



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

## Weekly Report: December 15–21, 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  
**125,473** Veterans  
with COVID-19



**9.21m** patients  
currently enrolled  
in VA health care

**23,288** COVID-19 patients  
admitted to VA facilities (as of Dec. 7)  
» **1,029** current COVID-19 inpatients

**105,880** COVID-19  
patients have reached  
convalescence

### TESTING

**VA has tested 1,138,845 Veterans  
& employees for COVID-19**

**79,321**  
tests processed on  
behalf of states (as of Dec. 17)



### VIRTUAL CARE

**196,228** weekly home or off-site  
telehealth visits (Dec. 6–12)



**1,654%**  
increase in home or off-site  
telehealth visits (Mar. 1–Dec. 12)

\*Virtual Care figures are from Dec. 12–19.



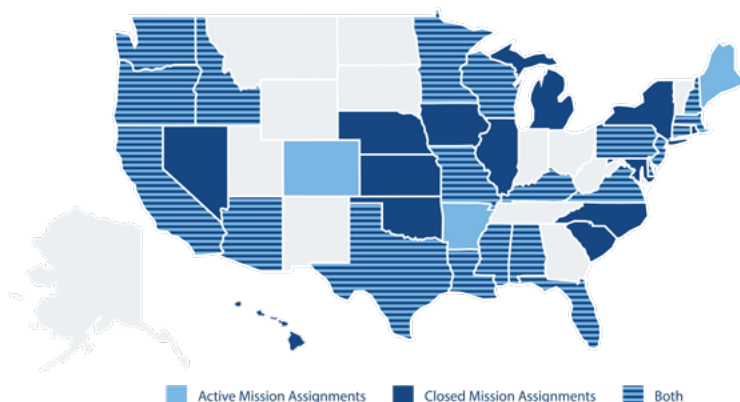
**295,664** secure  
messages exchanged\*

**478,192** prescription refill requests placed\*

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

### FOURTH MISSION

#### Supporting state & local health care systems



**1,339** Veterans admitted to care from  
State Veterans Homes (as of Dec. 14)

**30** beds provided  
for Colorado  
community  
hospitals\*

**11,000+** COVID-19  
tests processed on  
behalf of Florida  
residents\*

**287** non-Veteran  
patients discharged  
home (as of Dec. 11)

**2,266** VA staff  
members supporting  
non-VA facilities\*

Provided **911,750** total pieces of personal  
protective equipment (PPE)\*, including:

**213,834+** masks



**557,170+** gloves



**403** COVID-19 non-Veteran patients in **14** states  
(as of Dec. 11)

\*Fourth Mission figures are as of Dec. 17.

All figures are as of Dec. 21, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

## VETERAN OUTREACH

VA.gov had **4,921,039** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus had **330,431** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot had **22,360** visitors

Veteran Outreach figures are from Dec. 14–20.

## VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

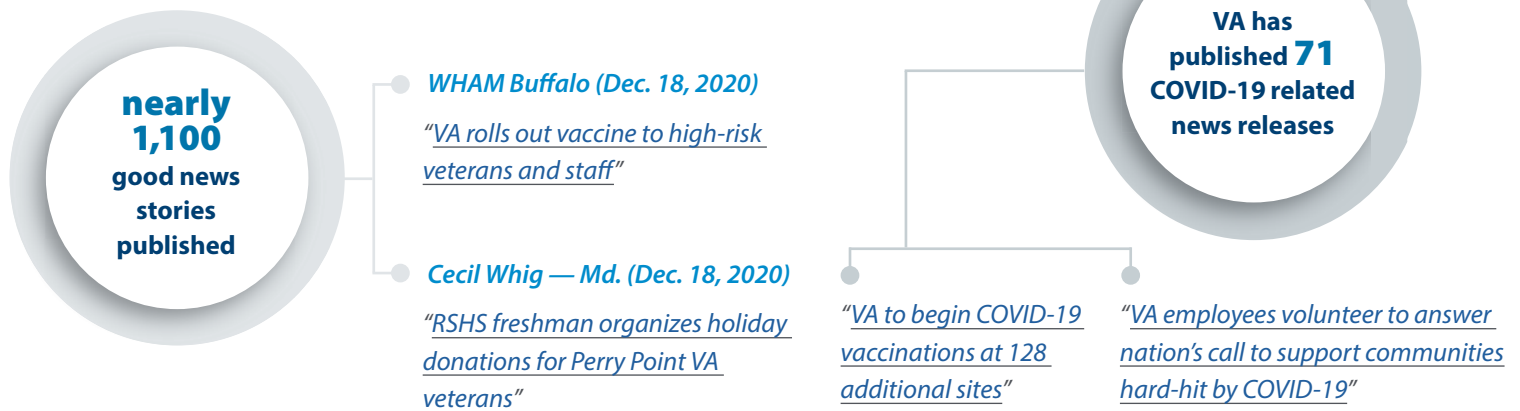
**76,965** COVID-19 related calls made to VA 411 & the White House VA Hotline

**53,363** calls made to VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline

Veteran Engagement figures are as of Dec. 20.

## MEDIA OUTREACH

### Secretary Wilkie has participated in **275** media opportunities related to VA's response to COVID-19

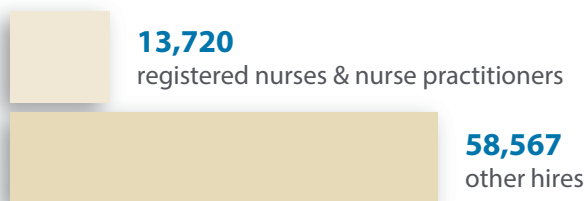


All figures in the Media Outreach section are from Feb.–Dec. 2020

## STAFFING

## BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS (BVA)

### **72,287** total VHA new hires (from Mar. 29–Dec. 17)



Staffing figures are from Mar. 29–Dec 17, 2020.

Held **7,443** virtual hearings

Issued **72,924** decisions



BVA figures are from Mar. 23–Dec. 14.

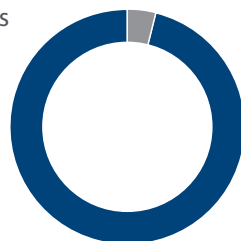
## NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

## 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](https://va.gov/remember))



**22,297** calls received at VBA National Call Center related to COVID-19 (from Mar. 16–Dec. 14)

**125,866** VA Video Connect appointments conducted for VA benefits\*



**5,731,926** Veterans in **50** states & **7** VSOs reached through **110** tele-town halls held to discuss Blue Water Navy, VBBP, & Solid Start Programs (from Mar. 16–Dec. 22)

\*VBA figures as of Dec. 22.

All figures are as of Dec. 21, 2020, unless otherwise noted.



1



2



3



4



5



6

### 1) Beliefs into action: fighting COVID-19 as a research volunteer

U.S. Army Veteran Michele Jones is one of many Veterans in the VA health care system who has volunteered to participate in a clinical trial for a new vaccine for fighting COVID-19.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 4) Researcher receives VA grant to study COVID-19 immunity

Dr. Jonathan Moorman of East Tennessee State University received a \$330,000 grant from VA to study immune responses to COVID-19 through blood samples from recovered patients.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 2) South Texas VA vaccinates its first Veteran

South Texas VA nurse Christine Salonga inoculates Community Living Center patient Roy De La Garza, the first Veteran at the VA facility to receive the long-anticipated COVID-19 vaccine.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 5) WWII Veteran celebrates 72nd anniversary after COVID-19

A 94-year-old Navy Veteran, Norman McArthur, spent 11 days in the ICU with COVID-19. McArthur beat the disease in time to make it home for his 72nd wedding anniversary.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 3) Oklahoma VA Begins COVID-19 vaccination

Air Force Veteran Gary Glascoe, age 76, was the first VA patient to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the Oklahoma City VA. The facility has begun vaccinating Veterans at high risk of severe illness.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 6) Maine teen sells masks to help a women Veterans housing unit

Kasey Jordan, a high school student in Lamoine, Maine, is selling face masks to raise funds for her Girl Scout Gold Award project: building a transitional housing unit for women Veterans.

[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](#)

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs