

VHWC DISPATCH

June 2025

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.

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CORE TEAM UPDATE

June has several monthly designations, including Men's Health Month and Pride Month. These are particularly relevant for the emphasis on mental health; specifically, the importance of increasing awareness and eliminating the stigma associated with mental health issues. LGBTQ+ veterans are not immune to related mental health conditions. While one of the designations specifically calls out "Men's" health, we know women represent an increasing proportion of veterans recognized by [Governor Whitmer on June 12, 2025](#). Available reports describe that *all* veterans are at increased risk to experience these challenges compared to the general population. This relationship exists regardless of the individual's personal identity. The link between untreated mental health conditions and increased risk for suicide is well documented. We support the family, friends, colleagues, and health professionals serving all individuals who struggle asking for help to obtain the respectful and appropriate resources they deserve.

Our emphasis on suicide prevention aligns with the importance of understanding risk factors that are associated with poor mental health and actions that could mitigate poor outcomes. We are pleased to offer the following webinar in partnership with Dr. Kevin Saulnier, PhD, Assistant Professor in Psychiatry at University of Michigan. This live presentation would be appropriate for all audiences. Selected continuing education and nursing credits will be made available. Registration is not necessary and the zoom link for the event is provided below. Please share with your networks!



- July 14, 2025, 1 pm – 2 pm (Eastern time), ***Factors to Improve Identification of Veterans at Risk for Suicide***
 - <https://msu.zoom.us/j/91322897367?pwd=VkYrcUpRSIhsNkJRcXU5S0ZPQzZsZz09>
 - Meeting ID: 913 2289 7367
 - Passcode: 465837

One of VHWC goals is to disseminate opportunities for engagement and information benefitting those who served and their partners. We rely on the VHWC network to share information with personal and professional networks. We have a recent webinar recording to share featuring several VHWC colleagues and an opportunity for veteran serving organizations to highlight this month.

1. Dr. Kevin Bohnsack, US Air Force Veteran (ret.), Executive Medical Director, Population Health Management, Trinity Health Michigan, and Andrea Norton, LMSW, US Air Force Veteran, Women Veteran and Underserved Populations Coordinator, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, presented on ***Valuing Veterans - Connecting for Better Health***. Dr. Bohnsack stated “By sharing what we are doing in a large healthcare system and raising awareness around the importance of identifying veterans, we hope to further the cause of better connectivity, promotion of benefits and health advocacy for this important patient population.” This webinar was sponsored through the Michigan Veteran Service Organizations Networking Grant (MiVSONG) and the collaboration between the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) and Michigan Health Information Network (MIHIN). The recording is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6x_FvZNrog.
2. We are pleased to share the following opportunity to all veteran serving organizations from our partners at the Aging, Community Living, and Supports Bureau at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. This opportunity is made available through the Collaborative Linkages for Older Adult Veterans grant funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. This initiative aims to increase awareness of Aging Services and Special Programs available to eligible older Veterans.
 - a. Veteran Serving Organizations can sign up to receive a ***free 35-minute presentation covering these valuable resources and programs for older adults***. If your organization is interested in hosting a presentation, please contact Arielle Buckley at buckleya3@michigan.gov.

Our plan to convene a July Advisory Council meeting will likely be delayed by a month or two. We will continue to communicate via email and through this newsletter and other email blasts. Our website will be undergoing an update in the next month as part of a larger university-wide initiative. If you run into issues, please let us know!

Never hesitate to contact us if you would like to be involved in our work. There is still time to join in on our brainstorming sessions, participate in newsletter content, work with events that other organizations are hosting, and many other opportunities. We would appreciate ideas for expanding participation and can be reached at ihp.vhwc@msu.edu with any questions, concerns, and suggestions.

If you received this email from someone as a forwarded item, be sure to subscribe to our list serve on the main page of the website. This will add your email information to our contact list so you will receive our communications directly. We will not share your information with other organizations.

UPDATES: 2025 PRIORITY AREAS

Thank you to those who have reached out to express interest in serving on the priority area groups. Due to a confluence of out-of-office time covering most of June, we are delayed in distributing our project ideas. The VHWC framework aims to engage with other organizations to achieve their goals, so the dissemination work done so far is supportive. Since we did not have any volunteers to chair the priority area groups, we will focus on 1 or 2 projects that could impact all areas.

Housing Insecurity: Options include a multi-part transition support education series focusing on financial literacy and the relationship to stable housing. Also under consideration are community events to encourage landlord participation with veteran-related housing programs.

Oral Health: We were fortunate to have an in-service from someone involved in the oral health community to provide helpful insight and reactions to our ideas. There is a meeting being sponsored by those in the oral health community and we will be attending to network and see where a logical place for our group to support their efforts lives.

Suicide Prevention: We are happy to present the online seminar scheduled for 7/14/25. We have also been introduced to a death certificate review project led by Duke University that is involving Michigan. There may be opportunities to contribute to their efforts rather than duplicating existing efforts. More details will be forthcoming as we learn more.

Transition: The concept of a transition screener for use in all settings remains a key function that could be our multi-focal approach. We will return to this in July.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Webinars:

We continue to seek partnerships with those interested in delivering online content on health and wellness topics of interest for veterans and care partners. Please reach out at ihp.vhwc@msu.edu

to be included on the speakers bureau list. Be sure to include your contact information, topic(s) of interest, and identify “Speakers Bureau” in the subject line so we can follow-up.

Events:

We’re pleased to promote upcoming events through the [Resources and Events](#) tab of our website. Send details about events to ihp.vhwc@msu.edu and we will advertise through our website and list-serves. If you are looking for volunteers to help with events, we will share those requests with our networks to help fill gaps and boost engagement.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Subscribe at our website to make sure you receive the latest updates and information and share this content 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.

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

John F. Kennedy
