



# PARTNERSHIPS

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS SERVING VETERANS

Community health centers across the country are creating partnerships to better serve Veterans in their communities. Partnership opportunities can include delivering direct healthcare services to Veterans, hiring Veterans, and providing Veterans and their families increased access to high quality health care and support services such as transportation, counseling, and therapeutic work programs.

### HOW TO ESTABLISH SUCCESSFUL VETERAN PARTNERSHIPS

Create a culture of understanding the military

- ✧ Learn about military branches, ranks and experiences that are available in the military
- ✧ Develop an understanding of basic military values, structure, policies and expectations
- ✧ Learn about the benefits and health services of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- ✧ Talk to Veterans on your staff and listen to their experiences transitioning to civilian life
- ✧ Take a free online course to strengthen your military and Veteran cultural competency: <http://deploymentpsych.org/military-culture>

Build (or join) a network of organizations focused on serving Veterans in your community

- ✧ Identify and get to know the people in your community who are working with Veterans:
  - ✓ Contact your nearest VA facility: [www.va.gov/directory](http://www.va.gov/directory).
  - ✓ Find nearby military installation: [www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil](http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil)
  - ✓ Reach out to your State Veteran Service Office: <http://www.nasdva.us/Links.aspx>
  - ✓ Get to know local Veteran service organizations and non-profits that offer services to Veterans and transitioning Service members
- ✧ Attend or organize meetings with community partners to discuss Veteran focused issues and opportunities
- ✧ Provide your community partners with a tour of your facility and an overview of available services

Identify unmet Veteran needs in your community

- ✧ Get smart about your community's Veteran population by reviewing statistics and reports published by:
  - ✓ **VA:** <https://www.va.gov/vetdata>
  - ✓ **Census Bureau:** <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/veterans.html>
  - ✓ **Department of Labor:** <https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets>
- ✧ Work with your local VA facility and other community partners to perform a gap analysis comparing Veteran needs and available services in your community

Design and implement a strategy to improve Service to Veterans

- ✧ Determine what complementary services you can provide to meet the needs of Veterans in your community
- ✧ Create a coordinated outreach strategy with partner organizations
- ✧ Identify ways to use your outreach and enrollment staff to connect Veterans to VA benefits and coordinate VA and health center care

### BEST PRACTICES

- ★ Develop strong relationships with local VA staff and Veteran focused community organizations
- ★ Provide services that are complementary, not competitive
- ★ Develop a gap analysis of Veteran needs in partnership with VA
- ★ Create a coordinated plan of action and assign clear roles to each partner organization
- ★ Ask your patients "have you ever served?" to accurately capture your Veteran population
- ★ Start small and build on successes

# WAYS TO PARTNER TO SERVE VETERANS



## INCREASING ACCESS TO CARE

### The Veterans Choice Program (VCP)

- ✧ The Veterans Choice Program is a national benefit that allows eligible Veterans to choose to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.
- ✧ Currently, **6,700+ health center clinicians**, in more than **1,670+ sites** are approved VCP Providers, and over **305,000 Veterans were served** by health centers in 2015
- ✧ For more information on becoming a Choice Provider, call 1-866-606-8198 or go to:  
[http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/for\\_providers.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/for_providers.asp)

### Direct Provider Agreements

- ✧ Direct provider agreements allow a VA facility to refer Veterans directly to a community care provider
- ✧ These agreements are established between VA facilities and community health centers at the local level
- ✧ VA facilities may choose to develop direct relationships when:
  - ✓ There is a significant travel distance for Veterans receiving care
  - ✓ The VA Facility does not have the capacity or does not offer the specialty services needed to meet Veterans' care needs
- ✧ Contact your local VA to start a conversation about services you may be able to provide to meet the needs of Veterans in your local community

### Supplemental Services

- ✧ Many Veterans are not eligible to receive certain types of care through VA, or lack access to quality and affordable essential health services.
- ✧ Several health centers have successfully established formal and informal partnerships with their local VA medical facilities to meet the supplemental medical, behavioral, dental, and care coordination needs of veterans in their communities.
- ✧ Examples of successful partnerships include:
  - ✓ **Oral Health:** A health center in New Jersey is partnering with VA to co-locate the health center's mobile dental vans at VA facilities. Another health center in Wisconsin is partnering with local Veteran Service Organizations to reach Veterans in need of oral health services
  - ✓ **Behavioral Health:** A health center in Alaska is partnering with the local VA and a non-profit community organization to provide animal-assisted Post Traumatic Stress therapy to Veterans.
  - ✓ **Care Coordination:** Two health centers in New Hampshire are partnering with VA and provide space in their health centers for a VA-employed RN case manager to work directly with rural Veterans. In Maine, VA Medical Center Director meets quarterly with the Maine Primary Care Association (PCA) Director in order to continuously dialogue and trouble shoot on any care coordination, payment or other Veteran related healthcare issues.



## HIRING VETERANS

### Develop a Veteran Hiring Strategy

- Ensure your board and executive team know that hiring Veterans is a priority, and include them in the strategy.
- Customize the strategy to the health center's needs and Veteran population in your area.
- Connect with Veterans on your staff and get them involved in developing the hiring strategy and providing career development support and mentorship to new Veteran hires.
- Focus on building your staff's military cultural competency to foster growth, development & retention of Veterans.

### Make Connections

- If you live near a military installation, pick up the phone and call the transition assistance program office to introduce yourself and your health center.
- Call American Job Centers and ask to speak to a Veteran Employment Representative about hiring Veterans.
- Find out if your state runs an employment program focused on Veterans
- Post your job openings and share with local Veteran Service Organizations

### For More Information:

- NACHC's Veteran Hiring Toolkit: <http://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Hiring-Toolkit-for-CHCs-and-Vets.pdf>
- [www.dol.gov/veterans/hireaveteran](http://www.dol.gov/veterans/hireaveteran)

*Learn More About How Specific Community Health Centers Are Serving Veterans:*

<http://www.nachc.org/health-center-issues/special-populations/veterans>