

What does the NVDA Volunteer Orientation Include?

NVDA orientations are offered quarterly. Topics covered in the orientation include:

- Overview of NVDA history and implementation
- Veteran-specific End-of-Life issues
- Volunteer's role and appropriate activities
- Veterans' rights and ethics
- Spirituality at End of Life & Your Role as a Volunteer
- The Importance of "Presence" at End of Life

Who Should I Contact to Get Started?

If you are interested in becoming a NVDA volunteer, please contact Alexi Vahlkamp, Hospice and Palliative Care Program Coordinator, at (708) 202-2584.

Contact Us:

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital
Palliative Care and Hospice
708-202-2584
www.hines.va.gov/services/

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Art donated by Elisha Dasenbrock, Fine Artist.

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

NO VETERAN DIES ALONE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



MISSION:

To provide a reassuring presence at the bedside of a Veteran who would otherwise be alone at the end of life.

What is No Veteran Dies Alone?

No Veteran Dies Alone (NVDA) is a volunteer program that provides a reassuring presence to Veterans who would otherwise be alone at the end of life. With the support of the Hospice and Palliative Care staff, NVDA volunteers offer Veterans the most valuable of human gifts: a dignified death.

No Veteran Dies Alone was adapted from a community program first envisioned in 1988 by Sandra Clarke, a critical care nurse at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene, Oregon. The lonely death of one particularly elderly patient led Sandra to the idea of a volunteer companion program for hospital patients who would otherwise die alone. The program has inspired hospitals around the U.S., including the VA hospital system, to create similar programs.

What Would My Role Be as a NVDA Volunteer?

Volunteers are contacted as needed to provide bedside vigil for a dying Veteran. Volunteers can dedicate as much time as they choose to staying with the Veteran and being a presence in the room throughout the dying process. Volunteers will rotate shifts to provide as close to round-the-clock vigil as possible until the Veteran passes.



Volunteers can also provide supportive visits to Veterans in the Hospice Unit at any time; some volunteers choose to serve on the anniversary of the death of a loved one, others simply choose times that are convenient for them. Visit activities might include reading aloud, playing quiet music, playing games, or just serving as a calming presence.

How Can I Become a NVDA Volunteer?

The NVDA program is coordinated through the Department of Voluntary Service and the Hospice Interdisciplinary Team at Hines. Only current VA Medical Center employees and active VA Medical Center Volunteers can serve as NVDA volunteers. To become a volunteer with NVDA, individuals must first complete the Hines Volunteer application and orientation.

Application and orientation dates can be found online at: <http://www.hines.va.gov/giving/> or by contacting the Hines Voluntary Service office at 708-202-2523.

After successful completion of the Voluntary Service process, volunteers will attend a specific orientation for NVDA.