



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2020

VA virtual mental health care use on the rise amid COVID-19

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues, daily, to deliver quality and timely mental health care to Veterans, even as the COVID-19 pandemic has made traveling to VA facilities complex.

VA staff data shows a dramatic jump in virtual mental health care services in March, a sign Veterans are successfully accessing care despite the challenges the pandemic has presented. [VA Video Connect](#) allows Veterans to consult with their healthcare provider via their computer, tablet or phone. Also, during March, mental health providers completed more than 34,000 appointments with Veterans using VA Video Connect, an increase of 70% from the 20,000 appointments made in February, before the pandemic. Here's a breakdown of the increases.

- [Telehealth](#) group therapy conducted more than 2,700 visits in March, a jump of more than 200% from the prior month.
- [Mental health care and consultation](#) delivered by phone rose to more than 154,000 appointments in March, up 280% from the 40,000 appointments in February.
- [Vet Centers](#) across the nation held more than 47,000 virtual appointments in March, a 200% increase from February. These counseling sessions dealt with mental health issues.

Mental health care is especially important during stressful times such as these and VA invites Veterans to take advantage of the care they've earned. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said the numbers show VA has made a quick adjustment to ensure ongoing support to Veterans during these difficult times.

"VA is open for business and we continue to provide same-day mental health services and mental health screening for Veterans at-risk who require attention at any of our facilities," said Wilkie. "There is no doubt VA's early embrace of new technology is aiding Veterans and I applaud VA health care workers and Veteran patients for embracing it."

Veterans interested in learning more about scheduling a telehealth appointment can read the [latest VA information about the Coronavirus and mental health](#).

Veterans looking to connect to local VA staff by phone [can find their closest VA facility here](#).

For Veterans in crisis or those who are concerned, help is available at the [Veterans Crisis Line](#): 1-800-273-8255, and press 1, or text 838255, or chat www.VeteransCrisisLine.net.

For more information about VA's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how procedures have changed at your local VA, [click here](#).

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