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News Release

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VA Recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month With Promotion of Use Your Voice Awareness Program to Urge Veterans to Speak Up About Mental Illness

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that, as part of its recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, it is promoting Use Your Voice, a national awareness program that encourages Veterans to seek mental health treatment if they need it.

The Use Your Voice program is designed to let not only Veterans, but all Americans know that reaching out for mental health information and support is just as important as talking to one's doctor about diet, blood pressure, joint pain and other health challenges.

"It's time to break down barriers and reverse the stigma of mental illness," said Dr. Poonam Alaigh, acting VA under secretary for Health. "We want Veterans to know there are effective options available right now and reaching out for help is a sign of strength, resilience and courage."

Individuals and organizations can make a difference and get involved by downloading, sharing, tweeting or posting a variety of content located at www.MakeTheConnection.net/UseYourVoice. Additionally, VA will hold a Facebook Live event about the Use Your Voice program at 1 p.m. (EST) May 4, which can be viewed and shared via the Make the Connection Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransMTC>.

While many Veterans do not experience mental health issues in their lifetime, it is critically important for those who do to know that support and treatment are available. By changing how people discuss mental health conditions and symptoms of mental illness, VA is making it easier for Veterans who need support to feel comfortable reaching out.

For more information on mental health treatment, Veterans' personal stories of recovery and a locator tool to find Veterans' resources across the country, visit VA's Make the Connection website at <http://www.MakeTheConnection.net/UseYourVoice>.

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