

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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## VA Announces Adoption of American Cancer Society Mammogram Screening Guidelines

WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is adopting American Cancer Society (ACS) breast cancer screening [guidelines](#) that give women a choice to begin screening at age 40. The guidelines also recommend starting yearly mammograms by age 45 and then every other year from age 55. The guidelines apply to women at average risk for breast cancer and complement VA's already-extensive program for breast care for Veterans.

"It is important for our women Veterans to know that they are in control of their care and the care they receive from VA is consistent with or exceeds care in the private sector," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Adopting American Cancer Society standards gives Veterans further assurances that their care aligns with other health-care systems." Currently, 76 percent of women Veterans age 40-49 receive mammograms through VA.

In addition to adopting ACS guidelines for breast cancer screening, other notable achievements include:

- Expanded access to onsite mammograms by 62 percent;
- All eligible women Veterans have access to mammograms either onsite or through care in the community;
- VA quality scores from the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), show that women Veterans are much more likely to receive age-appropriate breast cancer screening than women in private sector health care;
- In 2015, VA provided mammogram screenings to 86 percent of its women Veteran patients age 50-74, compared with the private sector at 73 percent; and
- VA has established a state-of-the-art information technology Breast Cancer Registry (BCR). The BCR integrates data from several VA sources to provide comprehensive patient specific information about breast cancer screening, test results, past and current breast cancer treatment, and population surveillance of breast care (both in the community and within VA).

"Engaging and better servicing the unique health-care needs of our women Veterans is one of VA's most important priorities," said Dr. Poonam Alaigh, Acting Under Secretary for Health. "When it comes to their care, we want them to be in control of it *every* day and in *every* way."

For more information about VA's commitment to women Veterans, visit <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/> or call 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636) for information about VA services and resources.

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