

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

# News Release

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## VA researchers to study COVID-19 in aging Veterans with dementia

**WASHINGTON** – Researchers at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Providence VA Medical Center began, early April, studying the effect of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on Veterans living in VA Community Living Centers (CLCs).

The National Institute on Aging awarded a \$184,375 grant this month to the VA Center for Innovation in Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS-COIN).

Researchers will focus on the potential effects of COVID-19 on nursing home patients with cognitive decline resulting primarily from dementia.

The grant will allow researchers to examine risk factors for COVID-19 in these Veterans, outcomes of intensive care use and how the virus spreads through a CLC – knowledge VA will then use to better protect this group of patients.

"Veterans in our CLCs are among our most vulnerable patients," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "They're counting on us to understand how this virus spreads and how it affects certain populations in these centers, and this timely grant will help us get there."

The study is one of several steps VA is taking to protect Veterans living in CLCs, which are VA-operated nursing facilities for patients who are unable to care for themselves.

CLC neighborhoods usually accommodate eight to 12 Veterans with shared spaces for socializing, activities and meals.

VA responded quickly to ensure all CLCs complied with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for dealing with COVID-19, which included ensuring social distancing and monitoring for elevated temperatures and other symptoms.

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