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Partnership for Public Service credits VA for customer experience improvements

The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, in collaboration with Accenture Federal Services, this month, released the study [Government for the People: Profiles on the Customer Experience](#)—finding that VA’s customer experience improvement efforts are showing positive results, citing reduced wait times for appointments, same-day mental health access at all medical centers, and an improved online experience.

The study also credits improved Veteran trust of the department to recent customer experience programs within the [Veterans Health Administration](#). In September 2019, 88% of Veterans nationwide said they “trust the VA for their health care needs” when responding to an outpatient health care survey, up from 85% two years earlier. The percentage of Veterans who said they trust the VA to fulfill our country’s commitment to Veterans increased to 72% in April 2019, from 59% in July 2016.

“Customer Experience is VA’s first priority,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “When Veterans come to VA, it is not up to them to get us to say yes. It’s up to us to get Veterans to yes. That’s an excellent customer experience, and we are taking bold steps to empower our employees with what they need to provide our Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors a consistent and world-class experience.”

The insights recognize the establishment of the [Veterans Experience Office](#) as a catalyst to launch major efforts aimed at improving online and in-person customer experiences. VA is one of two agencies of those reviewed that has a senior executive focused primarily on customer experience. Of the report’s 13 indicators that customer experience is a high priority to an agency, VA completely satisfies 11 and partially satisfies two.

Four of the essential indicators encourage a [mature customer feedback](#) program. Since 2016, the Veterans Signals program has received more than 4.1 million Veteran responses and has expanded to 35 surveys in real-time across the department. These surveys also act as a call for help by respondents, to date more than 1350 crisis alerts have been sent to the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) or the [National Call Center for Homeless](#) within minutes of receipt.

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