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Subject: Empowering Veterans to Direct Their Own Care and Services

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Empowering Veterans to Direct Their Own Care and Services

By Lori Gerhard, Director, Office of Consumer Access & Self Determination, ACL

Today the country pauses to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans. ACL believes that one of the best ways of honoring their service is helping veterans remain in their own homes and communities throughout their lives.

To that end, ACL provides an array of home and community-based services to veterans across the country through the aging and disability networks. These programs include the Veteran-Directed Home and Community-Based Services (VD-HCBS) program, the National Family Caregiver Support program, and lifespan respite programs.

The VD-HCBS program began in 2008 as a partnership between the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and ACL. It provides veterans of all ages the opportunity to direct their own long-term supports and services and continue to live independently at home. Eligible veterans decide for themselves what mix of goods and services best meet their needs. They manage their own flexible budgets and hire and supervise their own workers.

ACL and VHA's long-range national vision is to have a long-term service and supports system that is person-centered, consumer-directed and helps people at risk of institutionalization to continue to live at home and be engaged in community life.

[Learn more and watch two videos showing the program in action in San Diego and](#)

Central Texas.

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