We Honor Veterans
Building Partnerships - Improving care

NHPCO Webinar
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Kandyce Powell, Executive Director
Maine Hospice Council and Center for End of Life Care
Melissa Thompson RN, CHPN
Palliative Care Program Manager
VA New England Health Care System

Why Focus on the Veteran Population?

There is both a moral and demographic imperative to do so.
Objectives

- Learn the important role that Hospice programs play in the lives of Veterans and their families.
- Understand more fully how an effective partnerships can have a positive impact on a Veteran’s care.
- Understand the role of a VISN Palliative Care Program Manager in a VA/Community partnership.
- Learn how to problem-solve when challenges arise.

Projected Deaths of Veterans in the US (2000 – 2030)
Veteran Population

- Median age of all living veterans in 2007:
  - 61 for men
  - 47 for women

- Median ages by period of service:
  - Gulf War, 37 years old
  - Vietnam War, 60 years old
  - Korean War, 76 years old
  - WW II, 84 years old

Who Will Care for These Veterans?

Currently

- 4% of veteran deaths occur in VA hospitals and nursing homes
- 10-15% of veterans receive medical care at VA facilities

85-90% of the care of veterans is in community clinics, hospitals, nursing homes and hospices
Why?

- Approximately 680,000 Veterans die in the US every year: 25% of all deaths.
- The majority of Veterans are not enrolled in the VA and may not be aware of end-of-life services and benefits.

“...we have begun to appreciate the profound and sometimes irreversible changes produced by overwhelming stress. These include fundamental alterations in perception, cognition, behavior, emotional reactivity, brain function, personal identity, worldview, and spiritual beliefs.”

Friedman (2005)
How Can You Help?

Convene a Hospice/Veterans Partnership

Where to Start?

- Find champions
- Have a conversation
- Invite partners
- Be inclusive
  - Learn about one another’s organizations
- Identify need
- Agree on mission
- Communicate often
Partners to Consider

- VA Medical Centers
- State Hospice Organization
- Community hospices
- Senior Service Organizations
- Veterans Service Officers
- Homeless shelters
- Veterans Homes
- Vet Centers
- Academic Institutions
- Council of Churches
- Mental Health Organizations
- Hospitals
- Skilled nursing facilities and long term care facilities
- Others

Connecting with VA partners – Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs)
Connecting with VA Partners-
VISN HPC Leaders

- Each VISN has a designated Palliative Care Program Manager and Clinical Champion
- Program Managers oversee all HPC programs within their VISN service area
- Program Managers can help you identify VA champions and contacts in your area

VA Hospice and Palliative Care Program

- Veterans’ Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996

"VA must offer to provide or purchase hospice and palliative care services that VA determines an enrolled veteran needs." 38 CFR 17.36 and 17.38

Hospice and palliative care are equal to other VA Services in Medical Benefits Package

Regardless of inpatient setting or in a home
Establish Realistic Strategies

- Schedule meetings that work (Consider meeting at the VAMC). Quality of meetings is better than quantity.
- Develop a sustainable action plan
  - Be accountable
  - Be patient
  - Problem solving/communication are critical
  - Remember, this is a partnership

Suggested Projects/Activities

- Start a Hospice/Veterans Partnership
- Implement Military History checklist
- Staff trainings
- Veteran educational dinners
- Develop resource materials (do NOT reinvent the wheel)
- PSAs / videos
Suggested Projects/Activities (Cont.)

- Veterans Day/Memorial Day activities
- Stand Downs
- Research projects
- Data collection/track trends
- Annual conferences

Examples of projects - Asking about military service

- When and where did you serve?
- What did you do while you were in the service?
- Why ask these questions?
  may influence both health and quality of life
Examples of Projects-Military History Toolkit checklist and guide

Military History Toolkit

Military History Checklist and Guide

Slide sets

service-related clinical issues

other clinical issues

mental health issues

benefits

Resource and background materials

We Honor Veterans (WHV)

National awareness and action campaign

Developed by National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)

In collaboration with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Encourage partnerships between community hospices, state hospice organizations and VA facilities
Why WHV?

- Creates a culture that includes Veteran-centric activities
  - Taps into a shared value of honoring our Nation’s Veterans
  - Moves from organizations’ needs and goals to Veterans’ needs and goals
  - Moves the focus from individual organizations to partnerships

We Honor Veterans Campaign Goals

- Promote Veteran-centric educational activities
- Increase organizational capacity to serve Veterans
  - Support development of strategic partnerships
  - Increase access and improve quality
What does We Honor Veterans mean?

- Asking about military history and knowing what to do with the answer
- Partnering to improve care
  - Extending VA and community reach to improve care and access
  - Improving quality by measuring the impact of VA and community interventions

In Support of the Goals

www.WeHonorVeterans.org

- Centralized Information
- Educational Resources
- Partnerships
Web Resources

- Presentations (examples)
  - *We Honor Veterans Overview*
  - *Understanding the VA*
  - *Service Related Diseases, Illnesses and Conditions*
- Military History Checklist
- Hospice-Veteran Partnership Toolkit
- Veteran Appreciation/Recognition Certificates
- Links to VA and other websites
Levels of Commitment

- Recruit: Get oriented and commit
- Level 1: Provide Veteran-centric education
- Level 2: Build organizational capacity
- Level 3: Develop and strengthen relationships
- Level 4: Increase access and improve quality

WHV: What’s in it for us?

Community Hospices

- Extension of commitment to community
- Privilege to honor those who have served our country
- Provide quality EOL care to Veterans
- Expand business relationship with VA

VA

- Increased confidence in making referrals to community providers
- Enhanced ability to identify providers that have Veteran-specific skills and knowledge
- Heightened satisfaction in being able to honor Veterans’ preferences to go home

*It’s just the right thing to do!*
Men and women who have sacrificed so much in service to their country. They deserve care and caring, especially at end of life.

Contact

We Honor Veterans

A program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

Email: veterans@nhpco.org

www.WeHonorVeterans.org
Thank you!
Questions?