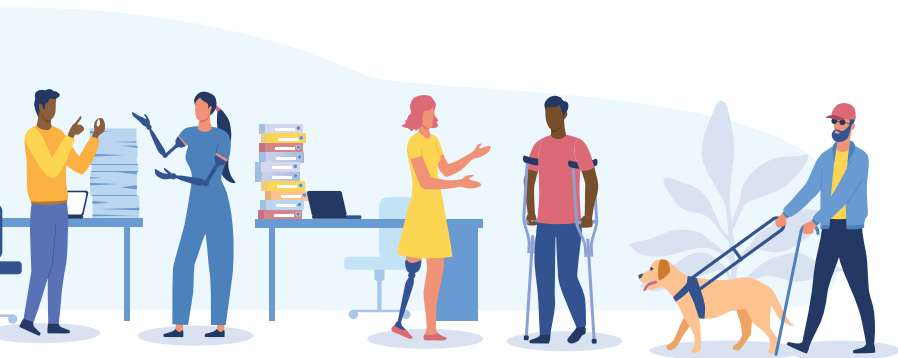




QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
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VHA National Center for Healthcare
Advancement and Partnerships

Celebrating Partnerships and Innovations



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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

A Note from the Nurse Executive

Each new year presents new opportunities for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (HAP) to uplift partnerships and innovations that are helping Veterans live healthy, vibrant lives. We started the year off right with a roundup of initiatives, resources, and services that are improving the health and well-being of Veterans, and we're excited to share some updates.

February was Black History Month, and we acknowledge the extraordinary achievements that Black Americans have made to our nation, including their service in the military. We are committed to supporting VHA's efforts to maintain an inclusive culture in which inclusion, diversity, equity, and access are weaved into all aspects of Veteran healthcare and employment. **(page 3)**

In this issue, you'll hear more about the 2023 National Community Partnership Challenge, an annual contest that highlights community partnerships between VHA and nongovernmental organizations that serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. This year, the theme is "Accelerating VHA's Journey to High Reliability Through Partnerships." **(page 4)**

Make sure to read about the Heroes Rise Alliance, an alliance with the Daniel and Salvador Montoya Heroes Foundation that focuses on strategically developing strong Veteran-ready programs with Veteran-friendly companies to enhance recruitment strategies, career mobility, talent development, and an inclusive culture for Veterans and their spouses. **(page 5)**

In celebration of Veteran's Day, HAP collaborated with the Y-USA to promote healthy lifestyles and provide effective services to Veterans and their families. They honored Veterans in local communities and increased awareness of the valuable services Mobile Vet Centers provide to

Veterans, Service members, and their loved ones. **(page 7)**

The VHA-American Lung Association partnership helps to increase Veterans' access to information about lung disease through various resources and programs. The partnership has some tips on how to strengthen your physical health and lung health. **(page 8)**

One of our major achievements in the past year has been working with Salesforce Military to help Service members, Veterans, and military spouses access free training, education, and job opportunities on the Trailhead platform. We are thrilled that 10,000 Veterans have completed the mental health resiliency module, since its launch in July 2022. **(page 9)**

In this issue, you'll also get a glimpse of a new webinar, part of our ongoing informal collaboration between VHA and the Danish Ministry of Health. The collaboration allows Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to share best practices in telemental health with Danish Clinicians, and in turn, we learn from Danish Health experts on how they utilize telemental health for those living in rural areas. **(page 10)**

We hope you enjoy learning more about our partnership with Go2 for Lung Cancer, which increases awareness about lung screening options and educates patients about the latest breaking information and support they need to combat COVID-19. **(page 11)**

Our team is dedicated to helping those who have sacrificed so much. We hope you follow along and enjoy reading stories about the HAP team and our current partnerships and projects.



In good health,
Chien Chen
*HAP Acting Chief Officer
and Nurse Executive*





VHA's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Although VA is committed to diversity throughout the year, Black History Month (observed every February) and Women's History Month (observed every March) serve as meaningful reminders of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

HAP works with VA stakeholders to support efforts that maintain an inclusive culture where DEI and access are a part of Veteran health care and employment.

Under the [Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network \(VSPN\)](#) initiative, VHA regional offices form non-monetary partnerships with community organizations to help transitioning Service members and their families access essential VA services and community resources. Initiatives and partnerships with organizations such as VSPN and the [Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program](#) help transitioning Service members get ahead of possible challenges, such as employment, housing, and education. Partnerships such as [MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger](#), help counteract the risks associated with negative [social determinants of health \(SDOH\)](#) – conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, that contribute to health disparities and underlying inequities for a broad range of populations, specifically minorities.

To ensure that Veterans receive equitable access to quality healthcare, VA implemented various DEI initiatives and established a diversity council. HAP is part of the newly formed DEI committee, launched

in January 2023, under the [VHA Office of Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks \(DEAN\)](#). The DEAN DEI Committee's mission is to enhance, encourage, and improve DEI in all DEAN work environments that align with VA/VHA strategic goals.

"Members of the committee meet regularly to discuss cultural awareness and DEI within DEAN and their internal and external partners," said Georgeanna Bady, DEAN DEI Committee co-chair and VHA health system specialist. "We hope that our diverse perspectives will help advance an inclusive work environment that values and supports the diverse communities we serve."

"The DEAN national program offices and senior leaders collaborate with the DEAN DEI Committee in enhancing DEI activities. The HAP team is committed to DEI training and opportunities to enhance DEI concepts when identifying and establishing partnerships that reflect our diverse Veteran and staff population/needs," said Chien Chen, HAP acting chief officer and nurse executive.

VA strives to bring the best health care to Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors and works to establish partnerships that address the unique needs that affect Veterans with minority and disadvantaged backgrounds. HAP serves as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships and advances the health and well-being of Veterans through the exploration of innovative, safe, and ethical emerging therapies.

VA leaders are encouraged to support observances celebrating the importance of DEI including Black History Month and Women's History Month. The Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion offers a [SEP Observances Toolkit](#) for suggested monthly observance activities or information about organizing ceremonies and events.

For more information, visit
www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/About.asp.



2023 National Community Partnership Challenge Submission Summary

VHA launches the [National Community Partnership Challenge \(CPC\)](#) annually to recognize exemplary partnerships that advance the health and well-being of Veterans and their communities spread best practices across the health care system.

The CPC is managed by HAP for the Office of the Under Secretary. The 2023 CPC's theme is "Accelerating VHA's Journey to High Reliability Through Partnerships," aligning with VHA's priority initiative to become a High Reliability Organization (HRO) – one that creates a framework for safe, reliable, and effective care in an environment where patients come first and employees are encouraged to report harm.

Submission Period

The submission period for CPC was open from January 3 to March 10, 2023, and HAP received 42 submissions. VHA employees at medical facilities, health care centers, community-based outpatient centers, clinics, and program offices were eligible to submit an entry. All partnerships must be nonmonetary between VHA and a nongovernmental organization, with concurrence from executive leadership.

Selection Process

Winning entries showcase the way the organization serves Veterans of all races, ethnicities, sexual identities, languages, cultures, and/or spiritual preferences and actively seeks out ways to serve Veterans that actively aligns with the five principles of an HRO.

Awards and Ceremony

The winners will be honored and recognized in August 2023 with a commendation from VA secretary along with the coveted diamond award from the Office of the Under Secretary for Health. HAP will share the winners' stories through multiple venues, highlighting and spreading their partnership ideas and outcomes.

"Winners of the challenge have filled gaps by addressing the social determinants of health, including housing, employment, education, and food security, as well as innovative methods to reduce Veteran suicide," said Georgeanna Bady.

History

Since 2014, local and national partnerships that serve Veterans have been recognized by CPC. "Winners of the challenge have filled gaps by addressing the social determinants of health, including housing, employment, education, and food security, as well as innovative methods to reduce Veteran suicide," said Georgeanna Bady, VHA health system specialist. "These partnerships have proven to be force multipliers that provide needed care to Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors, as well as needed services that are prohibited by law," Bady added.

The 2022 CPC theme was "**G.R.O.W.**" which focused on partnerships that were **goal-oriented**, showed **resiliency**, addressed **opportunities**, and focused on **wellness**.

2022 WINNERS

- Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center partnered with Heroic Gardens
- Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center partnered with Wichita Animal Action League
- VA Boston Health Care System partnered with Veterans Voice Radio Network

The 2021 CPC theme was "Adaptability in a Changing World," and partnerships submitted to the CPC focused on helping diverse populations of Veterans during the coronavirus pandemic.

2022 WINNERS

- Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center partnered with Heroic Gardens
- Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center partnered with Wichita Animal Action League
- VA Boston Healthcare System partnered with Veterans Voice Radio Network

The 2021 CPC theme was “Adaptability in a Changing World,” and partnerships submitted to the CPC focused on helping diverse populations of Veterans during the coronavirus pandemic.

2021 WINNERS

- Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center partnered with Veteran Safety and Planning with Community Hospitals to Prevent Suicide
- Rocky Mountain VA Medical Center Mental Illness Research Education Clinical Center partners to for VA Patient Safety Center of Inquiry-Suicide Prevention
- VA Pala Alto Health Care System partnered with Medical Legal Partnership with Bay Legal Aid Veteran Legal Project

The 2020 CPC theme was improving social determinants of health – conditions in the environments in which people live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect one’s quality of life.

2020 WINNERS

- Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center partnered with Lowcountry Hospitality Association
- Cincinnati VA Medical Center partnered with Freestore Foodbank
- Toledo Community Based Outpatient Clinic partnered with Toledo Bar Association

VHA is proud to launch this annual event and honor the organizations that are advancing the health and well-being of Veterans. By highlighting successful partnerships across VHA, the CPC encourages more communities to form partnerships that serve Veterans.

The CPC is facilitated by HAP. For more information, visit www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/CPC.asp

Heroes Foundation Workgroup Expansion

Since 2019, VHA and the Daniel and Salvador Montoya Heroes Foundation (Heroes Foundation) have partnered together to develop stronger [Veteran-ready programs with Veteran-friendly companies](#) that enhance recruitment strategies, career mobility, talent development, and an inclusive culture for transitioning Service members (TSMs), Veterans, and their spouses.

Chris Montoya started [the Heroes Foundation](#) to honor his father, Daniel Montoya Sr., a Vietnam Marine Veteran, and his late uncle, Salvador Montoya, a Vietnam Army Veteran. “My father’s challenging transition experience influenced me to try to fill that gap to do more,” Montoya stated. “My goal, [was to] take a unique approach in aligning the Heroes Foundation with VA’s [diversity, equity, and inclusion \(DEI\) strategy](#),” continued Montoya.

In 2022, the VHA-Heroes Foundation expanded its partnership to create the Heroes Rise Alliance (HRA), a community-focused coalition that creates a centralized cooperative network to ensure long-term, scalable access to employment, health benefits, and entrepreneurial and community resources for Veterans.

HRA builds on the Heroes Foundation values and its four-part mission to: (1) leverage its network, resources, and influence to create career opportunities for Veterans and their families; (2) create innovative strategies that improve interconnectivity in DEI for Veterans, TSMs, military spouses and their families; (3) strengthen the mission to support Veteran-owned businesses; and (4) develop a central platform that shares best practices as well as available resources with the community alliance. HRA also leverages resources to create hiring events, homeless Veteran re-entry programs, and job referral programs.

“HRA is focused on establishing and growing Veteran-owned businesses and advancing best practices among HRA members and employers to promote hiring and retention efforts,” said Dr. Jamie Davis, VHA health system specialist. “By partnering with federal, state, and local employers and organizations that assist Veterans, HRA is able to support several employment opportunities for TSMs, Veterans, and spouses,” Davis added.

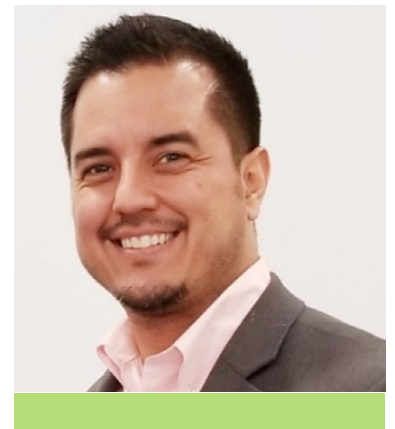
It’s common for organizations to call themselves “Veteran-friendly,” which means that they are receptive to Veterans. Montoya notes the importance of developing “Veteran-ready” employers —employers that create an environment to fully support Veterans and their families. Not only do these employers understand the military community, they also offer strong Veteran-centric recruitment and retention programs. “Through these integrated strategies and working with the VA, I believe we [as a community] have a better opportunity in creating change as well as long-term sustainability,” stated Montoya.

In the past year, the VHA-Heroes Foundation partnership held several corporate events, trainings, and initiatives, including a talent acquisition hiring event with Domino’s Pizza, whose commitment towards creating opportunities for our Heroes has been illustrated by their commercial driver’s license driver development program.

In 2023, the VHA-Heroes Foundation partnership will continue to focus on initiatives and activities that will better the lives of Veterans. In addition to company-focused hiring events, the partnership is working on the Heroes Challenge, an initiative led by the Heroes Foundation community coalition. The Heroes Challenge support DEI-focused companies and create a monthly framework that will allow companies to strengthen their landscape by achieving monthly targets, participating in corporate diversity training, receiving best practices within DEI to mental health, and more. These efforts help HRA-affiliated organizations to recruit and become more inclusive and supportive of Veterans and their spouses.

Participating companies become eligible to be integrated into the New Hire Orientation Program, a program that provides new hires and their families with care packages full of items that new employees can use on the job. “This is a great pilot program in partnership with Janet Gieselman, chief marketing officer of Fogo de Chao,” said Montoya. “Fogo de Chao, a long-time partner of the Heroes Foundation, will provide gift certificates that can be used at any one of their locations to welcome new Veteran employees.” Other companies contributing to the care package include Professional Golfers’ Association of America Hope, Crash Champions, Men’s Wearhouse, Southwest Airlines, Glazers Southern Wine & Spirits, and more.

Finally, HRA has launched Season 2 of ‘[Heroes Coffee and commUNITY](#)’, a monthly virtual series where they bring hosts from the federal, state, and local government for a casual conversation. Guests share their stories and discuss how to support Veterans and their families. “I use the platform as an educational tool for both the jobseeker as well as Veteran-ready employers wishing to learn about resources available to support their recruitment and retention goals,” explained Montoya. “We are honored to be a strategic partner in VA’s ongoing efforts to support Veteran-ready companies as well as transitioning Service members, Veterans, and their families.”



The partnership with the Heroes Foundation is facilitated by HAP. For more information, visit va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/partnerships.asp

VHA Partners with Y-USA to Celebrate Veterans Day

HAP collaborated with the Y-USA (the national entity that oversees YMCA facilities across the country) to promote healthy lifestyles and provide effective services to Veterans and their families. In November 2022, 12 Y-USA locations across the nation celebrated [Veterans Day](#) week with the help of several VA Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs). The event honored Veterans in local communities and increased awareness of the valuable services MVCs provide to Veterans, Service members, and their loved ones.

MVCs were created by VHA to connect Veterans in faraway communities with essential resources, especially after a national emergency or disaster. Currently, there are more than 80 MVCs nationwide.

“Our YMCA [Y-USA] received a visit from Fidel Estrella Jr., a retired Veteran and MCV specialist from Pikesville, Maryland,” stated Maria Moya, Southern community service director for the YMCA of the Roses Shrewsbury in Pennsylvania. Moya continued, “During the time he was with us, he met with several of our members. Mr. Estrella also inquired about the Veteran’s time in service and had mini counseling sessions to discuss their needs and the ways the MVC can assist them if they are not receiving all the benefits available to them.”

Established by Congress in 1979, [Vet Centers](#) are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional readjustment counseling, at no cost to eligible Veterans and active-duty Service members. Vet Centers also provide individual, group, marriage and family counseling, referrals, and connections to other VA and community benefits.

“These YMCA [Y-USA] events are a great example of how HAP partnerships can benefit Veterans and their families,” said Dr. Kimberly Pugh, VHA health system specialist. Dr. Pugh also stated, “MVCs are a wonderful resource to help Veterans transition from military to civilian life or cope with traumatic events, grief, or loss. This is especially true for those who

might be farther away from a VA medical facility.”

Retired Marine Corps Colonel Dan Gillan, chief executive officer of the Albany Area Y-USA, echoes the importance of sharing information about VA resources with the Y-USA communities.

“The MVC and other Vet Centers have a lot of great resources for Veterans,” said Gillan. “The challenge is getting Veterans to actually visit the centers.” Gillan also added, “We hope that repeated visits of the Mobile Vet Center to our community will help Veterans gain greater acceptance of the assistance and resources being offered by VA through the MVCs.”

VA medical facilities interested in facilitating similar events are encouraged to reach out to their local Y-USA to coordinate future collaboration efforts.



For more information about Vet Center services, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp.

For more information on HAP partnerships, visit va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/partnerships.asp.

VHA Partners with the American Lung Association to Support Lung Health

The respiratory system consists of organs and tissues working together to facilitate breathing, with the lungs being major contributors. A healthy person takes about [17,000 breaths daily](#), but those with respiratory diseases such as asthma, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancer, struggle with this involuntary process. Service members and Veterans may [suffer from respiratory problems due to service-related exposure](#) and the use of tobacco products. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Service members and Veterans [are more likely to use tobacco products](#) than civilians, increasing the risk of developing lung disease. Smoking is the [number one risk factor for lung cancer](#) and is linked to 80-90% of all lung cancer-related deaths.

HAP partners with the American Lung Association to improve Veterans' health and well-being through collaborative education and services. By working together, the VHA-American Lung Association partnership helps increase Veterans' access to information about lung disease through various resources and programs.

"Our goal is to give Veterans access to the best research and care available, whether they choose to get their care at VA or in the community," said Randy Moler, VHA program analyst. "We're thankful for community partners such as the American Lung Association who provide additional resources for Veterans who have respiratory diseases."

VA Resources for Lung Health

VA has extensive research on respiratory health, including tuberculosis, lung cancer, smoking, influenza, and pneumonia. The [Tobacco and Health - Mental Health](#) page provides information about VA smoking cessation treatment options available to Veterans. VA provides Veterans with access to FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications

and behavioral counseling options. The first step towards quitting smoking is scheduling an appointment with your VA provider. They will work with you to determine the best treatment option. VA offers many programs and resources to help you make a "quit plan" and stick to it.

- The VA quitline, [Quit VET](#), is a behavioral counseling option that helps Veterans immediately connect to a counselor from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.
- [SmokefreeVET](#) is a free text message program that provides daily advice and support to help Veterans quit smoking.
- [Stay Quit Coach](#) develops a customized plan that provides information, motivational messages, and interactive tools to support Veterans and help them stay smoke-free.
- The [VA's smokeless tobacco](#) and [tobacco cessation workbook](#) helps Veterans who are trying to quit smoking. Veterans between the ages of 50-80 who are currently using cigarettes or have used cigarettes within the past 15 years, with a smoking history that is equal to a pack a day for 20 years or more, may be eligible for [lung cancer screening](#). Veterans should talk with their health care providers to find out if lung cancer screening is right for them.

American Lung Association Resources for the Lung Health

The American Lung Association researchers revolutionized treatment and achieved milestones in lung health and [continues to fund cutting-edge research](#).

"Lung health and lung disease are significant concerns for military Veterans and contractors, often due to past exposure to tobacco use, workplace, and environmental exposures. That is why improving the health of our Veterans and their families is a priority for the American Lung Association, but we can't do it alone," said Bev Stewart, national senior director of lung disease programs for the American Lung Association.

“Our collaboration with HAP is critical. Working together, we can help provide free quit-smoking support for families, access to key information about lung disease, and connections to local lung disease support communities.”

American Lung Association can deliver most of their programs close to patients or virtually, which allows rural Veterans to use them despite their location.

- [Better Breathers Network](#) is an online support program that provides access to a variety of tools, education, and connection to other patients and caregivers to help with lung disease management.
- [COPD Action Plan and Management Tool](#) helps patients and healthcare providers plan and complete an action plan together.

Spring is a great time for Veterans to set a resolution to strengthen their physical health and lung health. They can challenge themselves to stay active by walking outdoors or taking a low-impact exercise class. VA healthcare providers can provide more information on how Veterans can protect their respiratory systems.

The partnership with the American Lung Association is facilitated by HAP. For more information, visit va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/partnerships.asp.

Salesforce Military Announces 10K Module Milestone

HAP partners with [Salesforce Military](#) to support Service members transitioning into civilian workforce. Salesforce Military provides Veterans with free access to high-demand technology skills, globally recognized certifications, and additional career support benefits. The partnership aims to help Service members, Veterans, and military spouses access free training, education, and job opportunities through Trailhead, Salesforce’s free online learning platform facilitating in-demand technology skills through a gamified, personalized learning experience. In partnership with VHA, Salesforce Military

developed several [informational](#) and [technical](#) learning modules in Trailhead (including the [mental health resiliency module](#)), supporting Veterans and their families to learn about the health, financial, educational, and career benefits available. HAP is proud to announce that over 10,000 individuals have completed the mental health resiliency module on Trailhead, since its launch in July 2022.

“Supporting the mental health and resiliency of Veterans and their spouses is a top priority in VA. We are excited to see the positive engagement from the community in response to this collaboration with Salesforce Military,” said Christine Eickhoff, VHA health system specialist.

In contrast to online learning platforms that replicate a teaching environment, Trailhead gamifies the learning experience by utilizing engaging lessons, video content, and interactive quizzes to earn points and badges, accommodating various learning styles. The high level of engagement within the mental health module demonstrates that mental health resiliency resources are critical and highlights the strong support in the business community for the health and well-being of Veterans.



“We are committed to leveraging the coordinated efforts of the many public-private partnerships to increase individualized Veterans’ access to high-quality health care while exploring innovative approaches to supporting the VA mission and our Veterans’ mental health and well-being,” said Chien Chen, HAP acting chief officer and nurse executive.

VHA and Salesforce Military have also developed a [benefits module for Veterans](#), which identifies resources, such as economic stability, employment, and health literacy for Veterans.

“Challenging life experiences can take a toll on the mental health and well-being of Veterans and active-duty military members. Too often, Veterans and their community may be unaware of the numerous benefits and support services available to help,” said Katherine Clark, head of Salesforce Military. “We’re thrilled to have widened access with the mental health resiliency module on Trailhead, helping people better support Service members, Veterans, and their families.”

Since 2014, more than 55,000 Trailblazers from the military community have signed up for training to grow their careers in the technology industry. Veterans and military spouses can visit [Salesforce Military](#), for more information.

The partnership with Salesforce Military is facilitated by HAP. For more information, visit va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/index.asp



“I’m proud to be a part of the Trailblazer Community and to have completed the mental health resiliency badge. It’s a powerful step not only towards reducing the stigma of mental health issues, but it’s also equipped leaders, allies, friends, and family with tools they can access to support Veterans in crisis.”

- Hayley Tuller, U.S. Navy Veteran & Co-Founder, Navigators

VHA Collaborates with the Danish Ministry of Health

While VHA regularly collaborates with partners across the nation to improve Veterans’ health and well-being through education and services, VHA also works with international partners to gain a different perspective on the problems facing Veterans and their families.

In 2020, HAP and subject matter experts (SME) at the Danish Ministry of Health collaborated to focus on pain points associated with health care. The partnership implemented three shared learning webinars: [Primary Care Mental Health Integration](#), [PTSD TBI Prevalence - Suicide Risk and Risk Assessment](#), and [Mental Health Care - Digital Solutions](#). The first two webinars were successfully delivered in 2022, and the last webinar is planned for May 17, 2023.

Non-VA clinicians and SMEs who are interested in better serving Veterans can access the trainings on [VHA TRAIN](#), an external platform that provides medical information at no cost to community health care providers.

The joint effort represents an important effort by VHA to promote collaboration with a broad range of organizations and create a shared learning opportunity for both VHA and Danish healthcare teams to exchange ideas and facilitate important discussions between SMEs.

“The field of telemental health is rapidly evolving and staying up to date on the latest information is essential,” said Randy Moler, VHA program analyst. “We are pleased that the partnership has the potential to positively impact the care delivered to Veterans.”

HAP is proud to serve as a trusted resource and catalyst for the growth of partnerships.

For more information about HAP and other partnerships, visit va.gov/healthpartnerships

VHA Partners with GO2 for Lung Cancer to Help Veterans Stay Healthy

Over the winter season, community transmission of influenza (flu), COVID-19, and RSV surged across the nation, sparking concerns of a tridemic – an intersection of viruses all hitting at the same time. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), there have been at least 24 million illnesses, 260,000 hospitalizations, and 16,000 deaths from flu. While some may argue the triple threat has passed its peak, it's still important for our Veteran population. Veterans impacted by or at risk of lung cancer and other lung diseases (such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) need to take preventive steps to stay healthy.

“Our primary goal is to ensure the well-being of Veterans and their families....”

-Georgeanna Bady

HAP has several partnerships focused on supporting the health and well-being of Veterans and their families. The partnership between VHA and [GO2 for Lung Cancer](#) increases awareness about lung screening options and educates patients about the latest information and support to combat COVID-19.

“Our primary goal is to ensure the well-being of Veterans and their families,” said Georgeanna Bady, VHA health system specialist. “The partnership with Go2 for Lung Cancer allows us to leverage resources, programs, and services to increase awareness about Veteran-specific conditions.” VA implemented [an aggressive public health response](#) to prevent COVID-19 transmission among Veterans, their families, and healthcare providers that included targeted research programs, community Veteran outreach, a phased vaccination rollout, and screening at VA medical facilities. VA is committed to advancing the understanding, prevention, and treatment of respiratory illnesses (including common cold, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and lung cancer).

Laurie Fenton Ambrose, GO2 for Lung Cancer co-founder, president and CEO, worked to increase Veteran access to lung screening for over a decade. “Helping the men and women who have served our

country survive and thrive – especially during this time of heightened incidence of respiratory illnesses – remains a core priority of ours,” said Ambrose. “By working in strong partnership with the Veterans Health Administration, we can provide expanded resources, programs, and services to keep our Veterans better informed, screened, and supported if they are impacted by or at risk for lung cancer.”

The VHA-GO2 for Lung Cancer partnership focuses on developing and sharing technical resources, designing educational outreach for Veteran communities, and increasing access to screening for Veterans at risk for lung cancer at medical centers. GO2 for Lung Cancer has many supportive services including online resources about [lung cancer screening](#).

VA Programs for Health and Wellness

To maintain good health, it is important for Veterans to prioritize physical health and stay informed about vaccinations and health-related information. [VA has several programs for health and wellness](#) providing information, resources, and treatment options to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

- **Physical Health and Hygiene:** Practicing good health and hygiene habits can help protect Veterans and others around them. [Choose activities](#) that are best for you and your lifestyle.
 - Continue to follow [CDC guidelines](#) for public health, such as handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds (or using a hand sanitizer), and covering the mouth and nose during sneezing and coughing. Wear a mask and social distance when possible.
- **Stay Up to Date with Vaccinations:** VA is working closely with the CDC and other federal partners to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans at VA medical facilities and in-network community locations.
 - Health care providers can provide information about the value of vaccines and their side effects. Veterans can use [the vaccine finder](#) to identify a VA location or in-network community care provider.



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

HAP's efforts are strengthened by the invaluable contributions and resources of public and private partnerships that work with VHA to support our nation's Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

For more information on HAP visit va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/index.asp

- VA offers [flu shots](#) to eligible Veterans and family members at no cost, and retail pharmacies and urgent care locations provide no-cost flu vaccines until April 30, 2023.
- **Be Connected and Informed:** Stay updated and engaged with VA information as it becomes available.
 - [VA's Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) webpage](#) provides current up-to-date information and [VA's Coronavirus FAQs](#) page provides answers to frequently asked questions.
 - VA's Office of Research and Development provides numerous resources on respiratory health issues and more. Veterans and Service members with health concerns following their deployment can obtain more information at the [War Related Illness and Injury Study Center](#), a national program dedicated to health concerns.

