



**2024**  
**NASPA**  
SYMPOSIUM ON  
**MILITARY-CONNECTED**  
**STUDENTS**

# **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

## Short-Term Objectives

- Enhanced suicide prevention networks
- Increased engagement with Veterans
- Increased reach and adoption of CBI-SP
- Reduced gaps in community-based suicide prevention systems
- Improved community climate outcomes

## Intermediate Objectives

- Increased formal help-seeking / use of care
- Increased referrals from multiple sources
- Improved treatment engagement and retention among Veterans seeking care
- Enhanced community collaboration regarding Veteran services and suicide prevention
- Increased access to safe firearms storage options
- Increased willingness to discuss and use safe firearms storage

## Population Impact

- Reduced Veteran suicide deaths and attempts
- Reduced all-cause mortality
- Reduced suicide ideation

# VA



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### JAMES J. PETERS VA MEDICAL CENTER



- **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**

# VA



## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### JAMES J. PETERS STUDENT VETERANS COALITION

- **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.





# JAMES J. PETERS STUDENT VETERANS COALITION MEMBER SCHOOLS

Fordham  
University

CUNY  
LaGuardia  
Community  
College

Manhattan  
College

University of  
Mount Saint  
Vincent

CUNY  
Bronx  
Community  
College

CUNY  
Hostos  
Community  
College

CUNY  
Lehman  
College

Monroe  
College

# 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



The poster features a light blue background with orange and teal accents. At the top left is the James Peters VA Medical Center Bronx logo. To its right, it says 'Presented by' followed by the Manhattan College logo (a shield with 'M' and '1853'). The main title 'VETERANS WELLNESS SUMMIT' is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, a teal box contains the date and time: 'FRIDAY, MARCH 31 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM (Registration Opens at 9:00 AM)'. Below that, another teal box lists the location: 'MANHATTAN COLLEGE RAYMOND W. KELLY '63 STUDENT COMMONS - 5TH FL 4513 MANHATTAN COLLEGE PKWY, BRONX, NY'. At the bottom left, it says 'Registration is free. Parking available.' and provides an RSVP link: 'http://bit.ly/3l8lWwE'. At the bottom right, there is a QR code and the contact information: 'For more information, contact veterans@manhattan.edu'.

Presented by  
**MANHATTAN COLLEGE**

## VETERANS WELLNESS SUMMIT

Join us for a day of workshops and resource connections focused on all aspects of healthy living

**FRIDAY, MARCH 31**  
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
(Registration Opens at 9:00 AM)

**MANHATTAN COLLEGE**  
RAYMOND W. KELLY '63 STUDENT COMMONS - 5TH FL  
4513 MANHATTAN COLLEGE PKWY, BRONX, NY

Registration is free.  
Parking available.

RSVP:  
<http://bit.ly/3l8lWwE>

For more information, contact  
[veterans@manhattan.edu](mailto:veterans@manhattan.edu)

- 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

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**JAMES J. PETERS**

**STUDENT VETERANS COALITION**

## **VetEd NYC:**

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR VETERANS  
TRANSITIONING TO COLLEGE



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

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY EVER SERVED  
IN THE U.S. MILITARY OR ARMED FORCES?  
TAKE GREATER CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH  
WITH VA SERVICES

**James J. Peters VA Medical Center**  
130 W. Kingsbridge Road • Bronx, NY 10468  
718-584-9000 ext. 5353

~Services Include~

- Primary Care & Nursing Services
- Mental Health & Psychiatry Services
  - Women's Health
  - LGBTQ+ Program
- Homeless Veteran Programs
- Caregiver Support Services
- A range of Complementary Arts & Wellness Programs

Find out more about making an appointment at JJP VAMC.

**VA New York Regional Office**  
245 W. Houston Street • New York, NY 10014  
1 (800) 827-1000

Learn more about applying for VA benefits.

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Crisis Line DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

- 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



## Veterans Homebuyers Workshop

Date: 11/14/2023

Time: 2:00pm - 3:00pm

The workshop will share critical home purchasing information for first time veteran homebuyers, and aid key steps through the daunting process. Designed to help veterans in securing VA home loans and property purchases.

### Join Zoom Meeting

[https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?](https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09)

[pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09](https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09)

Meeting ID: 865 1269 5148

Passcode: 562425

Ricardo Garcia  
Office of Veterans Affairs

## BLUEPRINT FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> 2023 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM.

THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HAS PARTNERED WITH THE NY LIFE INSURANCE GROUP TO SPONSOR A FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOP. THE PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO HELP PARTICIPANTS GAIN KNOWLEDGE ON FINANCIAL SECURITY, WEALTH BUILDING, PERSONAL AND RETIREMENT INVESTMENTS, AS WELL AS FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT.

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

[https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?](https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09)  
[pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09](https://hostos-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/86512695148?pwd=dzdPcjRZOU9hbVRFjcwTElJOUFvQT09)

MEETING ID: 865 1269 5148  
PASSCODE: 562425

TO JOIN THE MEETING, SIMPLY SCAN THE QR



- 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



# OUR WORK

## 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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