

**For Immediate Release**

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# **Stand Down Event for Homeless Veterans**

*June 15 event provides convenient access  
to community resources*

**Wyoming, Michigan**, June 15, 2017—Scores of homeless veterans from throughout West Michigan are expected to gather on the Wyoming campus of Metro Health – University of Michigan Health to connect with resources that can help them rebuild their lives.

The veterans will be participating in a Stand Down event coordinated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Held throughout the year and throughout the country, Stand Downs bring homeless veterans together in a single location to provide convenient access to community resources.

The local Stand Down will be held Friday, June 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., on the Granger Green in front of the hospital at The Metro Health Village, 5900 Byron Center Ave. SW.

“We’re honored to host these veterans on our campus,” says Emil Hannesson, director of community outreach for Metro Health. “These individuals have pledged their lives to the country and now need the community’s assistance. This event is a great way to remind them how much they are valued, and that people do support them.”

Tiyanna Payne, a supervisor with the VA’s Health Care for Homeless Veterans program in Grand Rapids, adds: “Stand Downs are the nation’s most valuable outreach tool for veterans who are homeless or marginally housed.”

Nearly 50 service providers plan to participate, including federal, state, and community agencies, as well as veteran support groups. Homeless veterans will have access to food, clothing, medical care, housing assistance, job counseling, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services.

In addition, military surplus items will be available for eligible vets, including sleeping bags, backpacks, cold weather gear and personal hygiene products. The event also offers a lunch prepared by Metro's chef, and free haircuts and massages.

"Veterans won't have to go from one agency to another to access the services they need," Payne says. "For one day, everything will be in one place, and everyone will be here to provide them with aid."

The name of the event has its origins in the Vietnam War, when "standing down" referred to soldiers being taken off the lines to rest and recover.

"Our Stand Down is designed to give veterans an opportunity to renew their spirit, health and well-being," Payne says. "Here's our chance to surround this vulnerable population with the services they need."

This event is for veterans only. If a veteran needs assistance getting to the event, please call the Health Care for Homeless Veterans service center (616-356-1746). The media contact on the day of the event is Amanda Briggs (269-967-0190, [amanda.briggs@va.gov](mailto:amanda.briggs@va.gov)).