



Washington DC VA Medical Center
Office of Public Affairs
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Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center Partners To Address Veteran Homelessness

WASHINGTON, DC – Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center hosted its 28th annual Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down, November 5, 2022, on the main medical center campus. The annual outreach event brought together VA health and benefits services and community partners to provide resources to unsheltered and at-risk Veterans in the District of Columbia and areas of Maryland and Virginia.

Winterhaven 2022 connected 246 men and 45 women Veterans with VA health care and immunizations, benefits and claims assistance, housing and unemployment counseling, education benefits, legal aid, substance abuse and rehabilitative programs, mental health and psychosocial services and resources. Veterans also received personal care packs, warm clothing, shoes and meals.

According to Medical Center Director Michael S. Heimall, the Winterhaven stand down is designed to provide immediate help to homeless Veterans. “Through partnerships with more than 30 community sponsors, and local, state and federal government agencies, 291 Veterans experiencing, or at-risk for homelessness in the DC area received immediate assistance. In addition to same-day health care, VA benefits and local resources, major outreach events like Winterhaven allow VA to provide individualized solutions to homeless Veterans and preventative assistance to those at-risk. This event is a big step toward reaching VA’s goal of eliminating Veteran homelessness.”

Navy Veteran Sheldon Chan attended the event for the first time to learn about employment opportunities. Veteran Chan recounts, “This was a one-stop shop with tons of services streamlined in a way to help Veterans find exactly what they need. Everyone was extremely helpful and professional, and it was a great opportunity for me to get connected.”

Representatives from the VA’s Veterans Benefits Administration, or VBA, were among the partners on hand to connect Veterans, like Chan, with care, services and resources to aid in eliminating homelessness.

Deputy Executive Director of Operations at the Veterans Benefits Administration’s Office of Human Capital Services, LaToya Prieur, said the Winterhaven stand down was the perfect opportunity to connect Veterans with gainful employment through jobs created by the inception of the PACT Act. “VBA Office of Human Capital Services has been tasked with leading the largest hiring initiative in VBA’s history; the positions we’re recruiting for have been created to efficiently process PACT Act related claims. At Winterhaven, we met individually with Veterans that were seeking employment, and educated them about the basic requirements needed to fill these roles. During the event, we were able to provide one-on-one assistance in an effort to help Veterans with resume guidance and in understanding the application process. Once they submit a resume, and we verify their qualifications, we can hire them under a direct authority and get them to work quickly.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary, Donald Remy, and Under Secretary for Health, Shereef Elnahal, both attended Winterhaven to personally meet with Veterans and thank VA employees and community partners for their efforts. The United States Office of Personnel Management Director, Kiran Ahuja, also attended and offered appreciation to volunteers for their time and dedication to ending Veteran homelessness. More than 152 volunteers helped to fit Veterans with coats, clothing and boots for the upcoming Winter months as well as hand out care packs full of personal hygiene items, breakfast and lunch. The joint efforts of all who were involved, sponsors, donors, and partners, made the 2022 Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down possible and impactful for men and women Veterans of all service eras.

Unsheltered Veterans in the District of Columbia and commuting areas of Maryland and Virginia may connect with the VA Health Care for Homeless Veterans team by calling 202-745-3012.

