



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System to open second Fisher House

A new Fisher House at its O'Hara Township campus will join one operating in Oakland

PITTSBURGH – VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) is pleased to announce it has been selected to receive a second Fisher House to provide temporary accommodations at no charge for the families and caregivers of veterans receiving VA care.

“This is great news for veterans and their immediate family members,” said Donald Koenig, VAPHS director. “A second VAPHS Fisher House will provide additional safe and convenient accommodations at no cost to the families of veterans while the veterans are receiving care at our healthcare system.

“Support from their loved ones plays an integral role in healing and recovery for veterans. We are very grateful to VA and the Fisher House Foundation for approving our request for a second house,” said Koenig.

Since 2012, VAPHS’ original, 10-suite Fisher House, located at the University Drive campus in Oakland, has often reached capacity, resulting in the Friends of the Pittsburgh Fisher House, a local non-profit organization, funding 60-90 nights of lodging each month for eligible family members at nearby Family Houses. Family Houses are homes located in Shadyside and Oakland that provide lodging for patients and their families who are in Pittsburgh for medical care. When the VAPHS Fisher House and Family Houses are full, Fisher House Foundation will pay for a hotel room for veterans’ families through their Hotels for Heroes program.

The new Fisher House will be located near the Community Living Center on the H.J. Heinz III campus in O’Hara Township. It will offer 16 suites, more than doubling the current capacity. A timeline for construction of the second Fisher House has not been established.

Fisher House Foundation is best known for its network of 84 comfort homes where military and veterans’ families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment. These homes are located at major military and VA medical centers nationwide, and in Europe, close to the medical centers or hospitals they serve.

The homes are constructed by Fisher House Foundation on government land (military installations or Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities). Upon completion, the houses are donated to VA or the Department of Defense (DOD), which then has responsibility for the operation, maintenance, upkeep and staffing.

Since 1994, the successful partnership between Fisher House Foundation and VA has resulted in the construction of more than 42 VA Fisher Houses located at 35 VA facilities. VA and Fisher House Foundation plan to expand the number of VA Fisher Houses to at least 65 over the next several years.

Fisher House Foundation funds the construction costs and furnishings of each Fisher House. The Foundation also engages the local community to support Fisher House construction. The Friends of the Pittsburgh Fisher House is spearheading this effort locally. Find out how you can help at www.pittsburghfisherhouse.org.

For more information on the VA Fisher House Program, visit www.socialwork.va.gov/fisher.asp. To learn more about the Fisher House Foundation, visit www.fisherhouse.org.

To schedule an interview about this exciting project, contact Shelley Nulph at shelley.nulph@va.gov or 412-822-3536.

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About VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is one of the largest and most progressive VA health care systems in the nation. More than 3,700 employees serve nearly 80,000 veterans every year, providing a range of services from complex transplant medicine to routine primary care. It is a leader in virtual care delivery through telehealth technology; a center of research and learning with more than 300 active research projects and \$30 million in funding; and a provider of state-of-the-art health care training to some 600 residents and students annually.

VA Pittsburgh provides veterans' health care services at its medical centers in Oakland and O'Hara Township and its outpatient clinics in Beaver, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania and Belmont County in Ohio.

Veterans can call 412-822-2040 to check their eligibility and enrollment. Stay connected and up to date on the latest VA Pittsburgh news and events at pittsburgh.va.gov, facebook.com/vaphs and twitter.com/vapittsburgh.

About Fisher House Foundation

Fisher House Foundation is best known for a network of comfort homes where military and veterans' families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment. These homes are located at major military and VA medical centers nationwide, and in Europe, close to the medical center or hospital it serves. Fisher Houses have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room and an inviting living room. Fisher House Foundation ensures that there is never a lodging fee. Since inception, the program has saved military and veterans' families an estimated \$451 million in out of pocket costs for lodging and transportation.

Fisher House Foundation also operates the Hero Miles Program, using donated frequent flyer miles to bring family members to the bedside of injured service members as well as the Hotels for Heroes program using donated hotel points to allow family members to stay at hotels near medical centers without charge. The Foundation also manages a grant program that supports other military charities and

scholarship funds for military children, spouses and children of fallen and disabled veterans.

www.fisherhouse.org