

MARYLAND'S Hidden Heroes

Approximately 150,000 military caregivers are on the front lines caring for Maryland's wounded warriors. The Elizabeth Dole Foundation is proud to partner with the Department of Veterans and Military Families to nationally recognize Maryland as a Hidden Heroes State. Under this initiative, Maryland is committed to supporting family members and friends who provide care to disabled, injured, or aging service members and veterans. These Hidden Heroes (or Hidden Helpers, if they are child, teenage, or young adult caregivers) deserve all the resources, assistance, and recognition that the great state of Maryland can provide. Research and data proves they play one of the most critical roles in the health and recovery of our service members and veterans.

You may be a military caregiver if you do any of the following for a service member or veteran:

- Assist with activities of daily living
- Advocate for proper treatment and care
- Care for an invisible and/or physical injury
- Manage medication and medical appointments
- Provide emotional support
- Review budget and/or paperwork for VA benefits



Transforming How Maryland Supports Our Military Caregivers

Maryland State Caregiver Resources

- ★ **Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families**
For help with VA benefits applications and resources, call the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Service and Benefits Program at 800-446-4926, ext. 6450. Visit veterans.maryland.gov/maryland-department-of-veterans-affairs-service-benefits-program
- ★ **Maryland's Commitment to Veterans**
For help finding behavioral health counseling or to receive wrap-around service referrals, contact Maryland's Commitment to Veterans, a Maryland Department of Health Program. Referral line: 877-770-4801. Visit health.maryland.gov/bha/veterans/Pages/Home.aspx
- ★ **Maryland Department of Health**
The Maryland Department of Health promotes and improves the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management, and community engagement. For more information, call 877-463-3464. Visit health.maryland.gov/Pages/Home.aspx
- ★ **Maryland Department of Aging – Family Caregiver Support Program**
Maryland's Family Caregiver Support Program works in conjunction with a host of state and community-based services to create a coordinated array of support services for individuals who need them. For more information, call 800-243-3426. Visit aging.maryland.gov/Pages/national-family-caregiver-support.aspx
- ★ **VA Maryland Caregiver Support Program**
Veterans in Maryland feed to 3 VA healthcare systems: the VA Maryland Healthcare System, Martinsburg WVA Healthcare System, and DC VA Healthcare System. Ask a caregiver support coordinator to help you find what you need, whether it's in-home help, someone to listen, or anything in between. To learn more, visit www.caregiver.va.gov/index.asp. For the VA Caregiver Support Line, call 855-260-3274
- ★ **Warrior Care Recovery Coordination Program**
DOD provides resources and information exclusively for military caregivers who assist wounded, ill, and injured service members with activities of daily living. To learn more, visit <https://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/>
- ★ **Veterans Crisis Line – 24/7**
If you or a loved one is experiencing a crisis, help is available. Call 988, press 1 for the Veteran Crisis Line available 24/7, or text 838255 for the Crisis Text Line

“Military and veteran caregivers are just as much a part of the American story as those who put on the uniform. Maryland is proud to partner with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to honor their service. We want our Hidden Heroes to know that Maryland sees you. We are committed to providing the resources you need to deliver the care our service members and veterans deserve. Together, we will leave no one behind.”
GOV. WES MOORE

EDF's Four Areas of Impact

DELIVERING DIRECT SUPPORT

Providing services directly to caregivers and their families to address urgent and essential needs.

BUILDING CAREGIVER INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Creating a national network of cities and counties with local caregiver outreach and support services.

TRANSFORMING NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF CARE

Advancing policies and training programs that ensure caregiver inclusion in healthcare settings.

GENERATING INFORMATIVE EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

Building a foundation of high-quality research on caregiver needs to effectively guide policies and reforms.



Elizabeth Dole Foundation Program Highlights

As the Foundation leads our nation's response to systemic caregiver challenges, we have prioritized research guided interventions to meet the immediate and long-term needs of service members and veterans, their caregivers and their families.

PROVIDE CRITICAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation provides emergency financial assistance to support caregivers during acute financial hardship and set them on a path toward success.

Every caregiver who applies for financial relief will be offered additional support, referrals, and access to other benefits available through the Foundation's holistic financial wellness program.

STRENGTHEN MENTAL WELLNESS AND PEER SUPPORT

Caregivers report feelings of loneliness and are often disconnected from critical support programs. To create a strong and vibrant caregiver network, the Foundation manages and facilitates the Hidden Heroes Caregiver Community, a vetted and private online community that offers caregivers of all eras the ability to connect, share, and learn from each other and our professional community managers.

Caregivers also have the opportunity to participate in a six-week virtual program for military and veteran caregivers designed and facilitated by two mental health professionals. **The Foundation has worked with mental health professionals and caregivers to create a Mental Wellness Framework to holistically support our military and veteran caregivers, their veterans, and their families.**

IMPROVE SYSTEMS OF CARE

Responding to research, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation created the Campaign for Inclusive Care which is transforming health care by training health care providers on how to effectively include caregivers in the veteran's health team. This program has been implemented at the VA and is now expanding to civilian hospitals.

Qualitative research among participants has shown that the program increases provider satisfaction, reduces provider burden and caregiver stress, increases patients' medication adherence, and reduces emergency department visits. **To date, thousands of providers have been trained, impacting millions of veteran families.**

★ If you are a military caregiver looking for support, log onto elizabethdolefoundation.org for more information and sign up to join our community today.