

# 2023 VA Permanent Housing Conference

C4 Dallas Preventing Returns: Homelessness Prevention  
Targeting and Best Practices

# Homelessness Prevention

# Homelessness Prevention

The goal is to prevent **literal homelessness**. ***Homelessness Prevention is NOT the same as eviction prevention.***

- ***Meaning***: preventing loss of current housing (including doubled-up situations) and helping Veterans to avoid entry to emergency shelter (incl. Health Care for Homeless Veterans), Safe Haven, hotel with voucher, or transitional housing (incl. Grant and Per Diem), or avoid staying overnight in unsafe or other place not meant for human habitation.
- Many people who are evicted or lose current housing do not become literally homeless

# Homelessness Prevention and SSVF

- SSVF is most fundamentally a housing-focused crisis response program with responsibility for resolving crises.
- Veterans presenting for assistance are experiencing a housing crisis that inherently causes stress and anxiety that may cause and/or contribute to acute, chronic, or complex trauma
- More than ever, your efforts to reduce homelessness among Veterans, coupled with additional resources and flexibility, allow us to further “bend the curve” by engaging and effectively assisting Veterans experiencing a housing crisis
- Continuous learning and improvement are the hallmarks of SSVF – we value and rely on the expertise of Veterans and SSVF providers to continuously improve

# Rapid Resolution

Housing Problem Solving and Diversion

# Rapid Resolution Key Features

- Using **Housing Problem Solving** (HPS) approaches with the primary goal of avoiding homelessness (diversion) or ensuring it's as brief as possible for those recently entered into shelter, transitional housing, or who are unsheltered (rapid exit).
- Rapid Resolution strategies promote immediate same day access to services and/or safe accommodations and reduce delays in care even while pursuing longer term options.
- Rapid Resolution services are employed continually to support safety and an end to the housing crisis at hand. The level of services and options provided temporary financial assistance (TFA) can increase as needed, through a Progressive Engagement approach.
- Rapid Resolution is not a separate program and not a one-time conversation, but a set of approaches to be considered at all points in a homeless crisis to ensure rapid reconnections to available housing options.

# Housing Problem Solving Key Features

- HPS immediately and intentionally builds trust and rapport through an exploratory, non-judging stance of active listening and question asking designed to discover a Veteran's strengths and existing resources.
- Mediates concerns helping resolve conflicts between Veterans and their family, friends, and other support systems. This may result in temporary housing options while SSVF continues to support a permanent housing solution.
- Uses a strength-based exploratory stance for immediate crisis resolution and to expedite longer-term housing goals and pathways.
- Treats each Veteran individually by recognizing their potential past trauma and their current unique crisis.
- Help identify what longer term housing supports are appropriate and feasible as immediately as possible

# Targeting Homeless Prevention Assistance



# Rapid Resolution Strategies

- Connecting to safe temporary housing while looking for PH unit – avoid trauma and stress of shelter or streets
- Rental situations within social or family networks
- Identify those willing to have roommate or reconnect with partners to enter permanent housing situation
- Target connections to longer term subsidy resources or needs to be explored during the period of support
- Identify assets and opportunities to support housing goals that may not be apparent on traditional assessments
- Inform prioritization and case conferencing discussions to identify best, immediately available intervention(s) for Veteran family

# Targeting Homeless Prevention Assistance

The single ***best predictor*** (*the highest risk factor*) of becoming homeless is having been ***homeless previously***.

The ***ability to predict*** a potential participant's outcomes based on risk and protective factors is ***limited***.

Even if the ability to predict is limited, it's still more effective to use an ***empirically-based screening tool*** than to rely entirely on caseworker judgment.

# Targeting Homelessness Prevention

“Poor targeting leads to an inefficient strategy and inefficient strategies are rarely effective.”

**Efficiency:** Prevention activities that are well targeted, delivering effective activities to people who are very likely to become homeless unless they receive help.

**Effectiveness:** Prevention activities capable of stopping someone from becoming homeless.

Martha Burt, et al (2005): Strategies for Preventing Homelessness. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research

# Effective Service Strategies

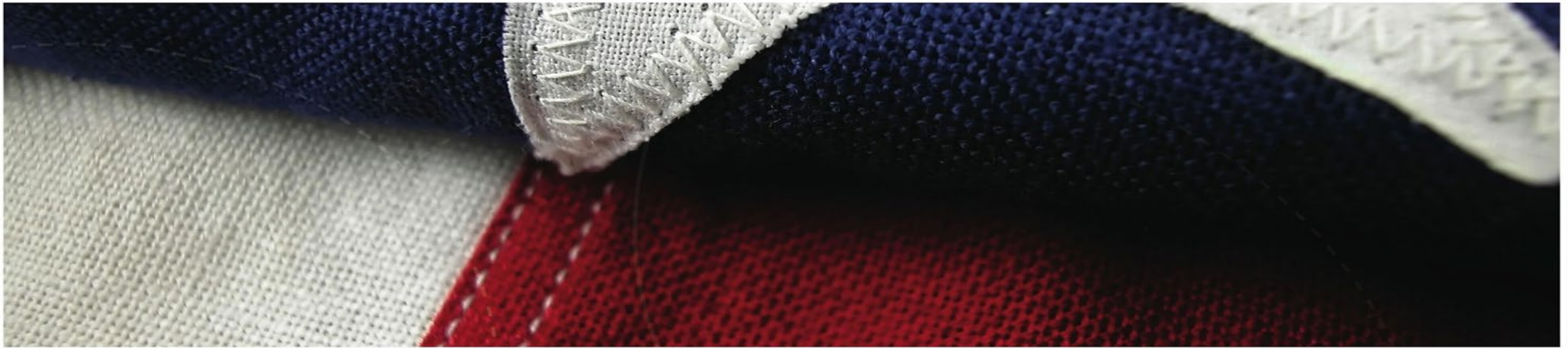
# Effective Service Strategies - Legal Aid

Legal Aid is not limited to eviction prevention, can be valuable in the following ways:

- Negotiating reasonable accommodations
- Mitigate against or delay evictions, including illegal evictions
- Fair Hearing representation for public benefits such as housing vouchers, SNAPs and/or city welfare resources
- Income maximization and money management
  - Address garnishments
  - Interpreting and understanding credit reports for advocacy purposes with landlords
  - Represent clients on old debt matters
- Legal services may be an appropriate intervention for Veterans eligible for HP Services while in HUD-VASH or other supportive housing programs

# Effective Service Strategies – Landlord Negotiation

- Practice has shown that often landlords are willing to negotiate
- Evictions can be very costly and often landlords would prefer to work things out with current tenants than proceed with evictions.
- Other negotiations could include:
  - Lease amendments for things like reasonable accommodations or roommates
  - Repayment plans for past rent
  - Additional time before move-out to find alternative housing for a household where eviction is inevitable



# Providing Whole Health Services for Homeless Veterans

**Stratton VAMC**  
**Albany, NY**



**VA** | Defining  
**HEALTH** | **EXCELLENCE**  
**CARE** | in the 21st Century



# The Pathway to Whole Health

Whole  
Health  
for  
Life 

[The Pathway to Whole Health](#)





# WHAT IS WHOLE HEALTH?

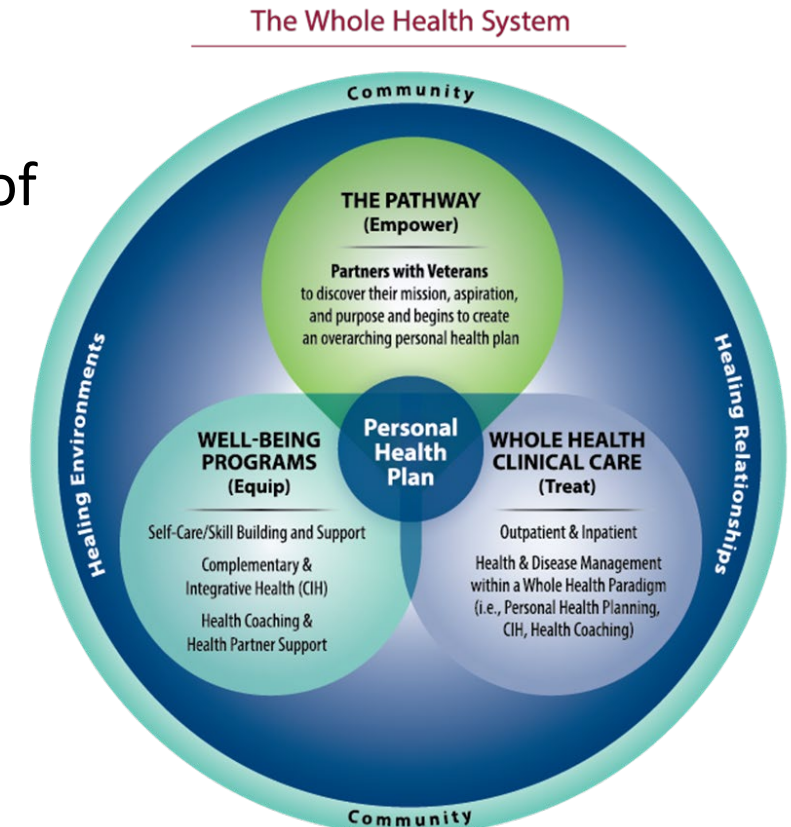
Whole Health is Patient Centered Care:

- **Personalized:** tailoring a person's healthcare to their individual characteristics, medical conditions, genes, circumstances, values, etc.
- **Proactive:** using strategies that strengthen the person's innate capacity for health and healing, such as mind-body approaches and nutritional strategies prior to surgery or chemotherapy.
- **Patient-driven:** health care that is based in and driven by what really matters to the person in their life, and aligns their health care and goals accordingly. This requires that we change the conversation and start from a different place.



# WHOLE HEALTH MODEL

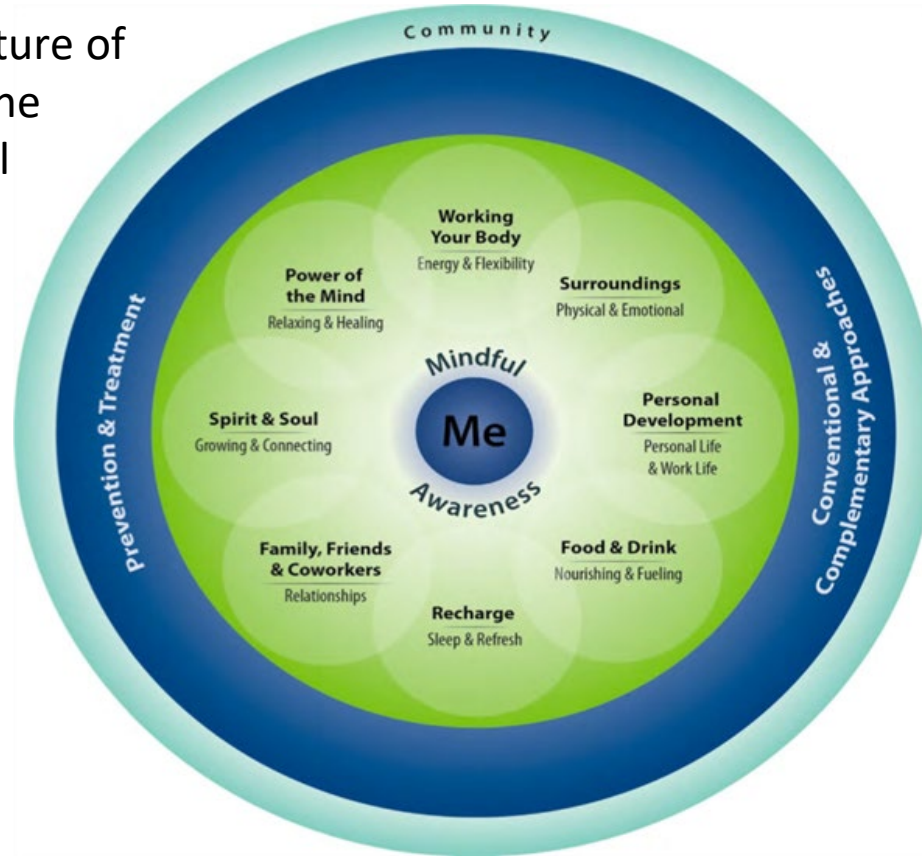
- Recognizes the Veteran as a whole person (not just their diagnosis)
- Examines the effects manifesting throughout the Veteran's body, mind, and spirit to enhance the individual's life and total well-being.
- The Veteran is an active partner at the center of all aspects of their health
- Team based approach to support the Veteran with meeting their goals
- Incorporates a range of conventional and complementary approaches





# CIRCLE OF HEALTH

This circle illustrates the big picture of Whole Health. All the areas in the circle are important, they are all interconnected.



ME: Represents what is important in your life.

Mindful awareness is noticing what is happening when it happens.

Green circles represent everyday actions

Blue ring is professional care and can include complementary approaches

The outer ring includes people, places and resources in your community

ALL HAVE INFLUENCE ON YOUR WELLBEING



# Personal Health Inventory

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Patient Centered Care and  
Cultural Transformation



## Personal Health Inventory

Use this circle to help you think about your whole health.

- All areas are important and connected.
- The body and mind have strong healing abilities.
- Improving one area can help other areas.
- The inner ring represents your values and aspirations. Your care focuses on you as a unique person.
- Mindful awareness is being tuned in and present.
- Your self-care and everyday choices make up the green circle.
- The next ring is professional care (tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, treatments, and counseling). This section includes complementary approaches like acupuncture and yoga.
- The outer ring includes the people and groups who make up your community.



Rate where you feel you are on the scales below from 1-5, with 1 being miserable and 5 being great.

Physical Well-Being				
1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great
Mental/Emotional Well-Being				
1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great
Life: How is it to live your day-to-day life?				
1	2	3	4	5
Miserable				Great

What do you live for? What matters to you? Why do you want to be healthy?

Write a few words to capture your thoughts:

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### Where You Are and Where You Would Like to Be

For each area below, consider "Where you are" and "Where you want to be". Write in a number between 1 (low) and 5 (high) that best represents where you are and where you want to be. The goal is not to be perfect in all areas. You do not need to be a "5" in any of the areas now, nor even wish to be a "5" in the future.

Area of Whole Health	Where I am Now (1-5)	Where I Want to Be (1-5)
<b>Working the Body:</b> "Energy and Flexibility" Moving and doing physical activities like wheeling, walking, dancing, gardening, sports, lifting weights, yoga, cycling, swimming, and working out in a gym.		
<b>Recharge:</b> "Sleep and Refresh" Getting enough rest, relaxation, and sleep.		
<b>Food and Drink:</b> "Nourish and Fuel" Eating healthy, balanced meals with plenty of fruits and vegetables each day. Drinking enough water and limiting sodas, sweetened drinks, and alcohol.		
<b>Personal Development:</b> "Personal life and Work life" Learning and growing. Developing abilities and talents. Balancing responsibilities where you live, volunteer, and work.		
<b>Family, Friends, and Co-Workers:</b> "Relationships" Feeling listened to and connected to people you love and care about. The quality of your communication with family, friends and people you work with.		
<b>Spirit and Soul:</b> "Growing and Connecting" Having a sense of purpose and meaning in your life. Feeling connected to something larger than yourself. Finding strength in difficult times.		
<b>Surroundings:</b> "Physical and Emotional" Feeling safe. Having comfortable, healthy spaces where you work and live. The quality of the lighting, color, air, and water. Decreasing unpleasant clutter, noises, and smells.		
<b>Power of the Mind:</b> "Relaxing and Healing" Tapping into the power of your mind to heal and cope. Using mind-body techniques like relaxation, breathing, or guided imagery.		
<b>Professional Care:</b> "Prevention and Clinical Care" Staying up to date on prevention and understanding your health concerns, care options, treatment plan, and their role in your health.		

#### Reflections

Now that you have thought about what matters to you in all of these areas, what is your vision of your best possible self? What would your life look like? What kind of activities would you be doing?

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Are there any areas you would like to work on? Where might you start?

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After completing the Personal Health Inventory, talk to a friend, a family member, your health coach, a peer, or someone on your healthcare team about areas you would like to explore further.

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## Why the switch to Whole Health?

- Increased levels of chronic disease
- Response to Opioid Crisis
- To improve the level of care
- Keep Veterans engaged in care
- Encourage Veterans to be proactive with their health





## Changes with Exceptional Care:

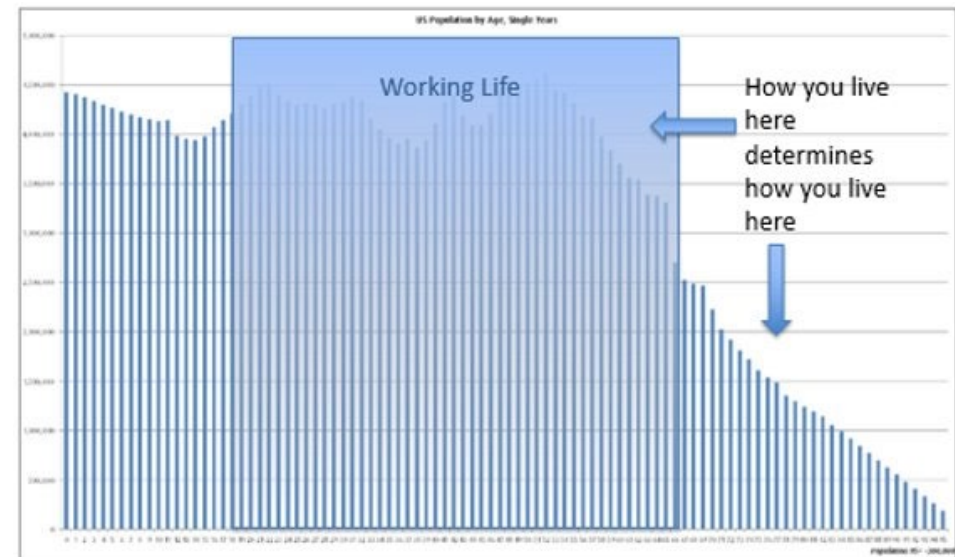
- Getting to know Veterans better
- Learning what matters most to Veterans
- Focusing on Veterans goals for their life and health
- Helping Veterans with self-care





## Whole Health benefits both the Veteran and VA Employees:

- Encourages Veterans to take ownership of their health-related goals
- Veterans can identify self-care priorities
- Incorporates Veterans' values and aspirations into goal setting and behavioral changes





## **Educating program staff on the benefits of the Whole Health Model**

- Staff incorporating Whole Health philosophies within their daily interactions with Veterans
- Instruction on how to connect Veterans to Whole Health programs
- Support with how to 'code' Whole Health conversation in CPRS
- Education on available complementary integrated healthcare services and how to access services





## How to Start a Conversation About Housing Utilizing a Whole Health Approach

1. Is housing an area you would like to make changes in?
2. What does “home” mean to you?
3. How would you describe your living situation?
4. Do you feel safe there? If not, what is unsafe?
5. If you could change things in your surroundings, what would they be?
6. Do you think your living situation will change in the future?
7. What specifically do you like about your living situation? Space, style, accessibility to resources etc.?
8. Do you like to live alone or do like a companion? (human or animal)



## **When Veteran identifies an interest in Whole Health:**

- Homeless Program staff enter Whole Health Consult in CPRS
- HCHV Whole Health Coach embedded in all program staff meetings to discuss referrals

## **Once Veterans are connected:**

- Complete a Personal Health Inventory
- Develop a Personal Health Plan, that includes SMART goals for behavioral outcomes relating to health and wellness
- Continued access to Whole Health staff for ongoing planning in support of their health goals



# IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE MEASURES

**GPD Permanent Housing FY22- 67.65%    FY23-90.63%**

**GPD Negative Exits    FY22 -23.53%    FY23-15.63%**

**Contract Permanent Housing FY22-82.61%    FY23-91.43%**

**Contract Negative Exits FY22- 8.16%    FY23-5.56%**

**HUD VASH Negative Exits FY22-12.5%    FY23- 2.2%**



# ALBANY HOMELESS WHOLE HEALTH PROGRAMING



## Engagement Efforts:

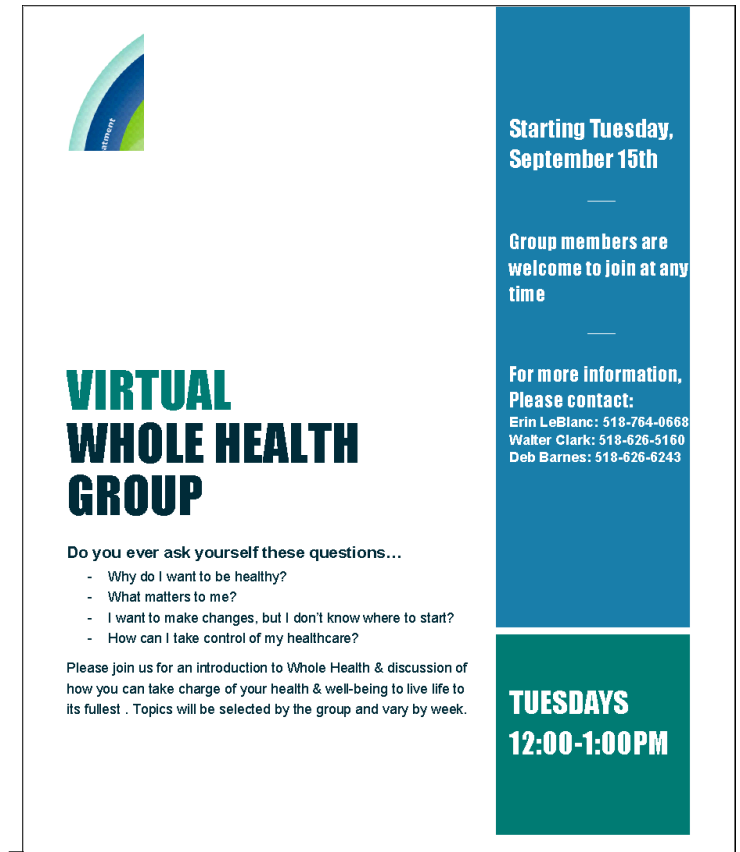
- Programming offered through variety of methods (in-person, virtually, telephone)
- Accommodations for Veteran preference (individual or group meetings)
- Outreach to Veterans at Vet Houses,
- Partnering with existing HCHV staff

## Current Offerings:

- Introduction to Whole Health
- Taking Charge of My Life and Health
- Whole Health Coaching
- Weekly Virtual Whole Health Group

**Future Expansion Opportunities :** Women's Whole Health Programming

Weekly Drop-In groups on Whole Health Topics



The flyer features a logo at the top left consisting of a stylized 'W' shape in shades of blue and green. The main title 'VIRTUAL WHOLE HEALTH GROUP' is prominently displayed in bold, dark blue and green text. Below the title, a list of questions is provided to gauge interest. Contact information for three staff members is listed on the right side. The bottom right corner features a dark green box with white text indicating the schedule: 'TUESDAYS 12:00-1:00PM'.

**Starting Tuesday, September 15th**

Group members are welcome to join at any time

**VIRTUAL WHOLE HEALTH GROUP**

Do you ever ask yourself these questions...

- Why do I want to be healthy?
- What matters to me?
- I want to make changes, but I don't know where to start?
- How can I take control of my healthcare?

Please join us for an introduction to Whole Health & discussion of how you can take charge of your health & well-being to live life to its fullest . Topics will be selected by the group and vary by week.

**For more information, Please contact:**  
Erin LeBlanc: 518-764-0668  
Walter Clark: 518-626-5160  
Deb Barnes: 518-626-6243

**TUESDAYS  
12:00-1:00PM**



## FEEDBACK FROM PROVIDERS

“I observed a Whole Health Group with Veterans from various service times. It was very impressive to see 25 year old Veterans connect with an 80 year old Veteran discussing health, finding meaning and purpose and how to eat healthier. Seeing the Veterans in the house connect on these topics encouraging each other to take care of themselves and to work on their goals was incredible.”

Director of a Veteran House



- Young veteran needing encouragement
  - Able to engage with veteran and help him go from homeless to home owner
- Veteran improving physical health
  - Used WH guide to help veteran change bad eating habits and activity level to overcome type 2 diabetes
- Veteran stabilizes his life
  - Through whole health goal setting veteran able to manage mental health challenges and remain housed for 4 years



## FOR HOMELESS PROGRAM EMPLOYEES

- Weekly Whole Health Check-In
- Incorporating Whole Health programming into staff strategic planning retreats
- Promotion of Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation trainings and offerings (Whole Health HUB)



Thank you for being here today!

Questions, Comments?

