

*Current Issues Affecting Veteran's Health at End-of-Life

- Hybrid (in person & virtual)
- Approved for SW CE credit

Description of my presentation: Current Issues Affecting Veteran's Health at End-of-Life – a presentation by Ashton Stewart, Veteran Program Manager at MJHS Health System and Certified Veteran Service Officer, will provide updates on VA policy for vulnerable Veteran populations, survivor benefits, suicide ideation, and new research correlating Veterans living with TBI (traumatic brain injury) or PTSD and dementia that redefines how clinicians can better support Veterans as they age. This workshop will provide you with resources and anecdotal evidence demonstrating how to access new resources to improve support for Veterans and their families.

Session Objectives:

Objective 1: Veterans with Dementia

Content: Current research has shown a correlation between Veterans who suffer from dementia, PTSD and TBI. Presenter will describe the lasting effects of military trauma and how to recognize PTSD symptoms (that can sometimes surface for the first time when a patient suffers from dementia). Provide grounding techniques for the caregiver, and the patient and how to navigate mental health resources at the VA and with Veteran service organizations/ programs.

Objective 2: LGBTQ+ Veterans and updated VA policies

Content: Presenter will address policy changes within the VA that have helped LGBTQ+ Veterans who were wrongfully discharged from the military access health care benefits. Additionally, attendees will learn strategies to address suicide ideation and key legislation to support this vulnerable population.

Presenter will highlight the Restoration of Honor Act (ROH) and subsequent legislative amendments) available in New York State, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Ashton Stewart – is an advocate who helped craft some language included in the NYS ROH legislation.

Objective 3: Women Veterans

Content: Presenter will address what is leading to women as the fastest growing cohort of veterans, why there is a high percentage dying by suicide, and what the VA is doing to help stop this trend.

Speaker BIO: Ashton Stewart is a certified Veteran Service Organization representative and Veteran Program Manager for the MJHS Health System. Ashton oversees the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program, a national initiative with the VA and National Alliance for Care at Home (formerly NHPCO, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization). Prior to joining MJHS, Ashton served in the U.S. Navy during Operation Desert Shield, and as SAGEVets Program Manager, a New York State program for elder LGBTQ+ veterans. Ashton holds a bachelor's degree from Lehman College and a master's degree in public administration from Baruch College. Currently, he serves as a member of the New York City Veterans Advisory Board, the State Veterans Home at St. Albans Advisory Board, the New York State Council of Veteran Organizations, and the Intrepid Museum's Council of Veteran Advisors. His awards include the Gallantry Award from Black Veterans for Social Justice, an Outstanding Citizen Citation from the New York City Council, a Community Partnership Award from Volunteers of Legal Service, Inc., and his work contributed to MJHS earning the 2023 WHV Outstanding Program Award.