

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

AIMING FOR THE

MOONSHOT

V-2.0

VA NATIONAL ONCOLOGY PROGRAM 2023 PROGRAM GUIDE

2023

SECTION 1:
COLLABORATION

SECTION 2:
INNOVATION

SECTION 3:
EXPANSION

AIMING FOR THE MOONSHOT **V-2.0**

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EXPANSION

Dear Veterans,

The goals of President Biden's Cancer Moonshot are clear: to cut the cancer death rate in half within 25 years and to improve the experience of people and their families living with and surviving cancer. VA's National Oncology Program has taken concrete steps to improve outcomes for Veterans through collaboration, innovation, and expansion of services.

Collaboration

Collaboration:

We know that progress doesn't happen in a vacuum. This year, VA has collaborated across federal agencies and with our academic partners to strengthen research and gain insight into environmental toxic exposures, to create a more complete picture of Veteran cancer diagnoses, and bring care to where Veterans live.

These collaborations will help us better understand and more effectively treat cancer among Veterans, and ultimately, all Americans.

Innovation

Innovation:

At VA, we're also committed to conquering cancer among Veterans through large-scale innovation, research that is integrated with clinical care, and prioritization of health equity as an essential call to action. Part of VA's legacy in providing best-in-class care is thinking broadly about the Veteran experience and making sure that our programs evolve with their complex needs and those of their families.

Expansion

Expansion:

Veterans often live in rural locations which can make delivery of care challenging. VA meets this head-on through VA's National TeleOncology (NTO). NTO allows cancer care providers to reach Veterans through telehealth—regardless of where they are located, operating as a virtual cancer center with access to subspecialized cancer care and support.

We're in the second year of working towards the goals of Cancer Moonshot. VA is invigorated and focused as we continue to collaborate, innovate, and expand to provide the best cancer care possible for Veterans.

Sincerely,

Shereef Elnahal MD, MBA,
Under Secretary for Health,
Department of Veteran Affairs

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COLLABORATIVE CARE

A TESTAMENT TO EXCELLENCE



TECHNICIAN REVIEWS TEST RESULTS IN THE CLINICAL CENTER'S DEPARTMENT OF LABORATORY MEDICINE

In the dynamic world of cancer care, collaboration is the cornerstone of progress, as reducing cancer death by 50 percent in 25 years doesn't happen in a vacuum. VA's commitment to achieving that Cancer Moonshot goal and providing top-tier cancer care for Veterans has never been more evident than in our strategic partnerships. In 2023, we joined with federal agency partners and industry leaders to amplify VA's progress toward achieving Cancer Moonshot goals.

From a historic data sharing agreement with the National Cancer Institute that operates at the national level to tumor sample sharing with the Department of Defense to better understand toxic environmental exposures, collaboration has taken many forms, with many different allies. VA worked to break down barriers, share insights and data, and open new doors to a brighter, healthier future for those who've served our nation and may be facing a cancer diagnosis.

113
VA MEDICAL CENTERS

Participated in Lung Cancer Screening Awareness week activities.

2
SIGNED AGREEMENTS

With the National Cancer Institute and the Department of Defense to conduct or improve cancer research.

1
CLINICAL PATHWAY

Developed for prostate cancer in collaboration with VA's National Radiation Oncology Program, VHA's Department of Surgery, and others.



> 6,100 VIEWS
on Lung cancer screening awareness PSA in collaboration with NASA



21 VA-Led Working Groups
Within the cancer task forces

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN DOUGLAS CROSS



Air Force Veteran Douglas Cross, a Texan machinist, became increasingly worried about his smoking history's potential impact on his health. Aware of his elevated lung cancer risk due to smoking, Cross requested a low-dose CT scan through his primary care provider. The scan revealed Stage II lung cancer, prompting his decision to quit smoking with medical aid.

Following surgery in 2023, Cross's recovery proved successful, with minimal lymph node involvement. Grateful for his restored health, Cross emphasizes the message of resilience in battling cancer.

"I'm just grateful overall, cancer is not going to be what knocks me out...I'm going to be bigger than cancer, and that's the message that I want to spread now to other people who've been affected by it, and going through it right now," said Cross.

Support for Smokers: Resources and Assistance

Veterans, like Cross, can access comprehensive tobacco cessation support through VA. Counseling, medication options, helplines, and text-based programs aid tobacco cessation efforts. Quit VET and SmokefreeVET provide counseling and tools to quit smoking, underscoring VA's commitment to promoting healthier lifestyles.

During Lung Cancer Awareness Month in 2023, VA brought a critical focus on lung cancer screening. Collaborating with renowned organizations like the American Cancer Society, National Lung Cancer Round Table, the GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer, the American College of Radiology, and NASA, VA encouraged Veterans to talk to their providers about screening, and over 110 VHA facilities participated in National Lung Cancer Screening Day activities throughout November.

AN HISTORIC DATA-SHARING PARTNERSHIP

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE



THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS



Better understanding Veterans' Cancer
VA knows that not all Veterans with cancer may be getting their health care from VA, but their diagnosis and treatment information is still vitally important. Until recently, the exchange of data between external providers and VA was sporadic and incomplete, resulting in a lack of holistic information on cancer in the Veteran population.

Collaboration for Informed Treatment

In alignment with broad and ongoing efforts to fulfill the PACT Act and bring about the goals of Cancer Moonshot, VA is collaborating with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) under the Data and Innovation task force. In September 2023, VA announced an historic partnership with NCI to share cancer registry information and have developed a two-way data exchange process to collect more information on cancers in Veteran patients.

This process will allow NCI's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End

Results Program and the VA Cancer Registry to work together to gain crucial insights on Veteran cancer diagnoses and treatments, while maintaining and protecting Veteran privacy. This will help VA study the impact of cancer on the Veteran community — including cancer caused by toxic exposures such as burn pits or Agent Orange — to determine trends and research potential treatments.

Collaboration with NCI will help VA better understand—and ultimately more effectively treat—cancer among Veterans and all Americans. This data will also create new opportunities for the research community to support all patients facing a cancer diagnosis, ultimately reducing cancer's burden on the nation, and fulfilling the goals of the Cancer Moonshot.

LUNG CANCER SCREENING

VA's Lung Cancer Screening Expansion is a pivotal step forward in ensuring the well-being of our nation's Veterans. The mission of the National Center for Lung Cancer Screening is to reduce morbidity by leveraging a learning health care system to increase systematic and equitable access to evidence-based lung cancer screening through a collaborative, interdisciplinary network.

To help achieve these goals, VA has implemented the Lung Cancer Screening Platform that allows us to identify and manage LCS patients. VA also has partnered with the American Cancer Society National Lung Cancer Roundtable, American College of Radiology, GO2 for Lung Cancer, and Radiology Healthy Equity Coalition to increase awareness about the importance of lung cancer screening and improve outcomes for Veterans with lung cancer. The NCLCS continues to provide education and support to clinical teams

regarding LCS standards of care, VHA policy, best practices, as well as data and policy recommendations to central VA leadership. In 2023, VA worked to bring high-quality screening to 111 VA facilities across the country, so Veterans will be able to receive integrated and equitable access to high-quality lung cancer screening no matter where they live.

82%

Rate of follow-up adherence for sites using the Lung Cancer Screening Platform (LCSP)

111

VA facilities are using the LCSP Compared to 60 sites Nov 1, 2021

3 KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The leukemia & lymphoma society, the National Cancer Institute and VA's Precision Oncology Program for Cancer of the Prostate (POPCAP).

3 CANCER TYPES

Clinical Trials Navigation (CTN) evaluates and identifies trials insided and outside of VA for trials focused on lungcancer, leukemia and colorectal cancers.

2 DECENTRALIZED CLINICAL TRIALS ARE ENROLLING

Real-mind (for patients with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma) and propop (for patients undergoing cancer molecular testing for minimal residual disease).



CLINICAL TRIALS: BRINGING THE RESEARCH TO THE VETERAN

Clinical Trials provide high-quality medical care and advanced knowledge. Despite their importance, only a small percentage of Veterans with cancer participate in clinical trials. Rural Veterans and Veterans of ethnic and racial minorities are less likely to take part in clinical trials. Barriers to participating include strict eligibility criteria, difficulty finding and understanding trial information, and insufficient time or transportation. In 2023, VA met this challenge head on by establishing the Clinical Cancer Research Service (CCRS).

CCRS uses a two-pronged approach to bring the option of cancer clinical trials to Veterans. First, the Cancer Clinical Trials Navigation (CTN) program assists VA providers in identifying clinical trials and educates Veterans during enrollment. Second, the Decentralized Clinical Trials (DCT) program offers clinical trials where Veterans do not need to travel to a VA facility that is offering the trial. This model allows for therapies to be delivered at a VA facility closest to the Veteran, which helps in retaining participants who might otherwise struggle with participation.

CCRS is committed to ensuring that VA oncologists and Veterans have access to the best possible cancer care through these initiatives. By increasing cancer clinical trial enrollment, CCRS is helping to advance medical knowledge and improve cancer care for all Veterans.

INNOVATION

REVOLUTIONIZING CANCER CARE FOR VETERANS

VA is committed to expanding, innovating, and collaborating to provide high quality cancer care to Veterans. We are proud to join the mission to end cancer as we know it, and this year, VA's focus on innovation has sharpened. In 2023, VA launched new programs that help Veterans who may be at the highest risk of developing cancer, make lifesaving anti-cancer therapies available to Veterans where they live and made new molecular testing types available nationwide to make sure Veterans have the right care delivered at the right time.

Through VA's commitment to innovation, we bring together health care professionals from across the nation and facilitate discussions on cancer treatment plans in a virtual setting. This enables Veterans with complex diagnoses to access subspecialized providers and receive comprehensive care. These VA programs and services do not operate in a vacuum – they're built on the infrastructure of the largest integrated health care network in the United States.

52,000
MOLECULAR
TESTS

Ordered since 2016.

50
FACILITIES

Have participated in Virtual Tumor Boards to discuss complex cancer cases.

45,000
VETERANS

Veterans had their care guided by precision oncology since 2016.

VA NURSE TAKES BLOOD SAMPLE TO RUN LAB WORK.



> 1,000

Veterans cared for
BY CLINICAL CANCER GENETICS SERVICE SINCE LAUNCH IN FEBRUARY 2023.

U.S. ARMY VETERAN CASSIE GARRETT



Discovering Cancer Allies

Cassie Garrett's breast cancer journey after military service embodies strength and resilience. Joining the military at 17, she served in the U.S. Air Force and Army, undertaking diverse roles from mechanic to Arabic linguist. In 2013, a breast cancer diagnosis led her to VA for care.

Garrett's self-exam lead to rapid diagnosis and collaboration with the Cape Fear VA and Womack Army Medical Center, despite her rural location. Rapid diagnosis and collaboration with Cape Fear VA and Womack Army Medical Center underscored VA's commitment, despite her rural location.

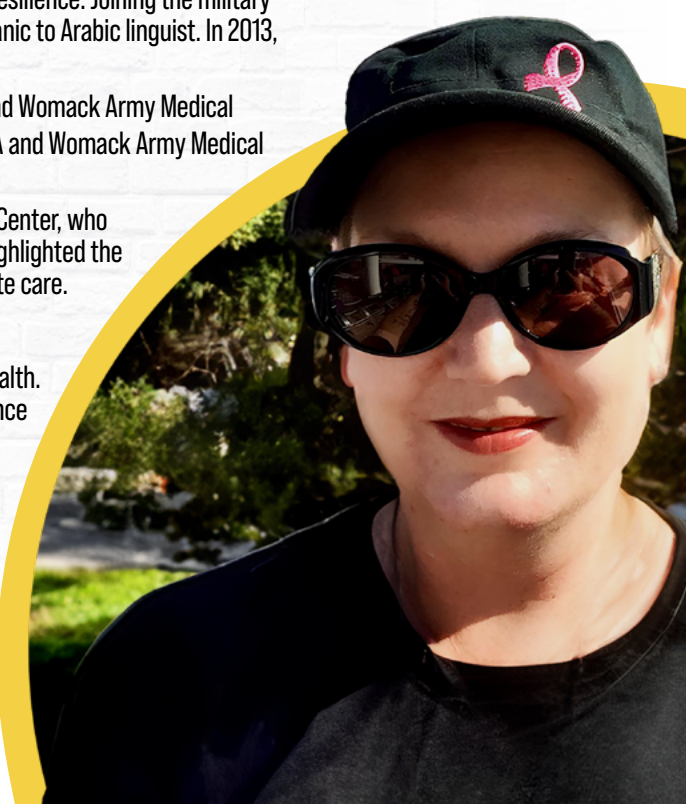
She relocated in 2020, seamlessly moving her care to the nearby Durham VA Medical Center, who facilitated her ongoing care, emphasizing VA's flexibility and expertise. Her journey highlighted the pivotal role of VA providers in managing medication issues and offering compassionate care.

Cutting-Edge Cancer Care

Garrett champions self-advocacy and regular exams, stressing their crucial role in health. VA's oncology care, driven by the Breast and Gynecologic Oncology System of Excellence (BGSoE), earned her trust. VA is building BGSoE to provide cutting-edge cancer care for Veterans. Initially launched in 2020, this System of Excellence is building the infrastructure necessary to screen for and aggressively treat the breast and gynecologic cancers impacting Veterans.

Garrett's clear CT scan stands as a testament to the excellent care received. Garrett also shared that her oncology provider is an "expert in breast cancer. She is communicative and caring."

VA's breast cancer resources encompass screenings, diagnosis, treatment, oncology, access to trials, peer support and more. Veterans are encouraged to discuss screening options with their providers and explore VA's expansive cancer care resources.



NATIONAL PRECISION ONCOLOGY PROGRAM



PERSONALIZED TREATMENT

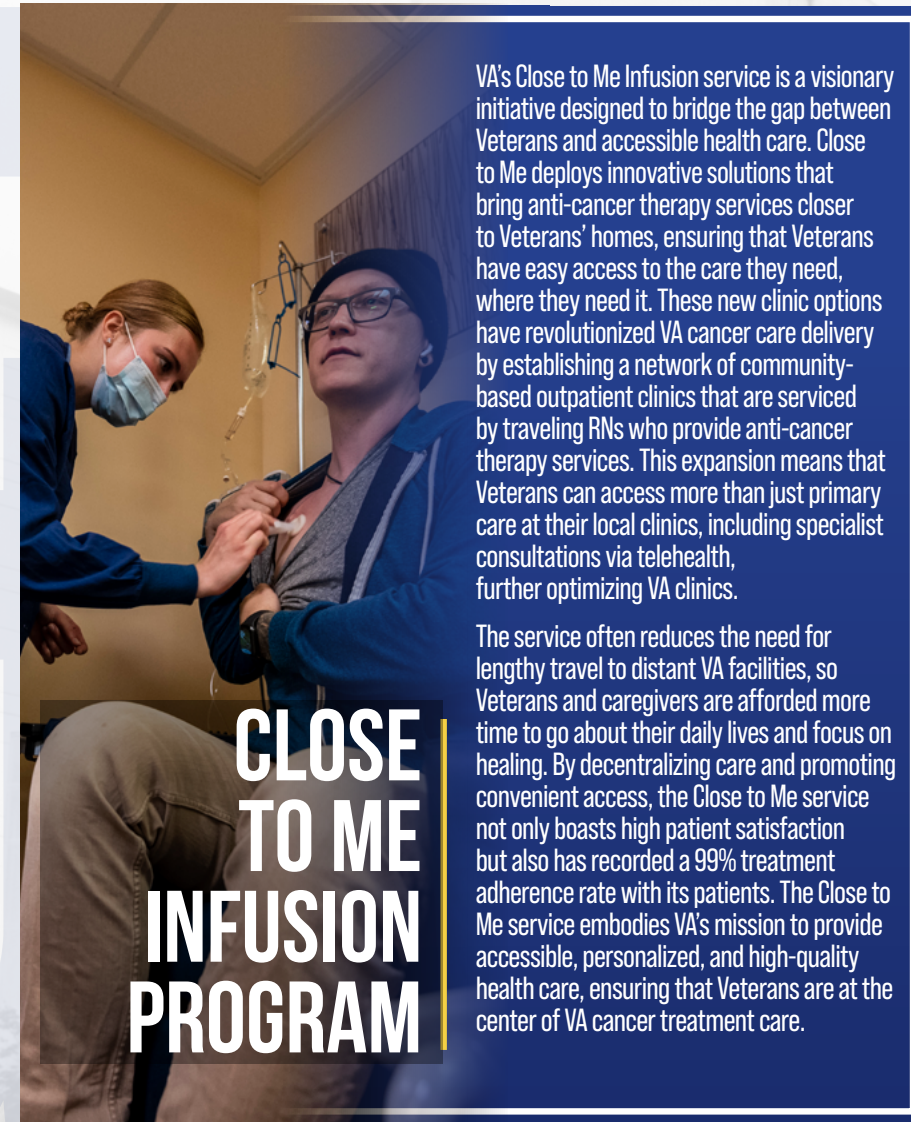


VA cares for approximately 450,000 Veteran patients every year on the cancer care continuum, from screening to survivorship. Nearly 43,000 new cancer diagnoses occur each year in VA, with approximately 25% classified as rare cancers. VA is leading the fight against cancer through its National Precision Oncology Program (NPOP), a groundbreaking initiative that leverages cutting-edge technology and genomic insights to provide personalized, precise care for cancer patients.

At the core of NPOP is the utilization of advanced genomic sequencing techniques to analyze the genetic makeup of tumors, allowing for a deeper understanding of the molecular underpinnings of cancer. By identifying specific genetic mutations and alterations in patients, oncologists can tailor treatments to target the unique characteristics of each tumor.

NPOP promotes interdisciplinary research and collaboration, bringing together oncologists, geneticists, bioinformaticians, pathologists and other experts to develop innovative approaches and testing options for cancer care. The program is also committed to data sharing and integration, which enables the accumulation of a vast repository of genomic information to inform treatment decisions and advance scientific knowledge in the field of oncology. Together, these efforts continue to enhance the landscape of cancer research and patient care at VA.

Scan to learn more or visit: [Cancer.va.gov](https://cancer.va.gov)



CLOSE TO ME INFUSION PROGRAM

VA's Close to Me Infusion service is a visionary initiative designed to bridge the gap between Veterans and accessible health care. Close to Me deploys innovative solutions that bring anti-cancer therapy services closer to Veterans' homes, ensuring that Veterans have easy access to the care they need, where they need it. These new clinic options have revolutionized VA cancer care delivery by establishing a network of community-based outpatient clinics that are serviced by traveling RNs who provide anti-cancer therapy services. This expansion means that Veterans can access more than just primary care at their local clinics, including specialist consultations via telehealth, further optimizing VA clinics.

The service often reduces the need for lengthy travel to distant VA facilities, so Veterans and caregivers are afforded more time to go about their daily lives and focus on healing. By decentralizing care and promoting convenient access, the Close to Me service not only boasts high patient satisfaction but also has recorded a 99% treatment adherence rate with its patients. The Close to Me service embodies VA's mission to provide accessible, personalized, and high-quality health care, ensuring that Veterans are at the center of VA cancer treatment care.

1,312

TREATMENT APPOINTMENTS

99%

TREATMENT ADHERENCE

CLINICAL CANCER GENETICS SERVICE

VA's Clinical Cancer Genetics Service (CCGS) is a pioneering program that's dedicated to delivering accessible, world-class cancer genetic counseling for Veterans facing or at risk of cancer. This initiative reflects VA's commitment to staying at the forefront of advancing health care, ensuring Veterans receive cutting-edge support and expertise, regardless of where they reside.

The impact of CCGS is far-reaching. It offers Veterans and their providers a comprehensive understanding of their genetic predispositions to cancer, empowering them to make informed treatment decisions. Through genetic counseling and testing, CCGS identifies potential inherited cancer risks and offers preventive and surveillance options tailored for each individual, ultimately leading to early detection and intervention. Moreover, CCGS assists patients

in navigating the emotional and logistical implications of their genetic information.

The program not only benefits the Veterans it serves but also contributes to a broader understanding of cancer genetics. The knowledge gained through CCGS may potentially advance care not just within VA but across the entire medical community.

CCGS embodies its dedication to providing exceptional care and support to Veterans predisposed to cancer. By delivering personalized, high-quality care, VA empowers Veterans to take charge of their health, equipping them with the tools needed to combat cancer.

VIRTUAL TUMOR BOARDS

Having access to best-in-class cancer care shouldn't depend on where a Veteran lives. VA National TeleOncology launched Virtual Tumor Boards (VTBs) to bring together health care professionals nationwide and facilitate discussions on cancer management. VTB sessions offer a recurring, easily accessible platform for patient care teams to review cases and assist referring teams in interpreting diagnoses and developing comprehensive treatment recommendations from a multidisciplinary team of experts across VA. These specialty-specific VTBs allow facilities that may have limited resources or volume of cases for a particular disease to connect with a tumor board that allows them to utilize the expertise of VA specialists including pathologists, radiation oncologists, surgeons, and other specialists across the nation. VTBs help Veterans with complex cancer diagnoses by ensuring access to subspecialty oncologists and care coordination, reducing logistical burden. VTBs also reassure providers that they are creating an appropriate and well-considered treatment plan for each Veteran.



EXPANSION

ENHANCING CANCER CARE ACCESS FOR VETERANS

According to the American Cancer Society, 66 percent of rural communities do not have an oncologist. To address this gap in access, VA's National TeleOncology has expanded to 75 facilities since its launch in 2020. This service saves time, logistical effort, and provides access to subspecialty teams that may not be available in a Veteran's immediate community.

With an eye to expanding access to cancer screenings, VA launched the Mailed FIT program in 2023. This program has distributed tens of thousands of fecal immunochemical testing kits to Veterans, which look for occult blood in stool and serve as an at-home way to screen for colorectal cancer. Knowing that cancer care is a continuum, VA also expanded access to radiation oncology services through dedicated efforts to equip five locations with new technology and initiate the build of a radiation oncology suite in New Orleans, Louisiana.

29

SPECIALIZED ONCOLOGISTS

In CY2023, NTO grew to 29 specialized oncologists.

≈ 100,000

MAILED FIT KITS

Distributed across the US.

79

NTO FACILITIES

NTO expanded from 36 facilities to 79 facilities in CY2023.



≈ 100,000

Total Colonoscopies

have been performed at facilities outfitted with AI devices.

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN PATTI DUHON



Navigating Cancer with VA Support

Joining the U.S. military in 1985, Patti Duhon reflects proudly on her journey, as one of the few women in the Air Force during that time, saying, "I look back with fond memories and I'm extremely proud of myself."

"Had I not been in the military, I wouldn't have the health care I have now," Duhon continued.

In 2016, a seemingly innocuous rash on her breast led to a rapid diagnosis of triple-negative breast cancer. The whirlwind of surgery and aggressive chemotherapy followed swiftly. Duhon's life took a challenging turn, culminating in utilizing VA cancer care after relocating to Durham, NC, in 2018.

Since 2018, Duhon's care at Durham VA has surpassed expectations. Her primary care and oncology team offered comprehensive care, alleviating fears about her health.

Embracing Advanced Genetic Care

VA's Clinical Cancer Genetics Service (CCGS) identified a BARD1 gene mutation, prompting Duhon's family members, including her children, to consider genetic counseling and testing.

CCGS's proactive identification of genetic risks and cascade testing offers exponential benefits to families, empowering them with proactive management strategies.

Patti Duhon's journey and VA's commitment to personalized care stand as a beacon for all Veterans navigating cancer.





COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

G & SURVEILLANCE

Broadened Access to Screening

Colorectal cancer is one of the most diagnosed cancers among Veterans. In 2023, VA launched the Mailed FIT Program which delivers fecal immunochemical testing (FIT) kits to the homes of Veterans eligible for colorectal cancer screening. Since the launch of Mailed FIT, VA has begun implementing the program in every VISN and aims to continue expanding to every medical facility, which will increase screening capacity and assist in identifying cancers earlier, when colorectal cancer is most treatable.

The program has distributed over 100,000 kits to Veterans. With Mailed FIT, Veterans across the nation have better access to high quality colorectal cancer screening without leaving their home.

Cutting Edge Care

As part of its ongoing effort to assure Veterans' access to the highest quality colonoscopy for cancer prevention, the VA has deployed nearly 300 artificial intelligence (AI) computer-aided detection devices in over 100 VA facilities to increase the detection and removal of precancerous polyps. Since their deployment in late 2022, nearly 100,000 colonoscopies have already been performed at facilities outfitted with these AI devices. VA's National Colorectal Cancer Screening Program is evaluating these AI devices to help guide their future use both inside and outside VA.

STATE OF THE ART, AND EXPANDING: RADIATION ONCOLOGY CARE

Roughly 60% of Veterans with a malignant cancer diagnosis will receive radiation treatment at one point in their care. The National Radiation Oncology Program at VA (NROP) is guided by best-in-class leaders in radiation oncology, who are committed to providing the safest and highest quality care to Veterans.

Radiation oncology care at VA quickly adopts evidence-based best practices that might result in shorter courses of therapy for Veterans. Moreover, because care is not driven by financial outcomes, Veterans receive unbiased opinions focused solely on patient outcomes. NROP

prioritizes direct, hands-on care for all ages and all types of cancer at every stage.

VA is actively working to build up its radiation oncology services, with 41 APEX accredited radiation oncology suites now onboard, and an expansion underway in New Orleans. Five sites were also selected in 2023 for upgrades to new technology in the coming years.

NATIONAL TELEONCOLOGY

An Innovative Care Model

According to an American Society of Clinical Oncology workforce report, 66 percent of rural counties have no oncologist. Veterans in these counties may face serious issues accessing care. VA has responded by prioritizing access for Veterans to top-rated physicians and cancer care specialists nationwide through National TeleOncology (NTO).

Working with VA medical facility partners, NTO delivers diagnostics and treatment for medical oncology — including rehabilitation and palliative care — regardless of where Veterans live. Using a “hub-and-spoke” model, with the main hub based in the Durham VA Health Care System, VA cancer specialists around the country work through NTO from their local VA Medical Center, providing care virtually to selected spoke sites around the nation.

Expanding Access for Veterans

NTO is making a tangible difference in the lives of Veterans. Of the thousands who received cancer care through NTO in 2023, nearly 50% lived in rural areas, where access to oncologists may be limited. NTO has expanded to 79 locations, with another 30 planned for the next calendar year, and now includes genetic counseling for Veterans. Additionally, in 2023, NTO grew to 29 specialized oncologists who are also associated with National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers.

CLINICAL PATHWAYS

Setting the Course for Cancer Care

VA's National Oncology Program develops Clinical Pathways guided by teams of subject matter experts from various specialties, including Primary Care, Radiation Oncology, Medical Oncology, Pharmacy and more, to offer reassurance that recommended treatments align with the most current, evidence-based practices.

With over 25% of diagnosed cancers at VA being rare, Clinical Pathways cover various cancer types, ensuring specialized support for Veterans regardless of the cancer's rarity.

These Clinical Pathways act as decision support tools, using current evidence to map out treatment processes, ensuring standardized, high-quality care for Veterans across the nation. Clinical Pathways incorporate the latest data to recommend the most effective, least harmful, and cost-efficient treatments based on national guidelines and expertise.

For Veterans, Clinical Pathways ensure consistent access to top-tier care regardless of their location. The pathways are continuously updated, guaranteeing that the most recent data shapes treatment recommendations. While these pathways prioritize effective and low-harm treatments based on national guidelines and expert experience, they still allow room for individualized options when clinically suitable.

VA now supports more than 20 cancer types through Clinical Pathways, demonstrating our commitment and dedication to offering Veterans the best available care options and resources.

20+

Cancer types supported through clinical pathways

≈50%

Of all Veterans served by NTO were rural, or very rural



PATIENT ROOMS
2B140 - 2B173

Dear Veterans,

Michael Kelley M.D.

VHA National Executive Director,
National Oncology Program

VA knows that progress takes place in collaboration which is why the call-to-action set forth by President Biden's Cancer Moonshot to reduce cancer deaths has only sharpened our focus.



VA's comprehensive oncology care spans the continuum from prevention and screening, to diagnosis, treatment, clinical trials and research, to survivorship and surveillance. VA knows that progress takes place in collaboration and the call-to-action set forth by President Biden's Cancer Moonshot to reduce cancer deaths has only sharpened our focus.

As demand for our services continues to grow, Veterans trust us to care for them more than ever. We ensure that Veterans get the best clinical care possible through specific priorities like employing expert providers from the nation's leading NCI-designated Cancer Centers and providing cancer care within an integrated and equitable healthcare system to achieve the best possible outcomes in oncology care. It doesn't matter if a Veteran is visiting a VA medical center in-person or receiving care remotely, our system of equal access reduces barriers in cancer screening, detection, treatment, and prevention. VA remains firmly focused on the needs of our Veterans facing cancer diagnoses.

Further, VA's dedication to continuous improvement means that Veterans receiving their care at VA have access to clinical trials and novel treatments that may offer hope for Veterans beyond standard treatment. We are scaling best practices and driving innovation by developing and expanding oncology Clinical Pathways, implementing programs that bring infusion services close to where a Veteran lives, and offering genetic counseling to everyone who might benefit from germline genetic testing, or whose close family members might be impacted.

As we look forward to reduced mortality and improved cancer outcomes through our Cancer Moonshot efforts, we remain focused on the Veteran: their unique needs, their health care goals, and their clinical outcomes.



THANK YOU

Rachel B. Ramoni, D.M.D., Sc.D.,

CD.M.D., Sc.D., Chief Research and Development Officer



Our Lung Precision Oncology Program has been wildly successful – at some facilities over 90% of lung cancer cases are now found at the early stage.

As a united force, VA's researchers and clinicians make the goals of the Cancer Moonshot a reality. This year saw incredible progress with our cancer research efforts. Our Lung Precision Oncology Program has been wildly successful – at some facilities over 90% of lung cancer cases are now found at the early stage, when it is most treatable. Additionally, we've shown that mobile lung cancer screening units can provide detection services in rural areas, making care more convenient for our Veterans.

We initiated over 2,000 cancer studies, including the largest study ever conducted for liver cancer screening, and we are developing artificial intelligence software to predict whether early prostate cancer will turn aggressive. These studies span a range of important topics, from improving access and equity in our cancer clinical trials to exploring new diagnostic tools such as molecular testing.

We also partnered with the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences, as well as our many academic research partners, to better understand the impact of toxic exposures and the needs of Veterans who may have been exposed.

Vitally, we are continuing to leverage a health system that has research as one of its core missions, alongside education, clinical care, and emergency response. In such a setting we should – and are – functioning as a learning health system in which clinical questions inform the research that, in turn, improves clinical care. This is our never-ending commitment to providing Veterans the best evidence-based cancer care in the world.

For more information about VA's cancer care and Cancer Moonshot efforts, please visit cancer.va.gov.

For media related questions, please contact:
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vapublicaffairs@va.gov

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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