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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**



Housing is not simply a place for a Veteran to call home. It isn't just a safe structure that provides peace of mind and a place to rest comfortably at night. It serves as a foundation for which Veterans can build their lives – much like the foundation of the building itself.

When Veterans have access to permanent housing, it allows them to focus on rebuilding their own personal foundations, helping them stand on their own.

Veterans who struggle to maintain permanent housing often find it challenging to make progress in their lives, but it's often just a lack of access to the right resources

and help from their communities that stand in their way. Stable housing is often an early milestone toward a Veteran securing steady employment, gaining access to health care, and building a life they are proud of.

With that in mind, we are eager to share the progress we have made toward our goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Last month, [VA announced that we are on pace to exceed our goal of housing more than 38,000 homeless Veterans in 2023](#), having housed 26,470 Veterans as of July 2023.

[Read the full message.](#)

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## Around HPO

### [VA On Track to House Over 38,000 Veterans in 2023, Awards \\$1B in Grants to Help Homeless and At-Risk Veterans](#)

VA is on pace to exceed its goal of housing 38,000 Veterans before the end of the year, having housed 26,470 Veterans as of July 2023. Additionally, VA has announced more than \$1 billion in grants to help homeless and at-risk Veterans through the Support Services for Veteran Families and Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem programs. [Read the press release.](#)



### [Don't Wait. Reach Out.](#)

Veterans are trained to endure challenging situations, but stigma can make it difficult to reach out for help. During Suicide Prevention Month, visit VA's [Don't Wait. Reach Out.](#) page to take a self-assessment to find support that is designed specifically for you, or simply explore the many resources available for specific Veteran needs. Resources are available and there is hope. Visit [www.va.gov/REACH](http://www.va.gov/REACH) for more information.

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net), or text **838255**.

### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Reducing the Risk for Suicide among Homeless Veterans](#)

This month, we are joined by Dr. Ryan Holliday, clinical research psychologist at the Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention and Kenny Bruemmer, program analyst for Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams, to learn about the intersections of homelessness and suicide risk. Our guests discuss why Veterans with a history of homelessness are at increased risk for suicide, how VA identifies Veterans who are at risk, and what VA is doing about it. [Listen to the episode.](#)





## [Infographic: Suicide Among Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Veterans experiencing homelessness have a higher risk of suicide compared to Veterans with no noted history of homelessness – and VA's top clinical priority is preventing suicide among all Veterans. [Read our infographic](#) to learn the drivers of suicide among homeless Veterans and what VA is doing to help.

## [USICH Seeking Input on Federal Homelessness Research Agenda](#)

USICH is seeking public input on the development of their proposed federal homelessness research agenda, which will determine federal priorities in homelessness research and create a national roadmap to build a stronger evidence base for what works to prevent and end homelessness. [Click here to view the proposed agenda and Request for Information \(RFI\)](#). After reviewing the agenda and RFI, [click here to submit comments no later than September 22](#).

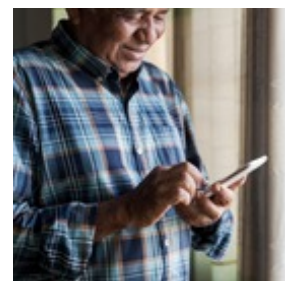


## [Five Tips on How to Engage with Homeless Veterans](#)

Every Veteran experiencing homelessness has a story to tell, and it often involves one or more traumas that led them to where they are now. If you encounter a Veteran living in an encampment, on the street or in a vehicle, you may feel compelled to help. [Read this article](#) for five tips on supporting and engaging with Veterans experiencing homelessness in a helpful, judgement-free manner.

## [Trauma-Informed Approach: Practical Implications for Teams Serving Veterans Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Join us on September 20 for a live webinar to explore the defining and piloting of a peer-led digital training and support intervention to increase the use of video telehealth by Veterans experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder. We'll discuss the development of the Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Justice-Involved Veterans (DBT-J) as a tailored intervention for Veterans with current or recent criminal justice involvement and its impact. [Register for the webinar](#).



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## **Health Update**



Flu season is here! Flu vaccines are available at no-cost to eligible Veterans at all VA medical centers and more than 65,000 in-network community retail pharmacies and urgent care walk-in locations. Get the flu shot to protect yourself,



your family, and the community from getting complications from the flu.

Flu shots are now available at community providers and all VA medical centers through April 2024. To find flu shots in the community or the nearest VA clinic, use the [VA Facility Locator](#) and enter your ZIP code.

Veterans should scan this [community provider billing information code](#) to a mobile device or print and bring this billing Information to the vaccine provider.

**Note:** Veterans should call ahead and confirm their location offers no-cost flu shots to Veterans through this VA benefit. To be eligible for a flu shot from a community provider, Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care and have received care from either a VA provider or a member of VA's Community Care Network (CCN) within the past 24 months. Ineligible Veterans receiving the flu shot at a community provider will be responsible for the cost of the vaccine.

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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Kenny Bruemmer

As a program analyst for HPO's Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT), Kenny Bruemmer has the opportunity to do a lot of project management – working on mobile medical units, suicide prevention initiatives, and opioid overdose prevention, to name a few.



His experiences working on these numerous initiatives throughout his 14-year VA career have changed his perspective on homelessness, teaching him that many Veterans require long-term support to help encourage them to care for themselves past getting housed.

[Read his full spotlight](#) to learn more about his role, his thoughts on how housing instability impacts suicide prevention efforts, and what many people get wrong about homelessness.

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## HPO Fact of the Month



Did you know that some homeless Veterans who move into permanent housing may find themselves facing homelessness again?

[Read our infographic](#) to learn the reasons returns to homelessness happen, which Veterans are most at risk, and our key takeaways.

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## VA Home