



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

Weekly Report: September 22–28, 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 718,943 Veterans & employees for COVID-19



VA has diagnosed 53,207 Veterans with COVID-19

9.21M patients currently enrolled in VA health care

11,400 COVID-19 patients admitted to VA facilities

- » **352** current COVID-19 inpatients
- » **46,608** COVID-19 patients have reached convalescence



397,400 total VA employees

- » From Mar. 29–Sept. 22, VHA has onboarded **50,193** new hires, including **9,454** registered nurses & nurse practitioners

VIRTUAL CARE

175,783 weekly telehealth to home or off-site visits (Sept. 13–19)



www.myhealth.va.gov

1,471% increase in home or off-site telehealth visits (Mar. 1–Sept. 19)

453,157 prescription refill requests placed (Sept. 20–26)

290,527 secure messages exchanged (Sept. 20–26)

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

MEDIA OUTREACH

VA has published **55** news releases related to COVID-19

"VA's Home Loan Guaranty program provides regulatory relief in response to COVID-19"

Secretary Wilkie has participated in 233 media opportunities related to VA's response to COVID-19

480 good news stories published

WWMT West Michigan (Sept. 26, 2020)

"U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs says innovation continues, despite ongoing pandemic"

ABC 7 Amarillo (Sept. 24, 2020)

"Resources for Veterans still available amid pandemic"

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

VETERAN OUTREACH

From Sept. 22–28:

- » VA.gov had **2,662,308** visitors
- » VA.gov/Coronavirus had **11,416** visitors
- » VA.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot had **96,780** visitors

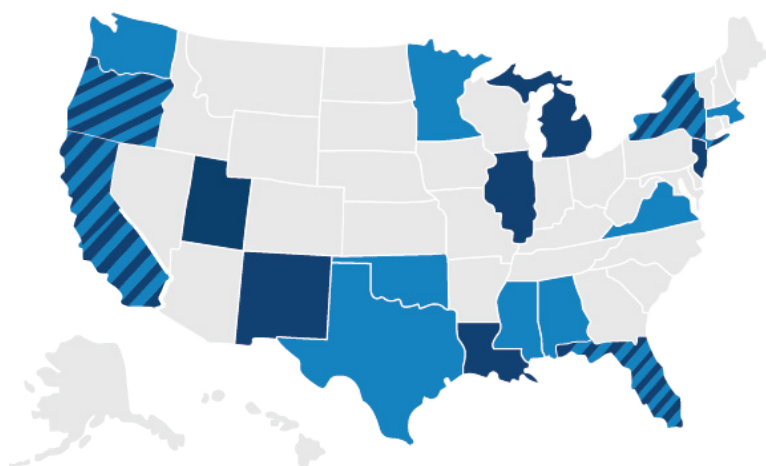
All figures are as of Sept. 28, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

48,294 COVID-19 related calls made to VA311 & the White House VA Hotline

34,459 calls made to VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline: 844-698-2311

SUPPORT TO STATES & OTHER AGENCIES



admitted non-Veteran patients into VA facilities

provided support to State Veterans Homes

343 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

1,962 VA staff members supporting non-VA facilities (as of Sept. 25)

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)

21,556 calls received at VBA National Call Center related to COVID-19 (since Mar. 1)

92,738 VA Video Connect appointments conducted for VA benefits

2,640,329 Veterans in **50** states & **7** VSOs reached through **76** 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

3,272 COVID-19 related Veteran interments

- » **69,844** interments (since Mar. 9)
- » **6,775** Veteran tributes

All figures are as of Sept. 28, 2020, unless otherwise noted.



1



2



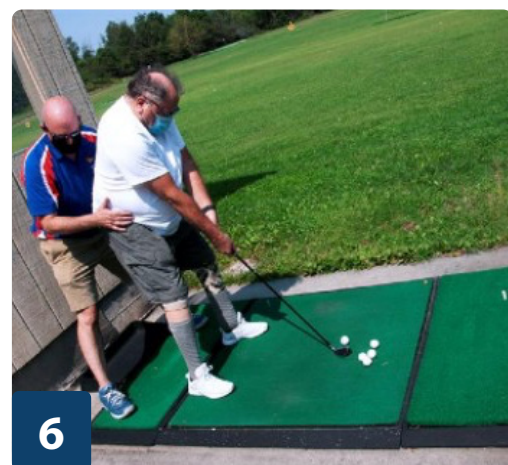
3



4



5



6

1) Muskogee VA welcomes DEMPS staff from across the country

On Aug. 30, Muskogee VA welcomed 40 VA employees from facilities across America. The team is part of VA's main program for deployment of clinical & non-clinical staff to an emergency or disaster elsewhere in the country.

[Read the full story.](#)

2) VA nurses weather the storm in service to Veterans

VA nurses expect challenges, but on a Monday in Aug. in Iowa, this team faced a bigger challenge than they had expected.

[Read the full story.](#)

3) From Trash to Treasure

Not only does Sunny (Saija) Puribhat live up to her name with her bright smile, she too believes in the power of action. Not just the required actions that come with her role as a Nurse but reaching beyond that.

[Read the full story.](#)

4) COVID-19 survivor gets new heart at Madison VA

Army Veteran Gerry Clemens had a heart attack & needed a heart transplant. He became the first Madison VA patient to have a transplant following recovery from COVID-19.

[Read the full story.](#)

5) VA volunteers honored at drive-thru event

Sporting poodle skirts & blue jeans, staff at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center honored more than 100 hospital volunteers during a 1950s-themed drive-thru event Saturday, Sept. 26.

[Read the full story.](#)

6) To "adapt & overcome" is par for the course

VA New York Harbor Healthcare System's prosthetics team - & the Veterans they serve - adapt to physical distancing amid COVID-19 by pursuing new sports & physical activities.

[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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs