Remembering Those With Hepatitis C Who Also Served Our Country

May 28, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

"They hover as a cloud of witnesses above this Nation." ~Henry Ward Beecher

Memorial Day is a day to remember those brave men and women who died in battle serving in the United States Armed Services. Typically we think of it as a day to honor those who died from combat-related wounds, but I prefer to think of it as a day to honor all those who died either in the war, or as an indirect consequence from having served.

How they died does not matter to me. Veterans are often unable to access decent medical services, leaving them to die from diseases or conditions that may be "unrelated" to combat, but is in every way related to combat. The suicide rate for veterans is high, particularly for those serving in the Middle East. No one is exempt, whether Army, Navy, Air Force or National Guard.

Veterans have complicated medical histories, and for many years, hepatitis C was a big problem. The data vary, with studies showing a hepatitis C prevalence among veterans from three to ten times that of the general population. However, this is changing in a big way.

In an article published in Forbes, John LaMattina wrote, 'The VA Will Eliminate Hepatitis C in Veterans by Year-End' (March 1, 2018). This is good news for the tens of thousands of U.S. veterans who were infected with hepatitis C. It's also good news for everyone since let's face it, our veterans deserve good health care.

Ant this isn't just talk - the VA is doing remarkable work. Click here to read '100,000th Veteran Treated by VA for Hepatitis C.'

If we can eliminate hepatitis C in veterans using the VA health care system, we can eliminate hepatitis C in the rest of the U.S. I can't think of a better place to start than with the women and men who serve this country. Click here to read this article in its entirety.

Hepatitis Awareness Month officially ends on May 31st. Our obligation to our veterans never ends.

Click here to learn more about the VA's Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment Awareness Campaign.

Tweet @hepatitismag and say how you are observing Memorial Day.

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