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VA exceeds hiring goal of mental health providers by the thousands

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently surpassed its original goal to hire mental health providers by more than 1,000, through the [Mental Health Hiring Initiative](#), which aims to achieve higher standards of access and quality care.

Since 2017, VA has filled nearly 4,000 mental health positions nationwide, which provides nearly 120,000 more Veterans access to high-quality mental health services each year, including those in underserved and rural regions of the country.

“VA committed to improve access to mental health care in June 2017 as part of its top clinical priority to [prevent Veteran suicide](#),” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “As outlined in the [MISSION Act](#), VA will continue to recruit and retain the best health care providers to meet patient demand and provide quick access to mental health care. Building a clinical trainee pipeline of qualified health care professionals is crucial to future VA recruitment and sustainment efforts.”

Some of the success can be attributed to VA hosting its first-ever external virtual trainee hiring fair, where 74 mental health professionals completed training and accepted positions at VA facilities. The department is currently planning a second, internal virtual-trainee hiring event focused on connecting, matching and retaining current VA psychology trainees and placing them into vacant positions at VA facilities.

Staff were also empowered to develop facility-specific hiring and retention plans, which enabled them to hire as vacancies opened. Many facilities used national hiring announcements offering loan repayment and other incentives for attracting mental health professionals.

To learn more about VA health care employment opportunities and hiring events, visit: www.VAcareers.va.gov.

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