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News Release

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Secretaries Shinseki and Donovan Host First Meeting of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness under the Obama Administration

Secretary Donovan Elected New Chair of the Council

HUD and VA announce \$75 million for HUD-VASH program to provide rental housing and support for homeless veterans

WASHINGTON – The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) met today for the first time under the Obama Administration. U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki chaired the meeting, at which U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan was elected rotating Chair for the upcoming year and U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis was elected Vice Chair. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Melody Barnes, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, attended the meeting.

The mission of the USICH is to coordinate the federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership with every level of government and the private sector to address homelessness in the nation.

“It is simply unacceptable for individuals, children, families, and our nation’s Veterans to be faced with homelessness in this country,” said President Obama. “I am confident that the Interagency Council on Homelessness, under Secretary Donovan’s leadership, will have a renewed focus on coordinating efforts across federal agencies and working closely with our state, local, community-based, and faith-based partners to address these serious issues.”

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VA-HUD Homeless Initiative 2/2/2

“Ending the continuing tragedy of homelessness demands thoughtful and focused leadership,” said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. “President Obama and I are committed to working through the USICH, the agencies it represents and our state, local and non-profit partners to build a thoughtful and compassionate response to this crisis. The bottom line is that through our combined efforts every man, woman and child in this nation should have access to a safe, affordable place to lay their head at night.”

Secretaries Donovan and Shinseki also announced the allocation of \$75 million to local public housing authorities across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam to provide permanent supportive housing and dedicated VA case managers for an estimated 10,000 homeless Veterans. This innovative joint initiative is called Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH). This funding will provide local public housing agencies with approximately 10,000 rental assistance vouchers specifically targeted to assist homeless Veterans in their area. Public housing authorities, that administer HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher Program, work closely with Department of Veteran Affairs medical centers to manage the program. In addition to the rental assistance, VA medical centers provide supportive services and case management to eligible homeless Veterans.

“It is shameful that after serving our nation so well, some of our Veterans leave their military life only to fall into homelessness,” said Donovan. “Working closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs, we’re able to offer a permanent home, along with critically needed supportive services, to the very people to whom we owe so much.”

"No one, especially Veterans who have faithfully served our country should become homeless," said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. "This council's work is critical to providing for those at risk and on the streets. This interagency partnership allows us to leverage our resources, programs, talent and experience to create viable solutions that will eliminate homelessness."

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VA-HUD Homeless Initiative 3/3/33

“With new service members returning home every day and the economy sputtering, we must step up our efforts to provide all Veterans with housing and the dignity that comes with it,” said Senator Murray, Chairman of the Senate Housing Appropriations Subcommittee. “For too long homeless Veterans have been forgotten heroes. HUD-VASH grants are making a real difference in ensuring that those who have sacrificed for our nation are not coming home to sleep on our streets.”

Under HUD-VASH, HUD will provide housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) which allows Veterans to rent privately owned housing. The VA will provide to eligible homeless Veterans clinical and supportive services through its health care system across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. VA addresses the needs of the more than 100,000 homeless Veterans who access VA health care annually.

The USICH is an interagency council made up of members from federal agencies, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Interior, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation, Corporation for National and Community Service, Social Security Administration, General Services Administration, and United States Postal Service.

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