

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Impact Review

## Facility-level operating status

VSA - Facilities Team

# Problem, Solution Hypotheses/Approach

## Problem

- Access to many VA facilities and services are impacted by COVID-19. We needed a way to communicate facility availability to Veterans before planned visits. The goal is to prevent unnecessary exposure or frustration by an inability to receive services.

## Approach

- Collaboration among VHA Teamsite, CMS, Facilities and Lighthouse teams
- Establish facility-level operating status taxonomy and source of truth
- Display facility operating status in Facility Locator search results, on facility detail pages and on VAMC pages.
- Use design system components to ensure consistency of display across VA.gov
- Implement operating status to support COVID in the short term but with flexibility to support future needs

## Measuring success

- Monitoring call center volume related to facility availability
- Monitoring Veteran satisfaction through 5 star feedback

# Visuals

 **Facility Closed**

 **Limited services and hours**

 **Facility notice**

## VA Pittsburgh health care


### Facility operating statuses

<a href="#">Pittsburgh VA Medical Center-University Drive</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">Beaver County VA Clinic</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">Belmont County VA Clinic</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">Fayette County VA Clinic</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">Washington County VA Clinic</a>	Normal services and hours
<a href="#">Westmoreland County VA Clinic</a>	Normal services and hours

# Visuals

## Cemetery-specific language on Facility Locator detail page

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Benefits and Health Care

About VA


Find a VA Location

Home

Find Locations

Facility Details

# Massachusetts




Limited services and hours


We're open for visitors consistent with local travel restrictions and physical distancing guidance from the CDC and local health department. For safety, we've temporarily stopped holding committal services. Some areas such as info centers, pavilions, restrooms, or chapels may be closed.

For more information about the cemetery including interment, visit our [cemetery website](#).

Facility type: National Cemetery

Off Connelly Ave  
Bourne, MA 02532

 [Website](#)

 [Directions](#)

## Facility Locator search results

Search by city, state or postal Code

Washington, DC

Choose a VA facility type

VA health

Choose a service type

All VA health services

Search

main number: 410-590-5300

mental health: 410-305-5300 x5323

H

27.5 miles

VA HEALTH

Glen Burnie VA Clinic

I

Facility Closed

808 Landmark Drive  
Suite 128  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061-4983

[Directions](#)

Main Number: 410-590-4140  
Mental Health: 410-590-4140 x4248

I

32.2 miles

VA HEALTH

Charlotte Hall VA Clinic

29431 Charlotte Hall Road  
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622-3042

[Directions](#)

Main Number: 301-884-7102  
Mental Health: 301-884-7102

J

35.2 miles

VA HEALTH

Baltimore VA Medical Center

A

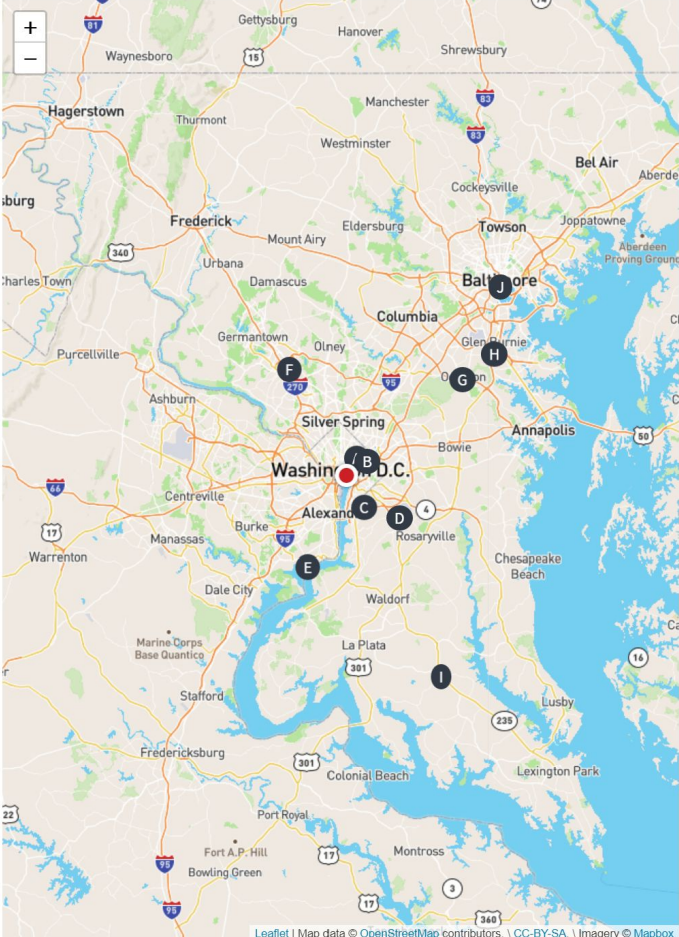
Limited services and hours

10 North Greene Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-1524

[Directions](#)

Main Number: 410-605-7000  
Mental Health: 410-605-7000 x57360

Can't find what you're looking for? Try using our other tools to search.



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# Results and Recommendations

## Impact on Veterans and the VA

- Veterans can now view the operating status for ~2000 VA facilities within Facility Locator and on Pittsburgh health care system pages
- Quick execution: Implementation within 3 weeks

## Impact on Technology

- Addition of operating status and free text fields in Drupal; added to Lighthouse API
- Facilities' plan to migrate from Vets API to Lighthouse API was expedited.
  - API implementation led to significant learning about other dependencies and cross-team integration

## Recommendations, Future Bets/Hypotheses

- Implement for long term use and flexibility: future uses, facility-type specific iterations
- Now considering implementation of health service level status
- Research sessions this week to validate existing statuses and understand Veteran expectations

# Questions?

- ~2.5 → 3.1 Foresee rating
- 240 calls in March, April → ~120 in May (Contact Center)
- Where's Google getting operating status info from?
  - tbd what's causing the discrepancy, theory around TeamSite
- Health-service status
  - potential to incorporate in longer-term (part of current research sprint)
  - dependent on data quality, of course
  - also dependent on veterans' mental models
  - business impact/preferences/opinions may play largest role, however (even more than data quality)
- Facility status used for other "occasions" besides Covid e.g. tornado, hurricane, "unrest"
- Other next step
  - onboard more Drupal users to maintain facility status more locally

# Executive Summary

**Problem:** Access to many VA facilities and services are impacted by COVID-19. We needed a way to communicate facility availability to Veterans before planned visits. The goal is to prevent unnecessary exposure or frustration by an inability to receive services.

**Hypotheses:** If we work collaboratively with other teams to implement facility operating status, we can display the information to Veterans within Facility Locator search results, on facility detail pages and on VAMC pages. By not limiting the concept to COVID-19, operating status can be leveraged for other scenarios and long-term.

## Quantitative Results:

- Veterans are able to view the operating status for ~2000 VA facilities.
- Call center inquiries about facility availability decreased from a monthly average of ~240 calls in March/April to ~120 in May
- Although created in response to COVID-19, facility operating status has also been used to communicate changes in availability caused by natural disasters and civil unrest.

## Recommendations:

- Explore the opportunity to implement operating status at health service level
- Validate Veteran understanding of current statuses and determine need to add statuses or change labeling