

**For Immediate Release
November 19, 2010**

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PRESS RELEASE

**Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
To Host
Rhode Island VETERANS SUMMIT**

**Secretary Alexander to Unveil Plans for the New State Department of Veterans Affairs and
Discuss Important Issues Facing Veterans**

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) announces the Rhode Island Veterans Summit at the Rhode Island Veterans Home in Bristol, RI on Monday, December 20, 2010 from 9am to 2pm. This summit will bring together Federal, State and community agencies to discuss plans to improve housing, employment and health care services for veterans and the design for the new Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

EOHHS Secretary of Health and Human Services, Gary D. Alexander, who has made Veterans a top priority for 2011, commented that "all Veterans especially those with disabilities must have access to needed health care services, housing and employment. In order to ensure that these services are available to veterans of all eras, the state must invest in the new State Veterans Department by providing sufficient funding to connect veterans to quality health care, invest in housing to eliminate homelessness among our veterans and to improve the employment outlook for all veterans. I am proud of the work that we have accomplished, but much more needs to be done. Veterans are our number one priority."

Many returning Veterans come home without a job and may have many barriers to employment, whether they are health related or economic. To combat this, the new state DVA will work with federal and state partners to provide a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life. The DVA will work with the federal and state agencies to better coordinate services and provide veterans with better employment opportunities.

Secretary Alexander will be joined by veteran's organizations and various federal, state and community agencies to kick off the event. Veteran services focused vendors welcome.

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