FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VA prepares to welcome volunteers back to health care facilities

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today plans to gradually and safely reintroduce volunteers to its health care facilities.

While volunteers are important to the operation of VA services and programs, most volunteer activities have been paused to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

"Just as our facilities are gradually reinstating services, volunteers are slowly reintegrating into them," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Volunteers are an integral part of our health care teams, offering fundamental services. We look forward to their return."

Some volunteer roles will be new, while others will stay the same, be modified, go virtual or remain paused as a precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Individual VA facilities will tailor the reintegration of volunteers based on the facilities' operational needs and the volunteers' abilities.

Volunteers can expect the following safety measures:

- **Phased reentry:** Volunteers are being asked to return to duty on an as-needed basis while maintaining physical distancing. VA asks that volunteers do not return to the facility unless they have been approved to do so.
- **Retraining:** Volunteers must complete an orientation and training on VA's policies and procedures. This includes the proper use of personal protective equipment including face coverings.
- **Health screenings:** Volunteers, like staff and patients, must consent to being screened for COVID-19 exposure and symptoms prior to entering facilities.

These actions are being taken to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of Veterans, staff and volunteers.

Visit VA Voluntary Service for more information.

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