



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Nov. 15, 2019

## VA uses innovative means to help reduce diabetic limb loss

**WASHINGTON** – November is National Diabetes Month and as part of broader efforts by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to confront diabetes, Dec. 1, VA will begin regional implementation of the [Podimetrics Mat](#), a new medical device that has the potential to prevent limb loss in Veterans with diabetes.

The technology, now in use at 15 VA medical centers, uses thermographic monitoring of a patient's feet to identify early onset of diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs), which can lead to limb loss if not detected early.

Known as thermal imaging, the non-invasive test involves no radiation and uses a special camera to measure skin temperature. This allows clinicians to develop plans for preventing added deterioration of a patient's health.

"VA's early adoption of cutting edge, innovative solutions to combat a disease that impacts so many Veterans is another example of how VA is aiming to be a leader in health care innovation," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA is uniquely positioned in its ability to test and quickly scale new solutions throughout its health care system, which can drastically change Veteran lives."

VA's use of the Podimetrics Mat builds on a 2017 VA-led [study](#) at the Phoenix VA and the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Systems. The study showed the in-home foot-temperature monitoring device was able to detect 97% of DFUs as early as five weeks before the onset of symptoms, with 86% of participants using the mat an average of three days per week. With more medical centers offering use of the mat, VA has continued to observe similar outcomes. One VA facility found 84% of Veterans are using the mat almost daily, allowing preventative clinical interventions to take place.

The mat will be available to all Veterans across the country through their local Prevention of Amputations for Veterans Everywhere clinic providers. In addition, VA's [Veterans Health Administration Innovation Ecosystem](#) is implementing a pilot program of the mats at VA facilities in the southeast, where some of the highest DFU rates exist.

Through the effort, VA will be able to further evaluate best practices and optimize care models, ultimately improving the effectiveness of the technology in the VA health care system. Last year, VA treated more than 75,000 DFU cases across the country.

###