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# News Release

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## **VA, VFW open telehealth access point in rural Pennsylvania**

*Partnership helps provide timely telehealth care to Veterans in rural areas*

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) opened a new [ATLAS \(Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations\)](#) site this week at Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7842 in Linesville.

This ATLAS site gives Veterans associated with the Erie VA Medical Center the option to receive VA care closer to home, in a setting that feels like a doctor's office, offering both the technology and privacy for Veterans to connect with their VA care team through a video visit.

The sites allow VA to provide services that do not require hands-on exams, such as counseling for mental health and nutrition; and selected primary care and social work visits. Establishing these points of care closer to Veterans' homes allows for reducing obstacles and increasing attainability to care.

"The ATLAS initiative is designed to provide convenient access to VA health care for Veterans living in rural areas, those with limited internet access and who don't have a convenient location to connect with VA by video from their home" said VA Chief Officer of [Connected Care](#), Neil Evans, M.D. "Telehealth has long been a principal part of VA's care delivery to Veterans, even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic."

VA has established procedures at ATLAS sites to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These procedures are based on guidelines from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#). The ATLAS site at VFW Post 7842 is also following local and state guidelines for prevention of COVID-19.

"By availing our VFW posts to create ATLAS sites, we provide a familiar trusted resource for Veterans trying to navigate today's health care system," said VFW National Commander Harold "Hal" Roesch II. "Additionally, we have the opportunity to provide communities the help they need during one of the most challenging health crises in our lifetime."

The [Secretary's Center for Strategic Partnerships](#) has facilitated collaborations with Philips North America, The American Legion, VFW and Walmart to provide convenient locations with private appointment space for Veterans to receive care. Veterans meet with their VA providers at ATLAS sites through the [VA Video Connect app](#), VA's secure videoconferencing platform.

ATLAS is part of VA's [Anywhere to Anywhere](#) initiative, which works to better serve the almost 9 million Veterans who receive care through VA — no matter where they choose to live. VA plans to expand the ATLAS initiative to more sites nationwide by 2023.

To learn more about ATLAS, visit [VA's Office of Connected Care](#).

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