

*The Homeless Programs Office (HPO) newsletter contains news and information about VA's ongoing effort to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans.*



## **Executive Director's Message | Around HPO**

### **Health Update | Staff Spotlight | Fact of the Month**

*Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the [National Call Center for Homeless Veterans](#) at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance.*

## **Message From Monica Diaz, Executive Director, VHA Homeless Programs Office**



For Veterans experiencing homelessness, a lack of transportation can lead to numerous hardships. It can be a barrier to stable employment, like it was for [Veteran Yolanda Peters](#). It can lead to [a lack of mobility](#), restricting them from caring for themselves properly, like it did for [Veteran Pete Bigham](#).

And for many, it can also mean an inability to receive proper healthcare.

To help address the obstacles homeless Veterans face in accessing medical care,

VA's Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (HPACTS) have [provided 25 select VA medical centers with mobile medical units \(MMUs\)](#) — which will allow us to meet Veterans where they are to provide much needed services.

The first MMU launched this month at the VA Orlando Healthcare System, with the rest [rolling out over the next six months](#). These vans and trucks will move from one location to another to provide a private space for eligible Veterans to meet with medical providers — including mental health clinicians, social workers, and other staff that provide primary care, women's health, audiology, laboratory, and telehealth services.

I'm proud that we're now able to provide more Veterans with the care they need and deserve, despite the barriers that stand in our way.

[Read the full message.](#)

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## Around HPO

### [HUD and VA Launch "Boot Camps" to Accelerate Homeless Veterans' Path to Permanent Housing and Support Services](#)

The HUD-VASH "Boot Camps" are a series of workshops to help Public Housing Agencies and VA medical centers improve their processes and more quickly transition Veterans from homelessness to permanent housing with wraparound supportive services. [Read the press release.](#)



### [Ending Veteran Homelessness Podcast: Solving the Coordination Problem in Your Community](#)

On this month's *Ending Veteran Homelessness* podcast, we speak with Eileen Devine, then national director for Health Care for Homeless Veterans, to discuss how coordinated entry is creating stronger crisis response systems to serve Veterans experiencing homelessness. [Listen to the episode.](#)

### [VA Launches Mobile Medical Units to Increase Access to Health Care for Homeless Veterans](#)

VA will deploy 25 mobile medical units (MMUs) across the country throughout the next six months to provide health care and support to homeless and at-risk Veterans.

Mobile medical units are vans or trucks that move from one location to another to provide a private space for eligible Veterans to meet with medical providers, including mental health clinicians, social workers, and other staff



that provide primary care, women's health, audiology, laboratory, and telehealth services to those who may not have access to a local VA medical center. [Read the press release.](#)



### [How Coordinated Entry Serves Veterans Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness](#)

VA has many homeless programs that serve hundreds of thousands of Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness each year. But for the most vulnerable Veterans to be helped effectively, they must be reached.

That's where coordinated entry systems come in. [Read the article](#) to learn about what coordinated entry is and how it better serves Veterans.

### [Strategic Plan Summer 2023 Update](#)

Read the [Homeless Programs Office \(HPO\) Strategic Plan Summer 2023 update](#) to learn about our vision for the future and our path to achieving the ambitious goal of ending Veteran homelessness.



### [DAV Honors Exceptional VA Employees with National Commander's Awards](#)

We are proud to celebrate Rhonda Sanford, who was honored with the Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year award by DAV (Disabled American Veterans). [Learn about the work she does](#) as a Veterans Justice Outreach social worker for the VA Coatesville Health Care System.

### [An Analysis of Returns to Homelessness among Veterans Exiting VA Homeless Programs to Permanent Housing](#)

This report summarizes analyses on Veterans who exit VA homeless programs to permanent housing destinations and subsequently return to VA homeless programs. It looks into why Veterans exiting VA specialized homeless programs to permanent housing destinations subsequently return to such programs, and to what extent Veteran sociodemographic, military service, health, and health services utilization factors associated with risk of returns to VA homeless programs.

[Read the report.](#)



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## Health Update

CDC has released [new guidance on COVID-19](#), noting that high levels of immunity and availability of effective COVID-19 prevention and management tools have

reduced the risk for medically significant illness and death.

However, they also highlight the continued importance of protecting yourself and others with vaccines, receiving testing and wearing masks when exposed, receiving testing if symptomatic, and isolating for  $\geq 5$  days if infected. [Read the full guidance.](#)

VA offers COVID-19 vaccines to eligible Veterans at no cost. [Find out how to get your COVID-19 vaccine at VA.](#)



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## HPO Staff Spotlight: Ilana Marmon, LICSW

In her role as a Coordinated Entry Specialist with the Health Care the [Health Care for Homeless Veterans \(HCHV\)](#) program with the [Washington DC VA Medical Center](#), Ilana Marmon is constantly working to improve systems and brainstorm ways to better support Veterans. Knowing that VA programs can be overwhelming to navigate, she enjoys getting to demystify services and help make them easier to access.



[Learn more about Marmon's role](#) as well as what inspires her to continue the work she does.

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## HPO Fact of the Month



Permanent, stable housing is the benchmark of efforts to end homelessness among Veterans, but did you know housing alone is often not enough?

Employment can be a key element in helping Veterans climb out of homelessness or avoid it all together. [Learn how hiring Veterans supports ending Veteran homelessness.](#)

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