

**Ranks of Homeless Veterans Drop 18 Percent** - The number of Veterans homeless on a typical night dropped 18 percent as the VA entered the second year of its campaign to eliminate homelessness among Veterans within five years. The VA's Community Homeless Assessment Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG), which conducts a widely cited, annual census of homeless Veterans, estimated 107,000 Veterans were homeless each night last year. That figure was 131,000 in 2008 and 154,000 in 2007. VA has approximately 4,000 agreements with community partners. Last year, more than 92,000 homeless Veterans were served by VA's specialized homeless programs. This is an increase of 15 percent from the previous year. An important program that has helped Veterans leave homelessness began in June 2008 when VA partnered with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The VA provides dedicated case management to homeless Veterans, and HUD provides housing vouchers to Veterans and their families. Since the program, called HUD-VASH, began, 20,000 housing vouchers have been given for homeless Veterans. A recent VA study of Veterans discharged from VA-funded residential rehabilitation and transitional housing programs indicated that 79 percent remained housed one year after discharge. Information about the CHALENG process and previous CHALENG reports about homelessness can be found on the Internet at <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/chaleng.asp>. The 2009 report is projected to be published in spring 2010.