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## New dementia screening shows promise in early detection of cognitive decline

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*Jocelyn Almazan performs cognitive screening at The Villages Outpatient Clinic.*

The [North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System \(NF/SGVHS\)](#) has made improvements to easier and earlier identify Veteran patients with symptoms of cognitive deficits. The multidisciplinary approach's aim is to assist with diagnosis and early access to resources, medication, treatment, and decision making for life planning and involvement in health care decisions.

Jocelyn Almazan, registered nurse, The Villages Outpatient Clinic explains that, not only the screening is quick, easy to administer, and reliable, it is also a cost savings for those diagnosed with cognitive decline because according to the [Alzheimer's Association](#),

early diagnosis can improve the overall outcome of disease progression and allows for treatment of reversible types of dementia while improving quality of life for others.

Prior to the new screening process, health care providers utilized the Saint Louis University Mental Screen (SLUMS).

“Now, when a screening is warranted, a review is conducted and entered in for a consult by social work. At that point, further examination may be conducted, and based on the score, the provider may follow up with recommendations,” said Gladys Fontanez, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, The Villages Outpatient Clinic.

The new screening process was originally piloted by nurses at The Villages Outpatient Clinic which resulted in Veterans being referred to neuropsychologists and earlier diagnosed with some form of dementia.

“We are really excited about the new screening process and are seeing it’s benefits, firsthand,” said Almazan.

Veterans who have cognitive decline concerns are encouraged to discuss the opportunity to be screened with their health care provider.

### **About the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System**

NF/SGVHS is one of the nation’s leading VA healthcare systems employing more than 5,800 medical professionals and support staff dedicated to providing high quality care to Veterans residing throughout North Florida and South Georgia. The organization operates 14 facilities to include two medical centers located in Gainesville and Lake City, a domiciliary and clinics located throughout a 50-county service area.

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*“...to care for him who shall have borne the battle  
and his widow, and his orphan...”*  
- President Abraham Lincoln



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### **North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System**

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The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is one of the nation's leading VA healthcare systems, employing more than 5,600 medical professionals and support staff dedicated to providing high quality care to Veterans residing

throughout north Florida and south Georgia. The organization operates fifteen facilities to include two medical centers located in Gainesville and Lake City, and clinics located throughout a 50-county catchment area.

To learn more about the facilities and services offered by the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, please visit [www.northflorida.va.gov](http://www.northflorida.va.gov) or "like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/VANFSG>, or follow us on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/VANFSG/>

For any questions about the content of this message, please contact the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Office of Public Affairs at 352-348-7130 or email [vhanflpublicaffairs@va.gov](mailto:vhanflpublicaffairs@va.gov).