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Hospice of the Chesapeake earns highest status with national veterans program

(PASADENA, MD, January 16, 2019) — The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization recently announced that **Hospice of the Chesapeake**'s We Honor Veterans program has achieved Level 5 status. It is one of nine hospices in the nation to earn this new level of excellence, and the only Level 5 partner in the Delmarva region.

The status is a result of a yearlong pilot program initiated by WHV that included a pilot group of Level 4 hospice partners who implemented activities to expand their efforts and services provided to veterans and communities they serve. Aside from existing requirements, Level 5 will ensure that partners place a greater emphasis on staff education and caring for combat veterans. Additionally, Hospice of the Chesapeake will join its other Level 5 partners in taking on the role of regional mentor to other partners working to enhance their programs.

NHPCO President and CEO Edo Banach said that the expansion of the program to include a new level of excellence demonstrates that We Honor Veteran partners are committed to providing quality veteran-centric care to the veteran patients they serve. "We are incredibly proud of the Level 4 partners that participated in the pilot program and look forward to working with other partners eager to begin the process of attaining Level 5 – a journey that will include a lot hard work and dedication," Banach said.

Hospice of the Chesapeake's Volunteer Services Director Mary Jermann, who leads the organization's WHV program, said meeting the difficult milestones required to achieve Level 5 status has enhanced an already robust program. It not only benefits veterans on its census, but other patients, as well as the organization's staff and volunteers. "As our We Honor Veterans program has matured, it has extended beyond the Honor Salute to include many other veteran services activities and events," Jermann said. "We are excited to carry our mission forward to mentor other hospices to do the same."

The We Honor Veterans program is part of the national Hospice-Veteran Partnership, a collaborative effort between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the NHPCO. The campaign's goal is to help improve the care dying veterans receive from the nation's hospice and palliative care providers.

Hospice of the Chesapeake has been a partner since 2010. On any given day, the organization's staff and volunteers care for more than 125 Veterans in Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties. The We Honor Veterans program supports veterans and their families with Honor Salutes, the Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program; Veterans celebrations, educational programs and partnerships with the U. S. Naval Academy, Fort George G. Meade and Anne Arundel County Public Schools and more.

One signature event that exemplifies Hospice of the Chesapeake's commitment to veterans is its annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day celebration. The event provides an opportunity for the community to thank Vietnam Veterans for their service and to give them the welcome home they should have received decades ago. Now in its fifth year, the celebration will take place at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 29, at the Hilton Baltimore BWI Hotel. The doors will open at 4 p.m. for veterans to enjoy hors d'oeuvres, socialize and speak with representatives from veterans' service organizations. The event is free for Vietnam Veterans and one guest and \$30 for all others. To reserve seating, visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/2019-whvvd/>.

For details, email veterans@hospicechesapeake.org or call Nicole Malatesta at 443-837-1513.

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