You may have heard of our latest initiative Operation Connecting Veterans Home, which we’ve been redoubling our efforts into over the past month. In recent weeks, Brighton Marine is proud to have been able to spark a glimmer of joy among Veterans at the Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers’ Homes by donating 375 iPads to help Veterans experiencing isolation connect virtually with their families, friends, and telehealth service providers, while visitation to these facilities is restricted due to COVID-19. This is just one of the many ways we are working to aid the Veteran community during this time of crisis.

We are pleased to announce that we will be making additional iPad donations to veterans isolated from family and friends due to COVID-19 in the coming weeks. Please keep an eye out for our next efforts!

Campus Improvements & Changes

Veterans Housing build-out in Building 9 continues to progress and we are excited to officially open this summer and welcome residents to their new homes. The building will feature 25 studio apartments specifically designed for Veterans eligible for supportive housing assistance, and is made possible by our partnership with Boston Housing Authority, VA Boston Healthcare, and Soldier On through the HUD-VASH program.

The HUD-VASH program will provide Veterans with comprehensive case management and wraparound services delivered on and off campus – including primary and mental health care, and substance abuse counseling as needed. In addition to case manager and peer support presence, we are providing technology platforms to ensure each resident has access to tele-health and tele-counseling services when desired. The broad range of services provides tailored support for each Veterans’ recovery enabling them to achieve housing security and greater independence.
I hope that this message finds you, your family, and your team safe and healthy. I would be remiss if I did not immediately acknowledge the unique circumstances facing our country. COVID-19 has presented our Veterans with a new fight, one that is especially affecting our older Veterans. At Brighton Marine, our hearts are broken for more than 100 Massachusetts Veterans who have passed due to COVID-19 in the Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers’ Homes.

Our team has spent the past few months identifying ways to realign our resources to better serve Veterans and their families during this crisis. I am proud to share our recent activities with you. In early May, we were fortunate to coordinate with Apple on a purchase of 375 iPad tablets to donate to the Chelsea and Holyoke Soldiers’ Homes. This effort was driven by our Board of Directors coming together to discuss the tragic deaths in those facilities. We knew we needed to find a way to support those Veterans, who rely on connecting weekly with their loved ones, families, and friends. We realized connectivity was just one issue facing Veterans during this crisis, but by removing that barrier, we made a difference in Veterans’ lives during the recent surge in this pandemic.

This Memorial Day, Brighton Marine commemorated the 75-year anniversary since the end of World War II, those Veterans who we’ve lost to COVID-19, and the rest of our brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. For Gold Star families, Memorial Day is especially difficult, and the lack of social interaction and public gatherings of remembrance made this an unusual day of remembrance. Knowing how important it is to honor the fallen, our flag garden was planted as scheduled, largely thanks to volunteers from the East Boston High School Army JROTC and Derrick Hassell, facilities team member.

With The Residences at Brighton Marine nearly occupied with Veterans, the Building 9 permanent supportive housing initiative is moving toward its official opening providing new opportunities to support Veterans. We are confident we can continue to do the important work of providing essential resources and care for our Veterans, no matter what curve balls come our way.

Lastly, I would like to thank our dedicated employees who continue to perform essential work for Brighton Marine during this pandemic and we are grateful to have a team united in providing the best possible care for our Military, Veterans, and their Families.

Thank you for your continued support of Brighton Marine. Stay safe and well, and do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions, comments or suggestions as it relates to caring for our Veterans.

Best Regards,

Michael Dwyer
President & CEO

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Colonel’s Corner

Our focus throughout this pandemic is on how we can best serve our military and Veteran families, caregivers, and families of the fallen. As policies change and restrictions are lifted, we will all adjust to new ways of doing business. In addition to this, recent events in our country have drawn our attention in another direction, and rightly so. It is important we acknowledge the tragic death in Minneapolis and the emotion it brings out in all of us. Our country has seen peaceful protests, a form of freedom of speech that many of us wore a uniform to protect, and some non-peaceful protests that resulted in tragedies of their own. This, on top of the fear and frustration from the pandemic has melded a perfect storm in which we must be mindful of its impact on the emotional and mental well-being of those we serve, as well as ourselves. We must also be conscious of individual safety. Many of us may be on the ground in the protests, some as individual citizens exercising constitutional rights and others in uniform, fulfilling a role in public safety. It is important that we care and respect each other.

I ask that we all focus on collaboratively supporting our clients and each other today and the days ahead.

Bob Notch,
Program Development Officer

COBOVS On Campus!

LAST CALL! Brighton Marine and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) have partnered and we are seeking Massachusetts Veterans to participate in a study about their needs. The findings will inform future support programs and policies, so please share this survey with your Veteran connections.

If you know of a Veteran interested in sharing their insights, please have them reach out to ngrogan@cnas.org or call 206-695-8186 to schedule an interview.

The Residences at Brighton Marine

In our last update, we shared that building construction of the Residences at Brighton Marine is complete. We now want to share that our design and construction sustainable and environmentally friendly efforts resulted in a LEED Gold certification! Congratulations and Thank You to our partners, TAT, Cranshaw Construction, and WinnCompanies!

The team is now completing landscaping work to ensure the outside is as beautiful as inside. Again, we would like to thank our partner WinnCompanies and the City and State leaders who made this entire project possible. With our ribbon-cutting ceremony postponed due to COVID-19, we have been pleased to welcome 90 tenants to their new homes.

The Residences at Brighton Marine has just 11 units remaining for Veterans, service members, and their families in the higher levels of income. We ask that you share this information with your networks, as we hope to fill these units quickly. All information about the Residences at Brighton Marine can be found here: www.livebrightonmarine.com.

Leasing office hours have been temporarily extended. The office will be open on Thursdays from 8 am – 7 pm and Saturdays from 11 am – 4 pm.
Since we last convened, the Coordinated Veterans Services network has continued to provide a single stop for Veterans to receive a variety of care. The network’s mobile platform allows all of our partners to easily continue case management and manage referrals during the shift to work at home. Collaboration to fill gaps and provide services to Veterans who need support remains strong throughout this pandemic. Our vision is a simplified process for Veterans and military members searching for assistance as well as the organizations that serve them, in any environment.

To date, 38 Veteran-focused nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, municipalities and others have joined our ranks, and we have served more than 210 clients. We are pleased to welcome our most recent partner Boston Military Outreach Ministry, Inc.!

We invite organizations looking to support our Veterans to contact us and inquire about becoming a part of the network. We will host a network software demonstration via Zoom on Thursday, June 25 at 1pm. Call us at 888.887.3107 to register.

One last note. We are excited to reveal the new network logo! Let us know what you think of it.