

## OPERATION "WELCOME HOME" PROJECT GUIDELINES FOR MOPH, LAMOPH, AND SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS

### About This Document and Updates

This document has been created in cooperation with authorized representatives from Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), and Malcolm Grow Medical Center (MGMC) at Andrews Air Force Base (AAFB). All information below is provided to you per their requests. We update this document whenever we learn about a change(s) in military and other regulations applicable to MOPH, LAMOPH, and special volunteers. The latest copy of it is available in Adobe Acrobat PDF format on the Operation "Welcome Home" Project website of the MOPH Chapter 353 at <http://welcomehome.purpleheart353.com>.

### Visitors and Special Volunteers from Other States

Patriots and Ladies from other states are welcome to participate in military hospital visits of our MOPH Chapter 353 and/or LAMOPH Unit 353, as well as other Operation "Welcome Home" Project events. If you would like to visit OIF/OEF Veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), <http://www.wramc.amedd.army.mil>, in Washington, DC, and/or National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), <http://www.bethesda.med.navy.mil>, in Bethesda, MD, with us, we need to know your desired visit date(s) and the number of participants **at least 3-4 weeks in advance**. Due to operational security and patient privacy regulations, all visits to these military hospitals **must be approved in advance** by the respective hospital command. You are welcome to arrange your visits directly with the Visitors' Bureau at WRAMC and Marine Liaison Office and/or Casualty Affairs Office at NNMC. However, they strongly prefer to coordinate all visits through the local MOPH Chapter 353 and/or LAMOPH Unit 353, and have a representative from our Chapter and/or Unit participating in all visits.

Due to the visiting policy changes effective mid-June 2007, Operation "Welcome Home" Project team is no longer allowed to continue regular visits to the 79<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Staging Flight (ASF) at Malcolm Grow Medical Center (MGMC), <http://www.mgmc.af.mil>, at Andrews Air Force Base (AAFB) in Maryland. We may be able to schedule occasional visits and host special events. Every visit and special event **must be requested in advance**, coordinated with the Medical Wing Public Affairs Office, and **approved** by the MGMC Commander. To receive his approval, combat-wounded veterans **must agree** not to wear the Purple Heart Medal and anything else that may identify them as combat-wounded veterans and/or MOPH members. LAMOPH members and special volunteers **must agree** not to wear anything that shows their affiliation with and/or support of combat-wounded veterans. According to the MGMC Commander and staff of the 79<sup>th</sup> ASF, some returning troops with non-battle injuries (nbi) find cordial greetings and grateful support from combat-wounded veterans depressing and intimidating.

### Hospital Visits

The following rules and regulations apply to all MOPH, LAMOPH, and special volunteers visiting WRAMC, NNMC, and/or 79<sup>th</sup> ASF at MGMC. The number of visitors per hospital room at WRAMC and NNMC is limited to **a maximum of five people**, not including a military escort person. At the 79<sup>th</sup> ASF, all visitors **are prohibited** from entering hospital rooms and the Maryland Room unless they are specifically asked and escorted by the military medical staff or a military liaison officer. Due to security and patient privacy regulations, visitors at all three military hospitals **are not allowed** to ask about military service, name, nature of wounds or injuries, and medical or physical condition of OIF/OEF patients. MOPH, LAMOPH, and special volunteers may ask a patient to provide his or her military rank, name, and contact information **only** if he or she specifically requests a follow-up assistance.

### No Recruiting

Recruiting new members for the MOPH, LAMOPH, or any other veterans organizations during visits to all military hospitals **is prohibited**. If a patient expresses interest in joining the MOPH and/or other veterans organization, his or her membership eligibility can be determined without violating the security and patient privacy regulations. Ask the patient if he or she has received or is eligible to receive the Purple Heart Medal or other qualifying military award. A membership application can be given to a patient and/or a family member only if they specifically ask for it.

### Taking Photographs

Taking photographs of patients, their family members, military and medical staff, or a military facility with your camera (including cell phone camera) **is not allowed**. A special permission for each photograph to be taken must be requested and granted in writing in advance. MOPH, LAMOPH, and special volunteers may photograph patients, their family members, or military and medical staff per their request and with their cameras. Visitors may receive copies of such photographs for their personal use. They must obtain written permission of the person(s) depicted on each photograph before passing them to other people or using them for any public relations purposes.

### Providing Information

All MOPH, LAMOPH, and special volunteers are allowed and encouraged to provide information about the MOPH, LAMOPH, MOPH Service Foundation, MOPH National Service Program, other veterans organizations, and their personal contact information to patients, their families, and military and medical staff **upon their request**. They may also provide information about benefits and assistance available to them, their immediate families, and survivors from various sources.

## OPERATION "WELCOME HOME" PROJECT GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

### Service Officers

National Service Officers (NSOs) and Department, Chapter, or Post Service Officers from the MOPH and other veterans organization **are not allowed** by Federal law to assist OIF/OEF and other Veterans, their dependents, and survivors with their claims for VA and other benefits unless a Veteran has been discharged from the military or is deceased. Only Transition Service Officers (TSOs) from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) have the authority to assist Veterans and their eligible family members during their transition from military service.

### Special Events

All MOPH and LAMOPH members and special volunteers **must follow** all rules and regulations outlined above at all special events for patients and their families. The number of MOPH and LAMOPH members and special volunteers allowed or invited to attend special events is different for each special event.

### Appropriate Attire

The appropriate attire for **visits to WRAMC and NNMC** is a full or partial MOPH or LAMOPH uniform, or clean and comfortable (business casual) civilian clothing and closed-toe shoes. The appropriate attire for **special events for WRAMC and/or NNMC patients** is a full or partial MOPH or LAMOPH uniform, or clean and comfortable (business casual) civilian clothing and shoes. The appropriate attire for **all visits to and special events at the 79<sup>th</sup> ASF at MGMC** is clean and comfortable (business casual) civilian clothing and closed-toe shoes. **It is prohibited** to wear the Purple Heart Medal, MOPH and LAMOPH uniform, or anything else that may be in some way associated with combat-wounded veterans. **At all hospitals**, the amount of jewelry, makeup, and personal hygiene products (deodorant, cologne, aftershave, perfume, etc.) should be kept to the minimum. It is a good practice to carry a small hand sanitizer and use it after every direct physical contact (e.g., handshake) with a patient, family member, and/or their possessions.

### Donations and Sponsorship of Special Events

Some wounded and injured warriors return to the United States with nothing more than hospital clothes or military uniform they wear, while other require many months of hospital treatment and rehabilitation before they can return home or to their military units. We always appreciate monetary donations (cash, checks, and gift cards), which we use to buy civilian clothes, toiletries, prepaid phone cards, and other essential supplies for OIF/OEF patients and their families.

LAMOPH Unit 353 coordinates all in-kind donations and maintains a Wish List of supplies for MGMC, WRAMC, and NNMC. It is also looking for sponsors and co-sponsors for special events for OIF/OEF patients and their families. Examples of special events include holiday parties, cookouts, sports events, and concerts in the Washington, DC area. For additional sponsorship information and the latest Wish List, please visit [www.opwelcomehomeprogram.org](http://www.opwelcomehomeprogram.org) or contact Tanya Cobb.

### Questions and Requests

Please contact **MOPH Chapter 353**, if you:

- would like to make a monetary donation (cash, checks, and gift cards) to the Chapter
- want to schedule a visit to MGMC, WRAMC and/or NNMC, or join us for one of our visits
- need "Welcome Home" packets for distribution to combat-wounded OIF/OEF troops in your area

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Please contact **LAMOPH Unit 353**, if you:

- have any questions about this document
- would like to make a monetary donation (cash, checks, and gift cards) to the Unit
- want to receive the latest Wish List by e-mail, fax, or postal mail;
- have questions about donating supplies or would like to make an in-kind donation
- want to sponsor/co-sponsor, help host, or attend a special event
- need ideas for or assistance with "Welcome Home" activities in your area

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