



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center
www.charleston.va.gov

Media Contacts:
Tonya Lobbestael, 843-789-7699/843-709-3661
tonya.lobbestael@va.gov

SAVANNAH STAND DOWN FOR HOMELESSNESS RESOURCE AND JOB FAIR

VA Veteran Listening Forum with the Director

Savannah, GA –On September 15 – 16, the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, in partnership with Goodwill of the Coastal Empire, will host the 12th annual Veterans Stand Down for Homelessness from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Savannah Civic Center, 301 W Oglethorpe Ave. The event includes a Veteran Listening Forum with the VA director on Sept. 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and a job fair on Sept. 16 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the same location. Congressman Buddy Carter will be on-site and addressing the event participants on Sept. 15 at 10:30 a.m.

Participants are offered a hot meal, haircuts, showers, clothing, personal items and opportunities for a variety of health screenings. Representatives from more than 40 Social Service agencies will be available to provide information and outreach on a variety of services including housing options, job resources, resume writing tips, substance abuse treatment, income tax assistance, and accesses to Social Security and VA services. The job fair is open to the public and local employers will be on-site to fill positions. The Veteran Listening Forum is designed to gain feedback from Veterans on services provided for Veterans at the medical center and its Savannah VA Outpatient Clinic.

The goal of the event is to reach individuals in crisis and connect them with programs and services that will end their homelessness. Stand Down is intended to serve homeless Veterans but is open to all individuals and families impacted by homelessness. According to statistics released by the Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless, 285 Veterans were homeless in Chatham County last year. These men and women have served their country and this event demonstrates the support they have in the Savannah community to get back on their feet.

Each year area non-profits and over 400 community volunteers come out to support the event and ensure its success in connecting Veterans with the services they need. Local universities provide volunteers and other resources on-site during the event. In addition to the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC and Goodwill of the Coastal Empire, the following community partners are essential to providing all the resources available to Veterans at Stand Down: Savannah Vet Center, American Legion Post 500, Georgia Department of Veterans Services, Georgia Department of Labor, Military Order of the Purple Hearts, Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless, and Salvation Army.

Stand Down is funded by a federal grant offered through the United States Department of Labor and there is no cost to attend. If you are a local business interested in hiring and participating in the job fair, please call Michael Whitfield with Goodwill of the Coastal Empire at 912-354-6611.

ABOUT THE RALPH H. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER:

Located in historic downtown Charleston, SC, the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is a tertiary care teaching hospital providing the highest level quality care from cardiology to neurology to primary and mental health care for more than 63,000 Veterans along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. The Ralph H. Johnson VA is rated a 5-Star medical center, the highest possible rating according to VA's Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value (SAIL) model, and is the sixth fastest growing VA in the U.S. for percentage patient growth. This rating, which ranks the Charleston VA in the top 10 percent of VA medical centers nationwide for quality of care and efficiency, was first achieved by the Charleston VA in October 2014. The Charleston VA is also ranked in the top 10th percentile according to the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and ORYX. HEDIS and ORYX are independent reviews that measure performance of 90 percent of America's health plans and facilities in both the public and private sector on dimensions of care and service. The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is a center of excellence for robotic surgery and orthopedics, and is a recognized leader in Tele-Mental Health providing care for Veterans throughout the Southeast. The 149 bed hospital includes six community based outpatient clinics, a 20 bed nursing home, women's health, and the full range of inpatient and outpatient care including Medical and Surgical Intensive Care. The VAMC provides more than 700,000 outpatient visits and approximately 4,300 inpatient stays annually. The VAMC has an annual budget of \$359 million, research funding of more than \$20 million, and more than 100 principle investigators participating in approximately 300 research studies. For more information visit www.charleston.va.gov.

ABOUT GOODWILL OF THE COASTAL EMPIRE

Goodwill of the Coastal Empire, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization with over 850 employees. In 2014, Goodwill provided services to 9,885 people, placed 2,421 into employment and served more than 320 veterans in various programs. Goodwill serves 33 counties in Georgia and South Carolina, operating 17 retail locations, and five Job Connection Centers. Goodwill accepts tax deductible donations of clothing, household items, computers, and car donations. For more information on Goodwill of the Coastal Empire, please visit us at <http://goodwillsavannah.org>. Find us on Facebook: Savannah Goodwill or follow us on Twitter: @SavGoodwill.

ABOUT CHATAM-SAVANNAH AUTHORITY FOR THE HOMELESS (CSAH)

The mission of CSAH is to lead the effort to build and sustain community practices to eliminate homelessness. CSAH collaborates and develops a continuum of services for the homeless including child and family development, low income housing development, community outreach, case management, education, training, literacy support, employment, health and nutrition, transportation, and behavioral health services. CSAH works with community leaders to educate the public about why homelessness occurs and how to work together to solve these pressing issues. For more information go online to www.homelessauthority.org.