



# WE HONOR VETERANS

*Hospice Veteran Partnership*

## Guide for Hospice Providers and VA Facilities

*“Serving those who served us”*

## Background

With a focus on improving end-of-life care for Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs established their Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative (VAHPC) in November of 2001. One of the programs launched by VAHPC is the National Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP) Program, which is now being implemented with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s *We Honor Veterans* program.

HVPs are coalitions of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, WHV partners, Veteran service organizations, end-of-life care or community organizations and others working together to ensure that excellent care at the end of life is available for our nation’s Veterans and that support is available for their families. These partnerships can be community-based or statewide and may function independently or within an existing structure.

HVPs are hosted by state hospice and palliative care organizations, WHV partners or VA Medical Centers. Participants include VA facilities, community hospice providers, State Veterans Homes and Veterans service organizations as well as other community or state organizations that share the vision of improving end-of-life care for Veterans and their families.

## Mission and Purpose

The mission of HVP is to establish an enduring network of hospice and VA professionals, Veterans, volunteers, and other interested organizations working together to provide quality services through the end of life for Veterans. The purpose of HVP is to provide leadership, technical assistance, and program development recommendations aimed at:

- Improving Veterans’ access to hospice and palliative care across all sites and levels of care to assure that every Veteran is able to receive hospice care at the time and place of need
- Strengthening the relationships between community hospice and VA facilities
- Initiating comprehensive end-of-life community engagement plans designed to reach Veterans

## Opportunities

Once an HVP has been established, it opens many opportunities to best serve Veterans in its geographic area. While each HVP is as unique as the community it serves, the following are suggested activities that demonstrate the many ways a partnership can have a positive impact:

- Conduct assessments to determine Veterans’ needs in the community
- Share information with Veterans’ groups about advance care planning, available resources, and care options
- Hold statewide events to educate community hospice providers and VA facilities about opportunities for partnership
- Establish networks of mentors and experts to assist community hospices and VA facilities with staff and program development
- Develop a speakers’ bureaus for outreach activities to Veterans service organizations, community agencies, and VA facilities
- Educate community agencies about Veterans’ issues and benefits
- Hold town meetings for Veterans and their caregivers

## Impact

Hospice-Veteran Partnerships have successfully created an enduring network of hospice and VA professionals, Veterans, and other interested organizations providing quality end of life services for Veterans. HVPs were developed to ensure Veterans receive the best quality hospice and palliative care, whether in the community or through VA. HVPs were created to address confusion about Veteran hospice benefits; issues were related to both VA and hospice organizations being unaware and uninformed about one another, and a lack of communication between VA and various community partners. Over the past 10 years, HVPs have been able to strengthen and create relationships between hospices and VA facilities, thereby allowing Veterans to easily access quality hospice and palliative care services.

To learn more about HVPs, visit [www.WeHonorVeterans.org/hvp](http://www.WeHonorVeterans.org/hvp).

## Veteran Community Partnerships

Based off the success of HVPs, VA by way of the VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) developed and implemented a Veteran Community Partnership (VCP) model in 2010 to assist Veterans in getting seamless access to, and transitions among, the full continuum of non-institutional extended care and support services in VA and the community. The VCP model provides opportunities for existing HVPs to address Veteran-related issues upstream in the continuum of care in addition to end of life care.

To learn more about VCPs, visit [www.WeHonorVeterans.org/vcp](http://www.WeHonorVeterans.org/vcp).

## Community Partnership Toolkit

Since the strategies to begin and build a community partnership are essentially the same with both the HVP and VCP models, please download the [VCP Toolkit](#) to use as a supplement to this Guide.

The VCP Toolkit is located at [www.WeHonorVeterans.org/vcp](http://www.WeHonorVeterans.org/vcp) and provides specific information re:

- Forming a partnership
- Building a strong foundation
- Suggested partnership projects
- Veteran Community Partnership profiles

Also, please refer to the Appendix items and additional resources for HVPs directly below which provide specific tools and templates to use for your HVP meetings. All documents listed below are also located at [www.WeHonorVeterans.org/hvp](http://www.WeHonorVeterans.org/hvp).

### Appendix Items for HVPs

- A: [Sample Invitation to HVP Information Meeting](#)
- B: [NHPCO Letter](#)
- C: [Sample Agenda for HVP Information Meeting](#)
- D: [Areas of Interest Assessment](#)
- E: [Confirmation of Agreement to Serve on the Leadership Committee](#)
- F: [Invitation to the First HVP Meeting](#)
- G: [HVP First Meeting Agenda](#)
- H: [Vision, Mission, and Objectives of the \[State/Region\] HVP](#)

### Additional Resources for HVPs

[VCP Toolkit](#)

[Hospice and VA Working Together: Relationship Building Suggestions](#)

[HVP Fact Sheet](#)

[HVP Overview \[PPT\]](#)

[HVP Roster](#)

[Veteran Demographics](#)

[Veteran Health Benefits Fact Sheets](#)

# Appendix

*“Serving those who served us”*

## Appendix A: Invitation to a Hospice-Veteran Partnership Information Meeting



Dear **[Title]** **[Name]**:

We invite you to join us at an information meeting to explore the possibility of developing a Hospice-Veterans Partnership (HVP) in our area. HVPs are coalitions of hospices, Veteran Affairs representatives and other community organizations serving Veterans. The purpose of an HVP is to improve end-of-life care for Veterans and we think that your organization might be interested in:

- Increasing awareness and knowledge about Veterans’ end-of-life care needs and options
- Strengthening relationships between hospices, VA programs and community organizations
- Improving Veterans’ access to hospice and palliative care across all sites and levels of care

The Hospice-Veteran Partnership we form will be part of a national network of HVPs established through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). For more information about Hospice-Veteran Partnerships please see the [attached or included] HVP Fact Sheet.

**The information meeting will be held at [time] on [day and date] at [location.]**

If you are unable to attend this meeting, we would appreciate your forwarding this letter to a colleague who might be willing to represent your organization.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us by phone or email.

Sincerely,

Full Name **[Hospice contact]**

Phone

Email

Full Name **[VA contact]**

Phone

Email

Attachments:

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) memo, dated 7/19/05 and signed by James F. Burris, MD, Chief Consultant, Geriatrics and Extended Care SHG, VA.

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)’s memo, dated 12/1/05 and signed by J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD, President and CEO, NHPCO.

Hospice-Veteran Partnership Fact Sheet

## Appendix B: NHPCO Letter



May 1, 2015

To all members of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, NHPCO maintains an ongoing commitment to supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative (VAHPCI) including the formation of Hospice-Veteran Partnerships (HVPs.)

### **What is an HVP?**

Some hospices and palliative care providers form partnerships with VA facilities and programs. These Hospice-Veteran Partnerships (HVPs) work together to improve end-of-life care for Veterans. Hospice staff and VA staff provide information to each other, and to patients and families, such as: what services they provide and who is eligible for care, and how to resolve issues related to referral and reimbursement. They provide each other with formal education and resources about their specific knowledge and skills. And they may also provide—jointly—community education programs or speakers to raise the level of awareness of Veterans’ end-of-life care issues.

### **Why do we need HVPs?**

More than 1,800 Veterans die every day in this country, with only a small percentage of those deaths occurring in VA facilities. Every month, 54,000 Veterans are dying in the homes and communities in which they live. Many Veterans who fought in World War II and Vietnam need end-of-life care now and the number of older Veterans needing such care continues to rise. Many Veterans may not know about—or have access to—hospice and palliative care; and many hospices may not know which patients are Veterans and what end-of-life issues which are specific to Veterans may arise.

### **What are the Benefits of HVPs?**

The various organizations benefit from knowing more about each other’s services. VA programs may benefit from hospices’ experience with end-of-life care, and hospices may benefit from education about issues which may develop towards the end of life in Veterans. And patients, families and communities benefit because the increased knowledge of staff of each provider leads to more appropriate and timely referrals, and better Veteran-specific end-of-life needs.

Honoring our nation’s Veterans includes supporting them throughout their lives, and hospices have the particular privilege of providing care at the end of their lives.

NHPCO encourages all our members to learn more about end-of-life issues for Veterans and to either join a HVP in your community, or start one!

Sincerely,

J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD  
President & CEO

## Appendix C: HVP Information Meeting Agenda



1. **Welcome and introductions**
2. **\*Objectives of the meeting**
3. **\*Purpose of an HVP**
4. **\*Components of an HVP**
  - \*HVP Leadership Committee
  - \*HVP Project Workgroups
5. **Questions and Answers**
6. **Next Steps**
7. **Interest forms to facilitators**
8. **Thanks and closure**

\*For all items indicated with an \* we suggest you put the information into a power point presentation, or onto flip charts, and handouts.

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**Appendix D: Areas of Interest Assessment**



**BEFORE YOU LEAVE . . . Please complete this form and give it to us. Thank you.**

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Are you a Veteran?**  Yes  No

**3. Please circle 0 for none, 1 for some, and 2 for extensive, to indicate the following experience. If you circle 1 or 2, briefly describe the length and type of experience.**

I have experience working with Veterans	0	1	2
Type of Experience: _____			
I have experience working with hospice	0	1	2
Type of Experience: _____			

**4. Please circle 0 for none, 1 for some and 2 for great to indicate your level of interest in serving in the HVP Leadership.**

0      1      2

**5. Please circle 0 for none, 1 for some and 2 for great to indicate your level of interest in the areas where we need workgroups.**

Community outreach	0	1	2
Legal/regulatory issues	0	1	2
Provider Education	0	1	2
Research and evaluation	0	1	2
Member recruitment	0	1	2
Fundraising	0	1	2

**6. Do you know of any other individuals or organizations we might invite to join the HVP?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Do you have any other comments?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for attending this information meeting, we hope you found it interesting and useful; and that you will want to help with the development of the HVP. The Leadership Committee will be in touch with you within the next two weeks.

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## Appendix E: Confirmation of Agreement to Serve on the Leadership Committee



Dear **[Name]**

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Leadership Committee of the newly forming Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP). The purpose of the HVP is to:

- Raise awareness about Veterans’ end-of-life care needs and options (Education)
- Strengthen relationships between community hospices and VA facilities (Relationships)
- Improve Veterans’ access to hospice and palliative care at all sites and levels of care (Access)

As a member of the Leadership your role will include providing leadership to, and governing of, the HVP.

Please complete the form below which requests all your contact information and confirmation that you agree to serve on the Leadership Committee.

Thank you,

**[Signature]**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will serve on the Leadership Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I will not be able to serve on the Leadership Committee

Please sign and date: \_\_\_\_\_

and return to: \_\_\_\_\_

[name and address or email]

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## Appendix F: Invitation to the First HVP Meeting



Dear **[Title]** **[Name]**:

About one month ago, representatives of various organizations (see attached list) met to explore the possibility of forming a Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP). The purpose of an HVP is to improve end-of-life care for Veterans by:

- Increasing awareness and knowledge about Veterans’ end-of-life care needs and options
- Strengthening relationships between hospices, VA programs and community organizations
- Improving Veterans’ access to hospice and palliative care across all sites and levels of care

**We invite you to join us at the first meeting of our newly formed Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP) at [time] on [day and date] at [location.]**

If you attended our information meeting, we thank you for your interest. If you didn’t attend that meeting we welcome you to this meeting, and if you are unable to attend this meeting, we would appreciate your forwarding this letter to a colleague who might be willing to represent your organization.

The Hospice-Veteran Partnership we form will be part of a national network of HVPs established through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us by phone or email.

Sincerely,

Full Name **[Hospice contact]**

Phone

Email

Full Name **[VA contact]**

Phone

Email

Attachments:

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) memo, dated 7/19/05 and signed by James F. Burris, MD, Chief Consultant, Geriatrics and Extended Care SHG, VA.

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)’s memo, dated 12/1/05 and signed by J. Donald Schumacher, PsyD, President and CEO, NHPCO.

Meeting notes from Information Meeting

List of Attendees from Information Meeting

## Appendix G: HVP First Meeting Agenda



### 1. Welcome

### 2. Objectives of the meeting

### 3. Summary of Activities thus far

### 4. Leadership Committee:

Present drafts, and invite feedback re:

- Hospice-Veteran Partnership of [STATE/REGION] Fact Sheet
- Vision, Mission, and Objectives of the Hospice-Veteran Partnership of [STATE/REGION]

### 5. Leadership Committee introduces Project Workgroup Chairs, who:

- Appeal for more members if necessary
- Will provide a summary of their planned activities at the next meeting

### 6. Questions and Answers

### 7. Tasks for Organizations

A representative of each organization will give a 5-10 minute summary of their work, followed by questions and answers. Depending on the number of groups, you might want to have 2 or 3 organizations speak at each subsequent meeting.

### 8. Next Meeting:

### 9. Thanks and closure

## Appendix H: Vision, Mission, and Objectives of the [State/Region] HVP



### **Vision**

All [STATE/REGION] Veterans should have quality hospice and palliative care at the time and place of need.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Hospice-Veteran Partnership (HVP) of [STATE/REGION] is to establish an enduring network of hospice and VA professionals, volunteers, and other interested organizations working together to provide quality services through the end of life for all of our area's Veterans.

### **Objectives**

- a. Increase the number of VA referrals to community hospice agencies by 25 percent this year.
- b. Launch a state- or region-wide campaign to encourage all community hospices to collect information about Veteran status upon admission and report data annually to the HVP
- c. Conduct a statewide educational and networking program by the end of this year to help VA facilities and community hospices develop new relationships or enhance existing ones.
- d. By the end of one year, complete five outreach presentations to Veterans' service organizations to educate their membership about hospice and palliative care services.
- e. By the end of one year, complete five outreach presentations to hospice organizations to educate their membership about special needs of Veterans at the end of life.