



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
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VHA National Center for Healthcare
Advancement and Partnerships

Bridging the Gap Through Partnerships



In this issue

- A Note from the Chief Officer and Nurse Executive | **2**
- HAP Celebrates 10 Years of the National Community Partnership Challenge | **3**
- A Look Back at a Decade of CPC Winners | **4**
- CPC's First Winning Organization, Then and Now | **5**
- VSPN and Bexar County Help Veterans with Military-to-Civilian Transition | **6**
- Spotlight on the American Lung Association | **8**
- VHA-Salesforce Partnership Guides Veterans to Success | **9**
- VHA and Parkinson's Foundation Collaborate to Support Veterans with Parkinson's Disease | **10**
- HAP Chief Officer and Nurse Executive Inducted as an American Academy of Nursing Fellow | **12**

Learn more about the organizations featured in this newsletter:

- [American Lung Association](#)
- [Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services](#)
- [Jesse Brown VA Medical Center](#)
- [Parkinson's Foundation](#)
- [Salesforce Military](#)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

A Note from the Chief Officer and Nurse Executive

Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships \(HAP\)](#) is committed to leveraging Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), VHA, and community partner resources to support Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. By facilitating partnerships and initiatives with community organizations, HAP acknowledges community organizations are well-positioned to serve Veterans locally and strives to increase accessibility for the resources and tools Veterans and their families need.

VHA's [National Community Partnership Challenge \(CPC\)](#), led by HAP, celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2024. Past submissions include partnerships addressing employment, mental and physical health care, homelessness, food insecurity, and more. These partnerships leverage VHA and community resources to increase accessibility for the most vulnerable Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. The 2024 CPC theme is "Bridging the Gap Through Partnerships," and submission details will be provided in coming months.

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center (VAMC) Food Bank was the 2014 inaugural CPC winner. Food insecurity is a leading Social Determinant of Health, and an issue [1 in 6 military and Veteran families](#) face. By piloting the client-choice model, Jesse Brown VAMC, in collaboration with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and other partners, enables Veterans and their families to access nutritious food and community support.

One of VA's main priorities is addressing the rising suicide rate among Veterans. To leverage local resources, the Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network (VSPN) initiative partners with community organizations like Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services, a south Texas organization that provides Veterans with claims and appeals assistance for VA benefits, employment resources, and community outreach. In collaboration with VSPN, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services facilitates peer sponsor training to help Veterans successfully navigate the military-to-civilian transition.

Veterans face higher rates of lung disease than the general population, and lung cancer affects almost [8,000 Veterans each year](#). VHA's partnership with the American Lung Association is a force-multiplier in the effort to increase resources for research, treatment, and disease management for Veterans. Focused on improving current healthcare options and advancing research for future cures, the VHA-American Lung Association partnership illustrates VHA's commitment to driving healthcare innovation for Veterans living with lung disease.

VHA supports Veterans during and after the military-to-civilian transition, with employment assistance as a cornerstone of the Whole Health approach. Partnering with Salesforce enables VHA to provide useful resources and training for Veterans and their spouses interested in technology careers. Salesforce's free Trailhead training modules are foundational in advancing a current career or pursuing a new career path.

VHA provides many resources and tools to support Veterans living with Parkinson's disease (PD). To amplify these efforts, HAP facilitates the VHA-Parkinson's Foundation partnership, increasing available resources for treatment, management, and community engagement for Veterans, their families, and care partners. The renewed memorandum of agreement, signed in August, signifies VHA's continued dedication to providing Veterans with the "best and soonest care possible."

Finally, and with deep gratitude, I announce my induction into the American Academy of Nursing 2023 Class of Fellows. I appreciate this meaningful opportunity to amplify and disseminate the great work and impact of HAP on Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

To learn more about current partnerships, projects, and events, visit the HAP website at <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/CPC.asp>.

In good health,

**Chien Chen, MSN, RN, PMHBC,
NPD-BC, NEA-BC, FAAN**

*HAP Chief Officer and
Nurse Executive*

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HAP Celebrates 10 Years of the National Community Partnership Challenge

VHA and [HAP](#) celebrate 10 years of partnerships that advance the health and well-being of Veterans and their communities. VHA's [CPC](#), facilitated by HAP, recognizes recipients for their efforts in a variety of areas such as suicide prevention, hunger relief, legal services, mental health, health insurance assistance, and homelessness.

The 2024 CPC anniversary theme is "Bridging the Gap Through Partnerships." The initiative focuses on partnerships that connect Veterans to VA resources or augment existing VHA services. These partnerships create platforms for local organizations to better serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

"Each year, we receive dozens of submissions for the CPC," said Georgi Bady, HAP health system specialist. "The number of submissions we get is a testament to the great work our VHA staff and partners are doing to advance innovative, safe, and ethical care and services that increase accessibility to health care resources for our nation's Veterans."

Each year, the number and diversity of partnerships increase. According to Bady, these partnerships are instrumental in recognizing the specific needs of Veterans in their communities.

"By fostering partnerships that target these needs directly, we've made significant strides in improving healthcare access, employment opportunities, and overall well-being," Bady said. "In the next decade, we're aiming to expand CPC's outreach and impact. We want to encourage even more innovative partnerships, address emerging challenges faced by Veterans, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for those who have served our country."

Nominations for the 2024 CPC can be submitted through an online portal, with additional instructions provided soon. The submission period for the 2024 CPC opens **January 1, 2024**, and closes **March 8, 2024**.

VA medical centers, health care centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, program offices, and VHA employees can submit entries. Eligible partnerships must be nonmonetary between VHA and a nongovernmental organization (NGO), and all submissions should have concurrence from the submitting organization's leadership. Entries must align with the 2024 theme and demonstrate how the partnership serves and impacts Veterans of all races, ethnicities, sexual identities, languages, learning styles, and/or spiritual preferences.

Winners will be announced during an in-person CPC Showcase this summer. Additional information about the Showcase will be shared as it becomes available.

For more information about the CPC, visit <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/CPC.asp>.

A Look Back at a Decade of CPC Winners

2014

- **Jesse Brown VA Medical Center** for working with partners to provide hunger relief to 1,400 unique Veterans and 5,000 family members through the Jesse Brown Food Pantry.
- **Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center** for partnering with a major airline to provide air travel for disabled Veterans and their families.

2015

- **VA Connecticut Healthcare System** for partnering with the Connecticut Legal Center to provide free legal services to help Veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness overcome housing, healthcare, and income barriers.

2016

- **San Francisco VA Health Care System** for partnering with the Y of San Francisco to maximize community resources and improve the overall health and well-being of Veterans.
- **Tennessee Valley Healthcare System** for partnering with Middle Tennessee State University to place a VA mental health counselor on campus, providing 1,000 student Veterans an opportunity for mental health services.

2017

- **Albany Stratton Medical Center** for partnering with the Veteran Service Agencies and Faith-Based Organizations to educate Veterans, Service members, and civilian communities about suicide prevention strategies and the risk of gun violence.
- **Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center** for partnering with local law enforcement agencies to train first responders in mental illness, violence risk, and interface strategies.
- **VA Connecticut Healthcare System** for partnering with the Southwestern Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging to expand services for Veteran-specific mental health needs.

2018

- **Central Texas Veterans Health Care System** for partnering with the Central Texas Food Bank to improve food security for Veterans and their families.
- **Phoenix VA Health Care System** for partnering with the Arizona Coalition for Military Families to address Veterans' elevated suicide risk by connecting individuals to the support line, mapping resources on an online platform, and training community members as Military/Veteran Resource Navigators.
- **VA San Diego Healthcare System** for partnering with AMVETS to provide furniture, household items, cooking utensils, and appliances for California's homeless Veterans.

2019

- **Central Texas Veterans Health Care System** for partnering with the Salvation Army to increase food security among Veterans, their families, and others in Waco and Temple, Texas.
- **James A. Haley Hospital and Clinics** for partnering with the American Cancer Society to provide Veterans with coaching, information, and resources for their cancer treatment plans.
- **VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System** for partnering with Helmets to Hardhats to provide Veterans in the court or justice system with opportunities for training or employment in skilled trades.

2020

- **Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center** for partnering with the Lowcountry Hospitality Association to help Veterans find positions in the hospitality industry.
- **Cincinnati VA Medical Center** for partnering with Freestore Foodbank to provide more than 10,000 meals to hungry Veterans and their families.
- **Toledo Community Based Outpatient Clinic** for partnering with the Toledo Bar Association to provide free monthly walk-in clinics for Veterans with legal issues affecting social determinants of health, such as access to employment and safe housing.

2021

- **Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center** for partnering with six community hospital organizations to improve mental health care for Veterans transitioning from community inpatient treatment to VA outpatient treatment.
- **Rocky Mountain MIRECC VA Patient Center of Inquiry** for partnering with 13 community organizations to help community partners build suicide prevention programs.
- **VA Palo Alto Care System** for their partnership with Bay Legal Aid to integrate legal assistance screening into Veterans' well-being assessment and enable social workers to refer Veterans to a community partner for cost-free attorneys.

2022

- **Michael H. Crescenz VA Medical Center** for partnering with Heroic Gardens to offer nature- and plant-based healing opportunities to Veterans through virtual gardening workshops and walking meditation groups.
- **Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center** for partnering with Wichita Animal Action to bridge the gap for Veterans who struggle to financially support their pets while they are receiving inpatient care and services.
- **VA Boston Healthcare System** for partnering with Veterans Voice Radio Network to broadcast and market critical information to military members, Veterans, and family members at no cost.

2023

- **Syracuse VA Medical Center** for partnering with the National Alliance of Mental Illness and Clear Path for Veterans to provide peer and family support services for Veterans and their families.
- **VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System** for partnering with AyZar Outreach, Bentwood School, U.S. VETS, and Village for Veterans to provide temporary and permanent housing for Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- **West Palm Beach Healthcare System** for partnering with the Delray Beach Community Center and West Palm Beach Sheriff's Office to provide police officers with Veteran-relevant training to improve understanding and promote positive interactions and outcomes.

CPC's First Winning Organization, Then and Now



Managing the CPC provides [HAP](#) with opportunities to highlight successful, nonmonetary partnerships between VHA and NGOs that serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. HAP remains committed to supporting community partnerships that expand VA's health care services to Veterans and their beneficiaries in the communities where they live, work, or engage in recreation.

Veterans and military families often experience employment and [food security](#) challenges after the transition to civilian life, with Veterans experiencing higher rates of [homelessness](#) and more severe [food insecurity](#) than nonveterans. Through the annual CPC, HAP spotlights community partnerships that provide supplementary resources to increase employment rates and food security for Veterans and transitioning Service members (TSMs).

"With [1 in 6](#) military and Veteran families experiencing food insecurity, it is imperative that HAP continues to facilitate partnerships with community organizations focused on providing necessary resources for Veterans and their families," said Chien Chen, HAP chief officer and nurse executive.

Jesse Brown VAMC Food Pantry

The positive outcomes of the CPC are exemplified by the Jesse Brown VAMC Food Pantry, winner of the 2014 Challenge. "It was very exciting to be part of the inaugural year of the CPC," said Patrick Gleason, chief of the Center for Development and Civic Engagement at Jesse Brown VAMC. "And I'll never forget our first Veterans Day pantry event when a Veteran said 'Patrick, now this is true healing!'"

The Jesse Brown VAMC Food Pantry, a collaborative effort by the Jesse Brown VAMC, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and other community partners, enables Veterans to choose their own food, similar to a grocery store. This "client choice" model empowers Veterans to make their own selections based on preference and dietary need and combats the loss of dignity Veterans often feel when struggling to provide for their families.

Feeding Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors is a unifying mission in the community. With a "no soldier left behind" mindset, along with regular volunteer efforts from local Veterans, corporations, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and the Chicago FBI office, the Jesse Brown VAMC Food Pantry brings the community together to combat food insecurity for Veterans and their families.

Though the Jesse Brown VAMC Food Pantry was forced to pause their services due to COVID-19, the goal is to reopen in 2024. "Prior to the COVID shutdown, we provided a robust selection of groceries to between 125 and 150 Veteran families each week," said Gleason. "Our main goal is to get back to doing that again!"

VSPN and Bexar County Help Veterans with Military-to-Civilian Transition

Many Veterans and their families experience increased stress during the military-to-civilian transition, due to [losing the support system the military provides](#). To help address the challenges Veterans and their families face, VHA developed the [Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network \(VSPN\)](#) initiative. Led by [HAP](#), VHA partners with local government, State, and nongovernmental community organizations to provide assistance with housing, education, employment, health care, and more.

There are over a dozen partners aligned with the VSPN initiative, including the [Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services](#) in Bexar County, Texas. As an advocate agency, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services seeks to empower TSMs, Veterans, military spouses, and survivors by providing access to services, resources, and beneficial community-based events in the greater San Antonio metropolitan area.

The department is [accredited by VA](#) through partnership with the Texas Veterans Commission and provides services at no cost to the Service members, Veterans, and military families of Bexar County. Additionally, the department leverages the state-sponsored Texas Veterans Network, powered by Combined Arms, to connect Veterans and military families with an array of community services and resources.

"Oftentimes, the biggest challenge is knowing where to turn for assistance and doing so in a timely manner," said Keith Wilson, executive director of Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services. "Our goal is to make those connections before a challenge becomes a crisis."



Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services Resources

- **Online [appointment scheduling](#):** Schedule in-person or phone appointments to discuss claims, appeals, benefits, pension, and more.
- **VA benefit claims assistance:** Request expert help for VA disability claims, appeals, survivor benefits, burial benefits, and counseling.
- **Employment services:** Access employment resources such as support for TSMs, career mapping and navigation, free job-readiness workshops, career counseling, and career placement.
- **Bexar County Military & Veterans Services Center:** Visit the Veteran-staffed center for personalized job-placement assistance, housing referrals, utilities assistance, mental health treatment, education resources, and homelessness prevention.
- **Client Outreach:** Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services provides outreach to homebound, homeless, and incarcerated Veterans and presents benefits information at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other organizations throughout Bexar County.
- **Peer Sponsors:** Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services, in alignment with the VSPN initiative, pairs local Service members and Veterans with trained peers dedicated to helping with the military-to-civilian transition.

In fiscal year 2023, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services met with 2,215 clients and helped facilitate claims compensation rewards for their clients totaling more than \$8,700,000, exceeding their annual goal by 100%. In the past year alone, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services opened six new satellite offices at Wayland Baptist University, Endeavors, North West San Antonio VA Clinic, Westside Education and Training Center, Texas A&M - San Antonio, and Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston.

As a community partner aligned with the VSPN initiative, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services collaborates with VA to reduce Veteran suicide risk factors and assist with community reintegration. Adding sponsor support to standard community-based interventions [increases reintegration success rates](#), and many Veterans believe positive support systems are the [most impactful element](#) of a successful military-to-civilian transition. In support of the VSPN initiative, Bexar County Department of Military and Veterans Services helps recruit sponsors through outreach and community engagements to provide personalized and proactive assistance to Veterans and their families.

“VHA partners aligned with the VSPN initiative, like Bexar County Department of Military and Veteran Services, provide critical resources for Veterans and their families during a challenging time in their lives, a time when [suicide risk for Veterans is elevated](#),” said Christie Eickhoff, HAP health system specialist. “Organizations that provide peer support and Veteran-centered resources can reduce risks, improve health outcomes, and make a transition out of the military more successful.”



Spotlight on the American Lung Association

VA and the [American Lung Association](#) share a common goal – to improve the health and well-being of Veterans living with lung disease. In a partnership facilitated by [HAP](#), VHA and the American Lung Association work together to expand Veterans' access to health care information and resources and provide educational opportunities for healthcare professionals treating patients with lung disease.

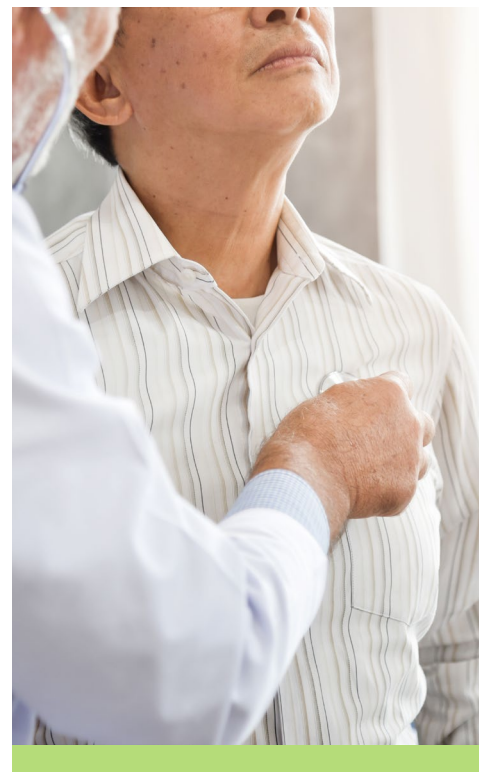
Veterans experience higher rates of lung diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) than the general population due to [economic disadvantage, higher smoking rates, and service-related exposure to toxic materials](#). Approximately [25% of Veterans](#) are diagnosed with COPD, while the prevalence of COPD among the [general population is only 6%](#), and many Veterans also begin to show signs of COPD earlier than nonveterans.

In addition, lung cancer is the deadliest cancer Veterans face, with [almost 8,000 Veterans](#) diagnosed and treated every year. "Thanks in part to treatment advances and increased access to care, the lung cancer survival rate has increased by nearly 50% over the past decade," said Bev Stewart, national senior director of Lung Disease Programs at the American Lung Association. "However, lung cancer still takes the lives of 365 people every day. The American Lung Association is dedicated to advancing the research and pursuing the legislative reform necessary to continue increasing survival rates and saving lives."

American Lung Association Resources

The American Lung Association supports more than 20 million individuals each year through various programs and initiatives and encourages prevention through education, advocacy, and research.

- **[LUNG FORCE](#):** A nationwide strategic cause initiative uniting those impacted by lung cancer through education, advocacy, and research. "Team Turquoise," with a variety of community events and team opportunities, includes more than 200,000 members.
- **[Online support resources](#):** Educational materials, screening quizzes, personal stories, and more to support Veterans and their caregivers through diagnosis, treatment, and management.
- **[Advocacy efforts](#):** Opportunities for advocates to speak out in support of lung protection initiatives, programs, and laws.
- **[Better Breathers Club](#):** A program connecting people living with chronic lung disease and their caregivers to education and in-person and virtual support groups. In-person meetings are available nationwide.
- **[Freedom From Smoking® Plus](#):** A pre-paid 1-year membership to American Lung Association's online cessation program available to Veterans and their immediate family members. When used in combination with a quit-smoking medication, Freedom From Smoking has a success rate of up to 60%.



American Lung Association Recent Events

- **[Respiratory Advocacy Day](#):** An annual advocacy opportunity, established in 2023. During the inaugural event, the American Lung Association's Lung Champions asked members of Congress to co-sponsor the Family Asthma Act, support investments to improve the nation's lung health, and support legislation to reform supplemental oxygen in Medicare. This spring, patient advocates will return to Washington D.C. to ask that Congress take further steps to help increase lung cancer survival rates.
- **[LUNG FORCE Walks](#):** Walk and Run/Walk events where participants celebrate positive change, commit to ending lung cancer, and honor the memory of those lost to the disease. These events provide critical funds for research, early detection initiatives, and outreach to vulnerable communities.
- **[Better Breathers Clubs](#):** The Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System club was recently added to the roster of in-person and virtual support groups for those living with chronic lung disease.

VA Resources

- **Lung cancer screening:** VA provides annual, low-dose CT scans to healthcare-eligible Veterans, enabling healthcare providers to intervene earlier, when cancer is more treatable.
- **Research and Advancements:** VA's respiratory health guide devoted to new and ongoing research, major accomplishments, and published articles.
- **Environmental Exposure Education Class Series for Veterans:** Classes designed to provide Veterans with information on what is currently known about exposures and health concerns.
- **Veterans' Health Matters Podcast Series:** Podcast series sponsored by the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center focused on issues important to the health care community, Veterans, and their caregivers.

"November is National COPD Awareness Month, a significant commemorative marker for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors," said Randy Moler, HAP program analyst. "With the prevalence of lung disease in Veteran populations increasing, HAP is committed to cultivating partnerships that enable Veterans to access a broader range of educational resources and healthcare services."

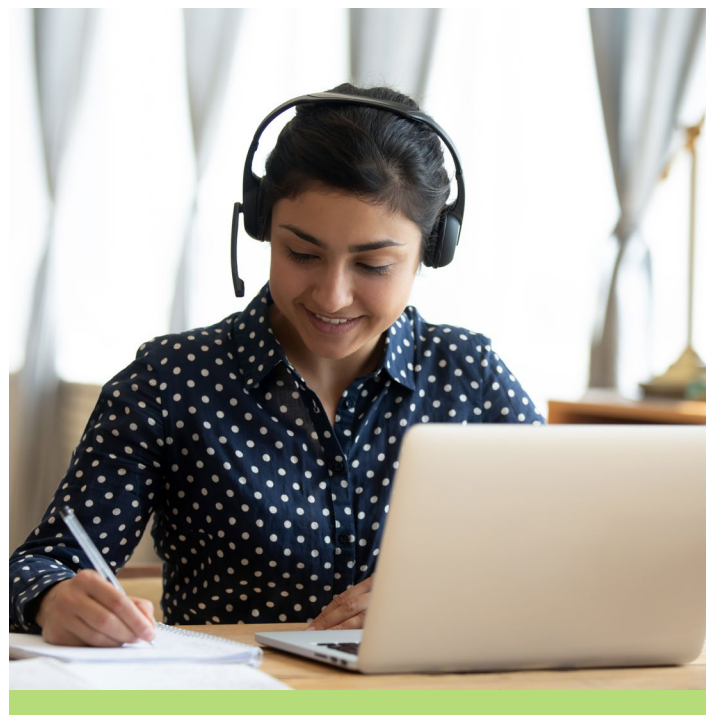
VHA-Salesforce Partnership Guides Veterans to Success

As part of its mission to care for Veterans and their families, VHA partners with [Salesforce](#) to provide free learning and certifications in high-demand technology fields for Veterans and their spouses. Facilitated by [HAP](#), the VHA-Salesforce nonmonetary partnership amplifies the skills learning, career advancement tools, and employment resources available through [Salesforce Military](#) that help Veterans and their spouses pursue successful careers in the technology industry.

"VHA's partnership with Salesforce illustrates VA's commitment to providing Veteran-centered care to Veterans and their families during a critical time in their post-military journey," said Christie Eickhoff, HAP health system specialist. "Through partnership, more Service members, Veterans, and their spouses can develop valuable skills, improve mental health resiliency, learn about VA benefits, and access employment resources that can make their career transition more successful."

Through Salesforce Military's free reskilling resources and [Trailhead](#), Salesforce's free online learning platform, Veterans can access self-paced virtual skills learning and receive vouchers to attend classes and complete certification exams. Veterans can also use the Salesforce Alliance, which prioritizes hiring net new talent, and connect with millions of other career-focused Veterans and spouses in the Trailblazer Community.

Eric Quarles' experience as a Navy Veteran trained through Trailhead exemplifies the positive impacts of the VHA-Salesforce partnership. Quarles, who now works for Salesforce, was initially drawn to the company for its reputation as a tech leader and was pleasantly surprised by leadership's appreciation for his past military experience.



Quarles said, "[What] won me over was just how quickly my 25 years of naval aviation experience was recognized and fostered at Salesforce. In contrast to the break-in period we have at a new command, I felt like I was a 100% contributing member from the very first call I joined. I can now say that finding a company that recognized me as a full-fledged sales executive from day one has been life changing."

For Veterans and their spouses interested in advancing their current careers or pursuing new job opportunities, Trailhead provides free, virtual, and self-paced learning content for in-demand skills. Using a gamified format, Trailhead provides learners with "trails," guided learning

paths participants can follow to complete badges and certifications. Participants can complete modules specific to the subject matter to receive badges and points marking their progress. After they earn 100 badges and 50,000 points, participants achieve “Ranger” status and are typically prepared to complete certification exams, which are free for Salesforce Military enrollees.

Together, VA and Salesforce support a successful military-to-civilian transition and help Veterans and their families achieve their career goals. When asked if military experience was useful in his new role, Quarles said, “My military background has been instrumental in shaping my success as an Enterprise Account Executive at Slack. The discipline, work ethic, and leadership skills instilled during my service continue to serve me well in the sales arena, which is chock full of high performing individuals. Effective

communication, resilience, and problem-solving abilities honed in the Navy have allowed me to connect with clients, navigate my new reality as a civilian, and adapt to dynamic sales environments.”

Additional VHA and Salesforce Resources

- **[Veteran Mental Health and Resiliency Resources Module](#)**: Module for Veterans and their families to learn about VA mental health resources.
- **[VA Benefits for Veterans Module](#)**: Module highlighting how VA supports military Veterans and their families.
- **[Salesforce VA Benefits Module Information Sheet](#)**: Information about the updated VA Benefits for Veterans Trailhead module.

VHA and Parkinson’s Foundation Collaborate to Support Veterans with Parkinson’s Disease

In August 2023, VHA and the [Parkinson’s Foundation](#) renewed the memorandum of agreement first established in 2020. Facilitated by [HAP](#), this partnership renewal reaffirms VHA’s commitment to provide care and support for Veterans living with PD.

“With an estimated [110,000 Veterans](#) living with PD, there is a need for expanded healthcare support and resources,” said Randy Moler, HAP program analyst. “The renewed partnership with the Parkinson’s Foundation will continue the good work seen in previous years.”

PD is a chronic progressive neurological disease resulting in various movement-related difficulties, [such as rigidity, delayed movement, poor balance, and tremors](#). Approximately 40% of people with PD experience mild cognitive impairment, [with almost 90% developing speech and/or swallowing impairment](#). Although there is currently no cure for PD, many effective medications and treatment options are available.

“The Parkinson’s Foundation facilitates outreach, raises awareness about the expert care available through VA health care, helps connect Veterans to VA [Parkinson’s Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Centers \(PADRECCs\)](#), and provides educational materials to help Veterans understand and navigate a PD diagnosis,” said Gretchen Glenn, associate director of education and social worker of the Philadelphia VA PADRECC. “These resources help Veterans get the support and care they deserve as early as possible in their PD journey.”

Since 2020, VA and the Parkinson’s Foundation have worked together to host 15 education events for Veterans and their families, totaling over 8,000 registrants. In the last 12 months alone, there were over 15,000 visits to the Parkinson’s Foundation Veteran-specific webpages.

Parkinson’s Foundation Resources

- **[Parkinson’s Foundation FAQs for Veterans](#)**: A detailed list of frequently asked questions about PD, diagnosis, treatment, management, and Veteran-specific VA benefits and resources.
- **[Digital Resources for Veterans with PD](#)**: An extensive collection of digital books, fact sheets, videos, webinars, and podcasts for Veterans at all stages of PD.
- **[Digital Resources for VA Health Professionals](#)**: A variety of educational materials, podcast episodes, webinars, and a dedicated helpline.
- **[Team Training Program](#)**: A virtual or hybrid interactive course designed to increase knowledge about PD and facilitate comprehensive care and treatment.

- **[Learning Lab](#)**: Best-care training courses designed to help healthcare professionals provide better PD care while earning CNE credit.
- **[Education Series for Community Providers](#)**: Free, asynchronous series of online accredited courses for community providers designed to improve PD treatment and outcomes.
- **[Veteran Webinars](#)**: A series of one-hour episodes hosted by PD experts that cover symptoms, progression, treatments, management, and more.

Recent webinars include August's "Veterans and Parkinson's: Managing Anxiety, Depression, and Apathy" and October's "Veterans and Parkinson's: Planning for the Future," exceeding 600 and 1,000 registrants, respectively. Through collaboration with the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center (West LA PADRECC) and the Southeast PADRECC Central Virginia VA Healthcare System, Veterans with PD were provided mental health resources and helpful tips on planning for advanced care and treatments.

On December 14, 2023, the Parkinson's Foundation held the "[Veterans and Parkinson's: Environmental Exposures in Veterans with Parkinson's](#)" webinar. Discussion topics included the ways in which environmental exposure and toxins can increase the risk of PD for some Veterans and the role head trauma plays in the development of PD.

VHA Resources

- **[PADRECCs](#)**: VHA's PADRECC home page.
- **[My Parkinson's Story](#)**: A series of short videos addressing various aspects of PD told through Veterans' stories.
- **[The VA Parkinson Report](#)**: A newsletter for the PADRECCs and The National VA PD Consortium to provide clinicians with information on recent developments concerning movement disorders.
- **[Suggested Education Essentials for Veterans with Parkinson's Disease](#)**: A PADRECC Education Committee-reviewed document that includes an overview of PD and provides information and resources about exercise, medications, nutrition, and organizations.

Building on more than two decades of specialized PD education, care, and research by VHA, the VHA-Parkinson's Foundation partnership focuses on three primary goals: to increase Veterans' and providers' access to PD information and resources; to educate VHA staff on PD management and therapies; and to improve services coordination and navigation for Veterans with PD.

The partnership helps raise awareness about VHA resources, encouraging Veterans and their care partners to take advantage of available services and benefits such as VHA's PADRECCs, and the regional [Consortium](#) centers for those Veterans unable to travel to a PADRECC. The partnership also creates opportunities to raise awareness of VHA resources and Veterans' healthcare needs with healthcare professionals outside of the VA health system.





HAP Chief Officer and Nurse Executive Inducted as an American Academy of Nursing Fellow

HAP is pleased to announce that Chien Chen, HAP chief officer and nurse executive, was inducted as an [American Academy of Nursing \(AAN\)](#) 2023 Fellow for his contributions to advance equity, promote inclusion and belonging, and uplift the next generation of health care professionals. He was recognized in October at the Academy's annual Health Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. Chen is an innovative executive with a proven track record of leading high-impact, scalable solutions that leverage equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging concepts to produce data-driven outcomes. As a minority executive, he is passionate about supporting the development of a culturally attuned health care workforce and advocating for the unique needs of our diverse Veterans, patients, staff, and communities.

The AAN's mission is to "improve health and achieve health equity by impacting policy through nursing leadership, innovation, and science." Established under the [National Academy of Medicine \(NAM\)](#) Fellowship program, the AAN Fellowship provides talented, early-career nursing scholars opportunities to advance their research and practice to improve patient care and access to care. A NAM-appointed committee evaluates AAN Fellowship nominees based on professional qualifications, scholarship, and quality of professional accomplishments.

The Academy is a prestigious organization that has inducted more than 3,000 nationally and internationally recognized health science experts and welcomes Fellows who significantly advance health and wellness locally and globally. With a focus on equity, diversity, and support for the next generation of nurses, the AAN Fellowship designation helps Fellows increase the impact of their contributions across the globe.

As one of only seven inductees from the District of Columbia, Chen was recognized for his work and impact to sustain and supplement Veteran-centric health care initiatives.

"I am grateful for the valuable opportunity to join AAN's community of Fellows dedicated to advancing health care and increasing equity and access for patients on a global scale," said Chen. "Collaborating with partners and colleagues, I look forward to my continual contributions to advancing care, increasing support, and improving resource accessibility for all Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors."

For more information about VHA partnerships, visit
va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/partnerships.asp

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
National Center for Healthcare
Advancement and Partnerships

To share a partnership opportunity or consult with HAP on a non-monetary partnership, please contact our office via email:

VHA_Partnerships@va.gov
va.gov/healthpartnerships