

# Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living (WNYIL). Our guest today is Thomas Patterson, Veteran Directed Care coordinator at WNYIL. And I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell. Welcome to the program, Tom.

00:00:19 Speaker 2

Thank you, Ernie. Good morning and thank you for having me.

00:00:22 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure. And I guess we've had Veteran Directed Care for about half a year, give or take, but there are new developments even in that period of time. What can you tell us?

00:00:37 Speaker 2

Yes, Veteran Directed Care has started in the Western New York area. In April, we got our first couple veterans enrolled and the biggest update that I have is that we've just expanded service into northern Pennsylvania through the Erie, PA VA. So, this spreads the services across the 10 counties of Western New York and now into northern Pennsylvania. So, this means that the elderly and disabled veterans who live in these very, very rural areas are now receiving paid support that they did not previously have.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

And as I may have mentioned before, the program is administered by veterans such as myself and also Jennifer Smith, who came on board with us back in August. So, it's a win-win beyond thanking these veterans for their service, we're striving for nothing less than excellence.

00:01:35 Speaker 2

And we do this by understanding their service experiences and how these experiences continue to impact their lives to this day.

00:01:45 Speaker 2

So, we're committed to them via effective communication and timely responses and also empowering them to direct their care with the resources they need.

00:01:57 Speaker 2

So, with that being said, I do have a special treat in honor of Veteran's Day.

00:02:02 Speaker 2

One of our veterans is a poet and I recently purchased his book, and he was tickled to sign it for me, but out of respect for him, I won't share his name, but I will share his poem, which is entitled Veterans.

00:02:18 Speaker 2

And it goes like this.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

Whenever our country has gone to war.

00:02:23 Speaker 2

There come forth a special breed of men and women from all walks to serve in those hours of need.

Like minute men of old, they rallied to defend our flag around the world.

00:02:36 Speaker 2

And even today, though, aged and gray, stand tall when our banners unfurl.

00:02:43 Speaker 2

There are tears for departed comrades whose bodies now lie far and wide.

00:02:49 Speaker 2

Yet always remembered down through the years, so in a sense walk side by side.

00:02:55 Speaker 2

These men and women are veterans who carry the scars of the fight, some on the outside, most on the inside, but all from defending what is right.

00:03:07 Speaker 1

That's marvelous. I thank you for sharing that with us, especially considering that November 11th is Veteran's Day.

00:03:22 Speaker 1

Many people may not know this, but it is one of the few national holidays which, at the insistence of those who are honored, is always on the 11th and not moved to a Monday or Friday to make people have long weekends.

00:03:42 Speaker 1

But I'm sure that there will be some people who might be interested in the program. If so, how can they get a hold of you?

00:03:51 Speaker 2

Yes, Ernie, they can get a hold of me at my office phone number, which is 716-836-0822 ext. 103 and I can provide them with the information. The key is that they just have to be a patient at the VA and then they can request the Veteran Directed Care assessment to get things started.

00:04:15 Speaker 1

I'm sorry. Well, thank you so much for being with us, Tom. And may I join you in saluting all of our veterans of American military service and we respect them and thank them for what they've done for their nation.

00:04:33 Speaker 2

Absolutely. And I respect and appreciate everything they've done. And thank you for having me once again.

00:04:40 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:04:42 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of WNYIL. Our guest today was Thomas Patterson, Veteran Directed Care coordinator at WNYIL, and I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.