

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 10, 2018

VA Partnership with National Cancer Institute Will Boost Veteran Access to Clinical Trials

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has formed a partnership with the [National Cancer Institute](#) (NCI) which will provide more access to the latest treatment options for VA patients with cancer.

“Strategic partnerships, such as this one with the National Cancer Institute, allow VA to leverage the strengths of both organizations to the benefit of all stakeholders, especially our Veterans,” said VA’s Acting Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “By increasing enrollment in these trials, VA and Veterans will contribute to important cancer research — this will not only help our Veterans, but also advance cancer care for all Americans and people around the world.”

The NCI and [VA Interagency Group to Accelerate Trials Enrollment](#), also known as NAVIGATE, is launching at 12 VA sites: Atlanta, Georgia; Bronx, New York; Charleston, South Carolina; Denver, Colorado; Durham, North Carolina; Hines, Illinois; Long Beach, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Palo Alto, California; Portland, Oregon; San Antonio, Texas; and West Haven, Connecticut. Boston, Massachusetts, will also serve as a coordinating center for the effort.

NAVIGATE will build infrastructure at VA sites to enable more Veterans to take part in cutting-edge clinical trials sponsored by NCI. Such trials typically test innovative experimental treatments, such as precision-medicine therapies based on patients’ genetic profiles, or immunotherapies that harness patients’ own immune systems to bring about cures.

The NAVIGATE network will also establish best practices and share insights to help other VA Medical Centers nationwide enroll more Veterans in cancer clinical trials. Special attention is being given to minority patients, who often have less access to new treatments and are not as well represented in clinical trials in the U.S.

While VA has a robust research program — including clinical trials on cancer and other diseases — at more than 100 sites nationwide, VA facilities often face challenges initiating and completing trials, including ones conducted through the NCI National Clinical Trials Network. Local VA research staff, for example, may lack adequate support to handle certain regulatory and administrative tasks involved in these studies. NAVIGATE will help remove those barriers.

NAVIGATE will also seek to enroll Veterans in trials sponsored by NCI’s Community Oncology Research Program, which focuses on cancer prevention and symptom management.

VA’s involvement in NAVIGATE is being managed through the Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) part of [VA’s Office of Research and Development](#). CSP has a long history of running impactful clinical trials focused on Veterans’ health needs.

To learn more about CSP and VA Research, visit www.research.va.gov.

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