



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Weekly Report: December 8–14, 2020

"Americans are coming together to fight COVID-19 in ways they haven't joined together since World War II, and VA is providing vital services to both Veterans and non-Veterans as part of this fight."
—VA Secretary Robert Wilkie



VETERAN CARE

VA has diagnosed
114,507 Veterans
with COVID-19



9.21m patients
currently enrolled
in VA health care

20,155 COVID-19 patients
admitted to VA facilities (as of Dec. 7)
» **1,318** current COVID-19 inpatients

93,123 COVID-19
patients have reached
convalescence

TESTING

**VA has tested 1,095,016 Veterans
& employees for COVID-19**

79,172
tests processed on
behalf of states (as of Dec. 10)



VIRTUAL CARE

200,059 weekly home or off-site
telehealth visits (Nov. 29–Dec. 5)



1,688%
increase in home or off-site
telehealth visits (Mar. 1–Dec. 5)

*Virtual Care figures are from Dec. 6–12.



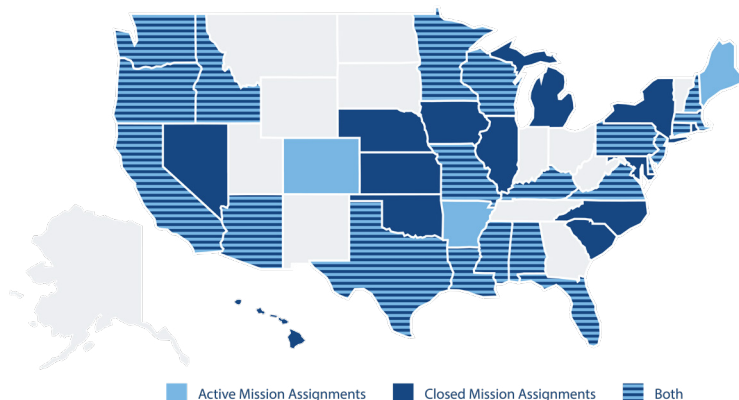
290,019 secure
messages exchanged*

493,619 prescription refill requests placed*

3,469,839 authenticated patients (as of Oct. 2020)

FOURTH MISSION

Supporting state & local health care systems



1,293 Veterans admitted to care from
State Veterans Homes (as of Dec. 7)

62 State Veterans
Homes supported
with consultation,
testing or staff*

10 ventilators
loaned to Niagara
Falls, NY community
hospital*

287 non-Veteran
patients
discharged home

2,239 VA staff
members supporting
non-VA facilities*

Provided **908,518** total pieces of personal
protective equipment (PPE)*, including:

213,774+ masks



555,170+ gloves



403 COVID-19 non-Veteran patients in **14** states

*Fourth Mission figures are as of Dec. 10.

All figures are as of Dec. 11, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

VETERAN OUTREACH

VA.gov had **3,753,584** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus had **10,634** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot had **8,130** visitors

Veteran Outreach figures are from Dec. 7–13.

VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

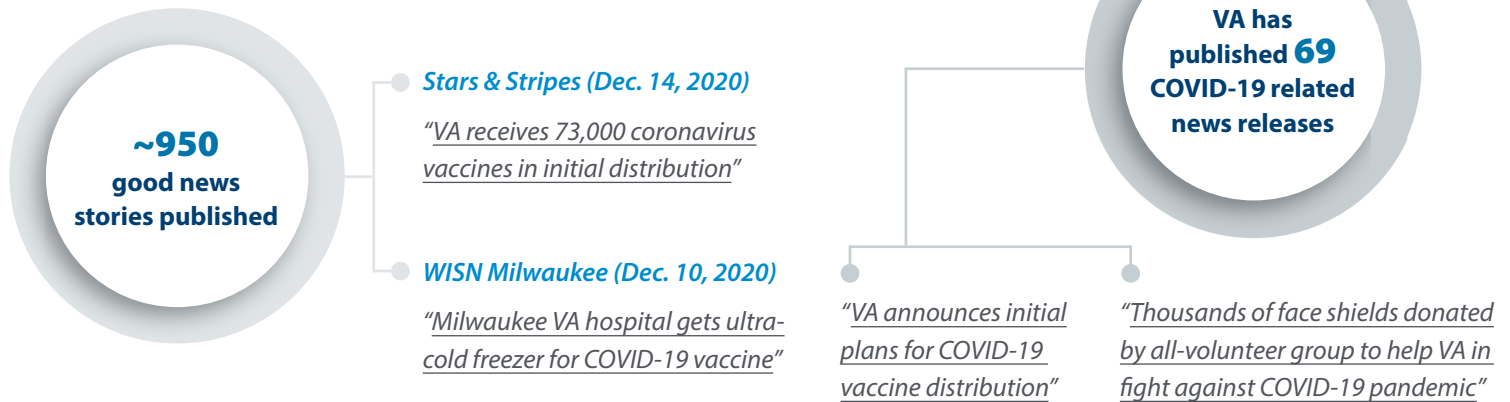
71,896 COVID-19 related calls made to VA 411 & the White House VA Hotline

50,184 calls made to VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline

Veteran Engagement figures are as of Dec. 13.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Secretary Wilkie has participated in **274** media opportunities related to VA's response to COVID-19

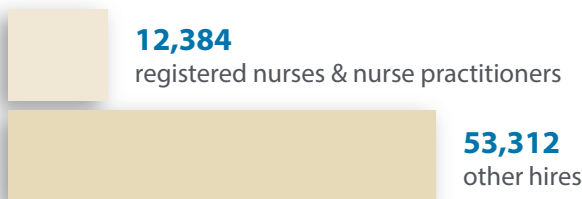


All figures in the Media Outreach section are from Feb.–Dec.

STAFFING

BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS (BVA)

65,696 total VHA new hires (from Mar. 29–Nov. 17)



Staffing figures are from Oct. 1–Nov. 17.

Held **7,443** virtual hearings

Issued **72,924** decisions



BVA figures are from Mar. 23–Dec. 14.

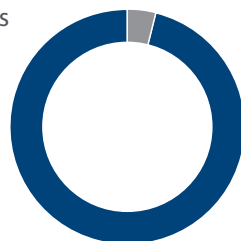
NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

97,486 total Veteran interments (since Mar. 9)

- **4,046** COVID-19 related interments
- **93,440** other interments

8,900 Veteran Legacy Memorial posts (va.gov/remember)



22,202 calls received at VBA National Call Center related to COVID-19 (from Mar. 16–Dec. 14)

122,603 VA Video Connect appointments conducted for VA benefits*



5,540,654 Veterans in **50** states & **7** VSOs reached through **108** tele-town halls held to discuss Blue Water Navy, VBBP, & Solid Start Programs (from Mar. 16–Dec. 14)

*VBA figures as of Dec. 4.

All figures are as of Dec. 14, 2020, unless otherwise noted.



1) Bedford WWII Veteran is first VA patient to get COVID-19 vaccine

On Monday, Dec. 14, World War II Veteran Margaret Klessens, age 96, was the first VA patient nationwide to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

[Read the full story.](#)

2) Veterans & staff at NOLA VA receive first COVID-19 vaccine

Surgical nurse Christine Aucoin was the first New Orleans VA staff member to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This ensures that staff & Veterans don't catch or spread COVID-19.

[Read the full story.](#)

3) Intel donates 450 laptops to VA for Veterans' use

In order to assist Veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic, Intel donated 450 laptops for use by Veterans, including 100 machines to VA's Fisher Houses.

[Read the full story.](#)

4) Wyoming Veteran recovers from COVID-19

70-year-old Navy Veteran Norman "Bud" Riggs was released Thursday from the Cheyenne VAMC after 3 weeks fighting COVID-19. He cautioned all to take the proper precautions to protect themselves & their families.

[Read the full story.](#)

5) "Doc" delivers massive donation for Vets

COVID-19 has canceled the "Christmas with the Vets" live show at Milwaukee VAMC. But event organizer Jeff "Doc" Dentice more than made up for the lack by raising \$23,000 in cash & donations.

[Read the full story.](#)

6) Face shields donated to VA

More than 36,000 face shields were donated to VA by the Jersey City Rapid Maker Response Group to aid in VA's COVID-19 pandemic response. The donation was worth nearly \$200,000.

[Read the full story.](#)

VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline: 844-698-2311
 Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255 & Press 1
 VA 411: 844-698-2311
 Call your VA medical center ([VA.gov/find-locations](#)) before visiting.
 This helps us protect you, other Veterans & medical staff.

[VA.gov/Coronavirus](#)

[VA Coronavirus: FAQs page](#)

Download your VA Welcome Kit: [VA.gov/welcome-kit](#)

Sign up for weekly VA email updates at: [VA.gov/VetResources](#)



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of Veterans Affairs