

Dear Friend,

I believe, as I'm sure you do, that there is no greater sacrifice than service to our country. This time of year, we are all reminded of those who gave their lives to secure our freedom. But let's not forget those who returned home. Many of the men and women who fought during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are now facing the end of life. Hosparus Health is privileged and honored to provide specialized care and recognition to these selfless individuals during such a vulnerable time. ***I am writing to you today to ask for your help so we can continue to do this important work.***

One out of every four dying Americans is a veteran. The vast majority of them are not enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs and may not be aware of end-of-life services and benefits available to them. Hosparus Health is working to reach out to as many of these vets as possible, to ensure they get the care, respect, and dignity they deserve.

As a Level Two partner in the national ***We Honor Veterans*** program, Hosparus Health has joined a network of hospice and VA professionals, veterans and volunteers to provide end-of-life services that are customized to the unique needs of our nation's servicemen and women. Thanks to our ***We Honor Veterans*** training, we know that vets from different eras face unique challenges, diseases, and conditions, and this helps us customize their care and experience wherever they call home. We are proud to care for vets from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces at all levels of service — from those who served on submarines and aircraft carriers, to mess cooks, to soldiers who fought on the beaches at Normandy.

As a veteran myself, I can tell you that the military is like one big family. Thanks to our participation in ***We Honor Veterans***, Hosparus Health has become an extension of that family. I've seen firsthand the instant camaraderie that emerges when one of our veteran volunteers or staff steps into a veteran patient room and asks them where they served. I know it gives them a lot of peace and comfort to have people involved in their care who speak their language.

In addition to direct care, we are proud to provide special recognition to each veteran we serve. We know the value and importance they place on the flag, so we strive to continue that honor and respect. For example, when a veteran is admitted to our Hosparus Inpatient Care Center (HICC), we honor them first by placing a flag magnet on their room's doorpost, so all who enter will know the patient is a veteran.

We also place a small American flag in a flower vase in their room and present them with a handmade patriotic or branch-specific prayer blanket the family can keep as a memento. Finally, a veteran volunteer presents the patient and their family with a special "We Honor Veterans" certificate. We believe this is the least we as an organization can do for those who were willing to sacrifice so much for us as Americans.

While these gestures might seem small to an outsider, they mean so much to our veteran patients. Charlie Beck, a U.S. Navy vet who served in Vietnam and passed away at the HICC in February, was honored a few days before he died. His wife, Libby, says, "The recognition meant more than anything to us. It was a final tribute. It was an honor and blessing shown to him for the time that he served. I wish that all our military veterans could be honored this way."

While we offer the same level of quality care to all our patients whether they are veterans or not, we know that unfortunately, many of our nation's veterans did not always get their health care needs met when they returned home. That's why we believe that giving them the best and most compassionate care now at the end of life is an important way we can honor their service.

I am proud to work with the many employees and volunteers that care for our veteran patients who willingly gave so much for us.

Your donation this Memorial Day will help make sure that every dying veteran gets the care and recognition they deserve.

Doug Hedges
Regional Director of Customer Support & HICC
Retired Senior Master Sergeant