

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

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 29, 2019

## VA and Cigna partner to help prevent opioid misuse and improve treatment of Veterans with chronic pain

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Cigna, a global health service company, recently announced a new public private partnership to improve safety and quality of care for Veterans with chronic pain, who are at risk for opioid misuse.

The partnership, which was formalized March 7, will educate Veterans and their families, the public and health care providers about the following: [safe opioid use](#); improving provider and patient interactions related to opioid use; and helping to improve delivery of care and health outcomes for Veterans.

“This partnership is in line with VA’s priorities of transforming our business systems and supporting more robust partnerships with state and local communities,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “By partnering with Cigna, we have extended our reach to help improve the way health care providers approach opioid use and we demonstrate our commitment to place Veterans’ safety and well-being above all.”

David M. Cordani, president and CEO of Cigna, agreed.

“Public-private partnerships are critical to address the opioid epidemic in the U.S.,” Cordani said. “It’s an honor and a privilege to partner with VA to support the brave men and women who served in the United States armed forces. We look forward to sharing our resources and best practices to benefit Veterans and the communities that support them.”

[VA’s Opioid Safety Initiative](#) has reduced the number of Veterans prescribed an opioid by more than 50% over the past six years. With more than 75% of this reduction attributed to not starting patients newly on long-term opioid therapy, VA is managing pain more effectively by using multiple strategies and alternative therapies, such as yoga, meditation and acupuncture. VA health care providers also participate in state prescription-drug monitoring programs and training to manage the opioid crisis.

Through the partnership, VA and Cigna will also promote existing supportive resources, such as the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) at 800-273-8255 and Cigna’s [Veterans Support Line](#) at 855-244-6211.

For more information, visit [VA Pain Management and Opioid Safety](#) and Cigna’s [Finding Consensus on Opioid Misuse is Critical to Overcoming It](#).

For more information on partnering with VA, visit [VA Health Partnerships](#).

###