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News Release

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VA Secretary Hits the Road to Highlight “United We Serve” Effort *Shinseki Encourages Veterans, Families to Help Their Communities*

WASHINGTON – Heeding President Obama’s call for Americans to commit themselves to meaningful, long-term service to their communities as part of the “United We Serve” campaign, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki spent part of his morning today transporting patients to the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center.

“We, who enjoy liberty’s blessings, will forever remain in debt of the men and women who served our nation in uniform,” Secretary Shinseki said. “Volunteering on their behalf is one way we can show our respect, regard and devotion for their service.”

He noted that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a long tradition of volunteering. Last year over 80,000 people volunteered more than 11 million hours to service to VA. They drove patients to medical appointments, welcomed returning combat Veterans home, helped homeless Veterans and donated time to maintain VA’s 128 national cemeteries.

Shinseki was joined by several members of VA’s senior leadership. Assistant Secretary L. Tammy Duckworth addressed a group of youth volunteers about “Knowing and Respecting Disabled Veterans” and helped escort a patient to a rehabilitation appointment. Assistant Secretaries John U. Sepulveda and Roger W. Baker escorted patients to their appointments at the D.C. VAMC. Assistant Secretary Jose D. Riojas and Acting Assistant Secretary Karen W. Pane served meals at a local D.C. shelter.

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United We Serve 2/2/2/2

“There is no better way to honor America’s heroes than to spend time every week giving back to those who have already given so much,” Shinseki said.

VA’s principals and other cabinet officials and senior federal leaders across the country highlighted the President’s summer service program, which encourages Americans to recommit themselves to improving their communities. The campaign runs through September 11, which will be National Day of Service and Remembrance.

The campaign, coordinated by the Corporation for National and Community Services, is encouraging Americans to develop their own service programs that benefit their communities. Toolkits for developing projects are available online at www.serve.gov

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