

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2020

VA participating in drug, plasma trials in fight against COVID-19

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced participation in a series of clinical trials and investigations across the nation aimed at finding ways to mitigate or potentially prevent symptoms of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in patients.

The trials demonstrate the ability of VA — America’s largest integrated health care network that also maintains a significant capacity for research — to work with government and industry partners on a wide range of solutions during this national health crisis.

“We’re in a position to do things that no one else in the world can do to improve the health of our Veterans, the nation and the world,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA is bringing all of its expertise to bear during this crisis, and now we’re leading the way on research into pharmaceuticals and treatments that could improve the lives of thousands of patients.”

VA’s most far-reaching effort is its cooperation with the Mayo Clinic, which is studying whether blood transfusions from people who recovered from COVID-19 can help those who are still suffering with symptoms. Plasma from COVID-19 survivors contains antibodies that may help current patients.

In cooperation with this program, more than 60 of VA’s medical centers and clinics are prepared to perform transfusions of this plasma to COVID-19 patients.

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) approved expanded access to convalescent plasma transfusions in April. Patients who are interested in this program can [learn more here](#).

VA researchers are developing other clinical trials that will offer even more opportunities for Veterans. Many are in the planning stage, and some are already enrolling volunteer participants.

- VA medical centers in Denver, New Orleans and Palo Alto, California have joined a clinical trial led by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases that is assessing whether drugs such as Gilead Sciences Inc., remdesivir are effective against COVID-19. Veterans who want to participate can contact VA in those cities or [learn more here](#).
- In Atlanta, VA is working with Regeneron Pharmaceuticals to assess whether sarilumab, a drug normally taken to treat rheumatoid arthritis, may be an effective treatment. Veterans interested in this study can contact the Atlanta VA, and [read more about the trial here](#).

Additionally, VA will soon launch a study in parallel with the Department of Defense to better understand the epidemiology and clinical characteristics of COVID-19. That study is being coordinated by the Seattle VA Medical Center, with assistance from researchers in Durham, North Carolina; West Haven, Connecticut; Boston and Palo Alto.

###