



2023

PUBLIC ANNUAL REPORT

National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
National Center for Healthcare
Advancement and Partnerships



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2023

Letter from Chief Officer and Nurse Executive

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Office of Discovery Education Affiliate Network (DEAN), National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (HAP) team is excited to share several innovative accomplishments and initiatives for fiscal year (FY) 2023, covering October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. Dedicated to helping Veterans live healthy, vibrant lives, HAP remains steadfast in its mission to cultivate public private partnerships (P3) and supports emerging healthcare advancement initiatives (HAIs) that enable the implementation of field-based impactful partnership projects aligned with HAP's pillars and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and VHA priorities and enablers. Throughout the year, HAP diligently pursued its commitment to uplift partnerships and drive innovations, ensuring a positive and meaningful impact on the lives of those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers and survivors.

In the previous FY, HAP undertook substantial efforts to refine its [strategic goals and objectives](#). These goals are built upon foundational principles, including those of a High Reliability Organization (HRO); Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access/Accessibility (IDEA); and VA core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (I CARE). HAP's efforts align with [VA's 2022–2028 Strategic Plan](#), the [2022–2025 VHA Long Range Plan Framework and VA healthcare priorities and strategic enablers](#). HAP embraces the principles of IDEA, HRO and I CARE when creating and implementing innovative healthcare solutions and strategic partnerships. The Annual Report highlights how these guiding principles translate into tangible actions and meaningful outcomes that reflect VA's healthcare priorities throughout the year.

The cultivation of P3s has been instrumental in achieving VA's mission to support and enhance Veteran health and well-being. Partnerships augment the services VHA provides and extend the reach to Veterans beyond those who receive VA care and benefits. This enables all Veterans to access a broader range of services provided by VA and the community. HAP-supported HAIs are nontraditional treatments that amplify the positive effects of VHA's care, offering hope and additional support to Veterans. Together, VA, VHA, HAP and community partners exhibit an unwavering commitment to ensure Veterans receive the "soonest and best care possible."

HAP commends the essential role VHA employees play in establishing and maintaining successful Veteran-centric partnerships. To recognize the efforts of employees and partners in meeting the diverse needs of Veterans and their communities, HAP hosts the annual VHA [National Community Partnership Challenge \(CPC\)](#), championed by the Office of the Under Secretary for Health. The 2023 CPC's theme was "Accelerating VHA's Journey to High Reliability Through Partnerships," aligning with VHA's journey to become an HRO. CPC received 42 submissions featuring partnerships that deliver innovative solutions to improve the quality of life for Veterans and their families. Over the nine years of CPC, HAP has received more than 550 partnerships entries showing the commitment to advance Veterans health care.

This report spotlights exciting new partnerships— [American Association of Kidney Patients \(AAKP\)](#), [Global Liver Institute](#), [Mediflix](#), [The Parkinson's Foundation](#), [Pet Partners](#), [The Rockefeller Foundation](#), and



[United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\).](#)

Partnerships improve Veteran outcomes by supporting innovative advancements such as Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) that treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

We also highlight examples of how [HAP collaborates with VHA partners to address some dynamic challenges faced by Veterans during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic](#). After three years marked by global shutdowns, widespread remote work, telework and vaccine mandates, the White House officially ended the nation's pandemic status in May 2023. HAP commends each partner's dedication and resilience in successfully navigating the uncertainties of the pandemic to ensure that Veterans' health and well-being remained a top priority.

My prior experience serving as an advocate for enhancing nursing practice and Veteran care through innovative training initiatives, along with my current role as the HAP Chief Officer and Nurse Executive, culminate into a multi-pronged approach to supporting partnerships, field-based HALs and resources that empower Veterans to be better informed about their health. The HAP team expertise distinctively positions HAP to ensure P3s and HALs address gaps in health care while meeting the unique clinical and holistic needs of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Despite ongoing pandemic challenges, HAP is committed to meeting the unique needs of our nation's Veterans through establishing strategic public-private partnerships and emerging innovative therapies. We must unite the strengths and efforts of VHA and our partners at the national, state and community levels to deliver cutting-edge health solutions. Together we bridge gaps, expand access to care and safeguard the whole health and well-being of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional staff and valued partners who continuously serve our nation's Veterans.



In good health,

Chien Chen, MSN, RN, PMH-BC, NPD-BC, NEA-BC, FAAN

HAP Chief Officer and Nurse Executive

Notable Current Partnerships

Over the course of the year, HAP highlighted notable partnerships such as [The American Kidney Fund \(AKF\)](#), [The Arthritis Foundation \(AF\)](#), [Pet Partners](#), and [Salesforce Military](#) to underscore its commitment in providing Veterans with comprehensive care beyond traditional treatments. With suicide prevention as a top priority, HAP aggregated available resources to help Veterans at risk of suicide or coping with suicidal ideation. HAP is committed to raising awareness about invaluable VHA and community partner suicide prevention services and resources, thus strengthening support to all Veterans.

HAP's Innovative Response to Protecting Veterans' Health in the Post-Pandemic Era

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to patient care, prompting VA adaptations to overcome physical distancing restrictions [while enhancing services for Veterans](#). Under VHA's guidance, HAP facilitated information sharing and communications processes among VHA nonmonetary partners. HAP's efforts strengthened VHA's connection to its nationwide partners and ensure continuity of care to Veterans.

VA's approach to improving services for Veterans is enhanced by VHA's unique partnerships, including community partners and field-based HAls, which HAP supports, facilitates and helps promote. These partnerships and collaborations bridge the gap between Veterans and available services, expand VHA's reach and Veterans' outcomes and play a vital role in meeting the diverse and specialized needs of Veterans to further their well-being.

As VA and healthcare continue to evolve, VA strengthened technological infrastructure to enable efficient delivery of care through remote channels. HAP helps facilitate VHA partners who can contribute robust digital health and resources.

The pandemic catapulted many industries, including healthcare, into the digital space. For VHA, COVID-19 brought telehealth services to the forefront of health care delivery. VA's immediate and unprecedented adaptation to the pandemic led to a dramatic national switch to increased virtual services. VHA's partners, [Veteran Community Partnership \(VCP\)](#) initiative members and informal partners also adapted from predominantly in-person interactions to virtual or hybrid ones.

Together, VHA partners and [VCP](#) members:

- ✓ Conducted virtual events, such as drive-through flu shots and educational resource fairs, which provided "no contact" deliveries to Veterans.
- ✓ Provided critical help to Service members transitioning to VA care during the pandemic. Because of decreased access to in-person services and support at the local level, Service members could not transition as usual. VHA partners helped transitioning Service members gain virtual access to a peer in the area they were moving to and the opportunity to meet in person upon arrival.
- ✓ Provided a digital learning platform to address challenges in career transition and career advancement for Service members. The platform also includes an online VA benefits module that helped transitioning Service members learn more about their VA benefits while they pursued online training for their new careers.



Veterans can now consult easily with a wide range of medical professionals remotely. The exponential increase in available digital health services greatly improved Veterans' access to reliable care, particularly for Veterans living in remote or historically underserved areas. Telehealth also reduces other barriers related to receiving in-person care or emotional apprehension by offering health care visits from the patient's chosen location.

As the global pandemic comes to an end, VHA partners continue to prioritize telehealth options for Veterans' safety and choices for healthcare, including for those who have limited access to technology.

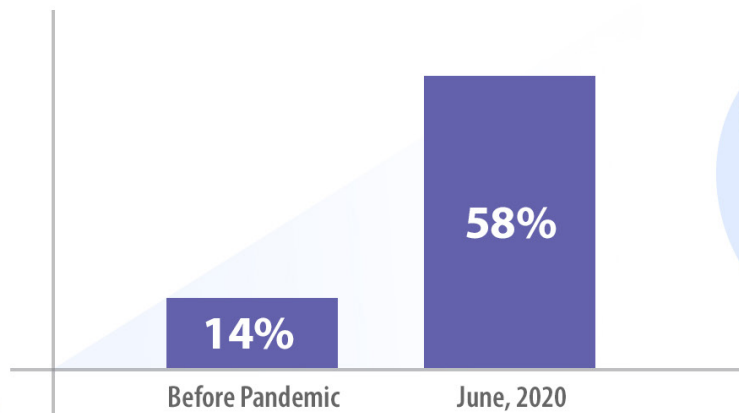
Digital Partner Resources for Veterans

In collaboration with VA, [AF](#) created a [new webpage with digital resources](#) to help Veterans take control of arthritis symptoms and challenges.

[Salesforce Military VA Benefits for Veterans](#) module provides a series of online learning units focused on different aspects of accessing and utilizing VA benefits.

National Institutes of Health

Digital Outpatient Care Conducted by VA



Introduction

As the largest and most complex health care system in the United States, VHA's mission is to **honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.** VA's vision is to lead the future in delivering unparalleled health and wellness to our nation's Veterans, and to the nation. With over 2,500 health care facilities, VA medical centers and VHA outpatient clinics, VHA exemplifies the nation's commitment to thank and care for millions of Veterans.

HAP's work is based on [VA's 2022–2028 Strategic Plan](#) and the [2022–2025 VHA Long Range Plan Framework and VA healthcare priorities and strategic enablers](#). This report outlines how HAP-managed partnerships HAs, VCPs and informal partners support VA's and VHA's priorities and enablers.

VHA Priorities

- Hire faster and more competitively.
- Prevent Veteran suicide.
- Accelerate VA's journey to an HRO.
- Support Veteran's whole health, their caregivers and survivors.
- Serve Veterans with military environmental exposures.
- Connect Veterans to the soonest and best care and utilizing VA benefits.

VHA Enablers

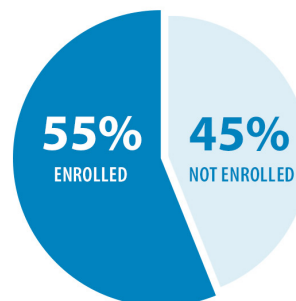
- Improve our technology systems and workflow.
- Retain, invest in and support our people.
- Scale best practices and drive innovation.
- Modernize our facilities into the future.
- Drive equity for women, minority and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) Veterans.
- Collaborate with Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), Tribes, states, advocates and Agencies.



Despite the concentrated and impressive effort that VHA dedicates to providing comprehensive services to all Veterans, there are several limitations. By collaborating with community partners, HAP expands access to resources that improve the health and well-being of Veterans and their families. HAP, VHA partnerships and HAls address:

- **VHA's budget is fixed, potentially limiting its ability to provide resources.** The demand for health care services among Veterans often exceeds the available resources. HAP facilitates VHA's nonmonetary partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to enhance VHA's resources.
- **Roughly 45% of all U.S Veterans are not registered with VA, under which VHA operates.** P3s can serve Veterans not enrolled in VA health care potentially reaching all Veterans.
- **Veterans reside in rural or remote areas where access to VHA facilities is limited.** HAP facilitates VHA joint efforts with a diverse group of organizations across the country, expanding increased Veterans' access to resources and services.
- **People with military experience develop unique physical and mental health conditions at different rates than civilian populations.** VHA's partnerships increase awareness and support to Veteran specific conditions, treatments and needs encompassing a whole health approach.
- **Stigma surrounding mental health issues and cultural barriers can pose challenges for Veterans.** HAP-facilitated VHA partnerships, [VCPs](#) and informal partnerships help organizations become Veteran-ready, culturally sensitive and inclusive for all Veterans.

Ratio of Veterans enrolled vs. not enrolled at VA



HAP plays a pivotal role by facilitating vital partnerships and HAls across the nation. These collaborations enable VHA to meet its priorities and enablers by extending its reach, expanding access diverse resources and increasing network of support for Veterans. By working together with other agencies and nongovernmental organizations, HAP contributes to ensuring Veterans receive the best possible care and services, tailored to their unique health requirements. Through managing VHA's partnerships, [VCPs](#), informal partnerships and HAls, HAP aligns with VHA's priority initiative to become an HRO that:

- Prioritizes patient safety.
- Creates a culture of continuous improvement.
- Uses proactive strategies to prevent errors and adverse events.

HAP's network of partners and collaborations provide Veterans with resources and services that:

- Expand to non-VHA-related facilities in rural or remote areas and that include telehealth services to overcome the geographic dispersion of Veterans across the country.
- Are cost-free to Veterans.
- Leverage both the partners' and VHA's communications vehicles to amplify messages for Veterans to increase awareness.
- Are accessible to all Veterans regardless of whether they are enrolled with VA or not.
- Tap into innovative or nontraditional forms of treatment.
- Disseminate best practices and provide support to staff in the field.
- Include facilities that provide culturally competent care to ensure a positive and culturally sensitive environment for Veterans from diverse backgrounds.

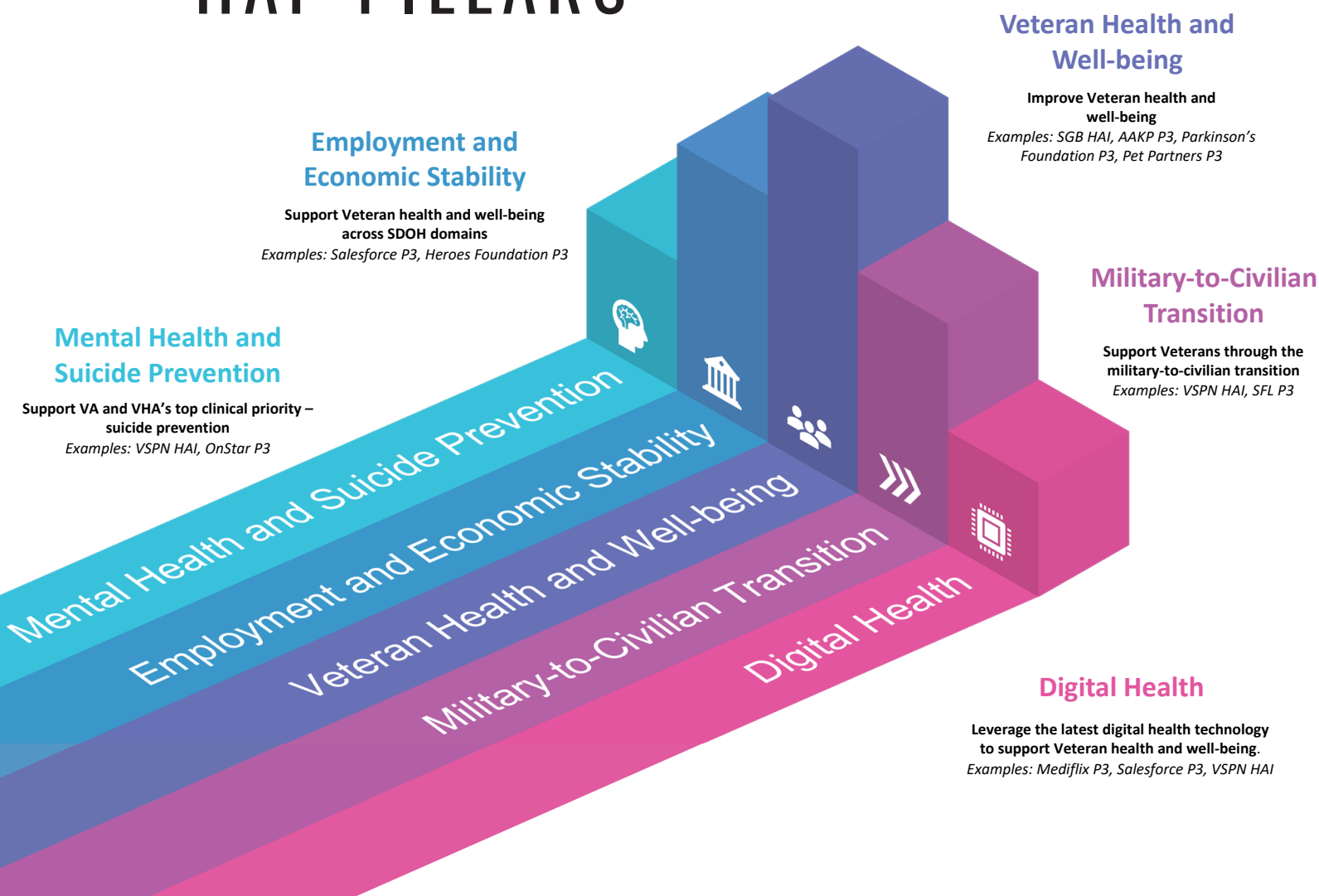
In expanding VHA's partnership network, HAP leverages the combined brand recognition from VA brands with that of the community-level or local partners to establish and expand trust. In turn, partners can take advantage of VHA resources to tailor or strengthen the services they provide to Veterans and their communities. HAP resources also help VHA personnel who develop policies or interact regularly with Veterans increase their awareness or understanding of the services VHA provides and learn how to pair those services with VHA partners' services to fill any existing gaps.

Through the network of partnerships, HAIs, VCPs and informal partners, HAP helps ensure Veterans have access to resources that supplement VHA services, helping them maintain a better quality of life. For instance, Veterans facing homelessness may receive housing benefits, but VHA's partnerships complement that benefit by partnering with nongovernmental organizations that provide resources such as career training, assistance with food insecurity, mental health support during the transition from active military service and help for those who are experiencing suicidal thoughts. These collaborations extend the reach of VHA and provide holistic care to address the diverse needs of Veterans so Veterans can more easily transition from military to civilian life.



HAP's five Pillars guide partnerships and HAIs to directly improve the health and well-being of VA beneficiaries

HAP PILLARS



A SNAPSHOT OF VHA PARTNERSHIPS FACILITATED BY HAP

■ **AAKP**

VHA and [AAKP](#) collaborate to enhance the quality of life for Veterans living with kidney disease.

■ **American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)**

VHA and [ACEP](#) work together to share best practices and educate community emergency medicine clinicians about Veteran-specific conditions and care needs.

■ **AKF**

VA and [AKF](#) partner to increase awareness of the risk factors, causes, complications and treatments of kidney disease and its associated conditions.

■ **Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association (ALS)**

VA and the [ALS](#) Association work together to provide Veterans with greater access to ALS programs and services.

■ **American Lung Association**

VHA and the [American Lung Association](#) have a shared goal to improve Veterans' health and well-being through collaborative education and services for Veterans living with lung disease.

■ **Americans for the Arts (AFTA)**

VHA and [AFTA](#) partnership focuses on increasing access to the arts and humanities and enhancing Whole Health opportunities for Veterans and their families.

■ **AF**

VHA and [AF](#) work together to increase access to care, education and support for Veterans diagnosed with arthritis.

■ **Crohn's and Colitis Foundation (CCF)**

VHA and [CCF](#) work together to raise awareness of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and improve the quality of life for Veterans affected by chronic intestinal diseases.

■ **Daniel and Salvador Montoya Heroes Foundation (Heroes Foundation)**

VHA works with the [Heroes Foundation](#) to provide Veterans with economic stability, employment and health literacy opportunities and provide education and training to companies to assist them in their journey to become Veteran-ready employers.

■ **Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP)**

VHA and [ETS-SP](#) partnership helps provide better support to Service members and Veterans across social determinants of health as they integrate into civilian life and communities.

■ **Global Liver Institute**

VHA and the [Global Liver Institute](#) collaborate to provide educational resources, webinars and support groups to Veterans with liver diseases.



■ **GO₂ for Lung Cancer**

VHA and [GO₂ For Lung Cancer](#) work together to increase awareness of the importance of lung cancer screening for Veterans at high risk for the disease.

■ **Marcus Institute for Brain Health (MIBH)**

VHA partners with [MIBH](#) to meet the ongoing health care needs of Veterans diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury.

■ **MAZON**

A Jewish Response to Hunger: VHA partners with [MAZON](#) to increase awareness about the risks associated with food insecurity and options to address it through outreach to Veterans.

■ **Medical-Legal Partnerships**

VA works with Medical-Legal Partnerships to provide VA medical facilities and volunteer attorneys to Veterans at no cost.

■ **Mediflix**

VHA partnered with [Mediflix](#) to provide Veterans and their families access to vital information for their well-being.

■ **OnStar**

VHA works with [OnStar](#) to support Veterans and increase suicide prevention services for them.

■ **Parkinson's Foundation**

VHA and the [Parkinson's Foundation](#) work together to increase Veterans' and health care providers' access to Parkinson's disease information and resources.

■ **Pet Partners**

VHA partners with [Pet Partners](#) to bring Veteran patients the benefits of the human-animal bond.

■ **Salesforce Military**

VHA and [Salesforce](#) partner to support Veterans and military Service members who are transitioning out of active duty and into the civilian workforce.

■ **The Rockefeller Foundation**

VHA and [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) partner to promote healthy eating habits and improve health outcomes for Veterans.

■ **USDA**

VHA and [USDA](#) have a shared goal to increase food security and improve Veterans access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education.

■ **VCPs**

VHA works with [VCPs](#) to ensure Veterans and their caregivers have access to care and support services through coalitions of organized partnership among VA facilities and community organizations.

New Partnerships in 2023

VHA is committed to establishing and nurturing responsible and mutually beneficial partnerships with non-governmental organizations. Partnerships play a critical role in extending the reach and impact of VA programs and services and help to ensure the needs of Veterans are met. This year, HAP proactively promoted partnerships that effectively address SDOH, such as access to food, economic stability and employment security. HAP is excited to highlight new partnerships with [Mediflix](#), [AAKP](#), [Global Liver Institute](#), [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) and [USDA](#), [Pet Partners](#) and the [Parkinson's Foundation](#).

American Association of Kidney Patients

VA's collaboration with [AAKP](#) is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for Veterans living with kidney disease. This strategic partnership, which is facilitated by HAP, targets the one-in-six Veterans affected by chronic kidney disease, aiming to expand the range of services and educational resources available to them.

What's ahead? Through this joint effort, Veterans with kidney disease will [receive comprehensive support and resources to manage their condition](#) effectively. The partnership will focus on providing Veterans with educational resources, webinars and support groups to Veterans with kidney diseases. This critical alliance exemplifies VA's commitment to improving the lives of Veterans and reflects the dedication of both organizations to address the unique needs that Veterans have compared to civilian populations.

Global Liver Institute

VHA's collaboration with the [Global Liver Institute](#) provides educational resources, webinars and support groups to Veterans with liver diseases.

What's ahead? The [Global Liver Institute](#) is developing a webpage on the organization's website specifically for Veterans. This webpage will offer a variety of liver disease resources to the Veterans.

1 in 6 Veterans are affected by chronic kidney disease



Mediflix

VHA partnered with [Mediflix](#), a streaming video health platform that connects Veterans with top physicians through digital technologies. The partnership, which is facilitated by HAP, provides access to salient health information from renowned institutions to ensure Veterans and their families have access to vital information for their well-being.

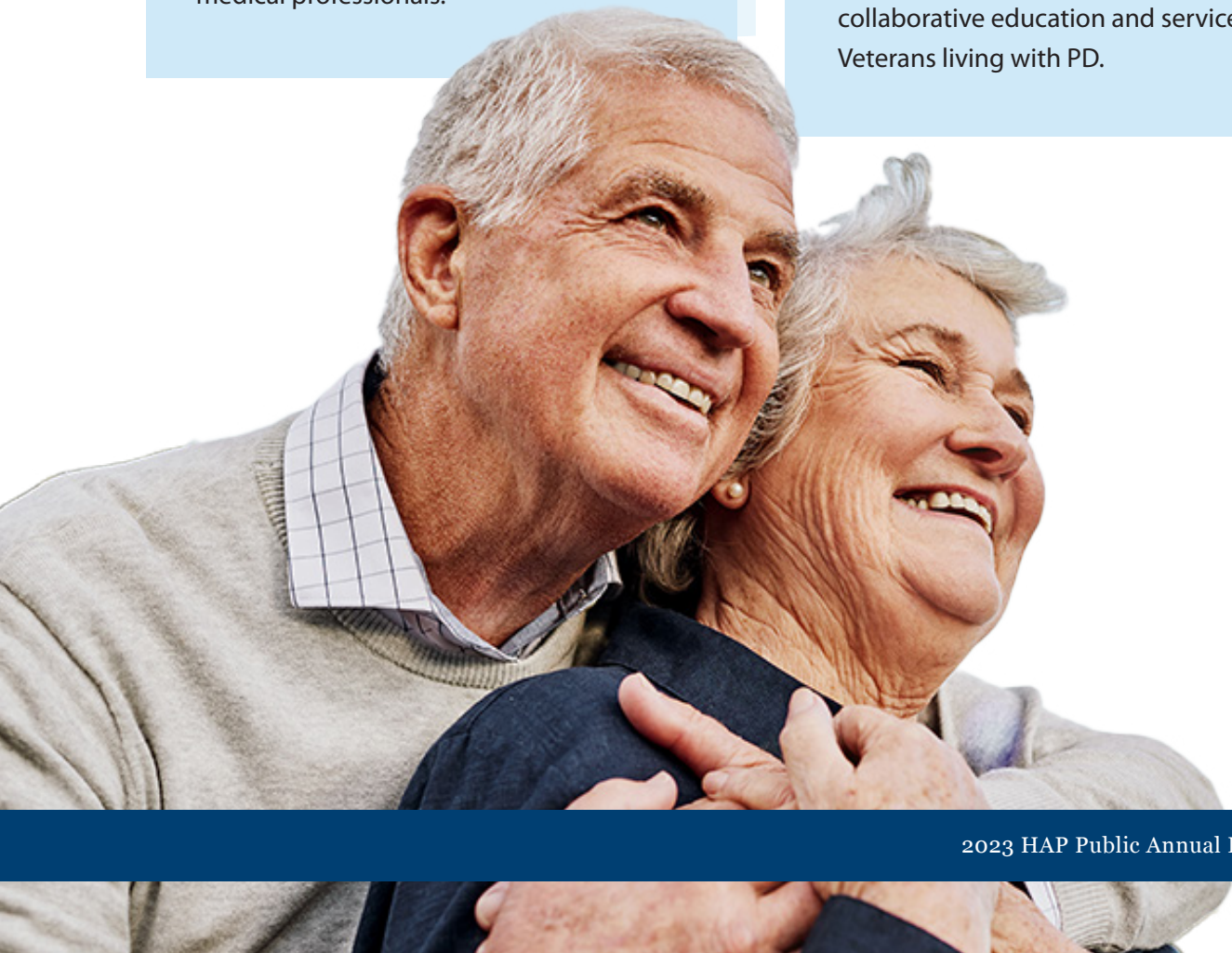
What's ahead? In 2024, this collaboration with [Mediflix](#) aims to [expand with the introduction of Vetiflix, a not-for-profit Veterans Health Channel](#) exclusively designed for Veterans. Vetiflix will enhance [Mediflix's](#) services and grant Veterans, caregivers and their families nationwide access to an extensive library of video streaming resources from Veterans and VA medical professionals.

Parkinson's Foundation

VHA renewed the partnership with the [Parkinson's Foundation](#), a nonprofit corporation, with the mission of making life better for people with Parkinson's disease by improving care and advancing research toward a cure.

Through the partnership with the [Parkinson's Foundation](#), 12 community events have been held with over 8,000 Veterans and their care partners registering for an event, requesting resources or contacting the Helpline. Additionally, 15 partnerships have been established at the local level, offering enhanced services to Veterans and their care partners.

What's ahead? The Parkinson's Foundation and VHA will continue to improve Veterans health and well-being through collaborative education and services for Veterans living with PD.



Pet Partners

VHA renewed its partnership with [Pet Partners](#), a nonprofit organization that helps improve quality of life, social engagement and health of Veterans by increasing their access to animal-assisted activities and animal-assisted therapy services in VA health care system. Facilitated by HAP, the partnership focuses on the benefits of the human-animal bond, a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances the health and well-being of both humans and animals. The partnership also provides animal-assisted programs to give patients the connection, comfort and joy that comes from spending time with animals.

A wide range of research and studies suggest the human-animal bond can lead to lower blood pressure, reduced risk for cardiovascular disease and lessened anxiety, pain and loneliness. Time with therapy animals not only promotes physical and mental health but also supports wellness across variables such as social interaction, rate of recovery and personal motivation. The partnership's objectives are in line with VA's strategic goal of collaborating with partners and advocating passionately for Veterans to enhance their outcomes, promote equity and improve their overall quality of life.

What's ahead? [Pet Partners](#) and VHA will [continue working with therapy animal teams](#), encouraging VA medical facilities to establish and expand therapy animal team visitation and health care interventions, and provide animal-assisted programs to give patients the emotional benefits spending time with animals provides.

The Rockefeller Foundation

VHA is dedicated to addressing food insecurity and supporting the overall health of Veterans. Food insecurity affects approximately 27% of Veterans from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, which is more than double the rate of the general U.S. population. VHA's partnership with [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) is facilitated by HAP and aims to promote healthy eating habits and improve health outcomes for Veterans.

What's ahead? [The partnership plans to expand Food is Medicine initiatives](#) across VA healthcare facilities in the U.S. to address the critical issue of food insecurity among the Veteran community. Partnership resources include guiding Veterans through a range of interventions such as medically tailored meals, fresh produce prescription programs and nutrition education.



United States Drug Administration

VHA and [USDA](#) have a shared goal to increase food security, access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education. This partnership will seek to emphasize Food is Medicine Initiative which has the potential to meet the goal and decrease healthcare cost by approximately 50%.

What's ahead? The partnership will support [The Rockefeller Foundation](#)'s plans to expand Food is Medicine initiatives across VA healthcare facilities in the U.S. to address the critical issue of food insecurity among the Veteran community.

HEALTHCARE ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY HAP

HAP supports the field to implement nontraditional projects and partnerships as part of the HAI protocol. These projects or partnerships are implemented in the field if they:

- Provide direct benefits to VA beneficiaries.
- Are new approaches or new uses of an existing approach that is little-known.
- Achieve outcomes aligned with HAP pillars.
- Are collaborative initiatives with HAP and other organizations.



Developed in accordance with HAP guidelines, HAP has a thorough and thoughtful review process to identify HAI proposals that are aligned with VA, VHA and HAP's mission and are appropriate and feasible to implement.

HAP is dedicated to promoting and supporting the dissemination of best practices in healthcare. With a mission to improve health outcomes for Veterans and advance public health initiatives, HAP works closely with VHA's partners to provide valuable resources and field support.

HAP's dissemination efforts also ensure the best practices they collect are effectively shared with relevant stakeholders and through various media to reach a wide audience, including publications, reports, webinars, virtual training and workshops. By providing accessible current information, HAP empowers its partners with knowledge they need to implement evidence-based strategies and interventions for Veterans in their own communities.

In addition to disseminating information, HAP directly supports VA staff and its partners. This includes working closely with organizations and communities to understand their unique needs and challenges. HAP's team of experts provides technical assistance, guidance and mentoring to assist partners in implementing best practices effectively. Direct support may include on-site visits, training sessions and regular consultations to ensure the successful translation of evidence-based strategies into practice.

Through the dissemination of best practices and field support, HAP plays a critical role in promoting collaboration and driving positive change across VA and in healthcare. By partnering with organizations and communities, HAP empowers them to make informed decisions, implement evidence-based interventions

and ultimately improve health outcomes for Veteran communities.

HAP is a leading force in advancing the health and well-being of Veterans. In addition to facilitating VHA's innovative partnerships, HAP also supports HAIs, which focus on conditions that are resistant to standard treatments and align with HAP's pillars. HAIs transform healthcare for those who served our country.

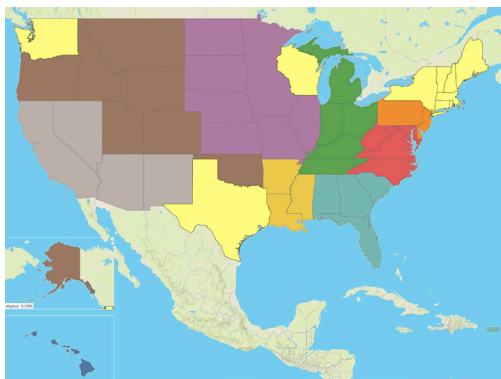
HAIs fill gaps in treatment to provide care for the whole person. Veterans experience unique and complex medical needs. HAP's support for HAIs presents opportunities to leverage clinical resources in the VA and community for the betterment of all Veterans. Nongovernmental organizations, through collaboration with VHA, discover innovative ways to benefit Veteran care.

By supporting initiatives that prioritize accessibility, mental health, chronic disease management, equal access and research, HAP prioritizes Veteran well-being. HAP bridges the gap in Veteran healthcare, paving the way for a brighter and healthier future.

Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network

The VSPN initiative supports VHA partnerships with organizations that pair service members with peer sponsors to support Veterans through the military-to-civilian transition. VSPN comprises local, regional and nation-wide VHA partnerships with organizations in the public and private sector.. Through the VSPN initiative, transitioning Veterans receive employment opportunities, education benefits, housing assistance and peer sponsors.

VSPN's support is critical for Veterans especially during the first year of transition when the risk of suicide can be higher. HAP leads the VSPN, in close consultation with VHA's Transitioning Service member/Veteran And Suicide Prevention Center. VSPN engages with community organizations and activates a network of local support for Veterans struggling with



Map of VSPN partnerships area of impact. Visit the [VSPN website](#) for current partners and the areas they serve.

Connection to HAP's Five Pillars

VSPN aligns to the following HAP pillars:

- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- Employment and Economic Stability
- Veteran Health and Well-Being
- Military-to-Civilian Transition

suicide ideation or facing the many challenges of re-entering civilian life.

The VSPN initiative supports VHA partnerships with organizations that pair service members with peer sponsors to support Veterans through the military-to-civilian transition. VSPN comprises local, regional, and nation-wide VHA partnerships with organizations in the public and private sector.

Stellate Ganglion Block for Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD is the third most common mental health diagnosis among Veterans at VHA. This stress-related disorder can affect survivors of military combat, life-threatening or traumatic emotional events. Health care service needs are high among people with PTSD because severe symptoms can cause an overall decrease in quality of life and suicide ideation.

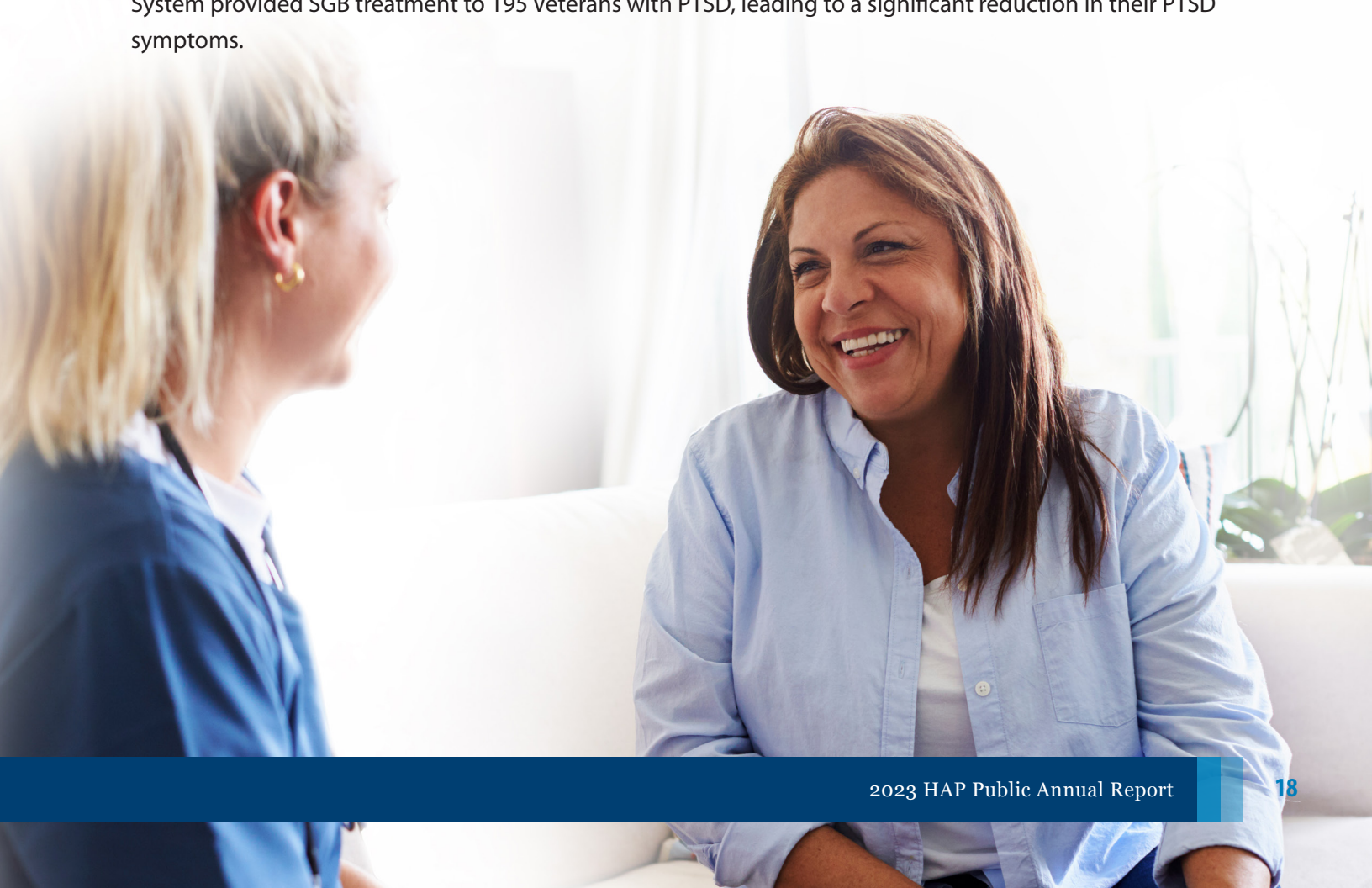
SGB involves the injection of anesthetic medication around the stellate ganglion, a cluster of nerves responsible for the fight or flight response. Although SGB is an experimental treatment for PTSD, some Veterans have experienced short-term benefits. Research on SGB, especially in Veterans with PTSD, is still underway. Long-term effects are unknown, but for Veterans who have not experienced relief through traditional treatments, alternative interventions like SGB may offer hope.

Connection to HAP's Five Pillars

SGB aligns to the following HAP pillars:

- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- Veteran Health and Well-Being

HAP collaborates closely with VA Long Beach Healthcare System, which uses SGB in combination with psychotherapy to treat Veterans diagnosed with PTSD. Case reports and individual accounts from Veterans suggest SGB treatment may help individuals with PTSD gain better control over their fight or flight reactions by blocking or altering nerve impulses between the body and brain. In FY 2023, VA Long Beach Healthcare System provided SGB treatment to 195 Veterans with PTSD, leading to a significant reduction in their PTSD symptoms.



SGB for PTSD Innovation Program (SPIP)

FY 2023 Preliminary Outcomes

PTSD Symptoms

Posttraumatic Checklist-5 (PCL-5)

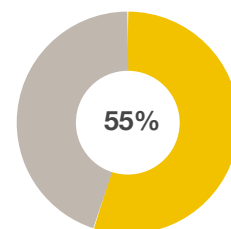
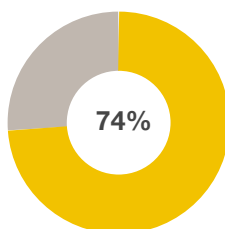
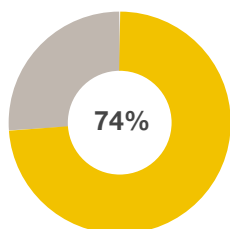
Veterans who Experienced:

Baseline to 1 Week

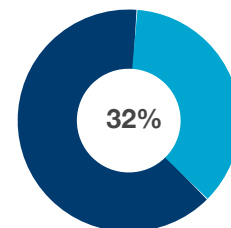
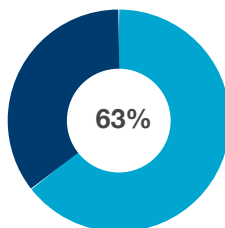
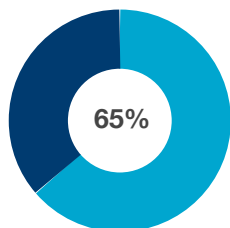
Baseline to 1 Month

Baseline to 4 Months

Reliable Symptom Reduction
(>5 points)



Clinically Significant Symptom Reduction
(>10 points)



Average Decrease
in Symptom Score:

18 Points
n=175

16 Points
n=169

7 Points
n=60

Anxiety Symptoms

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale-7 (GAD-7)

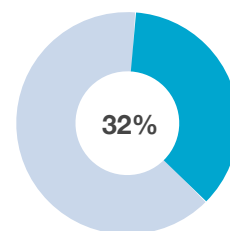
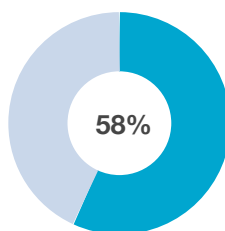
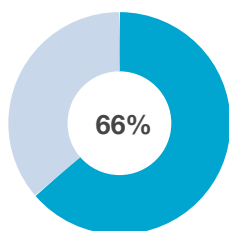
Veterans who Experienced:

Baseline to 1 Week

Baseline to 1 Month

Baseline to 4 Months

Symptom Reduction
(>5 points)



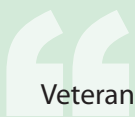
Average Decrease
in Symptom Score:

7 Points
n=166

6 Points
n=161

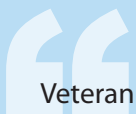
2 Points
n=57

Outcomes based on preliminary data reported between 9/1/2022 – 8/31/2023



Veteran quote:

"I was in a care facility and could not go outside or care for myself. The SGB has made it possible for me to live independently again and have hope for my future. I am grateful for the program."



Veteran quote:

"My pain led me to attempt suicide, and I also received two DUIs. However, the most recent procedure has given me hope. I am not scratching my skin for the first time in three years, and I can articulate my words without stuttering. Recently, I attended a family event that brought me near my ex-wife, and I didn't experience the anxiety that I normally would have. I have found a new me, and it is a better me. I intend to continue receiving these injections until I am completely off medication. Thank you for all that you are doing and the care you have provided."



This collaborative effort demonstrates VHA's commitment to exploring innovative therapies that can enhance Veterans' well-being and their quality of life. HAP's efforts focus on ensuring that Veterans have access to high-quality health care and supplemental services. HAIs can reduce barriers to nontraditional care that can take a Veteran from surviving to thriving.

Collaborations to Advance the Health and Well-being of Veterans and Their Communities

VA's priority is Veterans' health and well-being. Over 9 million Veterans rely on VA care and VHA recognizes the pivotal role of collaboration among its offices to effectively address the needs of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. HAP works with DEAN program offices, including the Office of Academic Affiliations, Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning and the Office of Research and Development to address Veteran's health care concerns.

Founded on IDEA, these collaborations recognize the range of life experiences, cultures and backgrounds among Veterans.

Veteran Community Partners Initiative

The [VCP](#) initiative is supported by HAP and the VHA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care in partnership with other offices such as the Office of Rural Health, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and the Caregiver Support Program. The initiative connects VA with community partners who cater to Veterans' diverse needs. HAP works with the [VCP](#) members to help establish a support system for Veterans, families and caregivers.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ Health Program

VA is unwavering in its dedication to promote the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ Veterans by providing personalized care that addresses each individual's needs. The LGBTQ+ Health Program delivers equitable, affirming and high-quality health care to all Veterans, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

HAP's collaboration with the LGBTQ+ Health Program demonstrates HAP's dedication to support diversity and inclusion-driven initiatives. HAP works with the LGBTQ+ Health Program to ensure partnerships and HAs improve healthcare outcomes for LGBTQ+ Veterans. This collaboration supports the individualized needs of LGBTQ+ Veterans and aligns with VA's commitment to expand gender-affirming care for transgender, nonbinary and gender-fluid individuals.

Suicide Prevention Program

Suicide rates among Veterans is a top clinical priority for VA. HAP works with VHA offices to address Veteran mental health needs. In collaboration with the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, HAP participates in organizing the annual Community Mental Health Summits.

Creative Art Therapy

HAP's advocacy for the VHA and [AFTA](#) partnership recognizes the healing potential of music, dance, visual arts and writing on mental health. The VHA and [AFTA](#) collaboration offers the therapeutic benefits of arts through initiatives by the VHA Office of Patient Centered Care, Center for Development and Civic Engagement and Recreation/Creative Arts Therapy Service.

Rural Wellness and Veteran Engagement Initiative

Approximately 4.4 million Veterans live in rural communities after completing their active military service. These Veterans encounter distinctive healthcare challenges in rural areas, particularly when dealing with combat-related injuries and illnesses, which can intensify the difficulties they face.

HAP partnered with the [Veterans Rural Health Resource Center - Salt Lake City](#), the Durham VA Center of Innovation to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation, and the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement to establish the Rural WAVE (Wellness and Veteran Engagement) Initiative. The Rural WAVE Initiative aims to strengthen interpersonal connections, renew a sense of purpose and mission and improve the overall quality of life for Veterans and their families in rural areas. The initiative leverages civic engagement activities, such as volunteering and community service, to help Veterans establish meaningful connections within their communities.

The Rural WAVE Initiative prioritizes inclusivity and focuses on rural Veterans while also welcoming families and civilians who wish to support Veterans in their community reintegration efforts. The Tomah VA served as the pilot site for the Rural WAVE Initiative, successfully establishing partnerships with [Pet Partners](#) and Project Healing Waters. The collaboration with [Pet Partners](#) brings the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted interventions to Veterans, while Project Healing Waters provides an enriching fly-fishing program that emphasizes camaraderie and socialization.

To date, the Tomah VA has recruited approximately 23 new volunteers, coordinated more than 60 new volunteer events and activities with 882 volunteer hours served and made over 880 rural-residing Veteran contacts. The initiative plans to expand to additional rural sites, including Central Alabama and Poplar Bluffs.



VHA National Community Partnership Challenge

The 2023 VHA CPC recognized outstanding partnerships that advance the health and well-being of Veterans and their communities. CPC winners are committed to serving Veterans of all races, ethnicities, sexual identities, languages, learning styles and/or spiritual preferences.

HAP accepted entries through the enhanced CPC portal between January 9, 2023, and March 10, 2023, receiving more than 40 submissions highlighting innovative partnerships. For almost 10 years, HAP managed the CPC for the Office of the Under Secretary of Health.

Which Partnerships Qualify

To qualify, partnerships must be nonmonetary initiated by:

- Veterans Integrated Service Network
- VHA facilities
- Community-Based Outpatient Clinics
- Vet Centers
- VHA program offices
- Other VHA entities

2023 National Community Partnership Challenge Theme

This year's challenge theme was "Accelerating VHA's Journey to High Reliability Through Partnerships," which focuses on five principles:

- Deference to expertise without regard to rank or status.
- Reluctance to simplify explanations for errors or problems.
- Sensitivity to operations that impact patient care.
- Commitment to resilience—understanding, addressing and preventing failure from recurring.
- Preoccupation with failure or being mindful of risks that impact care or services.

The theme aligns with VHA's priority initiative to become an HRO that:

- Prioritizes patient safety.
- Creates a culture of continuous improvement.
- Uses proactive strategies to prevent errors and adverse events.



Who Can Submit Entries

VA medical centers, health care centers, community-based outpatient centers, clinics, program offices and VHA employees are eligible to submit a partnership for the CPC.

Selecting and Recognizing Winning Partnerships

In August 2023, VHA proudly announced three winning partnerships. These remarkable collaborations were honored at a prestigious awards ceremony hosted by the Office of the Under Secretary for Health. Winners received the coveted VHA Crystal Award. Winners demonstrated a high impact on the well-being of Veterans and their communities with potential for scalability and sustainability. Since inception, CPC has received more than 550 partnership submissions for recognition.

Past Notable Partnerships



The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center's Heroic Gardens partnership project: Veterans participate in virtual gardening workshops, community-based nature walking meditation groups and opportunities to understand plant-based healing.



The VA Boston Healthcare System collaborated with Veterans Voice Radio Network: Veterans tune in to listen to critical care information, including suicide prevention resources.



Robert Dole VA Medical Center's partnership with the Wichita Animal Action League and Safe Paws Alliance: Veterans received pet care support during inpatient care, reducing their distress as they underwent treatment.



The Ralph H. Johnson VA Health Care System: Through a collaboration with 6 community hospitals, Veterans experienced improved coordinated care and reduced risk of suicidal behaviors and deaths by suicide.

2023 National Community Partnership Challenge Winners

The Syracuse VA Medical Center partnered with the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) and Clear Path for Veterans to develop the Family and Peer Program. This partnership provides education and support and engages Veterans and their families, including children through family and peer support.

A partner said that participating in the NAMI, VA, Homefront Peer-to-Peer course has been a life changing opportunity for the Veterans. One Veteran with whom the partner worked appreciates knowing that his children are in a safe environment and that he is getting an opportunity for education and self-care. He also enjoys the educational components, transparency of the instructors, inclusion of Veterans from all eras and friendships that he has made with other Veterans.



The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System was recognized for its Care, Treatment and Rehabilitative Services Initiative. Through this initiative, the VA Greater LA Healthcare System partners with AyZar Outreach, Bentwood School, U.S. VETS and Village for Veterans to provide temporary and permanent housing for Veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Following displacement from a previous facility due to reduced capacity from COVID, an Air Force Veteran told us: “Within a couple of hours, I was here with the tent, a sleeping bag and a trunk for all of my worldly belongings. I’m sober today, and I’m happy today and I’m walking in peace today.”

The West Palm Beach Healthcare System was recognized for its Veterans and Police Crisis Intervention Initiative. This partnership with the Delray Beach Community Center and the West Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office provides training for police officers in Veteran-relevant issues to improve understanding and promote more positive interactions and outcomes between the police and Veterans in the community.



One police officer trained through this program shared that she had encountered a person who she thought was impaired, but after learning that the individual was a Veteran, she was able to follow a different line of questioning. She learned that the Veteran had recently deployed and returned with PTSD, but had not yet entered treatment at the VA. The officer was able to facilitate a transfer to the VA for PTSD treatment.

HAP Highlights, Accomplishments and Outcomes

HAP's strategic goals encompass the HRO concept, IDEA and VA's core values I CARE. HAP's strategic direction aligns with [VA's 2022–2028 Strategic Plan](#), the 2022–2025 VHA Long Range Plan Framework and VA healthcare priorities and strategic enablers. As a trusted resource, HAP is a catalyst for partnerships and advances the health and well-being of Veterans. This alignment ensures a synchronized approach towards achieving outcomes and the VA mission.

VA Strategic Goal 1: Building Communication and Trust

VA places consistent emphasis on fostering effective communication and cultivating trust with its customers and partners. This commitment entails conducting due diligence of current and proposed partners, ongoing assessments of performance, needs evaluations and the establishment of enduring relationships. By actively engaging in transparent interactions, HAP aims to support and establish long-term trust-based partnerships.

HAP Connection

VHA's new partners, like [Mediflix](#), and long-standing partnerships, like [Heroes Foundation](#), convey modernization and reliability. Continued transparency and bi-directional communications about available resources strengthens Veterans' trust in VA.

VA Strategic Goal 2: Delivering Timely and Quality Services

A core principle driving VA's operations is the delivery of timely, accessible and high-quality benefits, care and services that cater to the distinctive requirements of Veterans and eligible beneficiaries. This goal emphasizes VA's dedication to addressing the diverse needs of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

HAP Connection

HAP works with [VCPs](#) who provide timely services for immediate needs, such as food, housing or shelter, emotional support and suicide prevention support. HAP-supported HAs give Veterans access to experimental innovations like SGB that are ahead of conventional treatments.

In line with this strategic goal, HAP is dedicated to promoting health equity among Veterans by addressing [SDOH](#), the social and economic conditions in the environment where Veterans live, learn, work, play, worship and age. In FY 2023, HAP facilitated collaborations with community organizations, healthcare providers and stakeholders to address the SDOH for Veterans and their families.

By facilitating the VHA and [Pet Partners](#) partnership, HAP highlights the benefits of the human-animal bond, a mutually beneficial relationship that promotes health and well-being for humans and animals. The partnership renewal reaffirms the commitment to enhance the quality of life for Veterans.

Challenges such as food insecurity and hunger significantly impact Veterans' physical and mental health, including chronic disease and depression. Veterans experiencing food insecurity may be at a higher risk for health issues. HAP facilitated a partnership with [MAZON](#) to address food insecurity risks. The partnership plays a vital role in ensuring that Veterans have access to food assistance programs, nutrition education and healthy food options through community collaborations.

HAP facilitated VHA's collaboration with the [ETS Sponsorship Program \(ETS-SP\)](#) to enhance the transition experience for Service members and their families. The collaboration proactively addresses challenges such as housing and other SDOH. Offering Veterans and their families an [ETS-SP](#) peer sponsor for social support as they transition from military to civilian life contributes to a more successful reintegration process.

VA Strategic Goal 3: Building and Maintaining Stakeholder Trust

VA's approach to stakeholder relations is characterized by the cultivation of trust through proven stewardship, transparency and accountability.

In its partnerships and HAIs, HAP places value on the insights and experiences of stakeholders both within VHA and across communities nationwide. HAP regularly collaborates with internal and external stakeholders who are situated in the areas where Veterans reside, worship, age, work and engage in leisure activities to provide Veterans and their communities with the necessary support.

HAP Connection

HAP earns stakeholder buy-in through transparent communications and leveraging its network to inform decisions. To assess suitability into VHA's partnership program or HAI, HAP conducts rigorous due diligence to ensure the mission and practices of VHA's external partners and HAIs consistently align with VA's mission, goals, priorities and strategies.

VA Strategic Goal 4: Enhancing Governance and Accountability

HAP Connection

HAP ensures VHA partnerships have clearly established objectives, responsibilities and outcome measures to enhance partnership accountability toward advancing the health and well-being of Veterans.

By utilizing governance, systems, data and management best practices, this goal aims to enhance performance and outcomes for Veterans and other beneficiaries.

HAP facilitated a partnership with [Salesforce](#) to better support Service members, Service member spouses, Veterans and military spouses in achieving their career goals following military service. Aligning with VA's strategic goal, centering on enhancing governance and accountability through effective resource management, the collaboration developed a range of informative and technical learning modules on Trailhead, including a [module on mental health resiliency](#). These modules serve as valuable resources for Veterans and their families, offering insights into available health, financial, educational and career benefits.

VHA and Salesforce Military connected 3,150 Veterans and eligible enrollees to Salesforce Military's free resources. Within this group:

**3,150 Veterans
CONNECTED TO
SALESFORCE'S
FREE RESOURCES**

**135 Veterans
COMPLETED
TRAINING**



**97 Certifications
AWARDED TO
VETERANS**



**45 Veterans
EARNED
CERTIFICATIONS**



**27 Veterans
EMPLOYED**



**2 Veterans
RECENTLY HIRED**



Resources for Internal and External Stakeholders

HAP developed the following newsletters, articles, programmatic short artifacts and infographics to support Veterans, staff working in the field, partners and [VCP](#) members:



[Flyer for Five Easy Steps to Submit a Partnership Idea to VA](#)



[Overview of Salesforce Military Modules that Support Veterans](#)



[How to use PACT Act Communication Toolkit to talk to Veterans, their families and caregivers](#)



[CPC Challenge - Banner and graphics about the 2023 Community Partnership Challenge](#)



[Current List of HAP Partnerships](#)

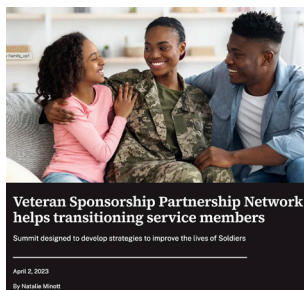


Veterans Affairs News Publications

VA News highlighted HAP-managed partnerships, HAIs, VCPs and informal partners.



[Support for Veterans with Chronic Kidney Disease](#)



[VHA Supports the Veteran Sponsorship Partnership Network Initiative](#)



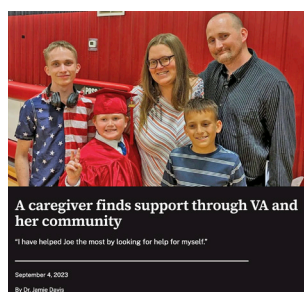
[Visibility Matters: Transgender Veteran Shares Her Story](#)



[VA Has Support for Veterans Thinking of Suicide](#)



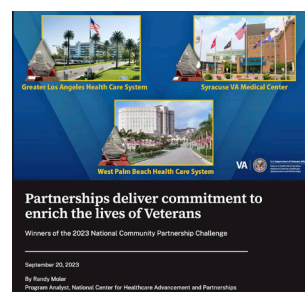
[VHA Partners with AF to Help Veterans Manage Arthritis Pain](#)



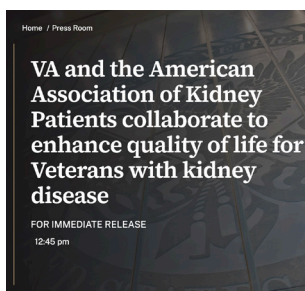
[A Caregiver Finds Support Through VA and Her Community](#)



[CPC Highlights Innovative Partnerships that Support Veterans](#)



[Partnerships deliver commitment to enrich the lives of Veterans: Winners of the 2023 National Community Partnership Challenge](#)



[VA and the American Association of Kidney Patients collaborate to Enhance Quality of life for Veterans with Kidney Disease](#)



[Partnerships Expand VA's Health care Services to Veterans](#)



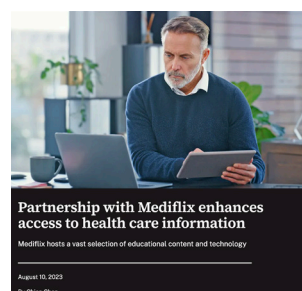
[VHA and Pet Partners Renew Partnership to Support Veterans](#)



[VA and The Rockefeller Foundation Join Forces to Increase Healthy Food Access, Improve Health Outcomes for Veterans](#)



[Rural WAVE Expands Veteran Reintegration](#)



[Partnership with Mediflix Enhances Access to Health care Information](#)



Published Bulletins

HAP shared various hot topic trends and notable news.



January 2023: [Announcing the Open Submission Period for the 2023 VHA National Community Partnership Challenge!](#)



February 2023 (1): [2023 VHA National Community Partnership Challenge: Sensitivity to Operations.](#)



February 2023 (2): [2023 VHA National Community Partnership Challenge.](#)



March 2023 (1): [DEADLINE REMINDER: March 10, 2023, is the last day for the 2023 VHA National Community Partnership Challenge Open Submission Period!](#)



March 2023 (2): [The 2023 VHA National Community Partnership Challenge Submissions Are Now Under Review!](#)



April 2023: [HAP Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2023.](#)



May 2023 – Approved in May 2023: [ANNOUNCEMENT: Welcoming HAP's new Acting Chief Officer – Chien Chen!](#)



June 2023 (1): [ANNOUNCEMENT: The CPC Selection Process is Underway: Winners will be announced August 2023.](#)



July 2023: [ANNOUNCEMENT: Walking with Ease Program: VHA and the Arthritis Foundation Empower Veterans!](#)



August 2023: [Congratulating The 2023 Community Partnership Challenge Winners.](#)



September 2023: [HAP Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2023.](#)



Newsletter Synopses

HAP's Quarterly snapshot of impacts/accomplishments/updates



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 6 ISSUE 5 WINTER 2022	In this issue
VHA National Center for Health Care Advancement and Partnerships	A Note from the Nurse Executive 2
Support & Engagement	Partnership Submission Portal Announcement 3
	Helping Veterans Transition Smoothly from Active Duty to Civilian Life 3
	VHA Partners with the Daniel and Salvador Montoya Heroes Foundation to Support Veterans Seeking Employment 5
	VHA National Community Partnership Challenge 6
	Understanding How the Human-Animal Bond Helps Veterans 6

Winter 2022 Newsletter:

As the end of the year approached, the winter edition of the HAP Quarterly Newsletter focused on highlighting accomplishments, updating strategies and setting new goals for the next calendar year.



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1 SPRING 2023	In this issue
VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships	A Note from the Nurse Executive 2
Celebrating Partnerships and Innovations	VHA's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 3
	2023 National Community Partnership Challenge 4
	Heroes Foundation Workshop Expansion 5
	VHA Partners with Y-USA to celebrate Veterans Day 7
	VHA Partners with the American Lung Association to Support Lung Health 8
	Salesforce Military Announces 10K

Spring 2023 Newsletter:

The start of the new year represents a new opportunity to build on the successes from the previous year and take on new challenges. The spring edition of the HAP Quarterly Newsletter focused on a roundup of initiatives, resources and services that improved the health and well-being of Veterans and sharing some updates.



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2023	In this issue
VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships	A Note from the Nurse Executive 2
Empowering Veterans Through Partnerships	VHA Collaborates with LGBTQ+ Health Program for Inclusive Healthcare 3
	VHA and Modivx Partner to Improve Health Education for Veterans 4
	VHA's Partnership with ACEP Supports Veterans Beyond COVID-19 6
	VHA-Salesforce Partnership Empowers Veterans
	Walk with Ease Program, VHA and the Arthritis Foundation Encourage Physical Activity 8

Summer 2023 Newsletter:

The summer edition of the HAP Quarterly Newsletter celebrated Pride month, new partnerships and nontraditional treatments, such as SGB, animal-assisted interventions and healing through creative art therapy.

A Commitment to Continue Supporting Veterans, their Families, Caregivers and Survivors

VHA's commitment to enhancing care for all Veterans, including Veterans who belong to historically marginalized groups, drives the agency's efforts to establish strategic partnerships. Specifically, HAP plays a pivotal role in facilitating VHA's partnerships between community partners and [VCP](#) members and informal partners to support the health and well-being of all Veterans, including LGBTQ+ Veterans.

Although more than 10 years has passed since the 2011 repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, the mental and physical toll of decades of secrecy and discrimination continue to affect the well-being of LGBTQ+ Veterans. Many LGBTQ+ Service members and Veterans still face significant challenges and health disparities.

Since 2016, every VA medical center has had an LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator to ensure that their facility's health care is affirming and relevant to LGBTQ+ Veterans' needs. VA medical centers offer gender-affirming care for about 10,000 of the country's estimated 134,000 transgender Veterans, including non-surgical gender affirming care such as hormone replacement therapy, prosthetics, voice therapy and medical care before and after gender affirming surgeries.

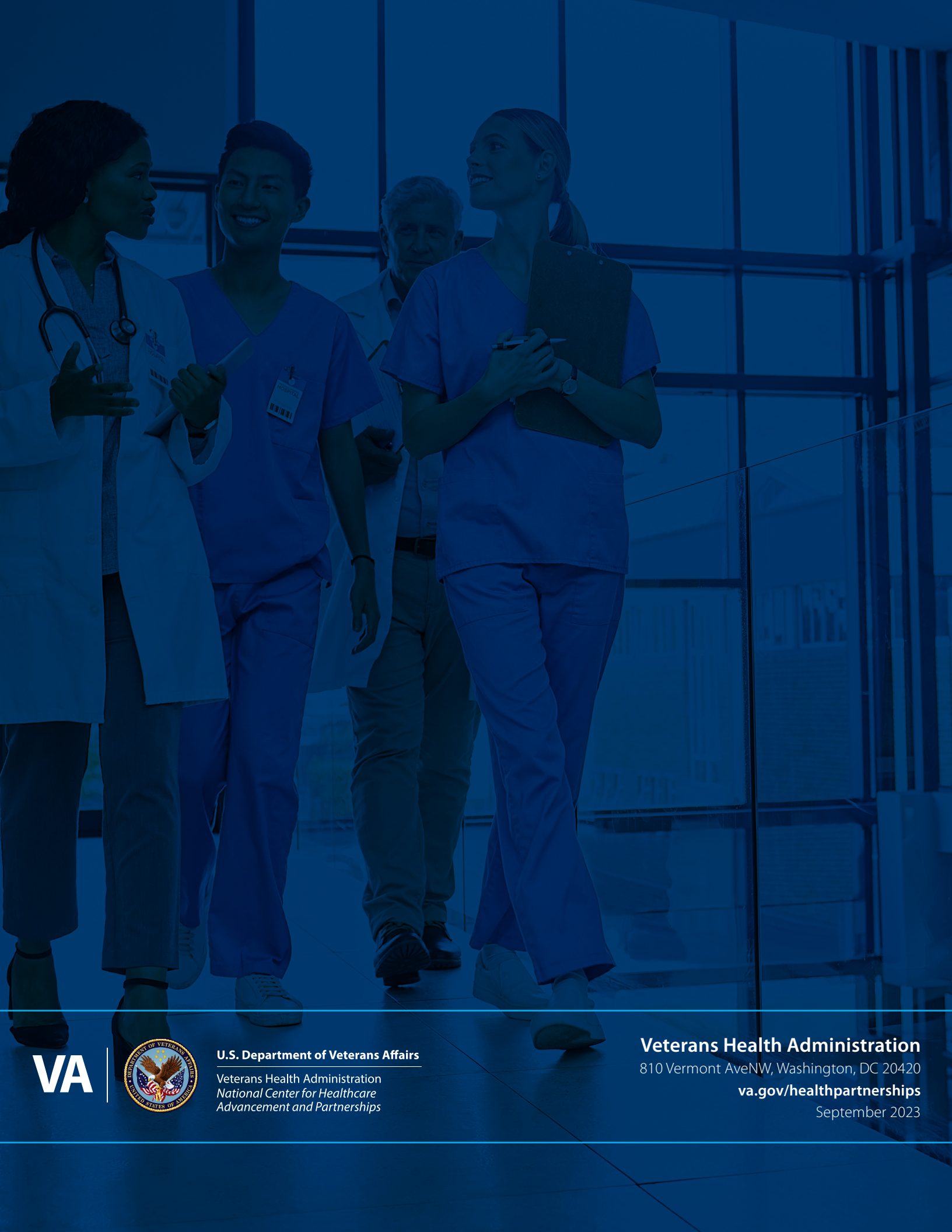
HAP works with the LGBTQ+ Health Program to support diversity and inclusion-driven initiatives for all Veterans, in fulfillment of VA's 2021 promise to expand gender-affirming care for transgender and nonbinary or gender-fluid Veterans. HAP is part of a VA team that is also working to enact VA's 2021 promise to provide gender-affirming surgeries such as mastectomies and facial and genital reconstruction procedures to Veterans who are transgender or gender-nonconforming.

A cornerstone of HAP's work is promoting the values of IDEA via VHA's partnerships. LGBTQ+ Veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide. With Veterans already having increased risk of suicide when compared to civilian populations, the higher risk for LGBTQ+ Veterans is especially alarming. Suicide prevention is the top clinical priority for VA and a HAP pillar.

HAP looks forward to facilitating more initiatives and partnerships to serve Veterans and their families. As Deedee Lynn Fulcher, a facilitator for the Transgender Care Coordination Integrated Project Team Veteran Experience Workstream, a Marine Corps Veteran and a transgender woman who served for 12 years, said: "People in the military ... can get medical care that was not offered when I was in... VA has come a long way in the past few years from where it was when I got out of USMC."

Suicide Prevention Support for LGBTQ+ Veterans

HAP's leadership of the [VSPN](#) is carried out in partnership with VA's Transitioning Service member/Veteran And Suicide Prevention Center. This partnership with community organizations offers early intervention and ongoing support for Veterans, including LGBTQ+ Veterans, who may be at risk of suicide as they transition to civilian life. In addition, HAP's pioneering collaboration with [Salesforce Military](#) has yielded a self-guided resource for Veterans to access benefits and suicide prevention skills.



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
National Center for Healthcare
Advancement and Partnerships

Veterans Health Administration

810 Vermont AveNW, Washington, DC 20420

va.gov/healthpartnerships

September 2023