



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

Weekly Report: September 29–October 5, 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 tested **752,237** Veterans & employees for COVID-19



VA has diagnosed **63,134** Veterans with COVID-19

9.21M patients currently enrolled in VA health care

11,759 COVID-19 patients admitted to VA facilities

- » **340** current COVID-19 inpatients
- » **48,421** COVID-19 patients have reached convalescence



397,400 total VA employees

- » From Mar. 29–Oct. 5, VHA has onboarded **52,517** new hires, including **9,879** registered nurses & nurse practitioners

VIRTUAL CARE

175,690 weekly telehealth to home or off-site visits (Sept. 20–26)



1,470% increase in home or off-site telehealth visits (Mar. 1–Sept. 26)

453,516 prescription refill requests placed (Sept. 27–Oct. 3)

283,251 secure messages exchanged (Sept. 27–Oct. 3)

3,444,834 authenticated patients (as of Aug. 2020)

MEDIA OUTREACH

VA has published **56** news releases related to COVID-19

"VA recognized for advancements in health care access, 3D printing applications"

Secretary Wilkie has participated in **245** media opportunities related to VA's response to COVID-19

500 good news stories published

Kark.com (Sept. 28, 2020)

"VA research study shows Veterans trust VA during pandemic"

Press-Telegram (Sept. 28, 2020)

"Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center lives up to its name during COVID-19"

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

VETERAN OUTREACH

From Sept. 29–Oct. 5:

- » [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) had **2,944,793** visitors
- » [VA.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.va.gov/Coronavirus) had **8,546** visitors
- » [VA.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot](https://www.va.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot) had **99,670** visitors

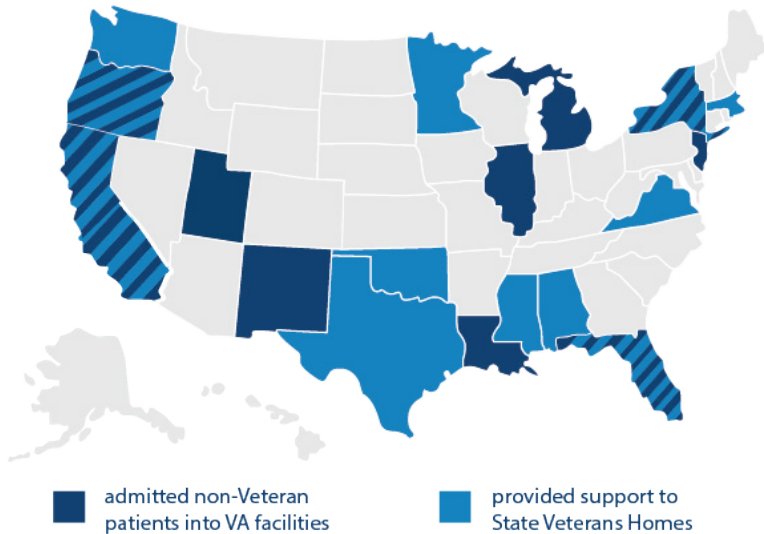
All figures are as of Oct. 5, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

49,055 COVID-19 related calls made to VA311 & the White House VA Hotline

35,719 calls made to VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline: 844-698-2311

SUPPORT TO STATES & OTHER AGENCIES



345 COVID-19 non-Veteran patients in 11 states

» States supported: NY, NJ, FL, LA, MI, IL, UT, OR, CA, AZ, NM

264 non-Veteran patients discharged home

120 Veterans from **12** State Veterans Homes admitted for care in VHA facilities

» States supported: MA, NY, VA, AL, FL, MS, TX, OK, WA, OR, CA, MN

VHAs mobile Vet Center has provided outreach & counseling in **12** states

» States supported: NY, OR, PA, SD, CO, TX, CA, LA, IL, WA, FL, AZ

2,015 VA staff members supporting non-VA facilities (as of Oct. 2)

Provided to State Veterans Homes:

- » IA: **100** reusable gowns
- » MN: **25** COVID-19 collection kits
- » NJ: **162** nurses to support operations

Provided up to **30** beds to patients in Portland, OR

Distributed **100** masks to tribal Veterans between the Cheyenne & Standing Rock Reservations

SUPPORT TO NON-VA NURSING HOMES

Providing support to **82** nursing homes in FL with **207** nurses & certified nursing assistants caring for an estimated **8,863** patients

Admitted **12** Veteran patients from community nursing homes

» States supported: RI, CA



VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

21,597 calls received at VBA National Call Center related to COVID-19 (since Mar. 1)

93,975 VA Video Connect appointments conducted for VA benefits

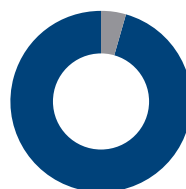
3,121,686 Veterans in **50** states & **7** VSOs reached through **81** tele-town halls held to discuss Blue Water Navy, VBBP, & Solid Start Programs (since Mar. 1)

BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

Since Mar. 23, the Board of Veterans' Appeals has

- » Held **4,262** virtual hearings
- » Issued **53,976** decisions

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION



72,870 total Veteran internments (since Mar. 9)

● **3,341** COVID-19 related internments

● **69,529** other internments

6,675 Veteran Legacy Memorial posts (va.gov/remember)

All figures are as of Oct. 5, 2020, unless otherwise noted.



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2



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4



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6

1) Nurses relish benefits of working at Milwaukee VA

Nurses are in demand, & they can choose from many different working environments. But nurses at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center are eager to share why they think VA is the best place to work & grow.

[Read the full story.](#)

2) Running to prevent Veteran suicide - virtually

Battle Creek VA's Alive & Running VA5K for Veteran Suicide Prevention kick-off was done on Facebook live. You can still participate virtually.

[Read the full story.](#)

3) Nurse steps in to protect Veterans from COVID-19

Steve Miller, a nurse at Coatesville VAMC, stepped in to help Veteran patients fight COVID-19 by serving on the frontlines of care at the state-run Southeastern Veterans Center in Spring City, Pennsylvania.

[Read the full story.](#)

4) VCP hosts drive-thru resource fair

The drive-thru resource fair provided resources to Veterans during a time when face-to-face interaction is challenging. The fair was attended by 42 vendors & supported by the Air National Guard.

[Read the full story.](#)

5) Two at Milwaukee VA receive Patriot Award

For showing unwavering support for their employees who are called to duty in the National Guard & Reserves, two supervisors at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center recently received the Patriot Award.

[Read the full story.](#)

6) Flu & COVID-19

Flu & COVID-19 can lead to serious health complications resulting in hospitalization or death. The good news is both may be prevented by wearing a face covering, practicing physical distancing & washing your hands frequently.

[Read the full story.](#)

VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline: 844-698-2311

Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255 & Press 1

VA311: 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 e-mail updates at: [VA.gov/VetResources](#)

VA



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of Veterans Affairs