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Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

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New research affirms critical need for caregivers in Veteran care

WASHINGTON — New research published in the June 2019 edition of the journal *Health Affairs* shows the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation are working collectively to better integrate caregivers into a Veteran's health care treatment.

The report, titled "[Including Family Caregivers in Seriously Ill Veterans' Care: A Mixed-Methods Study](#)," was led by Duke University researchers and emphasizes caregiver inclusion identified in the [VA - Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Campaign for Inclusive Care](#), which strengthens health care and is a model for improving care in the private sector. The Campaign for Inclusive Care is one of several initiatives and programs through which VA supports Veterans' caregivers.

"VA is pleased to partner with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, whose commitment to caregiver support mirrors our own," said VA Secretary Robert Wilke. "The Campaign for Inclusive Care is a groundbreaking model integrating Veteran caregivers into the fabric of our organization, ensuring Veterans' health care needs are met."

The study supports using family caregivers for Veteran care and provides recommendations, to include: a call to better define caregiver roles, support for caregiver inclusion in health teams and streamlining legal and privacy regulations currently creating barriers to provider-caregiver information sharing. The study also suggests health care teams (generally comprising a physician, nurse and social worker) build strong relationships with caregivers by inviting their participation in care decisions and creating methods to assess their abilities and assist their needs.

"These findings support the essential idea of a care model that is fully inclusive of Veteran caregivers," said Sen. Elizabeth Dole, founder of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. "We are grateful to work with VA, ensuring caregivers are empowered and providers are better supported in their work to improve Veteran care."

The Campaign for Inclusive Care builds on findings of the [Elizabeth Dole Foundation's 2014 RAND Report](#), indicating a wounded warrior's best chance for full recovery is a strong, well-supported caregiver.

Learn more by visiting the [Campaign for Inclusive Care](#) website. For additional information, contact Dan Gregory for the Elizabeth Dole Foundation at dgregory@susandavis.com or call 215-285-4137 or email VA Office of Public Affairs at vapublicaffairs@va.gov.

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