Our VA Partnership

We have a formal partnership with the VA with a signed MoA. Our partnership was publicly launched mid-January 2018. It’s with the VA Dept. of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. However, it doesn’t preclude us from reaching all Veterans and service members on a health journey.

Our partnership continues to be communicated across VA and CaringBridge channels.
CaringBridge and VA are aligned in our vision:
A world where no one goes through a health journey alone.
Partnerships are Key Referral Sources for CaringBridge

Referrals from Fisher House and other VA private partners are key referral sources for CaringBridge. When a partner refers CaringBridge, we see higher conversion rates:

- 5%+ is the average conversion rate for partner referrals
- 0.061 is the average conversion rate for non-referrals

67% of users start a CaringBridge site because of a recommendation from someone they know, whether it’s a friend, family member or healthcare provider.
Who We Are / How It Works
Founder Sona Mehring, started the first CaringBridge website for baby Brighid, who was born prematurely. The name CaringBridge rose organically out of “Caring for Brighid.”
Largest Nonprofit Social Network Dedicated to Health

Free, patient- and family-centered sites that connect patients and families during a health crisis, treatment and/or recovery.
CaringBridge is a Pioneer and Thrives in the World of Social Networks
The CaringBridge Community – Since 1997

2+ billion cumulative visitors
  • 31+ million visitors annually

800,000+ personal sites created
  • A new site created every 8 minutes!

85% User satisfaction (way above average)

65% of users are on mobile

64% of sites are started by family caregivers

Nonprofit business model
  • Ad free, privacy protected and funded by the people who have experienced the power of CaringBridge firsthand

1 in 11 people in the U.S. turn to CaringBridge. Reach of 235 countries and territories around the world.
How CaringBridge Works

1. GET STARTED
   It's easy to start a personalized, advertisement-free site. You can create a website for yourself or someone else in less than 5 minutes.

2. PERSONALIZE IT
   Give your CaringBridge website a name, add a main site photo and select a cover photo.

3. POST AN UPDATE
   Tell people what's happening with a quick update or longer Journal entry. Your site is all about your illness or injury and what you need to say and hear.

4. GET SUPPORT
   Write a message explaining ways family and friends can best help you—because they want to help you. You can even link your CaringBridge website to a personal fundraiser or other helpful tools.

5. SHARE IT
   Invite people to visit or share a link on other social media sites.

Start a Site

PRIVATE | SAFE | SECURE
We have developed a customized landing page for Veterans, service members and caregivers. The goal is to have everyone start a site by entering through the landing page so they feel a sense of connection.

The URL to the landing page is: [www.caringbridge.org/military-service/](http://www.caringbridge.org/military-service/)

The page covers top medical conditions such as:

- Critical Injury
- Cancer
- Mental Health
- Amputation
- Rehabilitation (not shown)

- It also asks viewers to Start a Site.
Personal Homepage

**Homepage**

It can be personalized with a background cover image that can be selected from a variety of categories, including “Military” or a personal image can be uploaded.

**Personal Photo and Site Name**

The homepage can also be personalized with a photo and a name to create an experience that fits the patient.

**Personal Story**

The patient or the family caregiver shares the reason behind their site and provides journal updates as it progresses.
The patient or the family caregiver posts regular health updates to keep everyone informed and connected. Visitors can use the heart amplifier and comment feature to let the patient know they’re thinking of them.
Visitors can also support patients and caregivers with messages of love, hope, prayer and strength.

They can add:

- A comment
- A photo
- A YouTube Video
- A Carepost (Hallmark images offering hope and encouragement)
Ways To Help: Patients/Caregivers Coordinate Help and Support

**Planner**
Schedule and coordinate task support like meals, rides to appointments and more.

**Support Links**
Add personal links that help you feel supported by your community such as a link to a healthcare organization support group or a conditions support group or religious organization.

**Healthcare Facility**
Patient can display provider information.

**Personal Fundraiser**
Patients can start a personal fundraiser to help cover the cost of health expenses.
Resources that Help and Inspire

Resource section of our website features helpful articles, stories and videos from patients, caregivers and health experts that help families and friends navigate the journey and offer support.

We also have resources specific to Veterans, service members and caregivers.
Why Start a Site
Provides the Social Support on the Path to Healing

Patients & Family Caregivers can experience isolation & chaos during a health journey.

Current social networking tools are not focused on health, and provide solutions that lack user controls and are cluttered with extraneous content.

Support, love, hope and prayer from family and friends are critical components on the path to healing.
Family and Friends are Crucial to Patient Outcomes

Among the measurable impacts on population health, CaringBridge address the one that is most significant.

- Clinical Care: 20%
- Physical Environment: 10%
- Social Support: 40%
- Health Behaviors: 30%
Connecting with family and friends can lessen the effects of stress and depression on health.

Kevin Amundson is a former National Guard member whose family used CaringBridge after he attempted suicide.
Studies show that storytelling can help find positive meaning in negative events and improve overall well-being.

Tomo Riley is a Gulf War Veteran who is fighting for his life with Melanoma.
Healing is Always Possible

With the simple hope of helping others, people plunged into serious health crises talk about what has made them whole again, even in the face of trauma, suffering and loss. While every approach is different, one universal truth emerges: Healing is a choice.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=how+we+heal+caringbridge
How You Can Help
What Fisher House Can Do to Support Our Partnership

1. **Promote the VA landing page URL with a description of CaringBridge** with your website, social channels, publications, emails, newsletters, etc. [www.caringbridge.org/military-service](http://www.caringbridge.org/military-service)

2. **Request & hand out collateral with landing page URL.** Personal referrals are key to site starts.

3. **Designate ambassador(s) at each house** to ensure success. A knowledgeable advocate on program is key.

4. **Share our content** from the Resource section of our website on social media. You are welcome to use any of this content with your channels.

5. **Request CaringBridge training for staff** (generally online) on the benefits of using CaringBridge and how to tell patients/families about it.
Next Steps

- Order Collateral for your house by emailing
  - Susan Kerber  skerber@caringbridge.org  651.789.5349
  - Kristie Thibodeau  kthibodeau@caringbridge.org

- Share CaringBridge as a resource with all house staff via newsletters, staff department meetings, and other organizational programming

- Share CaringBridge as a resource to your patients, families and their caregivers via collateral in welcome packets, at computer workstation areas, front desk, direct communication and social channels
Do you have any ideas on how you can refer CaringBridge?

Is there anything you need from us that would help with your referral efforts?

What other questions do you have?
Thank you!

Contact:
Susan Kerber at skerber@caringbridge.org or 651.452.7940
Kristie Thibodeau at kthibodeau@caringbridge.org or 651.452.7940