



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## News Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Trust in VA among Veteran patients in the Iowa City VA Medical Center rises to 94%, up 3.8% since 2018**

*Nationwide trust in VA care among Veteran patients rises to 91.8%, up 6% since 2018*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that Veteran trust in the Iowa City VA Medical Center has risen to 94% — up from 90.2% in 2018 (the first year since VA began conducting this survey). Additionally, nationwide trust in VA outpatient care has increased to 91.8% — up from 85.6% in 2018.

This finding is based on a survey of Veteran patients who received VA health care in the past 90 days. Within one week of using VA services, these Veterans were asked whether they trusted VA for their health care needs across a variety of categories — including scheduling an appointment, health care visits, in-person pharmacy, mail-order pharmacy, labs/imaging, and Veteran safety.

This survey mirrors the findings of recent independent studies. According to [Medicare's latest nationwide survey of patients](#), VA hospitals outperformed non-VA hospitals on all 10 core patient satisfaction metrics — including overall hospital rating, communication with doctors, communication about medication, willingness to recommend the hospital, and more. VA health care has also consistently outperformed non-VA care in [peer-reviewed studies](#), [overall quality ratings](#), and [affordability](#) for Veterans.

Today, VA is delivering more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before in our nation's history, setting [an all-time record for health care provided in 2023](#). As Veteran trust in VA has increased, more Veterans have also begun to choose VA care. VA [has enrolled](#) 401,006 Veterans in VA health care over the past 365 days — 30% more than the 307,831 it enrolled the previous year. This is the highest number of enrollees in a single year in at least the past five years at VA, and nearly a 50% increase over pandemic-level enrollment in 2020.

"We know that the Iowa City VA Health Care System provides the best care possible to our Veterans," said **Iowa City VA Health Care System Director, Judith Johnson-Mekota**. "These findings solidify the trust our Veterans have in our volunteers and employees. We go the extra mile to keep strong relationships with those who have served our country which is at the core of everything we do."

"We at VA work to earn the trust of Veterans every day, in every part of the country, every time they come to us for their care," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "We're proud that more than 91% of Veterans now trust VA health care, but we still have work to do. By measuring Veteran trust, we can not only learn what we're doing well at VA — we can also learn how to get better."

"Delivering world-class health care begins with trust," said **VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** "Whenever a Veteran walks into a VA facility, we want them to know that

we are going to take care of them. That's the standard to which we hold ourselves, and we'll never settle for anything less."

VA's historic health care enrollment has been made possible by the bipartisan PACT Act – signed into law by President Biden as a part of his Unity Agenda for the nation – which has allowed VA to [expand VA health care](#) and [benefits](#) to millions of Veterans. VA is also conducting the most aggressive outreach campaign in its history, including hosting over 2,600 events since the enactment of the PACT Act, launching a \$16+ million [advertising campaign](#), using [public service announcements](#), and – for the first time ever – sending text messages to Veterans encouraging them to enroll in VA health care. VA is continuing these vigorous outreach efforts throughout 2024, with more than 550 in-person events already scheduled for this year.

VA recently [expanded health care eligibility](#) for millions of Veterans nationwide, years earlier than called for by the PACT Act. As of March 5<sup>th</sup>, all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military and meet certain requirements became eligible to enroll directly in VA health care. This means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 can enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States are also eligible to enroll. VA also [recently expanded health care to all World War II Veterans](#).

Moving forward, VA will continue to aggressively reach out to Veterans to encourage them to come to VA. VA encourages all Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors to [learn more about VA to understand how VA fits into their lives](#), and apply for their world-class [health care](#) and [earned benefits](#) today.

For more information about VA care, visit [VA's health care website](#). For more information about Veteran trust in VA, visit the [VA trust website](#).

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