

# VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships

## Supporting Veterans Through Innovative Strategic Partnerships

The VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships' (HAP) mission is to serve as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships at the national, state, and community level and to advance the health and well-being of Veterans through exploration of innovative, safe, and ethical emerging therapies.



To support the larger VA mission to provide Veterans world-class benefits and services, HAP pursues public-private partnerships and explores new and innovative ways to support that mission. Partnerships augment the services VHA is already able to provide and helps fill gaps in service offerings when VHA cannot take actions due to legal limitations. Partnerships enable VHA to go further for Veterans because partnerships leverage the expertise of stakeholders from across the nation who share VA's mission to support the health and well-being of Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

### HAP supports VHA partnerships by:

- Developing partnerships HAP manages—that is, HAP staff will be primary points of contact for the partnerships
- Facilitating the creation of partnerships for other VHA offices and serving as a guide/consultative entity for those offices and partnership stakeholders
- Collaborating with VHA offices and VA medical centers to ensure that partnership goals are mission-driven,

and that partnership activities are in the best interest of Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors

- Working with nongovernmental entities, community and national organizations to support partnership creation

### The benefits of partnerships are:

- Augmenting the services VHA already provides: Partners bring additional resources, expertise, and support to the table and serve as force multipliers to VHA's efforts
- Filling gaps: There are some activities VHA cannot do because of legal limitations; partners help fill those gaps to offer more to Veterans
- Expanding reach: VHA and partners alike can see their efforts go further through partnerships; they can reach more Veterans, including those who are not enrolled in VHA for care or are not eligible for services
- Serving those who receive care elsewhere, including eligible and ineligible Veterans who opt to receive care through private insurance, military care, or community-based resources
- Local efforts meet the needs of the Veterans in the community and encourage involvement and resource use in those spaces



## HAP's Signature Event: The VHA National Community Partnership Challenge

The VHA National Community Partnership Challenge (CPC) recognizes and awards local partnerships all over the country that are working on behalf of Veterans. By widely publicizing and encouraging submission to the Challenge each year, HAP helps VHA employees uplift information about the work they are doing for Veterans through nonmonetary partnerships with nongovernmental organizations. Any VHA employees can enter the CPC and have a chance to be honored in a ceremony and win an award from the VHA Under Secretary for Health and the VA Secretary. A panel of VA and VHA judges selects the winners each year, and HAP widely publicizes the winners and their partnership stories.

The purpose of CPC is to spread best practices across VHA and uplift expertise, dedication, passion, and commitment of the front-line employees who serve Veterans every day. The celebration of the winners gives VA staff members and the public a chance to see what successful partnerships look like and can inspire

them to create their own partnerships or replicate effective partnership activities. Themes of the CPC include: "Adaptability in a Changing World" (2021); "The Social Determinants of Health" (2020); and "Public Trust" (2019). For stories about the winners, visit HAP's [Latest News page](#) and click on the Community Partnership Challenge tabs.

### HAP's health care advancement initiatives (HAI) focus on the conditions below and other that may be resistant to standard treatments:

- Suicidality
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Traumatic brain injury
- Chronic pain

### HAP explores innovative, safe, and emerging ethical therapies by collaborating with VA providers across the country on clinical (non-research) HAIs.

The clinical benefits of the innovation relative to risk are assessed keeping in mind the key principle to "Do No Harm."

### HAP's health care advancement initiatives include:

- Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Therapy: Stimulating brain cells with LED headsets may reduce symptoms of traumatic brain injury. An application of the therapy allows Veterans to complete LED sessions at home.
- Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB): SGB involves the application of a local anesthetic to a nerve bundle in the neck to relieve symptoms of PTSD.
- Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network (VSPN): VSPN improves the experience and outcomes of Veterans as they conclude military service and transition into civilian communities. HAP facilitates partnership agreements between VHA regional offices and local and national community integration coordinators, which are community organizations that manage volunteer peer sponsors who help transitioning service members/Veterans.

For more on these partnerships and health care initiatives and others, please visit: [va.gov/healthpartnerships](https://va.gov/healthpartnerships).

