

Murphy Calls for Volunteers to Help Disabled Veterans in Greater Torrington Area

Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) was joined by veterans' advocates and Torrington Mayor Ryan Bingham to call for volunteers to assist in driving disabled veterans to medical appointments at the West Haven and Newington Veterans Administration (VA) Hospitals in a van provided by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization.

July 2, 2009

Kristen Bossi

(202) 225-4476

TORRINGTON, CT - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) was joined by veterans' advocates and Torrington Mayor Ryan Bingham to call for volunteers to assist in driving disabled veterans to medical appointments at the West Haven and Newington Veterans Administration (VA) Hospitals in a van provided by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization.

"Our veterans have done so much for our country; it's the least we can do to help them get to their doctors appointments. Volunteering for this program will only take a few hours of your time, and it will make a huge difference in their lives. As we celebrate Independence Day this week, I encourage people to make the decision to donate their time for our veterans," said Murphy.

Litchfield County is home to over 16,000 veterans; nearly 5,000 of those veterans are enrolled in the VA Healthcare System. The DAV Hospital Service Coordinator/Transportation Network Program (HSC/TN) was established in 1987. From 1987 to 2008, DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have donated 2,109 vans to VA medical facilities nationwide at a cost of over \$41 million. In 2008, 795,688 veterans across the country benefitted from this program.

A DAV van is currently available and not being used regularly in the greater Torrington area because of a lack of volunteer drivers. The service will take veterans to medical appointments at the West Haven or Newington facilities; the vans do not service outpatient VA clinics, like those in Winsted and Waterbury.

The DAV is in need of three drivers on a part time or full time basis, and volunteers do not need to be a member of the DAV. To volunteer to drive DAV-owned vans, you must:

- Fill out a VA Form 10-7055, application for voluntary service. Forms will be available through Murphy's office and through Connecticut DAV.
- Hold a valid driver's license.
- Prove that you are insurable (the VA insures the van).
- Pass a VA physical.

Veterans who need rides can arrange them by calling my office at (860) 223-8412, or the DAV Transportation office at the facility where their appointment is scheduled. The DAV Transportation office can be reached in West Haven at (203) 932-5711 Ext 3575 or in Newington at (860) 666-6951 Ext 6397. To get a ride, a veteran:

- Must have a medical appointment (and therefore be eligible for VA treatment)
- Must be able to get in and out of the van without assistance
- May be required to bring a companion with him or her (if the patient has Alzheimer's)

###