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Elks Pledge Four Million Dollars to End Veteran Homelessness

Commitment is Part of VA and Community Partnership

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is strengthening community and non-profit partnerships to better serve Veterans. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America (BPO Elks) today announced that it has committed \$4 million over a 4-year period to help end Veteran homelessness.

This partnership and pledge embodies the mission of MyVA, launched last year to transform VA by putting Veterans in control of how, when and where they wish to be served. In order to achieve transformation, the Department has been reaching out to community partners working to meet the needs of Veterans.

As a part of this partnership, the Elks will work with VHA staff on pilot programs in the cities of Washington, Chicago and New York City. In addition, the organization is calling on the group's 800,000 members across the country to support efforts to support homeless Veterans in their communities. The Elks have a strong tradition of service to VA. In this fiscal year alone, approximately 1,300 Elks members volunteered more than 117,000 hours of service at VA facilities nationwide.

"We're so excited about partnering with the Elks on this important issue impacting far too many Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "As we move closer to our goal of ending Veteran homelessness, partnerships like these will be critical to ensuring that all Veterans have access to safe and affordable housing."

"Our goal is to provide the tools and support necessary for homeless Veterans to transition successfully into healthier and more stable lives," said Mary Morgan, Director of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission. "Most Americans agree that Veteran homelessness should not exist, but few people know how they can help."

For more information about VA's homeless initiatives, visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/>. For more information about the Elks' service to Veterans, visit <http://www.elks.org/vets/>.

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