



Department of Veterans Affairs

Harry S. Truman Memorial
Veterans' Hospital
800 Hospital Drive
Columbia MO 65201
www.columbiamo.va.gov

News Release

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
L. Stephen Gaither (573) 814-6308 (Office)
Public Affairs Officer (573) 355-4852 (Cell)

January 9, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF STAFF FOR RESEARCH NAMED AT TRUMAN VA

COLUMBIA, Mo. – **Adam Whaley-Connell, DO, MSPH**, has been appointed associate chief of staff for research and development at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital. In that role, he is responsible for oversight and supervision of research activities at the Columbia VA facility.

Whaley-Connell joined the Truman VA medical staff in January 2008 as a staff physician and has been a VA research scientist with extensive research activity since October 2009. He earned a medical degree from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in 2001 and a masters degree in public health from the MU School of Medicine in 2006. Board certified in internal medicine, hypertension and nephrology, Whaley-Connell's areas of research interest include cardiovascular disease and hypertension in diabetic patients and patients with chronic kidney disease.

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Public Affairs Officer (573) 355-4852 (Cell)

February 25, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINTER STORM CLOSURES

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Due to the latest winter storm and for the safety of our patients, outpatient services at Truman VA Hospital and at VA clinics in Jefferson City, Lake of the Ozarks, Mexico and Sedalia will be closed on Tuesday, February 26. Patients are encouraged to stay off the roads if at all possible. Truman VA's inpatient units and emergency department are open. Patients are encouraged to exercise judgment and only come to this facility for emergency or urgent care.

In order to fulfill our primary mission of quality health care services to Veterans, all Truman VA staff members who are able should make every effort to report for duty.

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February 26, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINTER STORM CLOSURES

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Due to the latest winter storm and for the safety of our patients, outpatient services at Truman VA Hospital and at VA clinics in Jefferson City, Kirksville, Lake of the Ozarks, Mexico and Sedalia will be closed on Tuesday, February 26. Patients are encouraged to stay off the roads if at all possible. Truman VA's inpatient units and emergency department are open. Patients are encouraged to exercise judgment and only come to this facility for emergency or urgent care.

In order to fulfill our primary mission of quality health care services to Veterans, all Truman VA staff members who are able should make every effort to report for duty.

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May 2, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRUMAN VA TO HOST VA2K FOR HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Who: VA employees, volunteers and other interested persons

What: VA2K – 30-minute “Walk and Roll”

When: Wednesday, May 15, 11:00 a.m.

Where: Truman VA Hospital
800 Hospital Drive
Columbia, Mo. VA Clinic
2707 W. Edgewood
Jefferson City, Mo.

VA Clinic
940 Executive Drive
Osage Beach, Mo. VA Clinic
620 North Jefferson
Saint James, Mo.

Why: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities across the nation will host VA2K events to focus attention on healthy lifestyle activities for employees and Veterans as well as to benefit Homeless Veterans Programs. Participants in the 30-minute “walk and roll” may donate items such as soap, detergent, personal hygiene products, brooms, mops, towels, etc. to be used in local Homeless Veterans Programs.

Activities will begin at 11:00 a.m. at each location. Veterans, family members and members of the community are welcome to join VA employees and volunteers for the local event. Participants will be able to take a 30-minute midday break and stroll or roll.



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May 8, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA2K Walk and Roll Event Promotes Employee Wellness

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital will host a 2K "walk and roll" event on May 15, between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to coincide with National Employee Health and Fitness Day.

"Worksite wellness activities enhance employee engagement and contribute to a more productive and healthy workforce," said Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, Truman VA Director. "Nationwide, VA's 2K has been extremely successful. We intend to collect in-kind donations and involve many participants in support of wellness and homeless Veterans."

The Truman VA event is just one of many 2Ks taking place May 15 at VA facilities across the country. In conjunction with the event, participants may donate in-kind gifts to be used to carry out existing VA programs for homeless Veterans. However, there is no requirement for a donation in order to participate. Suggested items include soap, detergent, personal hygiene products, brooms, mops, towels and wash cloths.

Truman VA's 30-minute "walk and roll" event will be held at the medical center in Columbia as well as at VA clinics in Jefferson City, Osage Beach and Saint James. Pre-registration is not required.

VA's employee wellness program is known as WIN (Wellness is Now). WIN empowers employees with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to create a culture of health and wellness. Further, WIN encourages employees to use their appreciation of wellness to inspire Veterans to live healthier lifestyles. WIN integrates traditional occupational safety and health programs with health promotion activities, addressing both workplace and worker health and helping VA employees to do their important work of serving the Nation's Veterans.

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May 9, 2013

VA Leadership, Mayor Slay to Announce 2013 National Veterans Small Business Conference in St. Louis

What: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Assistant Secretary Dr. Tommy Sowers, a native of Rolla, Mo., and St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay will announce St. Louis will host the 2013 National Veterans Small Business Conference in August. The government's premier event for Veteran-owned small businesses is expected to attract thousands of Veterans, business owners, contractors, private sector leaders, and federal employees.

When: News conference 2 p.m. Friday, May 10, 2013
Camera pre-set begins at 1:45 p.m.

Who: The Honorable Francis Slay, Mayor of St. Louis

Assistant Secretary Tommy Sowers, Ph.d.
Department of Veterans Affairs

Tom Leney
Executive Director of the Veterans and Small Business Programs
Department of Veterans Affairs

Where: Office of the Mayor
1200 Market Street, City Hall, Room 200
St. Louis, Missouri 63103

Background: Last year's National Veterans Small Business Conference in Detroit drew over 3,500 attendees, a significant economic boost to the host city. As with last year's conference, the upcoming event will provide multiple opportunities for small businesses to network and identify business opportunities with more than 200 government procurement decision makers in attendance. More than 200 training sessions will be proceed to build and expand business capacity and more than 350 booths in the Expo will allow businesses to raise visibility and connect with potential business partners. More information is available at www.nationalveteransconference.com.

Contacts: Paul Sherbo, VA public affairs, paul.sherbo@va.gov, (303) 808-6326



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May 13, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 8 "WELCOME HOME" EVENT AT FORT LEONARD WOOD

- Who:** Veterans, Active Duty Personnel, National Guard and Reservists, and their families
- What:** "Welcome Home" Event conducted by Truman VA in partnership with Battlefront 2 Homefront and sponsored by the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Leonard Wood
- When:** Saturday, June 8
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Where:** Nutter Field House, Fort Leonard Wood
- Why:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities partner with community organizations to conduct "Welcome Home" events to assure that returning combat Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are fully aware of their VA health care benefits. These events allow for recognition of these Veterans and their families as well as for dissemination of other related information.

The June 8 event will include demonstrations of outdoor recreational activities for disabled and combat Veterans.



HUD: Donna White (202) 708-0685
VA: Josh Taylor (202) 461-7216

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 2013

HUD & VA TEAM UP TO PROVIDE PERMANENT HOMES TO 100 HOMELESS VETERANS IN MID-MISSOURI

HUD-VASH vouchers to build on 17 percent decline in veteran homelessness since 2009

WASHINGTON – Approximately 100 homeless veterans living on the streets and in shelters in mid-Missouri will soon find a permanent place to call home. U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced today that HUD will provide \$60 million to local public housing agencies across the country to provide permanent supportive housing to homeless veterans, many of whom are living with chronic disabling conditions. The Columbia, Mo. Housing Authority will receive \$57,550 to assist homeless veterans.

The supportive housing assistance announced today is provided through the *HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program* which combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by VA. Since 2008, a total of 48,385 vouchers have been awarded and 42,557 formerly homeless veterans are currently in homes because of HUD-VASH. The local dollars received will pay for 15 additional vouchers, bringing the total number of vouchers to 90 for homeless veterans in mid-Missouri.

Donovan and Shinseki announced this additional support for homeless veterans in an address to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference today in Washington. [Find out how much of this assistance will help homeless veterans in your area.](#)

“Our veterans have answered the call of duty. That’s why our nation has its own duty – to help homeless servicemen and women rejoin the very communities they have given so much to protect,” said Donovan. “These grants make it possible to help more veterans obtain housing, bringing us steps closer to our goal of ending veteran homelessness by 2015.”

“These HUD-VASH vouchers are a critical resource to accomplish our shared goal of ending Veterans’ homelessness in 2015,” Shinseki said. “With the continued support of President Obama, Congress, and our community partners, we will end homelessness among Veterans and provide these brave men and women with the earned care and benefits that help them live productive, meaningful lives.”

“With programs like HUD-VASH, we will end veteran homelessness by 2015 in mid-Missouri one veteran at a time,” said Sarah Froese, supervisor of the psychosocial rehabilitation team and homeless veterans programs at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital in Columbia, Mo. Froese reported that more than 500 veterans were served last year in the array of homeless veterans programs at Truman VA Hospital.

HUD-VASH is a critical part of the Obama Administration's commitment to end Veteran and long-term chronic homelessness by 2015. *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* serves as a roadmap for how the federal government will work with state and local communities to confront the root causes of homelessness, especially among former servicemen and women. HUD's annual "point in time" estimate of the number of homeless persons and families for 2012 found that veteran homelessness fell by 7.2 percent (or 4,876 people) since January 2011 and by 17.2 percent since January 2009. On a single night in January 2012, 62,619 veterans were homeless.

The grants announced today are part of \$75 million appropriated this year to support the housing needs of homeless veterans. Local public housing authorities provide rental assistance to homeless veterans while nearby VA Medical Centers (VAMC) offer supportive services and case management. This is the first round of the 2013 HUD-VASH funding. HUD expects to announce more HUD-VASH funding this summer.

VAMCs work closely with homeless veterans then refer them to public housing agencies for these vouchers, based upon a variety of factors, most importantly the duration of the homelessness and the need for longer term more intensive support to obtain and maintain permanent housing. The HUD-VASH program includes both the rental assistance the voucher provides and the comprehensive case management that VAMC staff provides.

Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. VA offers eligible homeless veterans clinical and supportive services through its medical centers across the U.S., Guam and Puerto Rico.

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HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination; and transform the way HUD does business. More information about HUD and its programs is available at www.hud.gov and <http://espanol.hud.gov>. You can also follow HUD on twitter @HUDnews, on facebook at www.facebook.com/HUD, or sign up for news alerts on HUD's Email List.

VA is the federal government's second-largest cabinet office. Secretary Shinseki has outlined three key priorities for the department: increase Veteran access to VA services and benefits, eliminate the disability claims backlog, and end Veteran homelessness. VA provides health care to more than 6 million people each year, in 91 million outpatient visits and 960,000 hospitalizations. This year, VA will provide over \$1 billion in specialized homeless program funding, more than \$58 billion annually in disability pay and pensions to 4.5 million Americans, \$10 billion in educational assistance, \$1 billion for home loans and \$2.6 billion for life insurance. More information about VA is available at www.va.gov.



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May 30, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRUMAN VA TO RECEIVE TWO NATIONAL VA AWARDS

- Who:** Truman VA management/staff and officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) central office in Washington, DC (William Schoenhard, VA Deputy Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management, and Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion)
- What:** Video teleconference (VTEL) presentation of two national VA awards
- VA Secretary's 2012 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Awards ("Performance Excellence Winner")
 - VA Secretary's Third Annual Diversity & Inclusion Award (Truman VA EEO Committee for "Team" category)
- When:** Tuesday, June 4 at 11:15 a.m.
- Where:** Truman VA Second Floor Auditorium
- Why:** The Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence awards are VA's highest awards for organizational performance excellence. Award criteria are the same as those used for the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence awards sponsored by the Department of Commerce. There are three levels of recognition: "Trophy Winners," "Performance Excellence Winners" and "Circle of Excellence Winners." Health organizations that have won awards based on Baldrige criteria outperform other hospitals in nearly every metric used to determine top hospitals.

The Secretary's Annual Diversity & Inclusion Awards criteria are aligned with VA's 2012-2016 diversity and inclusion strategic plan: building a diverse, high-performing workforce; cultivating a flexible, collaborative and inclusive work environment; and facilitating culturally competent public service/stakeholder relations through effective leadership and accountability. Truman VA's EEO Committee was acknowledged for being a highly effective team.



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June 11, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA Hires More Than 1,600 Mental Health Professionals to Meet Goal, Expands Access to Care and Outreach Efforts *Truman VA Hires Six New Mental Health Professionals*

Columbia, Mo. – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has met the goal to hire 1,600 new mental health professionals outlined in President Obama's August 31, 2012, Executive Order to Improve Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families. The Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital has hired six new mental health professionals and an additional eight to fill existing vacancies.

"I am proud of the hard work our staff has completed to bring these new staff members on board," said **Truman VA Director Sallie Houser-Hanfelder**. "We are not slowing our efforts however, and will continue to actively recruit for any vacant mental health positions for the future so Veterans will get the care they need. Truman VA continues to provide health care and mental health services to more Veterans each year. Last year, nearly 36,000 mid-Missouri Veterans were served by the Columbia facility and its community clinics.

As of May 31, 2013, VA has hired a total of 1,607 mental health clinical providers to meet the goal of 1,600 new mental health professionals outlined in the Executive Order. Additionally, VA has hired 2,005 mental health clinical providers to fill existing vacancies.

"Meeting this hiring milestone significantly enhances our ability to improve access to care for those Veterans seeking mental health services and demonstrates our continued commitment to the health and well-being of the men and women who have served the

-More-

Nation,” said **Secretary of Veterans Affairs Erick K. Shinseki**. “Meeting this goal is an important achievement, but we recognize that we must continue to increase access to the quality mental health care Veterans have earned and deserve.”

VA provides a full range of comprehensive mental health services across the country. In Fiscal Year 2012, more than 1.3 million Veterans received specialized mental health care from VA. This number has risen each year from 927,052 in Fiscal Year 2006. In addition to hiring more mental health professionals, VA is expanding the use of innovative technology to serve Veterans in rural and underserved areas. VA expects to increase the number of Veterans receiving care from tele-mental health services in Fiscal Year 2013 and has increased the number of Vet Centers from 233 in 2008 to 300 in 2012. Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and referral services.

In November 2011, VA launched an award-winning, national public awareness campaign called *Make the Connection*, which is aimed at reducing the stigma associated with seeking mental health care and informing Veterans, their families, friends, and members of their communities about VA resources. More information on *Make the Connection* can be found at www.maketheconnection.net.

Mental health professionals interested in seeking employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs can obtain information at www.vacareers.va.gov. Veterans and their families interested in learning more about the mental health services provided by VA can go to www.mentalhealth.va.gov.

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June 20, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Truman VA Hospital Offers E-Donate to Support Local Veterans

Columbia, Mo. – The Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital announced the availability of E-Donate, an online donation option at www.columbiamo.va.gov that will provide community members who wish to give back to Veterans at the medical center a simple and safe way to pledge their support to the fund of their choice.

"We've known for years that citizens want to show their support to the service members who have defended their freedoms," said **Truman VA Director Sallie Houser-Hanfelder**. "While not everyone will have the time to volunteer or contribute in person, now anyone can take five minutes online to thank Veterans in any number of ways."

The E-Donate option allows donors to select from a number of funds at Truman VA for which they wish to donate. Additionally, since Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administrative costs are appropriated, donors can be sure that 100 percent of their donations go to funds they select and for the Veteran patients they are choosing to support.

"Donated money at Truman VA goes to support our recreation, chaplain, emergency social services, homeless Veterans, personal hygiene items as well as our general purpose fund," said **Sheila Brocaille**, Acting Voluntary Service Officer. "People would be amazed if they could see how far their donations go toward making a difference in the lives of the Veterans we serve."

Donors can find the E-Donate button at www.columbiamo.va.gov. The actual donation is made through a secure site at the Department of Treasury's www.pay.gov. A minimum of \$5 is required for online donation.

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**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
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www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 11, 2013

VA Grants Going to (State) Agencies to Help End Veterans Homelessness

Initiative Targets 120,000 Homeless and At-Risk Vets and Families

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of \$ 186,900 in homeless prevention grant to the Missouri counties of: Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Chariton, Cole, Cooper, Gasconade, Howard, Macon, Maries, Miller, Moniteau, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Phelps, Pettis, Pulaski, Randolph, and Saline. The grants will serve approximately 50 homeless and at-risk Veteran families as part of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. This award will serve Veterans families associated with Welcome Home, Inc., one of 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

“With these grants, we are strengthening our partnership with community non-profits across the country to provide Veterans and their families with hope, a home, and a future,” said Shinseki. “The work of Supportive Services for Veteran Families program grantees has already helped us prevent and end homelessness among tens of thousands of homeless Veterans and their families, but as long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do.”

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, VA is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in -- or transitioning to -- permanent housing.

Those community organizations provide a range of services that promote housing stability among eligible very low income Veteran families.

Thanks to the SSVF grants, those community organizations will provide a range of services that promote housing stability and play a key role in connecting Veterans and their family members to VA services such as mental health care and other benefits.

More

Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

This is the program's third year. Last year, VA provided about \$100 million to assist approximately 50,000 Veterans and family members.

In 2009, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government's goal to end Veteran homelessness in 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 17.2 percent since 2009.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed over \$1 billion in fiscal year 2013 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, housing, job training, and education.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp. Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and their family members and friends can call VA's National Homeless Veterans Call Center at 1-877-4AID-VET

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July 17, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Truman VA Hospital Director Leaving *Appointed to VA Executive Position in Central Texas*

Columbia, Mo. – Sallie Houser-Hanfelder, director of the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital since Oct. 29, 2006, has been appointed director of the Central Texas VA Health Care System in Temple, Tex. effective Aug. 11.

"Words cannot express my appreciation for the opportunities that I have had working with the dedicated staff and employees at Truman VA," said Houser-Hanfelder. "I am proud of our accomplishments and the exceptional service we have provided to mid-Missouri Veterans."

During her tenure at the Columbia VA facility, her leadership has resulted in significant budget allocation increases, employee and program growth and Veterans served. Truman VA has experienced net increases in Veterans treated by 12.5 percent (+3,900), annual outpatient visits by 30 percent (+91,300) and employees by 30 percent (+324) since fiscal year 2007. Three new community based outpatient clinics have been added with two other clinics moving to new sites during her tenure. Her leadership enabled the organization to significantly improve performance in areas such as patient safety, internal and external communications, customer service and stakeholder involvement. A diverse and effective learning organization was developed and initiatives such as new mental health programs, programs for homeless Veterans, patient aligned care teams in primary care and the facility's cardiac care programs have been enhanced. The VA medical center exceeded mission critical measures in quality, patient satisfaction and access. Truman VA's receipt of a 2012 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award, based on Baldrige performance excellence criteria, and the VA Secretary's

MORE

Third Annual Award for Diversity and Inclusion was further evidence of her successful leadership. Finally, she developed and implemented a robust and comprehensive strategic capital plan with major clinical involvement and participation that resulted in more than \$60 million in projects under construction or on the design board. Those construction projects have enhanced the facility's ability to deliver outstanding, high quality health care services.

A national search for Houser-Hanfelder's replacement has begun. An announcement about an interim medical center director will be forthcoming.

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July 30, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRUMAN VA HOSTS HOMELESS VETERANS SUMMIT

Who: Community organizations and individuals interested in collaborating with Truman VA staff members involved in the array of programs and services that address homelessness in the Veteran population

What: Homeless Veterans Summit

When: Friday, August 2
2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where: Auditorium, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital

Why: Eric Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has established a goal to wipe out homelessness in the Veteran population by 2015. Extensive resources have been provided to enhance and build a wide array of programs to accomplish this goal. The Summit will provide an opportunity for Truman VA staff to be introduced and to provide program descriptions. Community partners including the City of Columbia, Mid Missouri Legal Aid, Welcome Home and the 13th Circuit Court have been invited to make presentations.

The event will include recognition of key community organizations and individuals for support and assistance in addressing homelessness. The following will be acknowledged: Thomas Asmar, Mid Missouri Legal Services, Veterans United Foundation, Welcome Home, Phoenix Programs, Columbia Housing Authority and VFW.



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July 30, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2013 National Veterans Small Business Conference in St. Louis

What: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with other federal agencies and commercial partners, is hosting the National Veterans Small Business Conference (NVSBC) from Aug. 6-8 at the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. This event is an extraordinary opportunity for Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) to connect directly with government and commercial Procurement Decision Makers (PDM) and business partners. NVSBC is the premier government event designed to help the Veteran entrepreneur community to maximize their opportunities to compete for and win new business.

Media please register at <http://www.nationalveteransconference.com/media/>

When: Aug. 6-8

Who: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Where: America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis (Please use Washington Avenue entrance)

Background: The upcoming event will provide multiple opportunities for small businesses to network and identify business opportunities. Attendees will have access to more than 450 representatives from 25 federal agencies and 35 commercial firms including more than 300 Procurement Decision Makers (program managers and contracting officers) and 47 senior leaders from VA. They have committed to spend three days engaging with participants in a variety of settings that will provide the access that is vital to successful business development, to include:

- Training and Business Requirement Sessions
- Dining With Decision Makers (breakfast and lunch)
- Networking Round Tables
- Conference Receptions
- Expo Hall of over 300 Exhibits.

More information is available at www.nationalveteransconference.com.

List of Major Corporations Seeking to do Business with Veteran Owned Small Businesses:

<http://nationalveteransconference.com/pdm/>

Contact: Paul Sherbo, VA public affairs, paul.sherbo@va.gov, 303-914-5855



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August 21, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Missouri VFW Auxiliary Donation for Cancer Research More than \$25,000 donated to Missouri Foundation for Medical Research

Columbia, Mo. – Rebecca L. Strauss, president of the Department of Missouri, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, recently presented a check in the amount of \$25,931.79 to the Missouri Foundation for Medical Research, a not-for-profit foundation that works to support research and education at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital.

"The donation represents a year of fund raising by our members," said Strauss. "The organization is proud to be able to contribute in support of continued cancer research at Truman VA."

The check was presented to **Sharon Feltman**, executive director of the local research foundation. She expressed gratitude on behalf of Truman VA research investigators and the veterans who will benefit from continued cancer research.

For more information about the Missouri Foundation for Medical Research, go to <http://mofmr.org/>.

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Photo Caption: (L-R) **Rob Crawford**, Administrative Officer, Truman VA Research; **Shadi Haddadin, MD**, Oncology/Hematology and Truman VA research investigator; **Robert Ritter**, Truman VA Associate Director; **Rebecca Strauss**, State President, VFW Auxiliary; **Lana Zerrer, MD**, Truman VA Chief of Staff; **Adam Whaley-Connell, DO**, Truman VA Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development; **Sharon Feltman**, Executive Director, Missouri Foundation for Medical Research; **Wynn Volkert, PhD**, Chairman, Board of Directors, Missouri Foundation for Medical Research.



Department of Veterans Affairs

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Media Advisory

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September 3, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRUMAN VA HOSTS MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

- Who:** Key stakeholders including community organizations and individuals affiliated with the Missouri Department of Mental Health and Truman VA
- What:** Mental Health Summit
- When:** Friday, September 6
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Where:** Auditorium, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital
- Why:** The purpose of the summit is to engage stakeholders with the goal of enhancing access to VA services and supporting community based mental health services for Veterans through the provision of educational and programmatic resources.

The event will include an overview of Truman VA behavioral health services, accessing VA services, community based care for Veterans, military culture and treatment implications, and an orientation to VA behavioral health clinical and support services. Approximately 60 individuals are expected to attend.



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September 17, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRUMAN VA HOSTS ANNUAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY CEREMONY

- Who:** Former prisoners of war and family members, Veterans and other interested persons
- What:** Annual National Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Recognition Day Ceremony
- When:** Friday, September 20
3:00 p.m.
- Where:** Auditorium, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital
- Why:** At Truman VA, we pause to remember the sacrifices and service of those who were prisoners of war, as well as those who are still listed as missing in action, and their families. Former prisoners of war in central Missouri have been invited to participate, and approximately 5-7 are expected to attend. **David Russell, PhD**, Missouri Commissioner of Higher Education, will be the featured speaker.

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What Veterans Deserve

Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs

November 11, 2013

(572 Words)

Last month, President Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to former Captain William D. Swenson, United States Army, for heroism and gallantry above and beyond the call of duty in the Battle of the Ganjgal Valley on September 8, 2009.

During 6 hours of intense combat, Captain Swenson did everything expected of leaders and more—keeping his ambushed unit fighting effectively, directing available fires, evacuating the wounded, and leading by example in repeatedly risking his personal safety to retrieve wounded Soldiers and Marines, Afghan allies, and fallen comrades.

Captain Will Swenson would tell you that there were many more heroes in the Ganjgal that day.

In the President's words, "[In] moments like this, Americans like Will remind us of what our country can be at its best—a Nation of citizens who look out for one another; who meet our obligations to one another, not just when it is easy, but also when it's hard. Maybe, especially when it's hard."

At the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we are honored to walk amongst, as well as work with, such heroes every day.

Today, less than 1% of our population shoulders the responsibilities of our national defense through their service in uniform, and just over 7% of all living Americans are Veterans. Veterans Day presents the opportunity to ask ourselves, "For their selfless service and willing sacrifice, what do Veterans need and deserve?"

What Veterans deserve is access to high quality and safe healthcare, benefits and services that buoy them against the rigors of military service, education that prepares them fully for their next success, safe and affordable housing, and meaningful and satisfying employment. At VA, we are privileged to deliver on the promises of the American people to those from whom we ask everything.

In the last 5 years, we have enrolled more than two million Veterans into VA healthcare. Since March of this year, we have reduced the backlog in compensation

claims from a record high of 611,000 to about 400,000, a decrease of 211,000 claims in 230 days—while increasing the accuracy of claims we process. We will eliminate the backlog in compensation claims in 2015.

We also committed to ending Veterans homelessness in 2015. Between 2009 and 2012, during a period of prolonged economic recovery, we have reduced the number of homeless Veterans by 17%, breaking previous patterns of increased homelessness during difficult economies. More needs to be done, but we have achieved a remarkable reversal. We expect another decrease this year.

Our gratitude for Veterans should not be a one day a year event, but an abiding commitment on every day of every year. There must be no question that this large and powerful country will meet its obligations to them with the same urgency, skill, and determination as it deploys them on critical missions when our Nation calls.

On this Veterans Day, every Veterans Day hereafter, and every day between them, Veterans must know that this Nation will keep Lincoln's promise to care for those "who shall have borne the battle" and their families.

I am honored to serve with the dedicated people of VA, and we are all privileged to serve with a President who has provided over a 56% increase to our budget requests so we can provide for the 7% of Americans, who are Veterans, what they need, deserve, and have earned. They answered their calls to duty; let us continue to answer ours.

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Eric K. Shinseki



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News Release

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November 13, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Veterans Day Essay Contest Winners Announced

Columbia, Mo. – Eight Columbia Public School District students are winners in the annual Veterans Day essay contest sponsored by the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital.

Open to middle school and high school students in the Columbia district, entries were reviewed by a language arts teacher at each school prior to submission. Truman VA staff members judged and determined the winning essays. Cash prizes from donated funds will be awarded to the winners on Friday, Nov. 15, at a recognition ceremony in Truman VA's auditorium.

Winners in the middle school division are **Meredith Asbury**, Oakland Middle School (first place); **Nancy Diallo**, West Middle School (second place); **Dalton Nunamaker**, Gentry Middle School (third place); and **Ilinca Popescu**, Jefferson Middle School (honorable mention). High school division winners are **Sara Ashbaugh** (first place); **Whitney Cravens** (second place); **Carlie Holcombe** (third place); and **Blake Hausman** (honorable mention). All four are students at Rock Bridge High School.

The essays will be placed on Truman VA's website.

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Department of
Veterans Affairs

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 19, 2013

Truman VA Hospital Named to Joint Commission's "Top Performers" List

WASHINGTON – The Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital in Columbia, Mo., was recently recognized as a top performer on key health care quality measures for 2012 by The Joint Commission, an independent panel that accredits and certifies health care organizations. .

"We are proud of the medical facilities that have been recognized for demonstrating VA's commitment to provide the high-quality care our Veterans have earned through their service," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "This achievement highlights the hard work of our VA medical staff to serve Veterans."

Truman VA Hospital was one of 32 VA medical centers that received the recognition. While all 151 VA medical facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission, the list recognizes facilities that are the top performers based on The Joint Commission's annual review of evidence-based care that is closely linked to positive patient outcomes. This program recognizes Joint Commission-accredited hospitals for a significant achievement in measures that produce the greatest positive impact on patient outcomes. The Joint Commission recognized 19 VA medical facilities as top performers in 2011/2012 and 20 VA medical facilities in 2010.

"VA health care has been a leader in performance measurement, electronic health records, research and clinical quality for more than a decade," said VA Undersecretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "I am proud of the staff, who work hard every day to care for America's Veterans."

The Joint Commission is a not-for-profit organization that ensures the quality of U.S. health care by its intensive evaluation of more than 20,000 health care organizations. In addition to being named in this report, this year's top performers are highlighted at www.jointcommission.org and The Joint Commission's Quality Check website at www.qualitycheck.org.

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