

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (HAP) and the American Lung Association (ALA)

Supporting Veterans Living with Lung Disease

Partnership Information

The partnership between Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the American Lung Association uses collaborative education and health services to improve the health and well-being of Veterans diagnosed with lung disease.

Respiratory health has become a major concern for many of the 2.77 million service members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11. VA research has found that Veterans may suffer from respiratory problems due to environmental exposure to Agent Orange, burn pits, sandstorms, or fumes from aircrafts throughout their service.

Promoting Lung Health



- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the US, and VA diagnoses 7,700 Veterans with lung cancer every year.
- Lung cancer survival rates are much higher when its detected early, yet only 23% of cases are diagnosed at an early stage.
- Veterans are more likely (29.2%) to use tobacco than the civilian population. A key measure to prevent lung cancer is to limit exposure to tobacco and secondhand smoke.
- Approximately 25% of Veterans are diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and many Veterans show signs of COPD earlier in their lives compared to the general population.

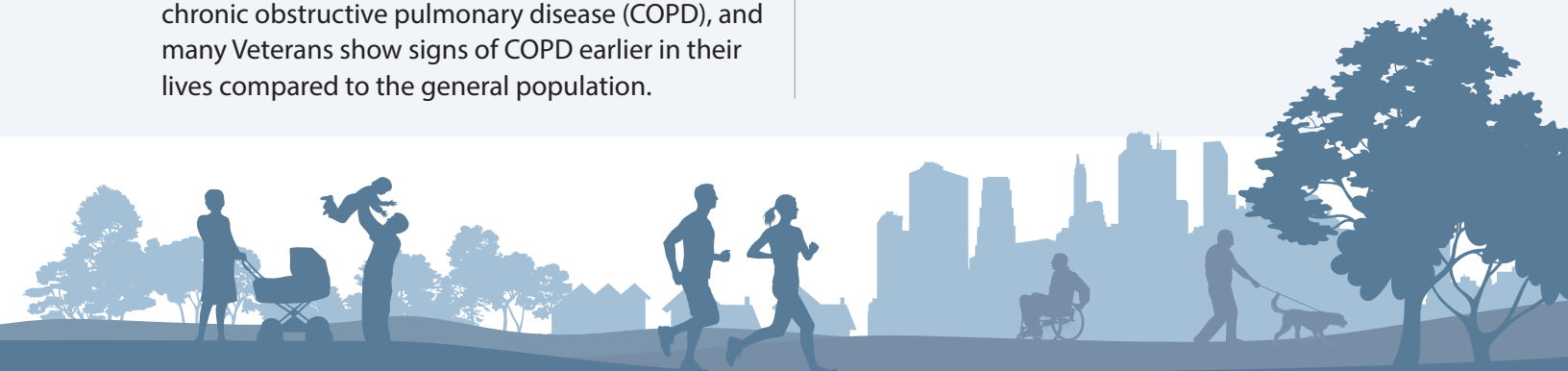
- VA estimates that 900,000 Veterans remain at risk of lung disease due to age, smoking, and other environmental exposures connected to their military experience.
- The American Lung Association is currently assisting 500,000 Americans with lung cancer and has committed more than \$10 million towards lung cancer research.



Benefits for All Veterans

The partnership between VHA and the American Lung Association provides education and health services to help Veterans living with lung disease while also giving Veterans access to online resources and support groups.

The American Lung Association will share its expertise with VA providers by hosting informational webinars, participating in training opportunities, and sharing best practices and program guides for services such as group therapy and telehealth. Additionally, VA suicide prevention resources will be shared with the American Lung Association and its affiliates to raise awareness about important mental health resources for Veterans, regardless of enrollment or eligibility.



VA Resources

- Veterans should talk with their VA health care team to find out if **lung cancer screening** is recommended for them.
- VA's **Lung Precision Oncology Program** provides VA providers a range of tools to proactively address and treat lung cancer in Veterans.
- The **War Related Illness and Injury Study Center** is VA's national program dedicated to health concerns for Veterans and Service members following their deployment.
- **Stay Quit Coach** is a free VA smartphone app designed for Veterans to help them stop smoking.
- VA's Office of Research and Development provides numerous resources on **respiratory health** issues including tuberculosis, pneumonia, upper respiratory infections, and more.

American Lung Association Resources:

- The annual **State of the Air** report analyzes air quality across the country and provides recommendations on how local communities can improve it.
- Local **Better Breather Clubs** offer in-person support groups to people with COPD.
- The **Freedom From Smoking** program can help Veterans stop smoking and vaping.
- The **Asthma Basics** program gives information about asthma and a host of tools and resources for those living with asthma, their caregivers, families, and healthcare professionals.

This partnership is not an exclusive arrangement or endorsement of services provided by the American Lung Association. Please contact your local VA Medical Center to see if there are other community resources available in your area.

Innovative Strategic Partnerships Facilitated through HAP

HAP's mission is to serve as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships at the national, state, and community level and advances the health and wellbeing of Veterans through exploration of innovative, safe, and ethical emerging therapies.

To learn more about VHA partnerships, please visit: va.gov/healthpartnerships.

For more information about ALA, please visit their website at: lung.org.

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the linked web sites, or the information, products or services contained therein.

**Veterans and members of the public are encouraged to adhere to current CDC guidelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

