VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 28, 2015

Counting Every Veteran on the Way to Ending Homelessness

VA Leaders Join Community Partners and Volunteers in Nation-wide Homeless Count

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald is taking a firsthand look at the issue of homelessness among Veterans by participating in this year's Point-in-Time (PIT) Count in Los Angeles, California. The PIT Count typically takes place in locations around the country during the month of January.

Secretary McDonald remains committed to the goal of eliminating Veteran homelessness. The January 2014 PIT Count revealed that 49,993 Veterans were homeless on a single night representing a 33-percent decline in homelessness among Veterans since 2010. In FY 2014 alone, through VA's various homeless programs, more than 72,000 Veterans and their family members were placed in permanent housing or prevented from becoming homeless.

"There is no question that the goal to end Veteran homelessness is within reach, and we remain laser-focused on it," said Secretary McDonald. "Ending Veteran homelessness in America is more than hitting a number, it's about helping communities put a system in place that can house every Veteran experiencing homelessness today and prevent it in the future. I am so heartened that over 440 mayors, governors, county executives and other local officials have joined us and are committed to ending Veteran homelessness in their communities. We will continue our work until all Veterans have a place to call home."

By estimating the number of homeless Veterans, the PIT Count gauges progress in achieving President Obama and VA's goal of ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Annual data from the PIT Count also assists VA staff and partner agencies in targeting homeless resources where they are needed most.

VA has a wide range of programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans, including health care, housing solutions, job training and education. Also since 2010 there has been nearly 43-percent reduction in unsheltered homeless Veterans.

As part of VA's continued commitment to ending Veteran homelessness, Secretary McDonald, has directed his senior VA leaders to take part in this year's count in cities across the United States and learn how the organizations they lead can continue to support VA's efforts to end Veteran homelessness. Twenty senior VA leaders will participate in PIT counts everywhere from New York to California to places in between.

The PIT Count is led by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) each year to estimate the number of Americans, including Veterans, who are homeless.

As a result of VA's work with HUD, as well as the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and other federal, state and local partners, significant progress has been made since VA's initiative to end Veteran homelessness began in 2010.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless should contact their local VA Medical Center and ask to speak to a homeless coordinator.

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