

JULY 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



*VETERANS AFFAIRS HAS PROGRAMS FOR VETS EXPERIENCING THIS STATUS, WHOSE NUMBER WAS REDUCED BY HALF FROM 2010 TO 2019*

If you responded, "What is homelessness?" while tuning into Jeopardy a few weeks ago, you answered the \$2,000 question correctly!

I owe the producers of the show a resounding "thank you." In just a few seconds, Jeopardy informed millions of Americans about VA's success over the past decade. As I watched the Jeopardy episode, I couldn't help but think about the similarities between the game and real life.

In the game of Jeopardy, there are multiple categories with answers ranging from commonly known to obscure information. As contestants respond to these prompts, they can either advance with large sums of money and prizes—or lose everything they earned with one wrong move.

In life, we face several categories—health, finances, employment—whose outcomes hinge on our ability to select, or sometimes guess, the “right” answer. Even one hiccup can set us back, effectively erasing any hard work and savings we have created.

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

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## Around HPO

### [2021 VHA Homeless Programs Office \(HPO\) Annual Report](#)

The VHA HPO annual report highlights each program’s accomplishments in providing case management and other services — housing, financial, physical and mental health, and employment — to prevent Veteran homelessness or ensure that it is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. [Read the full report.](#)



### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Episode #3: All About Outreach – Meeting Veterans Where They \(Literally\) Are](#)

Listen to the latest episode of the *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast with Eileen Devine, National Director for Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV), as she discusses how communities work together to coordinate housing services, how VA outreach staff develop trusting relationships with Veterans experiencing homelessness and shares some concrete tips on what to do if you meet a Veteran who needs help. The full episode is available [here](#).

### [New Number for Veterans Crisis Line](#)

There is a new, easy-to-remember way to reach trained responders at the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) – **Dial 988 then Press 1**. While the number is new, the support is the same. After activation, Veterans can still call the original number, 1-800-273-8255, and Press 1 to reach responders. Please share this information widely so Veterans and their loved ones can save the new number in case they need access to 24/7 support.



## [Research Brief: A Sector Wheel Approach to Understanding the Needs and Barriers to Services among Homeless-Experienced Veteran Families](#)

Veterans experiencing homelessness with their children remain a significant issue in the United States. Despite concerns about Veterans experiencing homelessness with their children, there are limited studies examining this issue. This research brief highlights three major themes that were identified across the sectors that pertained to the experiences of Veteran families experiencing homelessness. [Read the full brief.](#)



## [Veterans Re-Entry Search Service \(VRSS\) Video](#)

VRSS is a tool that alerts VA staff to Veterans in criminal justice populations so they can provide them with helpful services to support their re-entry. Learn about how the tool is used and find resources for Veterans [here](#).

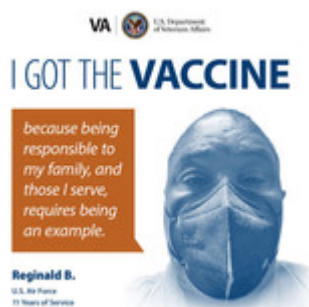
## [VA Provides Hope to Navy Veteran David Burris, Who Was Facing Homelessness](#)

When Veteran David Burris found himself unable to afford housing, VA stepped in to share the benefits available to him – equipping him with the tools and resources he needed to find stable housing and live independently. [Read his story.](#)



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## HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates



If you get COVID-19, it's important to be aware of the CDC guidance for quarantining or isolating. The website now has a tool that allows you to calculate your quarantine based on the date of your exposure. [Click here](#) to learn more and access the resource.

As always, staying up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect yourself and your family. [Learn about getting the COVID-19 vaccine through VA.](#)

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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Reaver D. Nelson, MSW, LISW-S

As a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) Program Coordinator, Reaver Nelson provides clinical supervision of social workers and rehabilitation technicians – and sometimes gets the opportunity to work directly with Veterans.

CRRCs are one-stop shops that provide Veterans with access to community-based services that start the process of addressing their homelessness. Nelson’s team is often the very first VA staff Veterans meet, and they work to link them to the right care that addresses each Veteran’s individual needs.



“When a Veteran walks into our CRRC for the first time filled with anxiety and worry, then is eventually able to get the help they need – food, school supplies for their kids, housing – it’s amazing,” Nelson says.

[Read Nelson’s full spotlight](#) to learn more about the role CRRCs play in providing comprehensive care to Veterans facing homelessness.

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## HPO Fact of the Month



Did you know VA’s specialized programs for homeless Veterans serve hundreds of thousands of homeless and at-risk Veterans each year?

Independently and in collaboration with federal and community partners, VA programs provide Veterans with housing solutions, employment opportunities, health care, justice- and reentry-related services and more. [Click here](#) to learn more.