

Easterseals NH Military & Veterans Services (MVS) continues to work with veterans in need of Substance Use Disorder treatment services by assisting them in entering treatment, and supporting them through holistic care coordination during and after treatment. This includes providing emergency financial assistance to meet urgent needs so the client can focus on their recovery. SUDs treatment providers continue to accept new clients, but screening for COVID-19 has resulted in a slower admissions process. In addition, SUDs facilities are running at a limited capacity in order to meet CDC and state guidelines surrounding occupancy limits and social distancing.

During the time period of April-July 2020, ESNH MVS supported 4 veterans and service members engaged in SUDs treatment. This included a total of $1,134 in emergency financial assistance. These funds paid for necessary car repairs so a veteran in treatment could continue employment and get himself and his children to medical appointments and the purchase of a bed for another formerly homeless veteran receiving SUDs services who entered permanent housing.

To show the impact of this support, we are proud to share a story of one veteran for whom treatment is making all the difference:

Keith is a US Navy veteran who reported to basic training on 9/12/2001, just a day after the September 11th terror attacks changed the course of American history. Filled with uncertainty and fear for his future, Keith persevered and completed basic training. He was immediately deployed to Afghanistan, where he completed three tours of duty in four years (2001-2005) as part of the War on Terror. When he arrived back in the United States, he immediately sought help at a veteran service center in Florida, where his Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms were dismissed. Nevertheless, Keith found his way to New Hampshire, where he secured employment and housing. He was living an “ordinary life” until a car accident changed everything. He was prescribed opioid pain medication for a severe back injury he received in the crash. Unfortunately, but like many affected by the widespread Opioid Epidemic, Keith became addicted. When his prescription ended and he was not able to obtain the medication legally any longer, he turned to heroin. Over the next 6 months, his addiction consumed his life. When Keith became homeless, he knew he needed help. He sought services at the NH VA Health Center, where he began medication-assisted treatment (MAT) alongside housing assistance to get him off the streets. When he moved from transitional housing to permanent housing, Keith was referred to ESNH MVS for Care Coordination services to ensure he had the supports he needed to continue living independently while in recovery. Keith has been sober for 3 years and remains in regular treatment and counseling, in addition to continuing supportive services through ESNH MVS. According to his Care Coordinator, Keith is thriving: he has recently been promoted at his job, and selected as President of the homeowners association of the veterans housing community where he lives. They are working together to treat his PTSD.

We are grateful to the CVS Health Foundation for supporting our efforts in achieving these outcomes.