

DC VA Medical Center Hosts Stand Down To Avert Homelessness Among Area Veterans

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WASHINGTON, DC – The Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center hosted its 29th Annual Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down, November 4, 2023, on the main medical campus. The annual outreach event brought together VA health care and benefits services along with community partners to provide wrap around services to unsheltered and at-risk Veterans in the District of Columbia and areas of Maryland and Virginia. Department of Veterans Affairs Officials actively volunteered, performing laborious tasks, serving warm meals, disseminating coats, shoes and large backpacks filled with personal care items.

The 2023 Stand Down successfully connected 282 Veterans (40 females and 242 males) to VA primary, preventative and specialty care to include immunizations, infectious disease screening, women's and mental health care and PACT Act toxic exposure screening. The VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) connected 68 Veterans to benefits and claims assistance. Federal and local government representatives and community organizations were also on hand to offer employment and housing assistance, substance abuse counseling and rehabilitation, legal assistance, warm clothing, boots and shoes, personal care items, barber services and more.

Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary Tanya Bradsher, who is also an Army Veteran, humbly served as a volunteer, preparing warm meals and freely engaging with fellow service members and participants. A number of VA leaders and team



members demonstrated their commitment to the mission of ending and averting homelessness among Veterans. To support the mission, there were 150 volunteers, 22 federal, state and local government and community organization representatives working together to care for and support Veteran participants.

One Navy Veteran, who served 20 years, offered positive feedback to event volunteers, comparing the number of giveaways, resources and services at this year's Winterhaven event to the joy of a milestone birthday celebration.

The VA's partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has successfully housed 318 Veterans since January 2023 through its VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program. The DC VA Medical Center's Health Care for Homeless Veterans team manages the HUD-VASH Program and works daily with area shelters, identifying unsheltered Veterans and preparing plans to transition them from homeless to housed.

All unused, donated items will be provided to Veterans in need. Unsheltered Veterans in the District of Columbia and commuting areas of Maryland and Virginia may connect with the DC VA Medical Center's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program by calling 202-745-3012 or visiting the VA Community Resource and Referral Center, 1500 Franklin Street, NE, Washington, DC.