The Homeless Programs Office newsletter contains news and information about Veteran homelessness.

In the Age of Coronavirus: July 2021

Some members of minority groups are less likely to receive mental health care. In 2015, 48% of those identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native reported mental illness within the past year, beyond people identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic/Latino. In contrast, 57% of those identifying as White and 63% of those identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander reported mental illness.

July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 people in the U.S. experience mental illness in a given year. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and that 30,000 Americans die by suicide each year. Suicide is a public health concern. It is the second leading cause of death among those ages 15 to 24, and the third leading cause of death among those ages 25 to 44.

Did you know?

The VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are working together to identify strategies that can be used to help Veterans experiencing homelessness. This effort is part of the always ongoing work to ensure that VA and HUD staff have the tools and resources they need to identify homeless Veterans and link them to the support they need. This work builds on the VA's long history of working with HUD to assist homeless Veterans and Veterans at risk of homelessness.

VA CARES Act

In addition to working with VA's community partners to help Veterans experiencing homelessness, VA also received CARES Act funding to support the Continuum of Care (CoC) System. This funding was critical in helping to support the CoC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in supporting Veterans who were impacted by the pandemic.

Many Americans, including Veterans, are at a higher risk of homelessness as temporary bans on evictions and other tenant and homeowner protections are lifted. This month, we are sharing critical information about the anticipated impact of the local and national eviction moratoria end housing instability.

The VA is working with Congress to ensure that the CoC System has the resources it needs to help Veterans experiencing homelessness and other at-risk groups. The VA is also working with Congress to ensure that the CARES Act funding is used effectively to support the CoC System and other efforts to help Veterans experiencing homelessness.

VA COVID-19 Response

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HPO Quick Links

Learn more about using the Non-filer Sign Up Tool. A new IRS tool now makes it easier for people experiencing homelessness to access stimulus checks. The tool addresses a major obstacle to accessing payments for people experiencing homelessness, as well as those in housing programs. The Non-filer Sign Up Tool strengthens the already robust efforts of the IRS to ensure that people experiencing homelessness receive the full impact of the Economic Impact Payments (EIPs), otherwise known as stimulus checks. Fortunately, it's not too late to help them claim their stimulus checks. For people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, don't worry. Visit the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance. To minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19, please follow recommendations by the CDC and the VA's COVID-19 Safety Plan and avoid large group gatherings. Every person is critical to the VA's COVID-19 response, and can play a role in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

HPO Fact of the Month

Dr. Robert Graziano is a postdoctoral fellow in clinical psychology at the Durham VA Health Care System in North Carolina. He led a study on the risk factors among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans for suicidal ideation, which is highly relevant to VA's needs for suicide awareness and prevention. The study found that Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are more likely to experience suicidal ideation, and that those with a history of combat exposure are at an even higher risk.

HPO Staff Spotlight: Morgan Fitzpatrick

Morgan Fitzpatrick, National Employment Manager at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH), will be the guest speaker and moderator of today's webinar. Ms. Fitzpatrick has been working closely with VA's Homeless Programs Office (HPO) on the VA's Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) program, and CBOCs play an important role in the continual delivery of efficient, coordinated, compassionate primary care. In addition to working with VA's community partners to help Veterans experiencing homelessness, Morgan helps to raise awareness and encourage new and returning Veterans to seek care at VA CBOCs.

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VA awards $418 million in grants to help Veterans and families at risk of homelessness.

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