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IL Department on Aging salutes Veterans this Independence Day with the launch of the Veterans Independence Program

State Aging Dept will work with local agencies to connect Vets with resources to help them live independently in their homes and communities

CHICAGO – Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director Charles D. Johnson is congratulating three Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the three area Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMCs) as partners involved in establishing the Veterans Independence Program, in Illinois. The Veterans Independence Program, or VIP, is a Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services Program. The goal of the program is to help veterans, including those less than 60 years of age, who are at risk of being placed in nursing homes. VIP will provide assistance so the veteran may avoid institutionalization and continue to live in his or her home and community.

Efforts for the VIP began when IDoA was contacted by the U-S Administration on Aging (AoA) to assist with an initiative to provide community based services for veterans in Illinois. The U-S Department of Veterans Affairs (U-S VA) would provide funding for VAMCs to serve at least 20 to 25 veterans during the course of a year. More veterans may receive assistance each year if the need could be met by both the VAMC and the AAA.

“I want to congratulate everyone who has worked tirelessly to establish the Veterans Independence Program in Illinois,” said Director Johnson. “Staff at the Area Agencies on Aging, the V-A Medical Centers and within the Department on Aging has done a great job getting the first phase of the program up and running in less than a year. I’m proud we’re able to launch this program to keep veterans independent in time for Independence Day.”

As part of this collaborative agreement, IDoA will provide information and outreach from its extensive network and coordinate with the AAAs and VAMCs. The VAMCs will purchase services from the AAAs. And the AAAs will serve as the lead Administrative entity in the coordination of services.

Partners involved in the launch of the VIP in Illinois include:

- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs):
 - AgeOptions (Suburban Cook County)
 - Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (City of Chicago)
 - Northeastern Illinois (8 collar counties: DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, & Will)
- Veteran Administration Medical Centers (VAMC's):
 - Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, Chicago, IL
 - Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Hines, IL
 - North Chicago VA Medical Center, North Chicago, IL

Under VIP, veterans at risk for nursing home admission will decide for themselves the mix of services will best meet their needs. VIP will provide a bundled package which, at a minimum, will include the following services:

- Home and Community-Based Services - some examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Personal Care
 - Homemaker
 - Adult Day Services
 - Assistive Technology
 - Home-Delivered Meals
 - Caregiver Support
 - Respite Care
 - Environmental Support
 - Other goods and services needed to remain safely in the community
- Assessment
- Options counseling/Support services including care management
- Fiscal Management Services
 - Budget Authority
 - Employer Authority
- Additional services may include:
 - Congregate Meals
 - Individualized Meal Plan (e.g.; local diner)
 - Transportation
 - Set-aside Savings Plan (e.g.; ‘rainy day’ savings, final month of care [discharge], large purchases)

Rates of payment from each of the three area VAMCs will be based on a tiered rate schedule corresponding to specific level of care as identified in the service plan. The monthly range begins at \$1,600 and may be increased based on need up to \$3,160.

The next phase of VIP in Illinois is expected to begin later this summer when AAAs in another part of the state finish training and move forward with implementation activities.

For more about program services to assist older adults in Illinois, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327 or visit www.state.il.us/aging.

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