



Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program



“Recruit, Utilize, Support”

Many community hospice providers have implemented an innovative model for serving Veterans at the end of life - the Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program. The Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program aims to pair recruited Veteran Volunteers with hospice patients who have been identified as Veterans. Once paired with hospice patients who also have military experience, Veteran Volunteers have the unique ability to relate and connect with each patient thereby creating an environment where life review and healing may occur. Establishing a Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program is also a criterion for hospices accomplishing *We Honor Veterans* Partner Level Three.

What is the importance of Veteran Volunteers?

- Volunteers are essential to the delivery of quality hospice care.
- Veterans are a part of a distinct culture with their own common language and experience.
- When Veterans interact, their common language and experience can form a strong relational bond.
- The camaraderie created between Veterans has proven to be supportive for all involved.

Where can Veteran Volunteers be recruited?

- Find out who are Veterans in your existing volunteer pool.
- Ask your staff if they know any Veterans who would be interested in volunteering.
- Contact Veteran Service Organizations, VA facilities and State Veterans Homes for potential volunteers.
- Use internet and print media to spread the word about recruitment.

How should Veteran Volunteers be trained?

- Verify Veteran status by asking about their branch of service, rank, service dates and combat experience.
- Follow organizational policies for training non-Veteran hospice volunteers.
- With the assistance of professional staff screen for possible difficulties with PTSD.
- Accompany Veteran Volunteers on their initial visits with terminally ill Veterans and allow for debriefing.

What activities can Veteran Volunteers do?

- Assist Veterans in reminiscing/telling life stories.
- Educate and assist patients in receiving Veteran benefits.
- Take part in pinning ceremonies or distribute certificates for Veterans Day and other recognition events.
- Assist in replacing lost medals.
- Provide transportation (based on organizational policy).

Supporting Veteran Volunteers

- Conduct interdisciplinary team support meetings.
- Recognize and thank Veteran Volunteers in person, and through newsletters and email postings.
- Provide continuing education with Veteran-specific content to staff and volunteers.
- Continue to monitor Veteran Volunteers to assess negative reactions.

Resources

- *We Honor Veterans* [volunteer webpage](#)
- [Hospice Veteran Volunteer Outreach and Support](#) [PPT]
- [Volunteers: An Essential Ingredient in Caring for Veterans at the EOL](#) [PPT]

For more information, visit www.WeHonorVeterans.org or contact Veterans@nhpco.org.