



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

Weekly Report: December 1–7, 2020

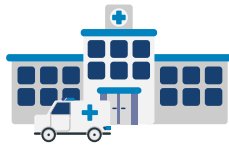
"Americans are coming together to fight COVID-19 in ways they haven't joined together since World War II, and VA is providing vital services to both Veterans and non-Veterans as part of this fight."

- VA Secretary Robert Wilkie



## VETERAN CARE

VA has diagnosed  
**108,190** Veterans  
with COVID-19



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

**20,155** COVID-19 patients  
admitted to VA facilities

» **1,206** current COVID-19 inpatients

**87,283** COVID-19  
patients have reached  
convalescence

## TESTING

**VA has tested 1,065,712 Veterans  
& employees for COVID-19**

**79,092**  
tests processed on  
behalf of states (as of Dec. 4)



## VIRTUAL CARE

**124,170** weekly home or off-site  
telehealth visits (Nov. 22–28)



**1,010%**  
increase in home or off-site  
telehealth visits (Mar. 1–Nov. 28)

\*Virtual Care figures are from Nov. 29–Dec. 5.



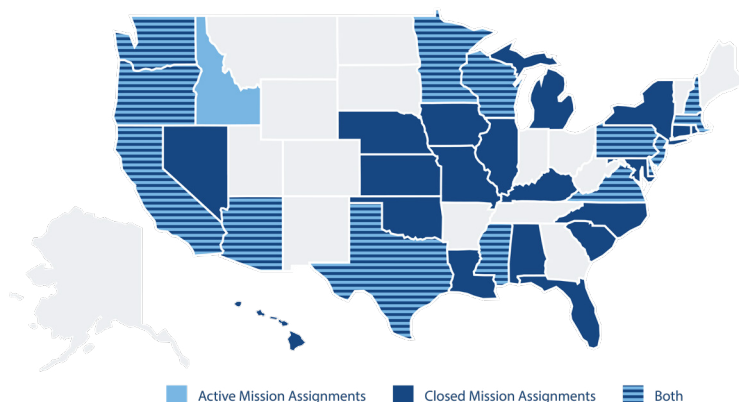
**292,065** secure  
messages exchanged\*

**520,905** prescription refill requests placed\*

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

## FOURTH MISSION

### Supporting state & local health care systems



**1,248** Veterans admitted to care from  
State Veterans Homes (as of Nov. 30)

**30** testing kits  
provided to WY  
community  
hospitals\*

**1,500** cloth face  
coverings donated  
to GA community  
organizations\*

**283** non-Veteran  
patients discharged  
home (as of Dec. 8)

**2,224** VA staff  
members supporting  
non-VA facilities\*

Provided **908,508** total pieces of personal  
protective equipment (PPE)\*, including:

**213,774+** masks



**555,170+** gloves



**397** COVID-19 non-Veteran patients in **14** states  
(as of Dec. 8)

\*Fourth Mission figures are as of Dec. 4.

All figures are as of Dec. 7, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

## VETERAN OUTREACH

VA.gov had **4,424,354** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus had **9,274** visitors

VA.gov/Coronavirus-chatbot had **4,420** visitors

Veteran Outreach figures are from Nov. 30–Dec. 6.

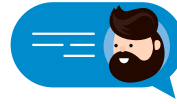


## VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

**68,585** COVID-19 related calls made to VA 411 & the White House VA Hotline

**48,634** calls made to VA's COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Hotline

Veteran Engagement figures are as of Dec. 6.



## MEDIA OUTREACH

### Secretary Wilkie has participated in **272** media opportunities related to VA's response to COVID-19

**900**  
good news  
stories published

**WBUR (Dec. 7, 2020)**

*"VA calls on Veterans to participate in COVID-19 vaccine trials"*

**Manchester Ink Link (Dec. 6, 2020)**

*"Gratitude from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for NH PPE effort"*

**13 News Now (Dec. 7, 2020)**

*"Hampton VA urges Vets to get their flu shots"*

VA has  
published **67**  
COVID-19 related  
news releases

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

## STAFFING

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

**12,384**

registered nurses & nurse practitioners

**53,312**

other hires

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

## BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS (BVA)

Held **7,000**  
virtual hearings

Issued **70,991**  
decisions



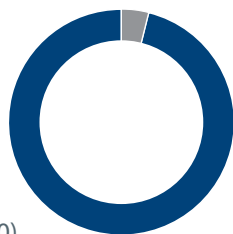
BVA figures are from Mar. 23–Dec. 7.

## NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

**97,846** total Veteran interments (since Mar. 9)

● **4,026** COVID-19 related interments

● **93,820** other interments



**8,885** Veteran Legacy  
Memorial posts  
([va.gov/remember](https://va.gov/remember)) (as of Nov. 30)

All figures are as of Dec. 7, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

## VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

**22,145** calls received at  
VBA National Call Center  
related to COVID-19  
(from Mar. 16–Dec. 4)

**119,591** VA  
Video Connect  
appointments  
conducted for VA benefits\*



**5,379,462** Veterans in **50** states & **7** VSOs reached  
through **106** tele-town halls held to discuss Blue  
Water Navy, VBBP, & Solid Start Programs  
(from Mar. 16–Nov. 30)

\*VBA figures as of Dec. 4.



1

### 1) Wilmington VAMC recognizes volunteers

Due to COVID-19, the Wilmington VAMC annual volunteer award & recognition banquet was reimaged as a drive-thru event where volunteers received a meal & reconnected with others safely from their vehicles.

[Read the full story.](#)



4

### 2) TVHS confronting domestic violence during COVID-19

TN Valley Healthcare System is raising awareness about domestic violence (which has risen due to added stress from COVID-19); 450+ participants from Greece, the UK, US, & Canada registered for a recent seminar.

[Read the full story.](#)



5

### 3) Vettes to Vets donates \$17k to VA Bedford

Last year's Vettes to Vets, an annual fundraiser at the Bedford VA, brought 700+ Corvettes from the Northeast & Canada for Veterans to view. Even though the event was canceled due to COVID-19, the organizers raised \$17k for the facility.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 4) Veterans find new way to serve: volunteering for COVID-19 vaccine trials

As if 26 years in the Army weren't enough for retired Col. Herminio Blas-Irizarry, he is answering the call to serve again. This time, he's a volunteer for the COVID-19 vaccine trial at the Tampa VAMC.

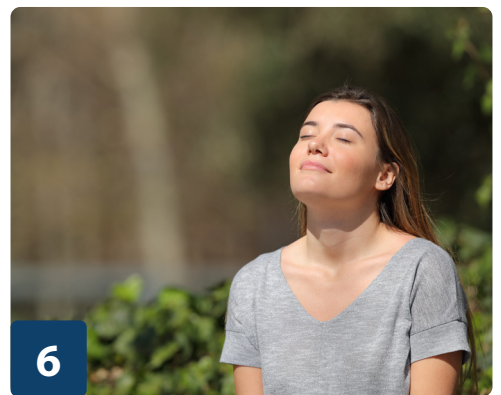
[Read the full story.](#)



2



3



6

### 5) Army Veteran survives two national pandemics

WWII Army Veteran Milton Zaczek survived two pandemics (1918 influenza & COVID-19). "The food was great, but I missed my home & my own bed," said Zaczek after his discharge from the Prescott VAMC.

[Read the full story.](#)

### 6) Meditation promotes love, kindness

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live our lives; Truman VA's Whole Health offers several programs to help Veterans regain control & continue to live their lives to the fullest.

[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