

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

# News Release

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## VA to fund first national center of excellence for Veteran and caregiver research

**WASHINGTON** — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will fund a new center of excellence to expand the department's capacity to deliver innovative, data-driven and integrated approaches to improve services for Veterans and their caregivers.

Managed by VA's [Office of Health Services Research & Development \(HSR&D\)](#), the first of its kind center will be named for Sen. Elizabeth Dole in recognition of her national leadership and advocacy on behalf of the nation's 5.5 million military and Veteran caregivers, and her support for the landmark RAND Corp. research on their challenges.

The Elizabeth Dole Center of Excellence for Veteran and Caregiver Research will serve as the model for excellence in peer-reviewed research on innovation, training, evaluation, implementation and the dissemination and adoption of best practices in supporting the caregivers of Veterans across VA, the federal government and private and nonprofit sectors.

"Given Senator Elizabeth Dole's significant impact on, and dedication to, military and Veteran caregivers, it is only fitting that VA names this center of excellence in her honor," said [VA Secretary Robert Wilkie](#). "The creation of the Elizabeth Dole Center of Excellence for Veteran and Caregiver Research is a firm example of VA's ongoing commitment to improving services and outcomes for the families, friends and neighbors who tirelessly care for our nation's Veterans."

The center of excellence consists of a multidisciplinary team that takes advantage of HSR&D's virtual network of nationally recognized VA investigators and their university affiliates to ensure that their state-of-the-art research will have the greatest possible impact on Veterans and the caregivers who support them. The team of VA investigators will be led by Dr. Luci Leykum of the [South Texas Veterans Health Care System](#).

Additional collaborating sites (and leaders) include the following: the [Miami VA Healthcare System](#) (Dr. Stuti Dang); [VA Salt Lake City Health Care System](#) (Dr. Mary Jo Pugh); and the [VA Palo Alto Health Care System](#) (Dr. Ranak Trivedi).

The creation of the center will allow VA to further all evidence-based research to inform the most appropriate and effective care for Veterans based on their needs, most notably by: involving caregivers of Veterans in the design and implementation of innovative models of care; applying the best caregiver and Veteran-driven metrics for evaluation and feedback; using data science to inform matching of services to different Veteran and caregiver groups; and applying implementation science to improve the deployment of best practices in home- and community-based care.

The resulting work will inform care delivery and improvement by empowering Veterans, caregivers, VA and non-VA providers, and leadership in making informed choices regarding the best care for Veterans and support for those who support them.

For more information on VA's HSR&D's program, visit <https://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/>.

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