

Letter of Support to County of Monroe

July 27, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

10.2 million Veterans are either not being served through the Veterans Affairs system, are not being served at all, or are receiving community-based services.

Mental health professionals have long sought effective strategies to encourage help-seeking behavior among those struggling with mental health challenges (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2019).

Many Veterans experience barriers related to transportation that prevent them from actively engaging in supportive services.

Veterans need medical and non-medical transportation to improve and sustain wellness.

Peer activities, like those offered by the Compeer CORPS program improve social determinants of health for Veterans. Many, especially city residents have trouble getting to outdoor activities offered in more rural communities and settings.

Research on peer support with Veterans suggests that Veteran social networks reduce stigma and facilitate help seeking behavior.

Stacy A Harris, LMFT, LPC, PhD

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I'm writing this letter in support of Compeer Rochester, Inc., and specifically for their military veteran services arm, CompeerCORPS. They are applying for a grant which will enable them to purchase a van and hire a full-time dispatcher and a 3-4 part-time drivers.

These new hires and the vehicle will be used to pick up and take veterans who do not have transportation to medical appointments, food/other goods shopping, and veteran-focused events which they could not get to without this help. This service is significantly lacking in the Greece and City of Rochester areas of Monroe County.

As the former President of OASIS (Outdoor Adventures for Sacrifice In Service) Adaptive Sports, a non-profit organization based in Honeoye, NY, I'm very aware of issues the area's veterans had in trying to get to our 7 adaptive sports venues. We had some volunteer drivers, but definitely not enough to cover the area and meet our veterans' needs. Because of the lack of transportation, some veterans could not get to activities which were proven to improve their quality of life.

I urge you to approve this grant request and allow CompeerCORPS to serve and improve the lives of more veterans in Monroe County.

Respectfully,
Vito Vasiliauskas
Compeer Rochester Board Member
CompeerCORPS Volunteer
USMC Veteran