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Veterans 'Stand Down' event planned for April 28

A free "Stand Down" event for veterans will take place on Saturday, April 28, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sarasota County Health Department, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota. The event organizers say that the "Stand Down" is a way for veterans not connected to the system to readily access available services in a one-stop setting.

Veterans who attend the "Stand Down" will be able to get help in accessing VA benefits and services. Housing assistance also will be available for homeless veterans. Local organizations will have representatives on hand to provide referrals for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, there will be legal services and employment assistance services available, along with free health screenings and haircuts.

Veterans should bring their ID (VA card or DD214) if available.

Backpacks with food, personal care items and VA surplus items such as blankets will be provided. The Salvation Army will provide food and refreshments at the event.

"Veterans are an essential part of our community. Unfortunately, the transition from active duty to everyday civilian life can be overwhelming. Local organizations have partnered for this event to help ensure that homeless veterans know about all the benefits and services they may be qualified to receive," said Chip Taylor, Director of the Operation Military Assistance Program (OMAP), a federally funded program initiated by Jewish Family & Children's Service of Sarasota-Manatee Inc. to assist veterans with obtaining or maintaining permanent housing.

Partner organizations for this event include Jewish Family & Children's Service of Sarasota-Manatee Inc., Florida Veterans for Common Sense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Bay Pines Healthcare Services, The Salvation Army, All Faiths Food Bank, Hedges Health Mart Pharmacy, the Sarasota County Health Department and Sarasota County Veterans Services.

For more information, visit <http://www.jfcs-cares.org/> or call 941-366-2224.

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