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New Program Provides Services to Senior Veterans

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Veterans over 60 not covered by health or service benefits can access hearing, dental, and vision services at the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department starting June 1. The Senior Veteran Support Program will use Senior Millage funding to cover the cost of services through a partnership between the department’s Veterans Service Office and Area Agency on Aging Division.

“Access to vision aids, dental services, and more are extremely limited for those who don’t qualify for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care,” said Lauren King, VSO Supervisor. “This partnership will remove barriers, giving veterans access to services that improve quality of life and increase independence.”

This year, the Area Agency on Aging will provide the VSO \$500,000 to connect Kalamazoo’s senior veterans to the Senior Veteran Support Program. From April 2022 to March 2023, 64% of clients served by the VSO were over the age of 60. The VSO also saw an increase in assistance requests for existing programs by almost 800% since 2019.

“We’re an aging nation. We need to ensure that all older adults, including veterans of the armed forces, have the needed support to age in place and to continue being a part of the Kalamazoo community,” said Don Saldia, Area Agency on Aging Division Manager. “Even with benefits, these essential services needed for quality of life are still financially difficult to access—and this holds true for our veterans. The Kalamazoo County Senior Millage assisted more than 7,300 seniors in 2022 and we are proud to make sure our veterans are included and honored.”

Community members can call 269-373-5361 to access the Senior Veteran Support Program. For more information about the Senior Millage, please visit www.kalcounty.com/seniormillage.

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