

*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

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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



*Went down to see my V.A. man,  
He said, "Son, don't you understand"*

Do you recognize this song? If not by these lyrics, you may know it by the chorus:

*"Born in the U.S.A.  
I was born in the U.S.A"*

When Bruce Springsteen wrote "Born in the U.S.A." he did not intend for the song to become an anthem of American patriotism. Instead, the singer-songwriter was trying to tell a more painful story of the American experience.

In the song, we are introduced to a Vietnam Veteran returning home to a country largely unable to help him find the resources he needs to transition to civilian life — including his "V.A. man."

The song was released in 1984, two years before the first VA homeless program debuted.

While the Veteran depicted by Springsteen is fictional, I am confident that if he wrote the song today, his character would have a vastly different experience when visiting their local VA.

Instead of being met with deferral, the Veteran would receive the help they needed. They would be introduced to compassionate caseworkers committed to helping them find housing and employment. They would receive guidance on how to enroll in VA benefits and health care. No matter the Veteran's situation, they would not be turned away.

[Read the full message.](#)

## Around HPO

### [VA Awards \\$11.5 Million in First-of-Their-Kind Grants for Legal Services for Homeless Veterans](#)

As part of its national homeless prevention efforts, VA has awarded \$11.5 million in legal services grants for Veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. These first-of-their-kind funds, available through VA's new Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program, were awarded to 79 public or non-profit organizations that will help Veterans in several ways. [Read the press release.](#)



### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Figuring Out Why Veterans Return to Homelessness](#)

On this month's *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast, we speak with Dr. Jack Tsai and Dr. Thomas Byrne from VA's National Center on Homelessness among Veterans and Ken Mueller from the VHA Homeless Programs Office about returns to homelessness, including why it happens to formerly homeless Veterans and what VA is doing to help. [Listen to the episode.](#)

### [Using Street Outreach to Help Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Homeless Veterans experience many barriers to basic social services and may be hesitant to reach out for help, which is why it is especially important to meet them where they are—often on the streets or in encampments. [Learn how the VA Palo Alto Health Care System has been doing this for more than a decade,](#) serving as a model of what successful outreach can look like.

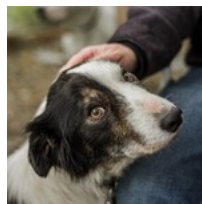


### [Healing Through Theater](#)

There is an innovative theater therapy program for Veteran residents and alumni of New Directions for Veterans (NDVets), a transitional housing program located on the West LA VA campus. Each year, Veterans from NDVets participate in the program, which is offered in conjunction with Imagination Workshop, a non-profit theater arts organization committed to using the unique power of the theater and the mentoring of theater arts professionals to provide life-changing artistic opportunities to those suffering from a broad spectrum of mental and emotional disorders. [Read the story.](#)

### [HPACT Is Fighting to Help Homeless Veterans Get Healthy and Housed](#)

Members of the Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT) have one very important thing in common: a powerful shared commitment to ending Veteran homelessness and ensuring this special population gets the comprehensive care they need and deserve. [Learn about the groundbreaking program,](#) which offers an integrative approach to treatment.



### [Feeding Pets of the Homeless Veteran Pet Support Program](#)

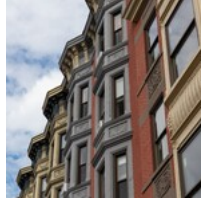
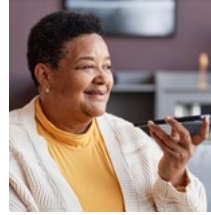
*VA does not endorse Feeding Pets of the Homeless and is not responsible for the content of the following linked website:*

Feeding Pets of the Homeless is the first national nonprofit providing [pet food and emergency veterinary care](#) to pets that belong to people experiencing homelessness. Their [Veteran Pet Support Program](#) helps Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program to access care for their pets, including wellness checks, vaccinations, spaying and neutering, flea and tick prevention.

heartworm prevention, and more. [Click here](#) to learn about eligibility.

### [VA San Diego Healthcare System's HUD-VASH Aftercare Team – Preventing Returns to Homelessness](#)

The VA San Diego Healthcare System has been identified as a site with an innovative practice in providing aftercare services for Veteran graduates of the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. [Read the white paper](#) to learn how the team increased regular communication and standardized their outreach and follow-up processes ensure ongoing Veteran success.



### [VHA Homeless Programs Office \(HPO\) Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2022 Fact Sheet](#)

HPO's overarching objective is to ensure every Veteran has permanent, sustainable housing with access to high-quality health care and other supportive services and that Veteran homelessness in the future is prevented whenever possible. Learn about the state of homelessness in FY 2022, how HPO is approaching preventing and ending Veteran homelessness, and what the various VHA homeless programs do on [our latest fact sheet](#).

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## Health Update

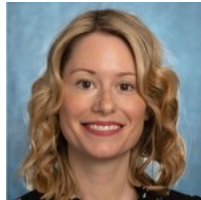
For more than 200 years, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans have played a vital role in defense of the United States as members of our military. VA is committed to delivering them – as well as all Veterans – the benefits and world-class health care they've earned and deserve.

In an effort to make health care more accessible to this community, VA is now [exempting eligible American Indian and Alaskan Native Americans from copayments](#) for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022.

To learn about eligibility and how to submit official Tribal documentation, call 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) or [visit the website](#).

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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Stacy Potts, MSW, LISW-S



As a Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Coordinator, Stacy Potts works with Veterans who are involved in the criminal justice system to help connect them with resources. After realizing that Veterans were entering and exiting the VA homeless programs very quickly, Potts proposed a program to verify that all Veterans would be contacted after leaving the system to ensure their needs were continuing to be met.

[Read her full spotlight](#) to learn about how this program, among others, help to prevent returns to homelessness for Veterans nationwide.

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## HPO Fact of the Month

Did you know housing Veterans can lead to [life-changing health, social, and socio-economic outcomes](#) for them and their families?

VA has a variety of homeless programs that provide support to landlords, housing developers, and nonprofit organizations who are ready and willing to house homeless Veterans. Whether you have immediate shelter, transitional housing, or permanent housing available, VA can help guide you to in supporting Veterans experiencing homelessness. [Learn more](#).

