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VA announces fully capable Tele-counseling service within its Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E) announced the ability for Veterans nationwide to meet with more than 1,000 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) via "Tele-counseling," or virtual communication.

Tele-counseling, which is accessible on any device with a webcam and microphone, increases VA's responsiveness to Veterans' needs, reduces travel costs and time for both Veterans and VRCs, and improves Veterans' access to necessary VR&E services.

"We strive to provide Veterans with access to personalized, interactive face-to-face care and services regardless of where they live," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VR&E's Tele-counseling service is another example of how VA continually modernizes in support of Veterans' needs."

Tele-counseling allows Veterans to meet with VRCs virtually through [VA Video Connect](#) without having to download specialized software or obtain unique usernames and passwords. Access to a scheduled counseling session is obtained through a unique link sent directly to the Veteran and is valid for that counseling session only.

Veterans participating in most VR&E rehabilitation plans of service may use Tele-counseling and are encouraged to speak with their VRCs about it. Participation is voluntary and not required.

VR&E's updated Tele-counseling application was developed through a partnership with [Veterans Health Administration's \(VHA\) VA Telehealth Services](#). VR&E recently tested the ability to use Tele-counseling during initial evaluation appointments at six regional benefits offices. This test was conducted to identify how using Tele-counseling can reduce time Veterans wait for an appointment. Best practices were identified and incorporated into the rollout of the updated Tele-counseling application.

Since 2014, over 56,000 Veterans have either completed a rehabilitation plan, are employed, or have achieved a greater independence in living through VR&E assistance. The VR&E Program currently has more than 122,000 participants. For more information about VR&E, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>.

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