

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

# News Release

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## VA's version of 'Shark Tank' awards grassroots health care innovations

**WASHINGTON** — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to promote grassroots innovations throughout its health care system, the agency recently crowned winners from the [Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\) Innovation Ecosystem's](#) "Shark Tank" competition during the Oct. 23, [VHA Innovation Experience \(iEx\)](#) event.

The competition serves as a platform for employees to pitch their ideas for improving health care services for Veterans. The winners' innovations will be implemented at select facilities.

"This is a huge cultural shift from the way VA has done things in the past," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We can't solve everything from Washington. Events and competitions like VHA's 'Shark Tank' that showcase employees' innovative ideas, empowers frontline personnel to take charge to improve services in needed areas."

The 12 practices and 15 medical center director winners were chosen from a pool of more than 500 applicants. The winning practices include expanded digital health capabilities, improved access to care and suicide prevention. The partnership between the creators of the practice and selected facilities will kick off at the Diffusion of Excellence Base Camp in February 2020 at the [Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System](#).

To view the finalists' pitches from the 2019 VHA "Shark Tank" Competition visit the [VA YouTube page](#).

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