PROMOTING CONNECTEDNESS
College Collaboration And Coalition Building with the VA Health System
INTRODUCTIONS

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OVERVIEW

• The VA & Community Engaged Partnerships

• Creation of the James J. Peters Student Veterans Coalition

• How we work together - successes and challenges

• How this work can be replicated

• Q & A
VA's Suicide Prevention Community Engagement & Partnerships Program

- The *National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide 2018 – 2028* outlines the VA's plan to address their highest clinical priority, preventing veteran suicide.

- In response, the VA has developed a Public Health Strategy that has led to the development of the Community Engagement & Partnerships program model that has been rolled out nationally.
Public Health Strategy

VA’s public health strategy combines partnerships with communities to implement tailored, local prevention plans while also focusing on evidence-based clinical strategies for intervention. Our approach focuses on both what we can do now, in the short term, and over the long term, to implement VA’s National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.

KEY TENETS

1. Suicide is preventable.
2. Suicide prevention requires a public health approach, combining clinical and community-based approaches.
3. Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.
## Community Engagement and Partnerships Program: Anticipated Outcomes

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<th>Short-Term Objectives</th>
<th>Intermediate Objectives</th>
<th>Population Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced suicide prevention networks</td>
<td>Increased formal help-seeking / use of care</td>
<td>Reduced Veteran suicide deaths and attempts</td>
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<td>Increased engagement with Veterans</td>
<td>Increased referrals from multiple sources</td>
<td>Reduced all-cause mortality</td>
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<td>Increased reach and adoption of CBI-SP</td>
<td>Improved treatment engagement and retention among Veterans seeking care</td>
<td>Reduced suicide ideation</td>
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<td>Reduced gaps in community-based suicide prevention systems</td>
<td>Enhanced community collaboration regarding Veteran services and suicide prevention</td>
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<td>Improved community climate outcomes</td>
<td>Increased access to safe firearms storage options</td>
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<td>Increased willingness to discuss and use safe firearms storage</td>
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• Bronx County in New York City (aka “The Bronx”) is regularly ranked in last place in New York State's health outcomes

• Estimated 60 – 70% of eligible veterans do not access healthcare through the Department of Veterans Affairs Health System (VA)

• Estimated 17 Veterans die by suicide each day

• According to the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report of 2022, in 2020 approximately 60% of Veterans who died by suicide had no prior contact with the VA

• Not all Veterans qualify for VA benefits in health, education, or otherwise
  ■ OTH Discharge status hinders access to benefits and services
Founded in December 2021 and based in the Bronx, New York City.

Mission Statement:
The James J. Peters Student Veterans Coalition is dedicated to addressing the multifaceted needs of student Veterans as they transition into college and career. The coalition works to provide resources for personal and professional development, advocacy, and a sense of camaraderie.

Fundamental purpose is to unite the Veteran service offices at local colleges and universities, fostering a collaborative environment for initiatives aimed at engaging and supporting our student Veterans.

Vision Statement: Recognizing that higher education institutions may struggle to provide the diverse support needed, the Coalition has formed a partnership with the local VA, colleges and universities, and Veteran service organizations to promote engagement and access to resources to facilitate transition to post-military life.
CUSTOMERS
James J. Peters Student Veterans Coalition focuses on

MILITARY FAMILIES

SERVICEMEMBERS & VETERANS

VA & VSOs
SERVICES

• Coalition provides direct referrals to VA and VSOs
• Increased access to healthcare and benefits
• Provide community for Veterans to participate and engage in
• Develop cohort community and camaraderie through campus programs and events for Military-affiliated students
OUR WORK

- HOVA hosted the viewing of the documentary film the 65th Infantry Regiment “The Borinqueneers”. The award-winning documentary was based on Korean War Veterans & Presidential Gold Medal recipients. The film creator/director attended to include four highly decorated Soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment “The Borinqueneers”

- Over 135 people in attendance

- Executive leadership from Veteran Service Organizations from city and state attended
OUR WORK

- One-day event with workshops and resources on personal, academic and professional wellness offered free to Veterans
- The VA and VSOs presented and offered resource tables
OUR WORK

Booklet written by our Coalition with information and resources on:

- Housing
- Career & Employment
- Medical, Dental, and Mental Health
- Education
- Disability
- Staying Socially Connected
- Additional Resources
OUR WORK

- Bookmark-style handout with information on services and how to connect
- Designed with feedback from Student Veterans
- Distributed at Veteran Centers and events
OUR WORK

- **Financial Literacy:** Workshop was conducted by two representatives of top-tier financial institutions – Chase Bank and New York Life Insurance Company. Discussion was centered on Financial guidance: Growing Savings, Managing Debt, Retirement Planning, Tax-Diversified Investment Strategies. We explored the basics of building financial security, literacy and creating a roadmap for your financial future.

- **VA Home Loan:** Workshop shared key information on 1st time home buying and VA Home Loan process. Informed Veterans and Military members on property purchasing expectations and realities and how VA can facilitate this process.

- **Employment/Professional Development**

- **Academic Institution Military Cultural Awareness:** Provide faculty, staff, and administrators with military cultural competency to help them understand the population and better serve them.
Student Veteran Outings and Excursions

- USS Intrepid – 3 colleges participated over 40 students
- NY Yankee Game – 2 Colleges and over 40 students
- Wall Street Visit – 3 Colleges participated over 30 students
- Military Appreciation Night Basketball game - 2 colleges and over 25 students
IMPACT

- This work has helped facilitate the Military members transition back into civilian life. As a result of the coalition initiatives, transition barriers faced by Veterans, Military members, and their families have been minimized and/or reduced.

- Upon separation from Military into civilian life, complications often arise with access to the VA and their benefits thereby complicating integration into academia. Coalition works collaboratively with the VA and VSOs to eliminate the impact to population.
HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL VA

• Invite VA to college campuses events (i.e. orientations, student events)

• Have VA pamphlets, flyers and information materials available on campus/office to direct Veterans to

• Offer workshops specifically geared to VA Benefits or dedicated to VA topics to present at college

• Conduct outings and excursions that VA can participate in or promote
Q & A
Thank You!

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