

# VHA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# **VA HEALTH CARE:**

## A STRONG FOUNDATION. A HEALTHY FUTURE.



**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Welcome From Dr. Shereef Elnahal</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FY24 By The Numbers: Historic Impacts on Veteran Care</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expanding Veterans' Access to Care</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bringing Care Closer to Home</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Combatting Veteran Suicide</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Connecting Veterans with a Safe, Stable Place to Call Home</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Innovating to Transform Veteran Care</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<b>15</b>

## WELCOME FROM DR. SHEREEF ELNAHAL

Welcome and thank you for taking a moment to discover what the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) accomplished in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). This was a historic year for VHA, as VA provided more care to Veterans than ever before. In these pages, we acknowledge what we have achieved, and the groundwork laid to advance Veteran care for years to come.

In 2023, a systematic review of studies of VA care demonstrated that VA care outperforms or matches non-VA care in most categories, including quality, safety, access, and patient experience. This year's VHA Annual Report builds on this review and demonstrates why Veterans continue to choose VA even when they might qualify for community care. For instance, in this year's CMS Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings, over 58% of VA hospitals achieved four or five-star ratings, compared to 40% of non-VA hospitals. Further, VA continues to outperform the private sector in the CMS patient satisfaction surveys. Most importantly, a record 92% of Veterans say they trust VA outpatient care.

Our ability to build trust with Veterans is a result of the work our teams across the nation have done to expand access to care, bring care closer to home, enhance mental health services to combat Veteran suicide, address Veteran homelessness, advance technology and innovation, and strengthen community

partnerships. Combined with the implementation of the PACT Act, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of new enrollees and increases and reduced copays for hundreds of thousands more, and an emphasis on improving operational efficiency, VA is positioned to continue to be the provider of choice for Veterans.

Please don't take it just from me. Throughout this report, you will hear directly from those we serve. Veteran voices provide invaluable insights into the impact of our work, and their decision to choose VA, strengthens our steadfast commitment to serve those who served our country.

Thank you for your trust and continued support.

Sincerely,



**Dr. Shereef Elnahal**  
Under Secretary for Health  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### EFFICIENCY DRIVES QUALITY: VA'S PATH TO BETTER VETERAN CARE

In FY24, VHA continued its overhaul of operations, aimed at directly enhancing health care quality for Veterans while simultaneously working to reduce the burden on taxpayers. Advancing its commitment to being a High-Reliability Organization (HRO), VA strives to channel more resources and focus into direct, efficient health care delivery by streamlining processes and minimizing bureaucracy. Key initiatives included the launch of the Integrated Critical Staffing Program (ICSP) to improve employment and hiring processes, and the creation of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The COO office integrates Support Services, Clinical Services, Patient Care Services, and Integrated Veteran Care, driving faster decision-making and better coordination between VHACO and the field. These HRO-focused improvements translate to better, more consistent care across VA facilities, underscoring VHA's commitment to fiscal responsibility and improved Veterans' health outcomes.

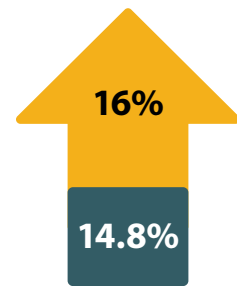
# FY24 BY THE NUMBERS: HISTORIC IMPACTS ON VETERAN CARE

For VHA, data is the guiding light that illuminates how effectively Veterans receive care now and how health care services can expand into the future. The data from FY24 are clear: more Veterans rely on VA care than ever before. From trust and satisfaction measures to increases in care appointments and crisis line support, our nation's Veterans continue to count on VHA to deliver the personalized care they deserve:

**92%** OF VETERANS trust VA outpatient care, the highest recorded percentage to date



In the CMS Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings: 58% of VA hospitals received either 4 or 5 stars compared to 40% of non-VA hospitals



Veterans can choose to receive VA health care or community care. In FY24, the anticipated rise in community care fell short of predictions as more Veterans chose VA for care.

**50K+** VETERANS in acute suicidal crises received no-cost emergency health care from VA

Upon the 2 year anniversary of 988, VCL has noted a

**22.7%** increase in calls per day, **76.7%** increase in texts per day, **27.5%** increase in chats per day,

evidence that Veterans in crisis are getting the help they need in the moment they need it.

VA delivered more than **130M** health care appointments, representing more than a **7%** increase over last year's record

**78.8M** Direct Care appointments **48.8M** Community Care appointments

**52.1K** women Veterans enrolled in VA health care in FY24, more than ever before

Nearly **48K VETERANS** experiencing homelessness housed by VA in FY 2024. 96% of these Veterans remain housed.

# EXPANDING VETERANS' ACCESS TO CARE

## MILLIONS MORE VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR VA CARE UNDER PACT ACT

The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act continues to drive the largest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in generations. VA launched the largest outreach campaign in its history to ensure Veterans understand and sign up for the care and benefits they earned and are newly eligible for. To date, nearly six million Veterans have completed toxic exposure screenings.

The PACT Act furthered a new way of understanding military environmental exposures as fundamental factors affecting Veterans' holistic wellbeing. Potentially exposed Veterans now have easier access to comprehensive, affordable health care services. In March 2024, years earlier than called for by the PACT Act, VA health care expanded eligibility for millions more Veterans by recognizing three new groups for eligibility: those who served in the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11; those who deployed in support of the Global War on Terror; and/or those who were exposed to toxins during military service at home or abroad.

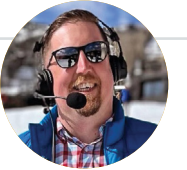
The PACT Act also paves new avenues for critical research to help VA better understand the relationship between areas of service and the health effects caused by potential toxic exposures. Veterans who enroll in VA's environmental health registries directly contribute to building a fuller understanding of the long-term health effects of environmental exposures. Over time, the knowledge gained through this research will be used to fuel advancements in treatments, inform policies related to establishing presumptive conditions, ensure more precise predictive medicine, and deliver targeted proactive and preventative care for the millions of newly eligible Veterans.



Learn more about PACT and eligibility by scanning the QR code.



**“**I am one of the 3.5 million Veterans eligible for VA care through the PACT Act. I'd advise fellow Veterans to find out about their eligibility for VA care. Be an ambassador for yourself—it's about getting the care you've earned.”



**Ron Haskell**  
U.S. Navy Veteran and Director of Broadcast and Video, VHA

**796K+** VETERANS have enrolled in VA health care since the PACT Act was signed into law in 2022

**37%** OF VETERANS trust VA outpatient care, the highest recorded percentage to date

Since its launch on August 1, 2024, the updated Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry expanded from

**500K ENROLLEES TO 4.7M VETERANS**

and service members, vastly expanding available and actionable data that will inform care and benefits for years to come.

## VA AND DOD COLLABORATE TO GET VETERANS FASTER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Across the country, hundreds of VA partnerships with the Department of Defense (DOD) allow Veterans to receive VA health care at military installations, meeting the growing demand for Veterans to receive care closer to where they live and work. Beginning in February 2024, Veterans in Tennessee and Kentucky became eligible to receive primary and mental health care at a VA clinic inside the Blanchfield Army Community Hospital located on the Fort Campbell Army Installation. In the future, Veterans will be able to receive specialty care at the military installation, including dental care, women's health care, intensive care, and pain management. A similar partnership in Florida allows Veterans to receive same-day outpatient surgical care at a new VA clinic in Naval Hospital Pensacola. In addition to expanding partnerships with DOD, VA reached agreements with Stanford University to build a cutting-edge cancer and research center and with Penn Medicine to expand health care access in southeastern Pennsylvania.

## VA ACCESS SPRINTS BRING VETERANS EASIER AND FASTER ACCESS TO CARE



VA's Access Sprints — an initiative aimed at increasing the use of VA care — made it easier for Veterans to receive timely care throughout the country. By offering night and weekend clinic hours and increasing the number of Veterans scheduled into daily clinics, Access Sprints contributed to VA's delivery of more than 130 million health care appointments in FY24, more than a 7% increase over the previous year. VA saw an increase in the number of patient appointments in the areas of primary care, mental health, oncology, gastroenterology, and cardiology as well as a decrease in new patient direct care wait times for primary care and mental health appointments. Efforts such as VA's Access Sprints are prime examples of how ease of access leads to increased use of VA care, giving Veterans around the country expedited pathways to care and a healthier future.

## ENSURING SEAMLESS HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS, EVERYWHERE THEY GO: THE VETERAN INTEROPERABILITY PLEDGE

The Veteran Interoperability Pledge (VIP), launched in October 2023, is transforming Veteran health care by enabling seamless data sharing between VA and non-VA health systems, ensuring continuity of care. This seamless information exchange reduces

the burden on Veterans, eliminating the need to repeatedly provide health information, and frees providers up to spend more time with patients and less time accessing health records. Additionally, through the Veteran Confirmation Application Programming Interface, which enables data systems to speak to each other, certain health systems and hospitals can help VA identify Veteran patients in their care, both for health information purposes and potential benefits purposes. After the interface went live in January 2024, Tufts Medical Center increased its identification of Veterans by 22%; of those Veterans, 40% had a presumptive condition covered by the PACT Act. In the future, VA plans to expand engagement with community health providers, further enhancing care coordination by getting providers the information they need to provide seamless care and identify potential benefits for Veterans.

## CLINICAL RESOURCE HUBS TRANSFORM CARE FOR RURAL VETERANS

Clinical Resource Hubs (CRHs) are revolutionizing health care for Veterans, especially for the estimated 4.4 million Veterans who reside in rural areas. When local VA facilities have gaps in care or service capabilities, CRHs connect Veterans via telehealth with clinical care including primary care, mental health, and specialty care. Since 2015, more than 500,000 Veterans have received care through CRHs. By using telehealth services to address local care gaps, CRHs make it possible for Veterans to receive timely and comprehensive health care no matter where they live.

## WHAT'S AHEAD: REDESIGNED BURN PIT REGISTRY ACCELERATES ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE RESEARCH

With the redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry now containing data from **4.7 million participants**, VA can begin to proactively and comprehensively address at a population level the health challenges faced by Veterans who have potentially been exposed to toxins. Ongoing research will evaluate possible presumptive conditions, inform future care considerations, and more fully represent the demographics of the affected Veteran population. **The redesigned registry now includes data on more than 800,000 Veterans who identify as a racial or ethnic minority.** It also contains mechanisms to track additional demographics data including age, gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, branch of service, deployment occupation, and state of residency. With this expanse of accessible data, VA can ensure reliable connections between potential exposures and current health outcomes, even for specific population groups. The redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry puts more data to work for more Veterans, directly impacting the future of Veteran health care.

# BRINGING CARE CLOSER TO HOME

**32.5M TELEHEALTH APPOINTMENTS completed in FY24**

VA Direct Care has **OVER 32X** the amount of telehealth appointments than Community Care

VA's National TeleOncology has served **8,035 VETERANS** since FY22



of those Veterans are considered rural or very rural



Read more about Veterans' access to cancer care by scanning the QR code.

## TELE-EMERGENCY CARE REDUCES EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

Tele-Emergency Care (tele-EC) enables Veterans to connect directly with a VA emergency care provider without unnecessary exposure to illnesses, drives, or long wait times. As part of VA Health Connect, Veterans can speak with a clinical triage nurse who will connect them to a tele-EC provider when clinically appropriate. The tele-EC provider will then evaluate the Veteran over the phone or on video and recommend treatment or follow-up, including if in-person care is needed. In life-threatening emergencies, the VA nurse will call 911 and stay on the line until help arrives. In the few months since tele-EC launched, VA assisted more than 61,000 callers. Of those encounters, almost 60% were resolved without escalation to in-person emergency care, addressing Veterans' health concerns in the comfort of their own home.

## COLON CANCER SCREENING MADE EASY WITH MAILED SAMPLE TESTING

Each year, VA diagnoses approximately 4,000 new cases of colon cancer in Veterans. Early detection is crucial for successful treatment, but colonoscopy screenings are time-consuming and can be burdensome to Veterans who live far from screening locations. Fecal Immunochemical Tests (FIT) are a non-invasive test where Veterans collect a tiny stool sample and mail it back to VA for analysis. Screening detects blood in the stool, an early indicator of potential colorectal cancer or precancerous polyps. By offering these tests, VA aims to increase screening rates among Veterans, no matter where they are in the country, leading to earlier detection and improved outcomes.

## TELEONCOLOGY BRINGS CANCER EXPERTS TO VETERANS, WHEREVER THEY LIVE

About one third of Veterans live in rural areas compared to 19% of Americans nationwide. VA's National TeleOncology Program (NTO) provides remote cancer care for Veterans, increasing access to cancer specialists and oncology services. NTO leverages telecommunication technology to provide remote cancer consultations, diagnostics, and treatment planning. By connecting Veterans with expert care teams, NTO ensures timely access to high-quality cancer care, improves patient outcomes, and enhances the overall patient experience.



*"I've been going to the VA since 1996. I like the people, but I like getting my care here at the house even better."*



Glenn D. Spivey  
U.S. Army Veteran



### PACT PT OFFERS SAME-DAY ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPY

VA's Physical Therapy Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT PT) program is revolutionizing access to physical therapy for Veterans with musculoskeletal pain (pain in muscles, ligaments, tendons and bones), even those in rural areas. Traditionally, providers prescribed pain medication while patients waited to get imaging services like X-rays and MRIs and meet with orthopedics or other specialists. Only after that did patients receive PT referrals. Now, Veterans have same-day access to physical therapy services at 194 VA facilities. PACT PT empowers Veterans to receive timely and effective care, improving patient outcomes and speeding Veterans' return to normal activities.

### WHAT'S AHEAD: REAL-TIME CONSULTATIONS WITH PROVIDER CONNECT

Provider Connect is an innovative communications tool that enables a requesting provider to consult with a VA specialty provider in real time, reducing referral delays and improving Veteran care coordination. Through phone, chat and video, the Provider Connect platform offers patient-specific and general consultations, allowing specialists to provide immediate medical advice and inform treatment plans on the spot. By offering instant access to consultations, Provider Connect decreases unnecessary ER visits and hospital admissions, ensuring Veterans receive timely and appropriate care. VA is working to integrate Provider Connect into national telehealth programs like VA Health Connect, enhancing real-time communication between providers and specialists and improving Veteran outcomes.

# COMBATTING VETERAN SUICIDE

## GRANT PROGRAM LEVERAGES COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO REACH VETERANS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

Veteran suicide is a critical public health issue and requires a nationwide approach to prevention. One key way VA is working to prevent suicide among Veterans is through the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (SSG Fox SPGP), which awards grants to community-based organizations to provide or coordinate suicide prevention services to Veterans and their families. Services include outreach to identify at-risk Veterans, mental health screenings, and innovative suicide prevention approaches like cultural and faith-based interventions. The SSG Fox SPGP places an emphasis on reaching at-risk Veterans not yet in VA care and prioritizes awarding grants in areas with limited access to medical services, such as rural communities, tribal lands, and U.S. territories with a high number of minority Veterans or women Veterans and a high number of calls to the Veterans Crisis Line. Early outcomes suggest the Fox Grant Program is effective in reducing suicide risk factors, enhancing protective factors, and meeting its goal to engage Veterans at risk for suicide who were not receiving VA health care.

Since its launch in 2022, the Fox Grant Program has awarded

**\$157.5M**

to 95 organizations across 43 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, and Guam.

## SAFE-WATCH ALERTS PROVIDERS WHEN CARE IS NEEDED

Suicide Assessment Follow up Evaluation Watch (SAFE-Watch) is a proactive risk assessment tool that identifies Veterans who may be at risk of suicide and alerts health care providers to intervene promptly. By automating the identification process and generating real-time reports, SAFE-Watch significantly increases the rate of completion of comprehensive suicide risk assessments. In the VA Heartland Network, for example, the program led to a substantial increase in the completion rate of suicide risk assessments, from 65% to over 90%, in just one year. SAFE-Watch has been deployed in over 26 VA facilities, with plans to expand to more.



Learn more about SAFE-Watch by scanning the QR code.



*"I don't remember the first day I didn't think of suicide, but I remember the first day I realized I didn't. And that was an amazing day! Over the past 9 years, I haven't thought about suicide once. At all. And this was a constant, daily occurrence for me for 8 years."*



**Jonathan Lubecky**  
U.S. Marine Army Veteran





# CONNECTING VETERANS WITH A SAFE, STABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME

## VA EXCEEDS ITS GOAL, HOUSING NEARLY 48,000 VETERANS

In FY 2024, VA housed 47,925 Veterans, exceeding its goal of placing 41,000 Veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing. Additionally, of the homeless Veterans housed, 96% remained in housing by the end of the fiscal year. One homeless Veteran is too many — so VA is working hard to help the 1,930 Veterans who returned to homelessness this year get back on a path to permanent housing. VA engaged with 42,064 total unsheltered Veterans, connecting them to VA care, inclusive of housing and health services. Now, Veteran homelessness is at a record low, down 7.5% since 2023 and more than 55% since 2010. To date, 85 communities and three states have achieved an effective end to Veteran homelessness. In fact, in FY24, Dallas, Texas, and Hennepin County, Minnesota, both effectively ended Veteran homelessness.



Learn more about VA's "Housing First" approach to Veteran homelessness by scanning the QR code.

## ADDRESSING UNSHELTERED VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

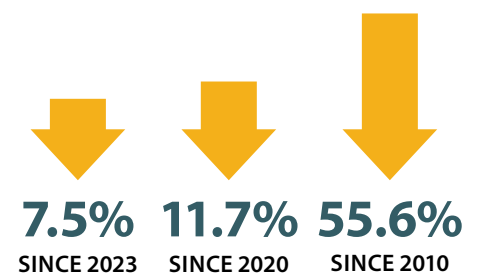
Recognizing the severe health risks and trauma associated with unsheltered homelessness, VA launched two surge events in FY24 to address the 44% of homeless Veterans living in places not meant for habitation. The first surge, from November 2023 to December 2023, targeted six communities including Bay Pines, Florida, Los Angeles, California, and Seattle, Washington. The effort engaged 525 unsheltered Veterans, moving 264 into same-day interim housing and enrolling 335 in permanent housing programs. A second surge, which ran from August 2024 through December 2024, focused on six additional communities. The surges demonstrate VA's commitment to reaching vulnerable populations and ending Veteran homelessness.

### WHAT'S AHEAD: FINDING A HOME FOR EVERY VETERAN

After achieving its goal to house Veterans experiencing homelessness every year since 2022, VA has set an ambitious goal to house 76,000 Veterans by September 30, 2025. It also aims to prevent homelessness for 90% of at-risk Veterans. VA is committed to working to ensure every Veteran has a safe, stable place to call home.



**2024 Point-in-time (PIT) Count shows a continual DECREASE IN VETERAN HOMELESSNESS, year over year**



“

*It's been amazing... the turnaround in my life since VA has come in to assist me. I never knew about the help that was there, but it was.”*



With VA support, Belmarez transitioned from homelessness to homeownership in under two years.

**Margarita Belmarez**  
U.S. Navy Veteran



# INNOVATING TO TRANSFORM VETERAN CARE

## CANCER MOONSHOT EXPANDS ACCESS TO GENETIC SCREENING

VA's Cancer Moonshot goal is to provide world-class care for over one million Veterans on the cancer care continuum, from screening to survivorship. VA now offers genetic testing to improve detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer by aiding in precision cancer care based on each Veteran's unique genetic background. To date, VA has conducted over 78,000 molecular tests to help guide Veterans' cancer care.

**100%** of VA facilities offer genetic testing

Over 3,400 Veterans have been supported with hereditary genetic counseling in the past 18 months. Of those Veterans, over 2,200 Veterans undergoing active cancer treatment had expedited genetic tests ordered, and 10% of those Veterans were found to have an actionable genetic mutation.

Genetic testing is available at 100% of VA facilities. In the next year, VA will work to make sure more Veterans receive genetic testing.

## AMBIENT SCRIBE GIVES PROVIDERS MORE TIME WITH VETERANS

VHA is piloting ambient scribe technology, which is an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven approach that allows providers to focus on Veteran patients. This initiative, led by the Digital Health Office (DHO), aims to reduce documentation burden, alleviate provider burnout, and improve the patient experience. The emerging technology accurately transcribes and summarizes provider-patient conversations, allowing health care providers to focus on the Veteran. Early results from tech sprints indicate the AI tool is highly accurate, with providers reviewing for accuracy and completeness. The technology adheres to strict HIPAA guidelines and rigorous security standards, ensuring Veterans' privacy is protected. The Ambient Scribe pilot will be launched at ten VA sites and underscores VA's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology to enhance care delivery, improving experiences for both Veterans and health care providers.

## OSSEOINTEGRATION ENHANCES MOBILITY FOR VETERANS WITH PROSTHETIC LIMBS

VA is exploring innovative technologies to improve the quality of life for amputee Veterans. One such technology is osseointegration, a surgical procedure that directly anchors a prosthetic limb to the bone. Osseointegration offers several advantages over traditional socket-based prosthetics, including improved mobility, reduced pain, and enhanced quality of life. By eliminating the need for a socket, osseointegration minimizes the risk of skin irritation and discomfort and improves balance. Veterans who have undergone this procedure report increased independence and a reduced sense of disability. While still in its early stages, osseointegration holds the potential to revolutionize prosthetic care for Veterans, offering greater freedom and mobility.

“

*“It's a gamechanger. I actually went swimming in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time in 11 years this past summer. And I went twice. I couldn't do that with a standard socket. That was a great feeling!”*



Joe Shutte  
U.S. Navy Veteran

## VA SIMULATES DEMENTIA TO IMPROVE VETERAN CARE

Veterans may be more likely to develop dementia due to exposure to certain risk factors, and VA projects that nearly half a million Veterans will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia by 2033. VA's SimLEARN program is addressing the growing challenge of dementia among Veterans with innovative training tools for providers. The Dementia Experience, a virtual reality program, allows health care providers to experience firsthand the cognitive and sensory challenges faced by Veterans with dementia. By immersing clinicians in a simulated dementia experience, the tool enhances compassion and understanding, leading to improved patient care. As the number of Veterans with dementia continues to rise, initiatives like The Dementia Experience are crucial in keeping staff engaged, promoting an empathetic approach to care, and creating better connections between patients and providers.

## A NEW INTERACTIVE PROGRAM EQUIPS VETERANS TO TACKLE DIABETES

The Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) program empowers Veterans to take control of their diabetes through education, support, and access to advanced technology. About 25% of Veterans have diabetes, more than double the rate for the general population; however, DSMES equips Veterans with the tools and knowledge to effectively manage their condition. The program's focus on Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) technology allows for real-time tracking of blood glucose levels, enabling timely adjustments to treatment plans. With a growing network of trained providers and expanded access to DSMES, VA is committed to improving the health and well-being of the 1.8 million Veterans living with diabetes.



Learn more about the DSMES program through Patient Handbooks by scanning the QR code

## MVP ENROLLS MILLIONTH VETERAN IN WORLD'S LARGEST RESEARCH PROGRAM IN A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



In FY24, VA's Million Veteran Program (MVP) welcomed the one millionth Veteran into the program, making it the first research program in the world to include extensive health and genetic data for so many participants. The program aims to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of health conditions affecting Veterans and, ultimately, all Americans. With one of the most diverse data sets in the world, MVP data have been used in peer-reviewed research publications on a wide range of health conditions — including cancer, diabetes, PTSD, suicide prevention, Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular diseases, kidney disease, and more. MVP has more people of African ancestry than any research program in the world, with approximately 180,000+ Veterans of African ancestry. This sample size advances MVP's ability to do meaningful research for Black Veterans and ensure their health and genetics are represented in research discoveries that will inform the future of health care.

“



*“I joined MVP to help the future generation of men and women Veterans, and so that scientists can study toxic exposures and PTSD. It's the strength in numbers that matters [in health care research].”*

**Alfonso Lopez**  
U.S. Marine  
Corps Veteran

**MVP is over 1M VETERANS STRONG**

**700+ RESEARCHERS use MVP data to make groundbreaking health discoveries**

**400+ PEER-REVIEWED publications using MVP data have published in journals such as Nature, Cell and PLOS**

## WHAT'S AHEAD: VA FUNDS GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ON PSYCHEDELICS

VA has taken a significant step towards advancing mental health care for Veterans by funding a study on Methylendioxyamphetamine (MDMA)-assisted therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alcohol use disorder in Veterans. This is the first VA-funded research on psychedelic-assisted therapy in several decades. Researchers from Brown and Yale Universities will lead the study, which aims to evaluate the safety and efficacy of MDMA-assisted therapy in a controlled clinical setting. Participants will undergo psychotherapy sessions with MDMA, with the goal of reducing symptoms of PTSD and alcohol use disorder. VA's investment in this approach reflects its ongoing effort to explore cutting-edge treatment options for improving Veterans' mental health. VA looks forward to keeping Veterans informed about the progress of these studies and ultimately to offering Veterans more mental health treatment options.



VA USH Dr. Shereef Elnahal joined Rep. Morgan Luttrell and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema for a panel on psychedelics at the 2024 HLTH Conference.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025 and beyond, VHA is poised to continue to embrace this era of innovation and excellence in Veteran health care. In May, we will celebrate the centennial anniversary of VA research. From the cardiac pacemaker to the first successful liver transplant, to prosthetics that restore the sense of touch, VA's groundbreaking discoveries have improved the lives of Veterans and all Americans for nearly 100 years.

We look forward to continuing to deliver new therapies and treatments that improve Veterans' lives. We will expand our work developing custom prosthetics and medical devices tailored precisely to Veterans' needs and explore new ways to use immersive technologies like virtual reality (VR) to treat PTSD, enhance physical therapy treatments, and alleviate chronic pain. AI promises to enhance diagnostic accuracy and relieve clinicians of administrative burdens, improving efficiency while reducing provider burnout. Service Assisted Robots (SARs) will also help

make medical facilities more efficient. They are already being used at 65 VA facilities for tasks like pharmaceutical delivery and facility cleaning.

As we look into the future, we will continue our commitment to expanding care for women Veterans, the fastest growing Veteran demographic. We will continue to work to end homelessness among Veterans and leverage clinical and community resources to combat Veteran suicide. We will expand services for aging Veterans and caregivers with respite care, tele-mental health care, and more.

Most important, VHA will continue to make good on our promise to deliver Veterans the world class health care they earned when they chose to serve our country.

The future of Veteran health care is bright. Thank you to all those who work every day on behalf of America's Veterans.







**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration