



A program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
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We Honor Veterans Newsletter

Spring 2024

FEATURED PARTNER STORY

Heart to Heart Hospice Hosts Comedy for the Community

The We Honor Veterans (WHV) program encourages relationship building between hospice providers, the VA, and other Veteran-centric organizations. Hospice partners at each level of the program are urged to initiate and foster relationships that support their ability to provide the highest level of care to Veterans at the end of life. Level 5 WHV partners are uniquely recognized for their efforts to collaborate and engage with organizations in their community providing Veteran-focused services.

[Heart to Heart Hospice](#) of Flint, MI, a Level 5 WHV partner, utilized its many connections throughout the community to enable the success of its comedy show benefiting [Mid-Michigan Honor Flight](#). Held in early August, Heart to Heart Hospice hosted the comedy show at the local VFW hall. The event included entertainment from multiple comedians, a Veterans-only raffle, a dinner service, and sponsorships by a wide array of community partners. The success of this event is evident not only by the show's attendance and the number of community partners involved, but most importantly, by Heart to Heart Hospice's achievement of raising over \$8,000 to benefit Mid-Michigan Honor Flight!

"I had the best time and can tell you I was overwhelmed by the money raised at the event," reported Vice President of Mid-Michigan Honor Flight, Kathy Barnes.

The funds Heart to Heart Hospice raised will be used to realize Mid-Michigan Honor Flight's mission to transport Veterans to Washington, DC, to visit the memorials dedicated to honoring the sacrifices



Comedians from Heart to Heart Hospice's fundraiser pose for a photo following the show.

and service of our Veterans. The success of this event even landed Heart to Heart Hospice a feature on the local news, an opportunity that will allow it to continue to foster connections within the community and raise awareness of Veterans at the end of life. [Watch the news feature in our blog post highlighting this event!](#)



Heart to Heart Hospice's WHV representative speaks with local news about the fundraiser for Mid-Michigan Honor Flights.

NEWS FROM WHV

CMS Clarifies Services Under the Medicare Hospice Benefit for Dually Eligible Veterans

CMS recently issued [Change Request 13523](#), which updates the Medicare Benefit Manual to clarify that a Veteran beneficiary who elects hospice services under the Medicare benefit may still receive services that are not included in the hospice plan of care and are furnished and paid under the beneficiary's VA benefits, in addition to hospice services.

Dream Foundation: Granting Dreams for Terminally-Ill Veterans and their Families

[Dream Foundation](#) is the only national dream-granting organization for terminally-ill adults. In the last 30 years, Dream Foundation has served more than 35,000 final Dreams. In 2014, Dreams for Veterans was created to tailor the Dream experience to veterans, service members, and their families. The program recently received the prestigious 2023 Fisher Service Award for its innovation and positive impact on terminally-ill veterans and their families.



Dream recipients must meet the following criteria: reside in the United States or Puerto Rico, can provide proof of U.S. military service or membership in the Reserves or National Guard, are 18 years of age or older, have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness with a life expectancy of 12 months or less, and lack the resources to fulfill a Dream themselves.

The application process is simple! Applicants must provide a photograph, a letter describing their Dream, proof of annual income, a completed and signed Dream agreement (including medical verification completed by a treating physician or hospice representative), a completed and signed HIPPA form, and proof of military service. Prospective applicants can [apply online](#) or [download an](#)

[application](#) and submit it to Dream Foundation via mail or email. Please contact Dream Foundation at info@dreamsforsoldiers.org or 805-564-2131 with any additional questions.

We Honor Veterans is excited to welcome Dreams for Veterans to share more about their inspiring work on our next Partner Networking Call!

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Toolkit

March 29 is Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, an opportunity to provide Vietnam Veterans the hero's welcome they never received. As we prepare to recognize this day, we invite you to review our Vietnam-focused resources and guides for honoring Veterans.

- Host an educational event featuring one of our [Veteran-focused resources](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the [history of the Vietnam War's impact](#).
- Get inspired by the [Welcome Home events](#) our hospice partners have hosted in previous years.
- Review our updated [Veteran Pinning Ceremony Guide](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and utilize our [Veteran Certificates of Recognition](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) in your next honor ceremony.

Advocacy Toolkit from Hospice Action Network

The Hospice Action Network (HAN) recently released its [advocacy toolkit](#), which offers an extensive library of advocacy and education resources. From basic advocacy know-hows to how to build a better relationship with your legislators to what you need to know about important hospice and palliative care policy priorities, these tools will help you grow as an advocate. This toolkit includes [specialized resources for We Honor Veterans partners](#) interested in working with Congress!

Level 5 Improvements – New Cohort System and Updated Materials

The We Honor Veterans (WHV) Team is excited to announce an update to Level 5! This update will include a new schedule for partners to submit their Level 5 Reports and updated materials to improve comprehension of Level 5 required activities. These updates aim to ensure the integrity and accessibility of Level 5. Our website team is working to update the WHV site with these improvements. Additional information on these updates is available in our [recent Blog post](#).

VETERAN-CENTRIC ORGANIZATIONS

The RAND Epstein Family Veteran Policy Institute

The [RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute](#), housed at RAND, is dedicated to improving the lives of those who have served in the U.S. military by conducting innovative, interdisciplinary, and evidence-based research. The institute's recent research includes:

- [Meeting the Changing Needs of Veterans: Insights from Single Parent Student Veterans](#)
- [What Americans Think About Veterans and Military Service: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey](#)
- [Psychedelics and Veterans' Mental Health: The Evolving Legal and Policy Landscape in the United States](#)

WHV EVENTS

Partner Networking Call – Thursday, April 11, 4-5 p.m. ET

Join us for our first WHV Partner Networking Call of 2024! Attendees will be updated with the most recent news from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, and WHV partners. We look forward to welcoming [Dream Foundation](#) to discuss Dreams for Veterans, a recipient of the prestigious 2023 Fisher Service Award, and a representative from the VA to review and provide updates on available VA benefits and services. [Register here!](#)

WHV Level 5 Improvements Forum

Join the We Honor Veterans team for a conversation about our Level 5 improvements! These updates include a new cohort system for submitting completed Level 5 reports and updated materials to assist you in completing Level 5 activities. The forum will begin with an overview of Level 5 updates and activities, followed by a period for questions and answers.

- Thursday, March 14, 12-1 p.m. ET – [Register here](#)
- Wednesday, March 20, 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET – [Register here](#)

WHV Office Hours

Join us for We Honor Veterans Office Hours – ask a question, meet fellow WHV partners, and learn more about the amazing impact WHV is having across the nation. All partner levels are welcome. Sign up via the [WHV Events Calendar!](#)

Upcoming Webinars and Partner Events

Want to ensure you never miss another WHV event again? Bookmark the [WHV Events Calendar](#) to register for upcoming webinars and learn about community partner events.

UPDATES FROM THE VA

- The VA recently announced its [2024 Equity Action Plan](#). The plan aims to ensure that the VA delivers world-class care and benefits to all Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors — regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or geographic location.
- [For the first time since the 1960s, the VA is funding new research to determine the benefits and efficacy of utilizing psychedelics to treat PTSD and depression in Veterans.](#)
- The [2023 VA Federal Benefits Booklet](#) is available! This Booklet explains the benefits and services available to Veterans, their families, and their caregivers.
- [The VA proposes a rule to improve ease of access to benefits for Veterans exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides.](#)
- [VA and DOD partner to increase primary and specialty health care access for Tennessee and Kentucky Veterans.](#)
- [The 2024 National Veterans Day Poster Contest is open for submissions!](#) Submissions for this year's theme "Alegacy of Loyalty and Service" are due on April 1.
- [The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant](#) is accepting applications. A live session will be held on March 14 at 1:30 p.m. ET to address questions regarding the application process.
- The VA's PTSD Bytes Podcast releases [new episode on Misconceptions about PTSD](#) featuring Dr. Kelly Maieritsch.

MORE PARTNER NEWS

Elizabeth Hospice Honors Marine Corps Veteran

The Elizabeth Hospice, a Level 5 WHV Partner, recently hosted a pinning ceremony for Carlo Romano, a US Marine Corps Veteran. This ceremony reminds us of the impact recognizing Veterans at the end of life can have on Veteran patients and their loved ones.

The care team was touched by Mr. Romano's reaction to the ceremony, describing that, "Mr. Romano had the most amazing, heart-warming smile on his face as he was greeted by his family members and care team."



Frank Hernandez, a Veteran volunteer with The Elizabeth Hospice, saluted and pinned Mr. Romano and handed him the certificate of appreciation. "These opportunities remind us in a divine way of our purpose," said Amanda Rivadeneira, The Elizabeth Hospice's RN Team Manager.

For more information on hosting a Veteran Pinning Ceremony, see our updated [Veteran Pinning Ceremony Guide](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and utilize our [Veteran Certificates of Recognition](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) in your next honor ceremony!

Congratulations to our 2023 Outstanding Program Winner & Salute to Service Recipients!

We Honor Veterans is proud to have recognized the [MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care Program](#) as the winner of our 2023 Outstanding Program Award. This New York-based hospice provider consistently demonstrates exemplary dedication to improving the end-of-life experience for all Veterans and their caregivers. Please join us in congratulating MJHS on this success and its continued excellence!

We would also like to acknowledge our Salute to Service Recipients: Angelic Health of Pleasantville, NJ; Frederick Health Hospice of Frederick, MD; Lower Cape Fear LifeCare of Wilmington, NC; and The Elizabeth Hospice of Escondido, CA.

Congratulations Level 5 Partners

Please join us in congratulating our new Level 5 partners!

Heart to Heart Hospice of Flint, LLC

Idaho Home Health & Hospice – Meridian

Vitas Healthcare – Florida

Centra Hospice Bedford

Centra Hospice of the Hills

Congratulations to our partners that renewed their Level 5 status in the first quarter of 2024

Please join us in congratulating our committed Level 5 partners!



Hospice of the East Bay, Hospice & Community Care – PA; Suncoast Hospice; Hospice of the West, Elite Hospice; Harbor Hospice; Housecalls Hospice; Brandywine River Valley Hospice; VITAS HEALTHCARE – Texas; The Elizabeth Hospice; Louisiana Hospice and Palliative Care – Opelousas; AuthoraCare Collective; Legacy Hospice; Fredericktown Branch; Avow Hospice; Sutter Care At Home; MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care Program; Hospice & Community Care – South Carolina; Gentiva Hospice – Indianapolis South, IN; Gentiva Hospice – Wichita, KS; Caris Healthcare – Georgia; Hospice of Wilson Medical Center BSA Hospice of the Southwest; AuthoraCare Collective - NC; Hospice Alliance; Gentiva Hospice – Troy, NC; Gentiva Hospice – Asheboro, NC

Do You Have a Photo or Story to Share?

We want YOU to send us any highlights of your WHV program and events or noteworthy volunteer and patient stories. [Share your story here!](#) If you need assistance, please contact veterans@nhpco.org.

NHPCO UPDATES AND EVENTS

2024 NHPCO Annual Leadership Conference (ALC2024) Call for Proposals – Now Open

Have an idea for a presentation on Veterans' end-of-life needs or on another topic related to end-of-life care? [Submit a proposal](#) to present at ALC2024!

Press Room and Alerts

- [The 2024 Quality Connections program now open for enrollment](#)
- The NHPCO Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) released a new resource, [Culturally Sensitive Communications to Enhance Care Delivery: A Resource Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [NHPCO Recognizes Participants Who Earned Health Equity Certificates in 2023 Project Echo: Equity Where It Matters Series](#)
- [NHPCO Celebrates Achievements of Hospice and Palliative Care Providers in Nationwide Quality Connections Program](#)

Upcoming Events

- March 12: [Regulatory & Quality Office Hours](#)
- March 13: Spiritual Caregiver Chat - [Can You Help Me? Exploring the Spiritual Needs of Caregivers](#) +
- March 18: End-of-Life Doula Chat - [Ask a Doula: An Interview](#) +
- March 20: Physician/Advanced Practice Provider Chat - [Advance Care Medical Planning: Why isn't This Done and What We Can Do](#) +

* Indicates accredited education with CE/CME credit available to live attendees.

+ MyNHPCO Chats are regular webinars developed by members for members. They are produced by the discipline-based MyNHPCO Steering Committees, participation is open to employees and volunteers of all NHPCO member organizations.

VA Crisis Line: 988 Select 1 if a Veteran | VA Caregiver Support Line: 855-260-3274 | VA Health Benefits Line: 877-222-8387 | [Find VA Locations](#)

If you need help finding the right contact to connect with VA telehealth resources, please contact veterans@nhpco.org.



We Honor Veterans

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