

Hospital Program

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If the recent pandemic has taught us anything over that last 3 years, it is how important human interaction is. When a Veteran enters a VA Hospital or VA Center it is important that they are given the utmost respect and best care possible. Not all those that enter these facilities leave, due to some medical and/or life changing event and they need to know that they are loved, will be cared for and that they and their needs will be taken care of. This is why doctors, nurses, staff, Hospital/VA Center Representatives, Deputies and Volunteers play such a vital part in giving care and comfort to our Veterans.

The Hospital Program for the Department of Pennsylvania will focus on

1. Recruiting and Engaging Volunteers: VFW, Auxiliary, as well as Non-Members
2. Finding new and creative ways to serve our Veterans
3. Honoring Veterans on Holidays
4. Recognition of Volunteers/Representatives/Deputies
5. Women's Veterans Health Care
6. "Final Salute" Honors Escort Program
7. Thinking outside the Box – "Pennsylvania Pouch" Special Project

Recruit new volunteers: Why recruit? Because hospitals and homes cover the basic needs doctors and nurses – brick and mortar – medication. Volunteers fill the gaps between what is needed and what is wanted. Check out the newly revised VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program Guide, at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources, page 5 has great recruiting tips.

New and Creative ways to serve our Veterans: Get your minds to work on new ways to serve our Veterans, some ideas are Cookie decorating – have a contest best decorating gets prizes, pose for the camera - take a picture with Veterans using different backgrounds, that you create and buy frames so they can have a nice memory. Maybe their family members can participate, Game night where they choose games (cards, board, etc.) that they can play with you and prizes can be given. These are just some ideas, what can you think of?

Honoring Veterans on Holidays: There are plenty of holidays throughout the year. Don't forget however.... Valentines for Veterans – share the love! The week of February 14 (Valentine's Day) is also National Salute to Veteran Patients week. We want to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to our veterans staying in our VA and non-VA medical facilities. Use this week to renew the spirit of hospital volunteerism with "Valentine's for Veterans". Pay tribute and express appreciation in a variety of ways, from ward visits, Valentine's Day Parties, distributing or sending Valentine's cards. This week also provides an opportunity for you to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within a medical center. Locate a VA facility near you at volunteer.gov/directory/index.asp.

Recognition time: This year we would like to go out of our way to show our appreciation to Doctors/ Nurses/ Staff/ Hospital/ Volunteers / VAVS Representatives and Deputies who go above and beyond what they do on a regular basis. One Auxiliary in each division that has the best promotion honoring these special people will receive a citation. Support your volunteers by thanking them for their service and recognize their contributions! A simple thank you goes a long way, but you can also print a Certificate of Appreciation from the website at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources and present it to them at an Auxiliary meeting or a volunteer appreciation event.

Women Veterans Health Care: Women are the fastest growing group within the Veteran population. Learn about the resources and health care services that are now being tailored to the unique needs of women veterans. Help our women veterans receive the benefits and services they deserve. Visit <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov> and learn more about what is available.

“Final Salute” Honors Escort Program: Is an opportunity to honor each veteran in a respectful and open manner and provides an opportunity for a veteran’s family and friends, other veterans and medical facility staff to participate in a display of high regard and reverence for the individual at the time of death.

Pennsylvania Pouch Project: This year our special project will be a pouch that can be made by our Auxiliary and/or VFW members; they will have pockets to hold any items the patient may have and that can easily be held on a wheelchair or walker with Velcro. A pattern will be available, or you can design your own, these will then be provided to local VA Hospitals, VA Centers, Nursing Homes, Hospitals etc. A citation will be given to any Auxiliary/VFW Post whose members participate in this special project. Get creative with the material you use, if you want to go above and beyond, think of a way to have a place they can put a name tag in case they misplace theirs. (When you deliver them, take a picture for your records, and provide a copy to us with your year-end reports).

Resources may be found on the following websites: www.vfwauxiliary.org, www.vfwaux.org/resources and www.pavfwaux.org.

Be sure to also promote the Veterans of Foreign Wars Programs. Information and details can be found as follows: National Website is www.vfw.org. Pennsylvania Website is www.vfwpahq.org.

Every day we will “Respect...Honor...Remember” and continue to assist our Veterans and their families with “Hands that Serve, Hearts that Care.”

National Hospital Awards for Members

1. Citation to one member in each of the 10 Program Divisions who recruits the most Hospital (VA and non-VA facilities) volunteers from July 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Winners will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.
2. “Hospital Volunteer Recruiter of the Year” plaque awarded to one member in the nation who recruits the most Hospital volunteers (VA and non-VA facilities) from July 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Winner will be announced, and award presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.
3. Citation to the Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year in each of the 10 Program Divisions. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Winners will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Member entries are due to Department Hospital Chairman by March 31, 2023.

National Hospital Awards for Auxiliaries

Most outstanding innovative method of serving hospitalized veterans.

1. Citation to every Auxiliary that demonstrates an innovative method to serve hospitalized veterans. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Hospital Chairman by March 31, 2023. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters
2. Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding innovative method of serving hospitalized veterans. Winners will be announced, and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

Department Hospital Awards

1. Citation to the Auxiliary and Member from the Auxiliary who are responsible in getting Hospitals or VA Centers (including public hospitals) to start a “Final Salute” Honors Escort at their facilities
2. Citation to the VFW Auxiliary in each Membership Division that have the most Hospital Volunteer hours. (Volunteer hours will be totaled from the year-end report.)
3. “Hospital Volunteer Recruiter of the Year” plaque awarded to one member in the Department who recruits the most Hospital Volunteers (VA & non-VA hospitals, nursing homes and/or, any medical facilities) from July 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
4. Citation to the Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year (VA & non-VA hospitals & nursing homes) entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
5. Citation to the VFW Auxiliary in each Membership Division donating the most money to the VA hospitals and homes thru the Department Headquarters.

ALL OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING AUDITS, BONDS, DELEGATE FEES, PLEDGES, ETC. TO NATIONAL, DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND DISTRICT MUST BE MET FOR YOUR AUXILIARY/DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMEN TO QUALIFY FOR AWARDS.