



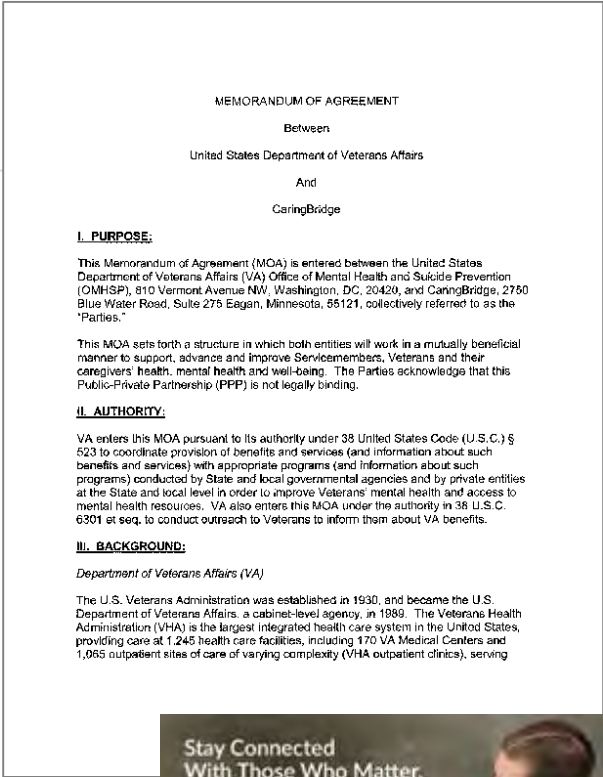
Fisher House and CaringBridge

April 2018

Our VA Partnership

We have a formal partnership with the VA with a signed MoA. Our partnership was publicly launched mid-January 2018. It's with the VA Dept. of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. However, it doesn't preclude us from reaching all Veterans and service members on a health journey.

Our partnership continues to be communicated across VA and CaringBridge channels.



CaringBridge and VA
are aligned in our
vision:
A world where
no one goes
through a
health journey
alone.



Partnerships are Key Referral Sources for CaringBridge

Referrals from Fisher House and other VA private partners are key referral sources for CaringBridge. When a partner refers CaringBridge, we see higher conversion rates:

- 5%+ is the average conversion rate for partner referrals
- 0.061 is the average conversion rate for non-referrals



67% of users start a CaringBridge site because of a recommendation from someone they know, whether it's a friend, family member or healthcare provider.



Who We Are / How It Works



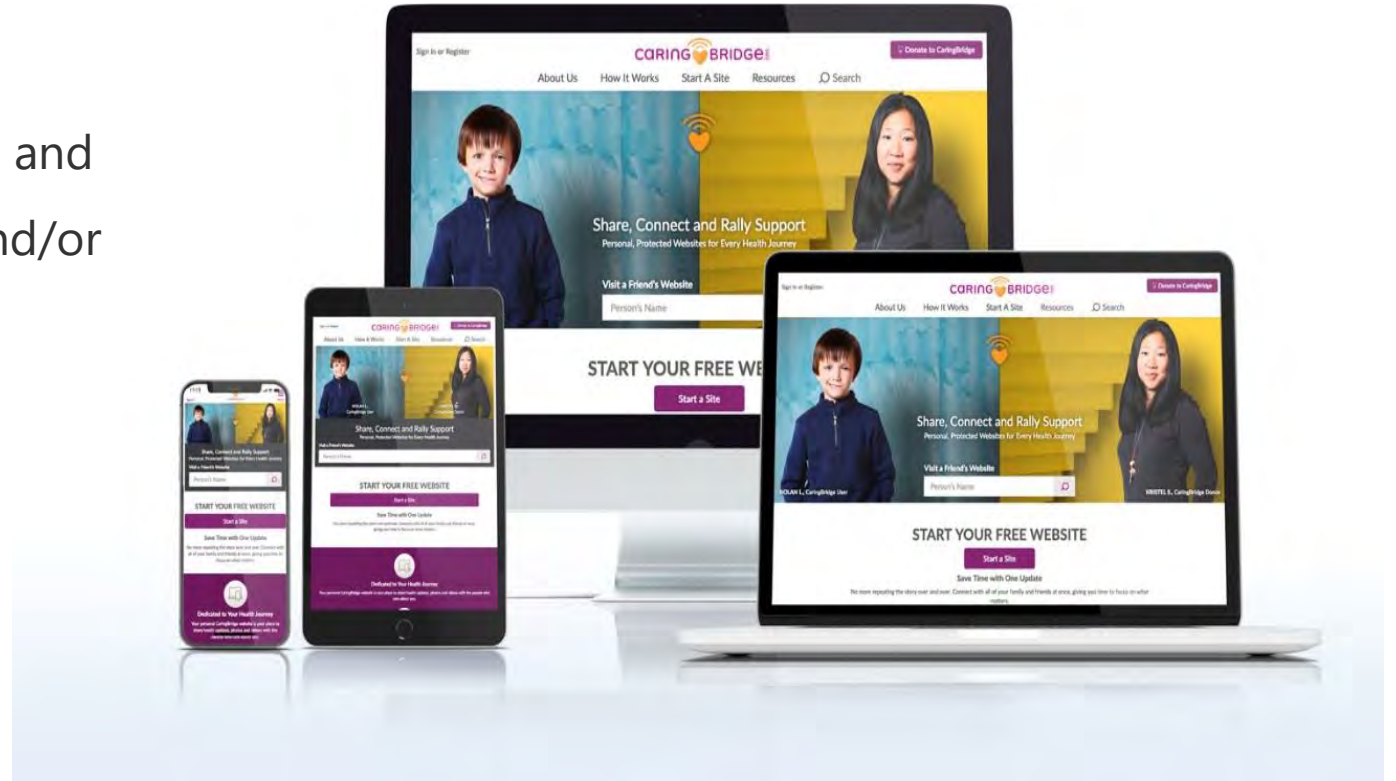
Founder Sona Mehring, started the first CaringBridge website for baby Brighid, who was born prematurely. The name CaringBridge rose organically out of "Caring for Brighid."

CARING  BRIDGE[®]ORG

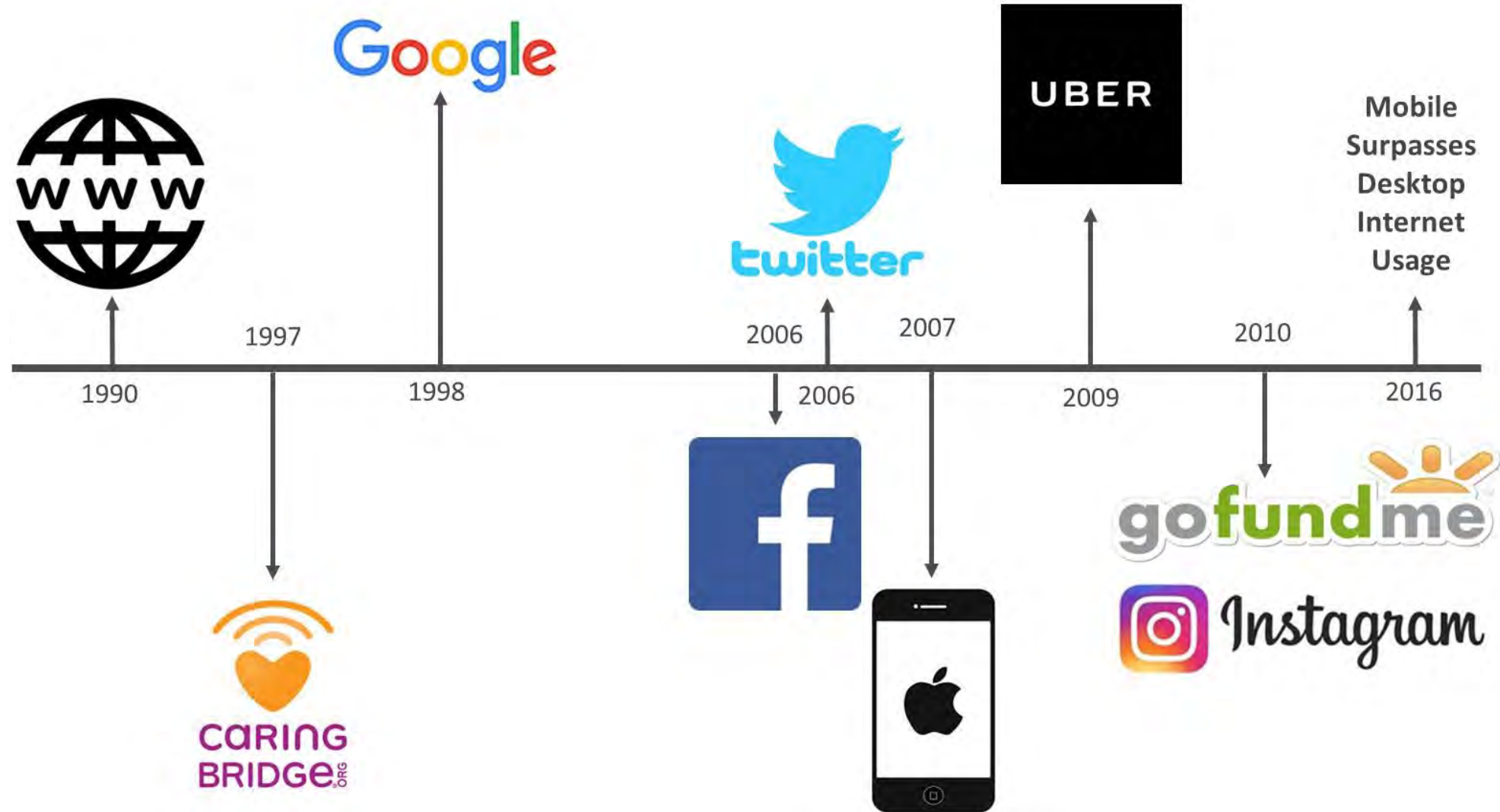
launched in
1997

Largest Nonprofit Social Network Dedicated to Health

Free, patient- and family-centered sites that connect patients and families during a health crisis, treatment and/or recovery.



CaringBridge is a Pioneer and Thrives in the World of Social Networks



The CaringBridge Community – Since 1997

2+ billion cumulative visitors

- 31+ million visitors annually

800,000+ personal sites created

- A new site created every 8 minutes!

85% User satisfaction (way above average)

65% of users are on mobile

64% of sites are started by family caregivers

Nonprofit business model

- Ad free, privacy protected and funded by the people who have experienced the power of CaringBridge firsthand

1 in 11 people in the U.S. turn to CaringBridge. Reach of 235 countries and territories around the world.

How CaringBridge Works



1. GET STARTED

It's easy to start a personalized, advertisement-free site. You can create a website for yourself or someone else in less than 5 minutes.



3. POST AN UPDATE

Tell people what's happening with a quick update or longer Journal entry. Your site is all about your illness or injury and what you need to say and hear.



5. SHARE IT

Invite people to visit or share a link on other social media sites.



2. PERSONALIZE IT

Give your CaringBridge website a name, add a main site photo and select a cover photo.



4. GET SUPPORT

Write a message explaining ways family and friends can best help you—because they want to help you. You can even link your CaringBridge website to a personal fundraiser or other helpful tools.

[Start a Site](#)

🔒 PRIVATE | SAFE | SECURE

VA Landing Page

We have developed a customized landing page for Veterans, service members and caregivers.

The goal is to have everyone start a site by entering through the landing page so they feel a sense of connection.

The URL to the landing page is:

www.caringbridge.org/military-service/

The page covers top medical conditions such as:

- Critical Injury
 - Cancer
 - Mental Health
 - Amputation
 - Rehabilitation (not shown)
-
- It also asks viewers to Start a Site.

The screenshot shows the CaringBridge landing page for Veterans and Military Families. At the top, there is a blue header with the CaringBridge logo and the text "SUPPORT FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES ON HEALTH JOURNEYS". Below this is a call to action: "START A FREE SITE TODAY >". The main content area is divided into sections for different medical conditions: Critical Injury, Cancer, Mental Health, and Amputation. Each section includes a photograph and a brief description of the condition and how CaringBridge can help. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "Create a secure, private site to keep family and friends updated after diagnosis, illness or injury" and "START A FREE SITE TODAY >". The footer includes the CaringBridge logo, the mission statement "Our mission is to amplify the love, hope and compassion in the world, making each health journey easier.", and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email.

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES ON HEALTH JOURNEYS
START A FREE SITE TODAY >

Share health updates and receive and respond to messages of support and prayers with a free, secure, private site

Health updates over multiple devices | No registration or privacy settings | Health care community for help, healing

How CaringBridge Helps

A single online platform helps military families stay connected and receive more support—whether the need is encouragement, a call to an appointment, a need for food during the medical treatment and recovery

Critical Injury

Many Service members sustain critical injuries such as traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), concussions, chronic pain, musculoskeletal injuries, hearing loss, impairment, vibration exposure and burns from combat trauma, training accidents, or other incidents. CaringBridge fills a gap for military families during health crises like these, so they aren't burdened by having to relay the same updates many times, and instead can use a single online platform to let everyone know what is going on.

Cancer

With more than 50,000 Veterans receiving a cancer diagnosis each year, CaringBridge is a place where communities can stand beside Service members, Veterans and family caregivers. Whether it's Gulf War illness, Agent Orange exposure, other toxic exposures or genetics that result in cancers including prostate, lung, colon, kidney, urinary, bladder, thyroid, brain, melanoma, lymphoma and leukemia, no one should go through a health journey alone.

Mental Health

PTSD, Anxiety Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Depression, Substance Abuse

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and CaringBridge are working together to help give Service members, Veterans and family caregivers community support and social connectedness, both of which are known to decrease suicide risk.

We can all prevent suicide. The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 98255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support the chief and head of hearing telehealth is available.

Amputation

Veterans who have experienced loss of limbs often face ongoing challenges related to residual limb pain, "phantom limb" pain, skin irritation, scar tissue, back conditions, prosthetic suspension and socket alignment. Messages of support and prayers that come through CaringBridge from family, friends and other Service members and Veterans can provide encouragement when it truly counts.

Create a secure, private site to keep family and friends updated after diagnosis, illness or injury

START A FREE SITE TODAY >

CARING BRIDGE

Our mission is to amplify the love, hope and compassion in the world, making each health journey easier.

Share

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | Email

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Personal Homepage

Homepage

It can be personalized with a background cover image that can be selected from a variety of categories, including "Military" or a personal image can be uploaded.

Personal Photo and Site Name

The homepage can also be personalized with a photo and a name to create an experience that fits the patient.

Personal Story

The patient or the family caregiver shares the reason behind their site and provides journal updates as it progresses.



Victoria's Story

Site created on March 25, 2019

Welcome to my CaringBridge website. We are using it to keep family and friends updated in one place. We appreciate your support and words of hope and encouragement. I have been struggling with depression and I recently started seeking help through VA, thanks to a friend of mine who helped me find the right support. Please connect with me as I can really use the support and well wishes. All is very important to me, my husband Tom and our two children. I plan to post on a regular basis so words of encouragement and support are always welcome. You can also visit My Ways to Help page. I have started a planner and I may start a GoFundMe campaign but too soon to tell.

Add Your First Journal

Invite a co-author to help with updates

Title
March 25, 2019

11pt - B I U [list icons] [link icon] [image icon] [clear icon] Clear Formatting

Welcome to my CaringBridge website. We are using it to keep family and friends updated in one place. We appreciate your support and words of hope and encouragement. I have been struggling with depression and I recently started seeking help through VA, thanks to a friend of mine who helped me find the right support. Please connect with me as I can really use the support and well wishes. All is very important to me, my husband Tom and our two children. I plan to post on a regular basis so words of encouragement and support are always welcome. You can also visit My Ways to Help page. I have started a planner and I may start a [GoFundMe](#) campaign but too soon to tell.

Draft saved at 4:01:46 pm

Save as Draft Post

INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO VISIT THE SITE



See who has visited your site

https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/victoriajohnson2

Copy Site URL

CaringBridge can also send out an email invite for you.

Enter one or more email addresses separated by commas.

Journal

The patient or the family caregiver posts regular health updates to keep everyone informed and connected. Visitors can use the heart amplifier and comment feature to let the patient know they're thinking of them.

The screenshot displays the CaringBridge website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the CaringBridge logo, a user profile for 'Susan's Account', and a 'Donate to CaringBridge' button. Below the navigation bar are links for 'About Us', 'How It Works', 'Start A Site', 'Resources', and a search icon. A teal banner at the top of the main content area reads 'Tell someone who needs support how CaringBridge can help.' Below this is a purple navigation bar with icons for 'Home', 'Journal', 'Gallery', and 'Ways To Help', along with a 'Site Settings' button. A green notification box states 'The journal entry is saved. View your new Journal entry.' with social sharing icons. The main content area features a date indicator for 'APR 24 2018' and a journal entry titled 'A Hard Day' by Susan Kerber, posted 3 minutes ago. The entry text describes a difficult day with depression and a visit to a VA medical center. Below the entry is a 'Post a comment' button with a heart icon and social sharing icons. At the bottom, there is a 'COMMENTS' section with a dropdown arrow.

Thoughts and Well Wishes

Visitors can also support patients and caregivers with messages of love, hope, prayer and strength.

They can add:

- A comment
- A photo
- A YouTube Video
- A Carepost (Hallmark images offering hope and encouragement)



The screenshot shows the CaringBridge website interface for the "Thoughts & Well Wishes" section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the CaringBridge logo, a "Donate to CaringBridge" link, a user account menu for "Beth's Account" with a notification badge, and an "Admin" link. Below the navigation are links for "About Us", "How It Works", "Start A Site", and a "Search" icon. The main heading is "Thoughts & Well Wishes". Below this is a form titled "Enter Your Thoughts and Well Wishes" with a rich text editor containing bold (B), italic (I), and link (🔗) buttons. Underneath the editor are icons for adding a link, image, video, and Carepost. A "Signature" field contains the name "Beth Betcher". A purple "Post Well Wish" button is located on the right side of the form. Below the form, there is a "Sort: Newest to Oldest" dropdown and a "Print" button. A post by "Susan Kerber | a minute ago" is displayed, featuring a heart icon, the text "We have started a prayer circle for you and we are praying every Tuesday at 3:00 pm with the guidance of Pastor Rick. I hope you feel our love and support and know that God is with you always.", and icons for a heart, edit, and delete. To the right of the text is a photograph of several people's hands clasped together in a circle on a wooden table.

Ways To Help: Patients/Caregivers Coordinate Help and Support

Planner

Schedule and coordinate task support like meals, rides to appointments and more.

Support Links

Add personal links that help you feel supported by your community such a link to a healthcare organization support group or a conditions support group or religious organization.

Healthcare Facility

Patient can display provider information.

Personal Fundraiser

Patients can start a personal fundraiser to help cover the cost of health expenses.

gofundme

Start a personal fundraiser for health expenses and connect it to your CaringBridge website so family and friends can easily participate.

[Start a Campaign](#)

Already have a GoFundMe?

"NO ACT OF KINDNESS, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, IS EVER WASTED."

AESOP

Support Links

Do you have favorite tools that make your life easier? Add up to 3 links here to share them with your community.

[Add Support Links](#)

Planner

Set up and schedule tasks in your Planner so your family and friends can help you.

[Visit your Planner](#)

Healthcare Facility

Orlando, VA Medical Center and Orlando Fisher House
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL
(MC) 407-631-1000
(FH) 407-631-9800

Victoria

[Send an Email](#)

Resources that Help and Inspire

Resource section of our website features helpful articles, stories and videos from patients, caregivers and health experts that help families and friends navigate the journey and offer support.

We also have resources specific to Veterans, service members and caregivers.

CAREGIVING USING CARINGBRIDGE 7 Things You Should Never Say to Patients or Caregivers

CaringBridge Staff | Jun 14, 2017



USING CARINGBRIDGE 3 Ways Family and Friends Can Support CaringBridge Authors

CaringBridge Staff | Aug 24, 2017



people you love," authors
less love, hope and

After her son was seriously injured in a car accident on the way to preschool, a CaringBridge mom spent 10 nightmare days and sleepless nights in her toddler's hospital room. No one was sure the boy would survive.



#BeThere for Veterans

CaringBridge Staff | May 29, 2018

Storytelling is powerful....but a community of listeners can be life-saving. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs... [Read More](#)



New to CaringBridge and Wondering What We Do?

CaringBridge is a nonprofit social network dedicated to helping family and friends communicate with and support loved ones during a health crisis through the use of free, personal websites. Know someone who could benefit from starting a CaringBridge site to keep loved ones informed and get the love, and support they need?

[Learn more](#)

RELATED CONTENT



Connecting Military Families and Loved Ones



Gulf War Veteran Puts His Cancer in the Bullseye



Tomo: Fight with Every Ounce of Your Being



Sisters and Best Friends, Conquering Challenges Together



Why Start a Site

Provides the Social Support on the Path to Healing

Patients & Family
Caregivers can
experience
isolation & chaos
during a health
journey.

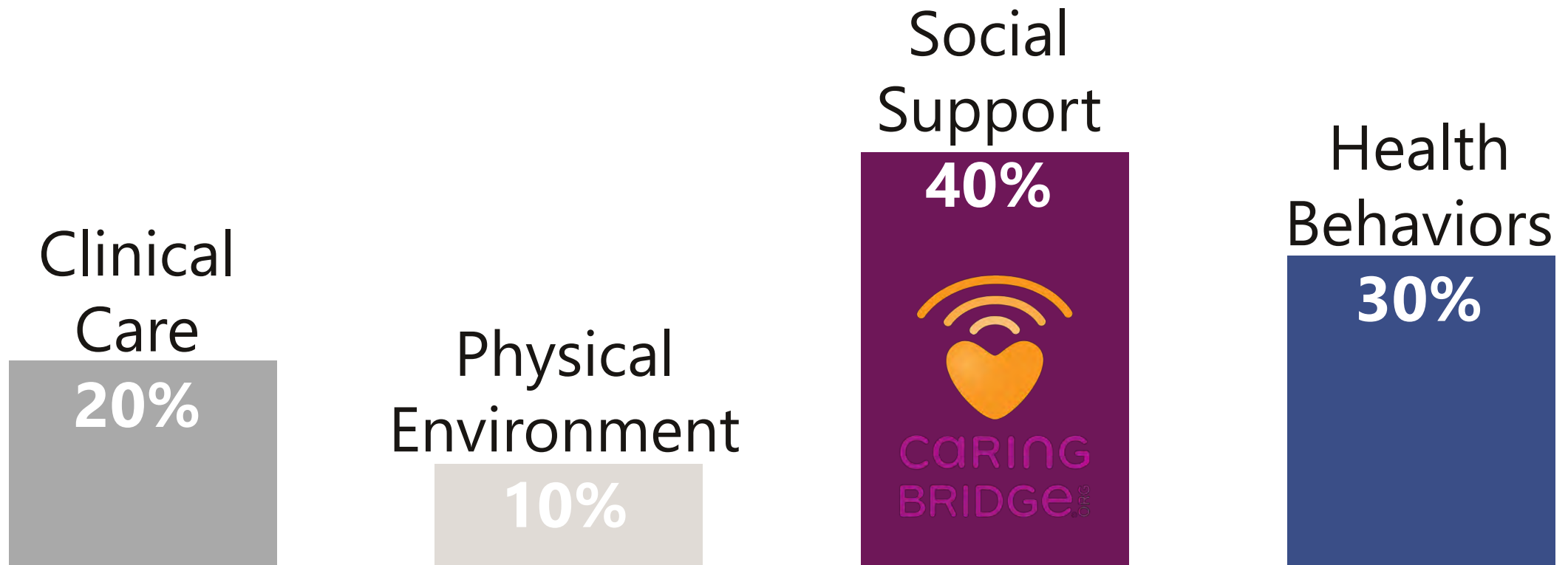


Support, love,
hope and prayer
from family and
friends are critical
components on
the path to
healing.

Current social networking tools are
not focused on health, and provide solutions
that lack user controls and
are cluttered with extraneous content.

Family and Friends are Crucial to Patient Outcomes

Among the measurable impacts on population health, CaringBridge address the one that is most significant.



Connecting with family and friends can lessen the effects of stress and depression on health.

Kevin Amundson is a former National Guard member whose family used CaringBridge after he attempted suicide.





Studies show that storytelling can help find positive meaning in negative events and improve overall well-being.

Tomo Riley is a Gulf War Veteran who is fighting for his life with Melanoma.

Healing is Always Possible

With the simple hope of helping others, people plunged into serious health crises talk about what has made them whole again, even in the face of trauma, suffering and loss. While every approach is different, one universal truth emerges: Healing is a choice.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=how+we+heal+caringbridge

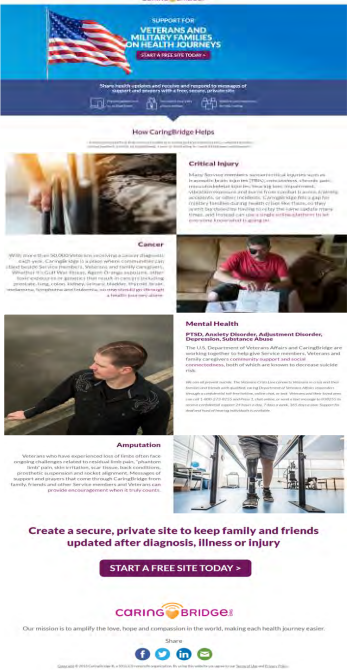




How You Can Help

What Fisher House Can Do to Support Our Partnership

1. **Promote the VA landing page URL with a description of CaringBridge** with your website, social channels, publications, emails, newsletters, etc.
www.caringbridge.org/military-service



2. **Request & hand out collateral with landing page URL.** Personal referrals are key to site starts.



3. **Designate ambassador(s) at each house** to ensure success. A knowledgeable advocate on program is key.



4. **Share our content** from the Resource section of our website on social media. You are welcome to use any of this content with your channels.



5. **Request CaringBridge training for staff** (generally online) on the benefits of using CaringBridge and how to tell patients/families about it.



Next Steps

- Order Collateral for your house by emailing
 - Susan Kerber skerber@caringbrige.org 651.789.5349
 - Kristie Thibodeau kthibodeau@caringbridge.org
- Share CaringBridge as a resource with all house staff via newsletters, staff department meetings, and other organizational programming
- Share CaringBridge as a resource to your patients, families and their caregivers via collateral in welcome packets, at computer workstation areas, front desk, direct communication and social channels

Q&A

Do you have any ideas on how you can refer CaringBridge?

Is there anything you need from us that would help with your referral efforts?

What other questions do you have?



Thank you!

Contact:

Susan Kerber at skerber@caringbridge.org or 651.452.7940

Kristie Thibodeau at kthibodeau@caringbridge.org or 651.452.7940