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Governor



STATE OF NEVADA
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January 2017- Veterans In Care (VIC) Update

The NDVS has launched a “first of its kind” initiative that has not been done in any other state. This is a continuation of the commitment to have Nevada be the most veteran friendly state in the nation. The initiative is an effort to find our “silent veteran heroes” who may reside in community settings, and are not enrolled in the VA system or are not aware of benefits and services. The vision of VIC currently encompasses three related components: 1) Education on Benefits and Programs for veterans; 2) Veteran Culture Education and Training for facility staff; and 3) Quality of Life Recognition and Communication for the veterans.

In late April NDVS reached out to 417 Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facility providers to let all know the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) is attempting to find our many veterans who reside in care facilities. Over the past few months, **90** facilities have responded helping us to locate **1200+** veterans in residence. As a result of this first group of responses, NDVS has launched **23** recognition events at **23** facilities, honoring, **577+** veterans. Each will have been honored with certificates from the state and pins denoting them as "Nevada's Heroes". In addition we have recognized over **200+** WWII veterans. We continue to anticipate finding more than 3000 veterans in care settings as we move into 2017, expanding the outreach to home based care providers.

Our Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) have attended these events to share benefit and program information for those who may not know they are eligible for certain benefits. Our team continues to work on scheduling continuing recognition ceremonies with those who have responded for events in 2017.

It is NDVS' statutory mission to assure all veterans, regardless of where they live, receive information, education and support to secure their federal and state benefits. Over the past few years, some of the qualifying criteria have changed and we have found many of our veterans are not receiving benefits they have rightly earned. In addition, many of our veterans have not been able to navigate the VA systems. Of our 577 veterans, we have discovered only 68 are declared to be receiving VA medical care and 151 are receiving Aid and Attendance. Our VSO's have been helping interested veterans in these settings (as well as the surviving spouses) to obtain and increase benefits when possible.

NDVS has the planning and development of CEU training workshops underway, which will be provided for no cost to assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, regarding the nuances of providing care to veterans and military culture. These workshops launch in January of 2017 in partnership with the Perry Foundation and Dr. Jennifer Carson. This educational outreach will occur throughout 2017, with 8 total workshops (4 north and 4 south). The first two in the series will be January 9th in Las Vegas and January 13th in Reno. In addition, NDVS is working with the Sanford Center for Aging Geriatric Education Center staff to conduct an additional 3 workshops on managing difficult behaviors related to care of our elder veterans. These will be offered in Reno and Las Vegas, as well as a video conference to the rural areas.

The Veterans In Care (VIC) Program is proving to be heartwarming and beneficial to the veterans and the facility staff, and has demonstrated that we as a state truly care about those who served our country.

Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy Simons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "W".

Wendy Simons, Deputy Director Wellness

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