

MAY 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



At Williams College, Nathan Krissoff was captain of the swim team. He majored in political science, wrote poetry, and loved kayaking. Surely the successful student athlete would have his choice of career options upon graduating. Yet, Krissoff's post-college plans were determined early in his junior year—on September 11, 2001, to be exact.

Less than four months after he arrived in Iraq as an Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, Krissoff was killed in action when his Humvee drove over an improvised explosive device, or IED. At his memorial service, Captain Michael Dubrule spoke of his commitment to service, saying, "Nate died doing what he loved,

leading men in combat, saving lives, and making a difference in the lives of so many. No greater epitaph can be written. No greater sacrifice can be made.”

Nathan’s father, Bill Krissoff, was an orthopedic surgeon at the time of his son’s death. At age 60, Bill had nothing to prove by joining the military. Yet, Krissoff petitioned the U.S. Navy to allow him to serve in a Marine Corps medical battalion, deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, and save countless lives of service members.

I learned of the Krissoff family’s story this month—as soon as I did, I knew I wanted to share it with each of you. Their family, like so many American military families, represents the best our country has to offer. Such devout selflessness is rare in the world, but it is embedded in the DNA of every service member and Veteran.

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

Around HPO

[New Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast](#)

Do you want to learn more about what VA is doing to end Veteran homelessness? Listen and subscribe to our new monthly podcast, [Ending Veteran Homelessness](#), which will explore all the ways our country is working to ensure that every Veteran has a safe and stable place to call home. The podcast will feature guests from across VA and beyond to discuss timely topics related to the challenges faced by Veterans experiencing homelessness, and how those challenges are being addressed.



Veterans Finding Support Through VA

The VHA Homeless Programs proudly provide resources to Veterans nationwide who are experiencing homelessness or otherwise find themselves in need of essential services.

Read the success stories of Veterans who were able to get a new lease on life after receiving vital assistance from VA.

- [Rideshare program helps Veteran find news roads to employment](#)
- [A VA skeptic finds support through homeless program](#)
- [Buffalo HUD-VASH partners with assisted living facility to help older Veteran](#)

[Month of the Military Caregiver](#)

Providing quality care to America's Veterans doesn't end with the Veterans themselves. It extends to the family member or loved one who tends to the everyday needs of a disabled, chronically ill, or aging Veteran: the caregiver. This month, we honor and recognize the more than 5 million caregivers in the United States who care for over 2 million Veterans.



In 2010, VA established new services to support certain caregivers of eligible Veterans who served after September 11, 2001. These caregivers are now entitled to access to a toll-free caregiver support line (1-855-260-3274), expanded education and training on caring for Veterans at home, and other support services such as counseling and support groups. [Learn more about these services.](#)



[**Connecting Research to Practice Webinar Series**](#)

In collaboration with the VHA Employee Education System, VA's National Center on Homelessness among Veterans, and Homeless Programs Office, the Veterans Affairs Central Office (VACO) is offering a webinar series discussing how current research has implications for the field in planning, developing, or implementing services for Veterans with experience of homelessness or risk of homelessness. [Click here](#) to sign up for the webinar.

[**Redevelopment of VA Greater Los Angeles West LA Campus represents proof of concept for the nation as a way forward in tackling homelessness**](#)

Secretary Denis McDonough recently released [Master Plan 2022](#), which details the updated vision for a stable and supportive community for homeless and other at-risk Veterans and their families at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. This latest action is in keeping with President Biden's commitment to uphold VA's sacred obligations to Veterans, which he announced as part of his Unity Agenda.



Learn more about what the implementation of Master Plan 2022 includes and what has already been accomplished across the nation by [reading the full press release.](#)



[**Permanent Housing Placement National Challenge to House 38,000 Veterans in 2022**](#)

To support, revitalize, and streamline VA's commitment to end Veteran homelessness and ensure at-risk Veterans are safeguarded from this crisis, VA established a nationwide goal to house 38,000 homeless Veterans during calendar year 2022. Achieving this goal requires a collective effort by all VA homeless program providers.

To support communities in achieving this goal, VA is hosting a bi-weekly Office Hours Call Series. Recordings of these calls can be viewed [here](#).

[Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Our Veterans return from service with wounds we cannot always see – and VA is committed to providing our Veterans with the mental health services they deserve. For Mental Health Awareness Month, educate yourself on the [mental health services for Veterans](#) through VA:



- [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#)
 - 1-877-424-3838 (1-877-4AID-VET)
- [Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans \(DCHV\) Program](#)
 - A residential setting for 24/7 support that enables Veterans to live independent, fulfilling, and healthy lives
- [Substance Use Disorder Treatment Enhancement Initiative](#)
 - Provides substance use services in the community to aid homeless Veterans' recovery
- [Readjustment Counseling Service's Vet Center Programs](#)
 - Community-based locations and outreach activities that identify and match homeless Veterans with services
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#)
 - Call 1-800-273-8255 or text 838255 to receive confidential support 24/7/365
- [Make the Connection](#)
 - Inspiring stories of Veterans who have recovered from substance abuse, mental health, and homelessness
- [Health Care for Homeless Veterans \(HCHV\) Program](#)

HPO COVID-19 Response and Updates

VA  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
I GOT THE **VACCINE**



If you're planning a vacation this summer, it's important that you're aware of the [testing and vaccine requirements](#) before traveling to your destination.

Maintaining physical distance to prevent COVID-19 is often difficult on public transportation. People may not be able to keep a distance of 6 feet from others on airplanes, trains, or buses. Protect yourself from COVID-19 by staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines and by wearing a mask on public transportation.

As always, do not travel if you have COVID-19 symptoms, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.

To learn more about the CDC's recommendations for traveling safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, [click here](#).

HPO Staff Spotlight: Jodie Picciano-Swanson

Jodie Picciano-Swanson works for VA as a Network Homeless Coordinator. In this role, she supports eight VA medical center homeless programs to ensure that they can provide the best care possible for Veterans experiencing homelessness.



As someone her colleagues go to when they need help handling various issues and brainstorming creative solutions, Picciano-Swanson stays busy. She is skilled at planning ahead, which she demonstrates while working on the Social Work Service Emergency Disaster Planning Workgroup. After seeing firsthand how devastating extreme weather events and disasters can be for Veterans, Picciano-Swanson is even more driven to help Veterans facing homelessness in the aftermath of natural disasters.

To learn more about her inspiring work serving our nation's Veterans, [read the full spotlight.](#)

HPO Fact of the Month



Did you know VA has tools to help you know what to do before, during and after an emergency?

In advance of hurricane season, take time to plan what you should do in an emergency, familiarize yourself with your local emergency management organizations, or get involved in your community so you can better identify gaps and prioritize decisions during an emergency. Visit our [Be Ready page](#) to learn more.