



Articles & Features

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Martinsburg VA Medical Center Hosts 2009 Hero Haven Homeless Veterans Stand Down



Members of the community including Veteran Service Organizations joined more than 150 staff from the Martinsburg VA Medical Center on Dec. 12 to care for local homeless Veterans. Photo: VA/Cali Coulthard

The Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center hosted the 2nd Annual Hero Haven Homeless Veteran Stand Down on Dec. 12, 2009. This highly central program provided medical screening, employment support, housing services, and clothing to eligible homeless Veterans.

A critical issue nationwide, about one-third of the adult homeless population are Veterans, with an estimated 131,000 Veterans on the streets any given night according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The number of homeless Vietnam Veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died in that war, and roughly, 56 percent of homeless Veterans are of African American or Hispanic descent.

This year VA will spend \$3.2 billion to prevent and reduce homelessness among Veterans, with \$2.7 billion on medical services and \$500 million on specific homeless programs. With 85 percent of homeless funding going to health care, the implication is homelessness is very much a health care issue—heavily burdened by depression and substance abuse.

For more information visit the VA Homeless Veterans web site at:

<http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>

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