VETERANS HEALTH & WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE

VHWC DISPATCH

October 2026

FOUNDATION

The VHWC brings together parties to build or expand pathways through which Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and their care partners optimize health and wellness outcomes.

CONTACT US

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CORE TEAM UPDATE

This October marks the 25th anniversary of the start of Operation Enduring Freedom. According to the Department of Defense Casualty Analysis System, 2,350 American service members lost their lives and 20,149 were wounded in action during the operation. Behind each number is a service member, a family, and a story of sacrifice. As we recognize this anniversary, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, those who returned home bearing visible and invisible scars, and the families whose lives were forever changed.

As we reflect on those who have served, we also recognize October 26 as the National Day of the Deployed, a day dedicated to honoring service members deployed away from home and the families who support them. Their dedication reminds us that the sacrifices of military service extend beyond the individual and are shared by loved ones and communities alike.

We also celebrate the 251st birthday of the United States Navy! Since October 13, 1775, the Navy has symbolized strength, resilience, and unwavering commitment to our nation. From maintaining freedom of navigation across the world's oceans to projecting airpower from aircraft carriers, the Navy plays a vital role in defending our nation and supporting our fellow service members. Whether transporting Marines into combat, providing lifesaving medical care through Navy corpsmen, delivering critical supplies, or conducting joint operations alongside other military branches, the Navy's contributions extend far beyond the sea. For 251 years, generations of sailors have proudly answered the call to serve, showing that America's Navy is not only a formidable force but also an essential part of our nation's military.

As always, we invite you to share updates, events, and opportunities with our network. Your engagement continues to strengthen support systems for veterans and their families across the state. To stay informed, join our listserv. Contact us at ihp.vhwc@msu.edu with any questions, suggestions, or ideas for future activities.

SPOTLIGHT:

Tunnel to Towers Foundation

This month, we are proud to spotlight the Tunnel to Towers Foundation and its continued commitment to ending veteran homelessness. Founded in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the foundation has dedicated



itself to honoring the sacrifices of our nation's military members and first responders by providing housing assistance and essential support services. Through its Veterans Villages and national network of supportive services, the foundation continues to expand housing opportunities for veterans across the United States.

On October 21, 2026, the foundation celebrated the grand opening of its Detroit Veterans Village in Southfield, Michigan. This renovated former hotel is designed to provide permanent housing and comprehensive support services for 92 veterans. In addition to housing, the Veterans Village will offer services including employment assistance, VA benefits navigation, mental health and PTSD counseling, addiction recovery support, and access to medical care.

In addition to building and renovating housing for our nation's heroes, the foundation offers a Smart Home Program. Through this program, Tunnel to Towers renovates and modifies existing homes to create fully accessible, mortgage-free smart homes for catastrophically injured veterans and first responders. When renovations are not feasible, the foundation builds new homes tailored to recipients' needs.

Tunnel to Towers makes a meaningful difference in the lives of veterans, first responders, and their families through community housing initiatives, individual housing assistance, and scholarship programs for eligible children of fallen service members, first responders, and other program recipients.

UPDATES: 2026 PRIORITY AREAS

Let our team know about upcoming events, and we will share that information with our network. Organizations seeking assistance with their events should also reach out so we can share their requests with others in our network who may be able to help.

Housing Insecurity: We are working on a webinar encouraging landlords to rent to veterans. If you have content or speaker recommendations, please forward names and email addresses to ihp.vhwc@msu.edu.

Oral Health: We welcome ideas for partnering with current dental and hygiene training programs to help expand access to oral health services for veterans. If you have any contacts or suggestions, please send them our way.

Suicide Prevention: We are looking for opportunities to support suicide prevention trainings and educational offerings across Michigan. Let us know of programs, trainings, or webinars you come across.

Transition: We are seeking input on financial literacy offerings that strengthen housing stability, as well as screeners or tools that can better connect transitioning service members and veterans to resources. Please share programs, contacts, or tools that we should explore.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Webinars:

Webinars can be hosted by VHWC for statewide viewing. Email ihp.vhwc@msu.edu to introduce yourself, share your ideas, or recommend subject matter experts. Our staff is available to arrange for technical support and promotion through the VHWC network.

Events/Programs:

We are looking for those interested in creating podcasts for more informal, targeted discussions. We would record these for later listening. If you have an interest in hosting or participating, please reach out to us.



Also, let us know about your upcoming veteran events! These are also listed on the Resources and Events tab of our website to boost engagement.

- **Grand Rapids Ruck to End Veteran Suicide**- November 7, 2026, 10:00 AM at the American Legion Boat and Canoe Club at 401 North Park Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Join fellow veterans, families, and community members for a 9.5 mile ruck to raise awareness about veteran suicide, honor those lost, and strengthen connections that support veterans' mental health and well-being. Participants will gather at 10:00 AM, with the ruck beginning at 11:00 AM and concluding at the Rockford Corner Bar. Learn more here!

- **University of Michigan Veterans Week-** November 9-13, 2026. The University of Michigan invites veterans, service members, families, and community members to participate in a week of educational programs, panel discussions, and events honoring those who have served. Programming will cover a wide range of topics, including veteran benefits and healthcare, military history, the experiences of women and LGBTQ+ service members, and the transition from military to civilian and student life. Additional activities include veteran appreciation events, book discussions, flag ceremonies, and opportunities for community engagement. Most events are free and open to the public, with select virtual attendance opportunities available. Some events require registration or an invitation. View the full schedule here!

- **Michigan State University Veterans Day Brunch**- November 11, 2026, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM at MSU's Multicultural Center at 535 N Shaw Ln, East Lansing, MI 48824. Michigan State University's Center for Veterans and Military-Affiliated Students (CVMAS) invites veterans, service members, families, and community members to attend a Veterans Day brunch honoring those who have served. The event will feature a keynote speaker highlighting the importance of supporting veterans and recognizing their service and sacrifices. All are welcome to attend. To RSVP, email Veterans@msu.edu.

- **The War Memorial Veterans Day Breakfast**- November 11, 2026, 8:00 AM-10:30 AM at The War Memorial, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236. Join The War Memorial for its annual Veterans Day Breakfast honoring those who have served our nation. This year's event will feature keynote remarks from Medal of Honor recipient and Vietnam War veteran Terry Richardson, a patriotic service song medley, heartfelt thank you notes from local students, and a gourmet breakfast. Attendees will have an opportunity to connect with fellow veterans and community members while recognizing the sacrifices of our nation's service members. The event is free for veterans and $20 for guests, with a limit of one guest per veteran. Reservations are required. Register here!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Subscribe at our website and share with your networks.
- Participate with Advisory Council or subcommittee activities.
- Volunteer your expertise: Whether you have ever served in the military, are a health care professional, community leader, or advocate, your input can make a difference.

"The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude"

Jeff Miller

