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Breast Cancer Awareness

As October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is encouraging female and male Veterans to take advantage of breast health screenings. VA clinics are offering and providing women's health services such as mammograms and other cancer detection methods. Currently, 32 VA Medical Centers have state-of-the-art digital mammography equipment and each VA hospital has a designated women's health care provider. A mammogram, or x-ray of the breast, is used to detect breast cancer early; it is recommended that women between the ages of 50 and 75 get a mammogram every two years. Both men and women can develop cancer, though male breast cancer is very rare. The VA has reported that 87% of eligible female Veterans receive screening mammograms on a routine basis. Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related death in females. Some breast cancer risk factors include: age, having a first-degree family member with breast cancer, having certain gene mutations (BRCA1 and BRCA2), being overweight or obese, not exercising, and previous radiation therapy/exposure to the breasts or chest area. Although, having any of these risk factors does not always mean that an individual will develop breast cancer; they should bring this information to their health care provider's attention. All Veterans should speak with their VA health care providers about having a mammogram done on routine basis. Veterans can find their nearest facility on the VA directory at www.va.gov/directory. ♦

Did You Know?

- About 1 in 8 U.S. women (just under 12%) will develop invasive breast cancer over her lifetime.
- A man's lifetime risk of breast cancer is about 1 in 1,000.
- About 85% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer; these occur due to mutations that result from the aging process.
- Five percent of breast cancers occur in women under age 40.
- On a single night in 2011, a national count of homeless Veterans totaled 67,495 which was 12% lower than 76,00 homeless Veterans in 2010.
- 26% of the U.S. homeless population are Veterans with 3% to 11% percent being female. ♦



VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has funded thirty-eight projects (\$28.4 million in grants) which will provide transitional housing to homeless Veterans in 25 states and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, 31 of these projects will provide temporary housing to homeless Veterans with the goal of these Veterans retaining the residence as their own. VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program's (GPD) "Transition in Place" model awarded thirty-one of these grants. Veterans will have the opportunity to take over payment of a lease instead of moving out after using VA services (mental health services, job training, substance use counseling, etc.). Many of the other VA programs require Veterans that live in transitional housing to move out after 24 months. Teams of experts performed a rigorous review of each of the projects before they were granted funds. These experts ensured that the projects were able to provide the services they described and that they had a solid plan to get homeless Veterans into housing with a high probability of obtaining residential stability and independent living. GPD is assisting in closing the gaps in available housing for the nation's most vulnerable Veterans, this includes: Veterans with substance use and mental health issues, women with children, Indian tribal populations, and all other homeless Veterans. VA's focus is to create and strengthen community services around the nation so that homeless Veterans receive all the support they need. ♦

