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VA Begins “Summer of Service” to Bolster Support for Veterans

Calls Upon Individuals, Organizations and Communities to Serve Veterans in Nationwide Effort

(Buffalo, New York) – A new nationwide initiative – a “Summer of Service” – seeks the help of citizens in Western New York to create and expand partnerships to grow the number of individuals and organizations serving Veterans here.

VA Western New York Healthcare System is renewing its commitment to Veterans by inviting them and the community to learn more about VA programs and other opportunities to serve Veterans during an open house, June 30 at the Buffalo VA Medical Center, 3495 Bailey Avenue, from 9am-11am in Freedom Hall, room 301.

“We have made progress over the past year addressing the challenges we face in delivering care and benefits to millions of Veterans and their families,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “While there is more work to do to honor our commitment to Veterans, we also recognize that VA cannot do it alone. We are asking Americans everywhere to join the Summer of Service and help us give back to those who have given so much to our nation.”

In the coming weeks, the VA Western New York Healthcare System will be working closely with Congressional partners, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), mayors and local communities, private sector and non-profit organizations, and VA employees to identify new and innovative ways to support VA’s commitment and mission to care for those who “have borne the battle” and their families.

The Department has an outstanding volunteer program, which will be highlighted throughout the country this summer. VA will build upon the ongoing work of its more than 350,000 employees and 76,000 volunteers around the nation – and the 706 volunteers throughout VA Western New York Healthcare System in Buffalo and Batavia. While the central focus of the campaign will be increasing volunteerism and partnerships, it will also provide individuals and communities an opportunity to support other important priorities. Despite a hiring effort that brought more than 11,000 net-new employees onboard over the past year, VA still needs more health care providers, claims specialists, medical support assistants, and cemetery directors to continue to expand needed services. VA’s partners can help by getting the word out this summer.

In an effort to improve the Veteran’s customer service experience, VA has begun the most comprehensive reorganization in its history. The initiative, called MyVA, has been guided by ideas and recommendations from Veterans, employees and stakeholders.

“There is no mission nobler than serving Veterans and their families. At VA, we constantly strive to improve the way we do our job,” said McDonald. “State by state, community by community, person by person, there are a number of ways we can all come together to serve veterans. From expanded partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations, to accelerating hiring, to celebrating the commitment of VA employees and volunteers – we need the help of communities everywhere to succeed.”

If organizations are interested in an information table at VA’s Summer of Service, contact Evangeline Conley, 862-8753 or Evangeline.Conley@va.gov by Friday, June 26.

Volunteers can also help serve Veterans by visiting <http://www.volunteer.va.gov/> or call 715-862-8671 or 585-297-1196 to volunteer in Buffalo or Batavia. Follow #VASummerOfService on [Vantage Point](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and join VA in caring for America’s Veterans.

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