the services the team was able to provide.

As director of HCHV, Guthrie works to instill the importance of trauma-informed care within her team, finding it to be a beneficial way of relating to the Veterans they serve and making them feel seen beyond their diagnoses. By understanding how a person's life experiences have influenced their perspective, medical teams can provide more personalized care.



[Read Guthrie's full spotlight](#) to learn more about the benefits of trauma-informed care and how it benefits Veterans within the VA health system.

HPO Fact of the Month



Did you know [11% of Veterans ages 18–64 experienced food insecurity](#) between 2015 and 2019?

[Food insecurity](#) is when access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources – and for Veterans experiencing homelessness, the odds of experiencing food insecurity are higher. During [Hunger Action Month](#), learn how you or a Veteran you know can get assistance through [VA's Food and Nutrition Services](#).