

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration  
Milwaukee VA Medical Center

**Milwaukee VA Medical Center**  
5000 W. National Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53295

## **Media Advisory**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Public Affairs**  
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### **Panel discussion looks to connect Veterans from diverse backgrounds with health care services**

Connecting Veterans from diverse backgrounds with vital health-care resources, including the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, is the topic of a panel discussion to mark Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Six Veterans from different ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds will take part in the virtual discussion, to take place over Zoom.

It begins at noon Tuesday, Jan. 19, presented by the Captain John D. Mason Veteran Peer Outreach Program.

The discussion will center on Dr. King's statement, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"

Specifically, the panel will look at the statement in how it relates to connecting with Veterans and reducing the rate of Veteran suicides.

"Research has shown that Veterans from diverse backgrounds have trouble connecting with VA and other health-care resources," said Dr. Bert Berger, head of the Mental Health Division at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. "We want to make sure all Veterans get the help they need and deserve."

Veterans Mark Flower and Chris Swift from the peer outreach program will lead the discussion.

For more information and to register, click [here](#), go to the [Mason program's Facebook page](#) or contact Susan Smykal at 414-955-8914 or via email at [ssmykal@mcw.edu](mailto:ssmykal@mcw.edu).

The event is hosted by the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Department of Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the Southeastern Wisconsin Task Force on Veteran Suicide Prevention. For more information, go to [www.BeThereWis.com](http://www.BeThereWis.com).

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The Captain John D. Mason Veteran Peer Outreach Program was created in 2018 and named after a Vietnam veteran who lost his own battle with depression and PTSD. The program, in the Medical College of Wisconsin Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine in collaboration with the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, aims to save lives by locating veterans in need and engaging them in VA health services.