

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VA-HUD Team Honored for Progress to End Veterans Homelessness**

***Cited for “Significant Contribution to the Nation”***

WASHINGTON – Employees from the Department of Veterans Affairs were members of a unique federal team that won the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Citizens Service Medal for the Administration’s efforts to end homelessness that resulted in a 12 percent reduction in homeless Veterans in 2011.

“These dedicated VA and HUD employees are committed to make a positive difference in the lives of our homeless Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “They have been implementing a strategy, based on prevention and rescue, that has been effective and moves us closer to our goal of eliminating homelessness among Veterans by 2015.”

The awards, known as the “Sammies,” are sponsored annually by the Partnership for Public Service to honor outstanding federal employees whose contributions are critical to the health, safety and well-being of Americans.

Leading the VA section of the team was Susan A. Angell, Ph.D., executive director of VA’s homeless Veterans initiative. Other VA team members were Lisa Pape, national director, Veterans health administration’s (VHA) homeless programs, Pete Dougherty, associate executive director of VA’s homeless Veteran initiative and Vincent Kane, national director VHA national center on homelessness. The HUD team was led by Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Johnston, and included Laure Rawson and Ann Oliva.

The two departments were cited for a program that combines HUD vouchers for Veterans to rent privately-owned housing, with VA case management services that include health care, mental health treatment, vocational assistance and job development. Since 2009, more than 47,000 Veterans have benefited from the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program.

Under another major program, VA awarded in July $100 million in grants to 151 community agencies across the nation to help about 42,000 at-risk Veterans keep their current housing.

According to the 2011 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, homelessness among Veterans declined by nearly 12 percent from 2010.

In 2009, Secretary Shinseki committed VA, which provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless Veterans, to end Veteran homelessness by 2015. The program puts new emphasis upon preventing homelessness by targeting at-risk Veterans for mental health care, substance abuse intervention and employment assistance.

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