



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Release: November 12, 2014**

**CONTACT: David Fronk, City of Schenectady Director of Operations, (518) 382-5000  
Jaime E. Forero, HUD Field Office Director, (202) 590-8924**

# **Five Capital Region Cities Unite to End Veteran Homelessness**

***Albany, Amsterdam, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Troy join with HUD, VA and USICH in collaborative effort to end veteran homelessness in Capital Region***

**Albany, NY** - Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy, Troy Mayor Lou Rosamilia, Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane, and Saratoga Springs Mayor Joanne Yepsen, today announced a joint effort to end veteran homelessness in the Capital Region. This joint local effort comes under a larger national initiative, the **Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness**, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

"Across America, cities are successfully tackling veterans' homelessness through collaboration at all levels of government," said Holly Leicht, Regional Administrator at U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. "This challenge cannot be met without local commitment and dedicated resources, which is why I'm so pleased that these five mayors from the New York Capital Region are joining together to solve veterans' homelessness by the end of 2015."

"For far too long, being a Veteran meant you were at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness; it's time to turn that shameful statistic around," said Laura Green Zeilinger, Executive Director of the U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. "We commend the Mayors of New York who have joined The Mayors Challenge and are committed to ending homelessness among Veterans in their communities by the end of 2015."

\* MORE\*

Each mayor has begun the process of engaging local public and community-based service providers to confront this significant issue and, with the assistance of HUD and the VA, the mayors are developing best practices for long-term success. As each city worked to develop its individual efforts, it became clear that many of the service providers crossed municipal lines, and collaborative partnerships were critical to creating solutions. Drawing community attention to this mission is also vital to its success.

“Our veterans have made sacrifices for our country. Now, it is our duty to step up for those in difficult times and provide them with services that they need,” said Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy. “This joint effort, bringing together organizations and governments across the region to provide a housing first solution is an important part of honoring those who have served our nation.”

“We have an obligation to make sure that the brave men and women who have served our country and protected our freedoms are provided proper housing opportunities,” said Troy Mayor Lou Rosamilia. “The City of Troy is proud to participate in this initiative and we look forward to the continuation of coordinated efforts to put an end to veteran homelessness.”

"Our veterans were willing to lay down their lives to protect us," said Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. "The least we should give in return is a guarantee of a roof overhead for all the men and women who serve our country."

"I am proud to be one of our region's mayors that have signed the pledge to end veteran homelessness," said Saratoga Springs Mayor Joanne Yepsen. "From founding The Guardian House to working with Saratoga County RPC to put "VETHELP" in City Hall, helping our veterans find the housing, jobs, and services they need has been and always will be a top priority of mine. I am very much looking forward to working with my local government and HUD colleagues on this important issue."

First Lady Michelle Obama and HUD Secretary Julian Castro have made the Mayors Challenge a major national priority since kicking off the effort earlier this year in Washington, D.C. The national program calls for a “housing first” approach which seeks to remove barriers and unnecessary prerequisites for permanent housing and to help veterans find permanent supportive housing opportunities. This process begins with coordinated outreach efforts that seek to identify and engage every veteran experiencing homelessness, and match those in need with housing and relevant services to provide long-term stable solutions through goal-oriented programs. These Capital Region Cities are conducting outreach efforts with the help of partnerships with many public and community-based agencies including the Albany Housing Coalition, Soldier On, the various local Continuums of Care, several local Municipal Housing Associations, and local Veterans Service Agencies.

###