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VA-led coalition embarks on combined effort to prevent hospital acquired pneumonia in U.S. hospitals

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launches an organized effort to assist in the prevention of hospital acquired pneumonia in VA and private hospitals across the country.

The effort, known as [National Organization for NV-HAP Prevention \(NOHAP\)](#) encourages patients to practice consistent oral hygiene as a simple measure to aid in the prevention of hospital acquired pneumonia.

Each year, it is estimated that more than 35 million patients in the U.S. are at risk for non-ventilator associated hospital acquired pneumonia at a cost of roughly \$3 billion.

[“VA has successfully shown](#) patients who brush their teeth a few times a day can dramatically reduce the risk of pneumonia,” said VA Chief Officer of Health Care Innovation and Learning Ryan Vega, M.D. “The practice may also reduce the severity of a COVID-19 infection by lowering the probability of a secondary bacterial pneumonia — a frequent occurrence seen with the virus.”

Other members of the NOHAP group include representatives from [The Joint Commission](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Dental Association, Patient Safety Movement Foundation and various organizations from the private sector and academia.

“This is a simple solution to a costly problem,” said Director of CDC’s Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion Denise Cardo, M.D. “The most recent CDC data shows hospitals are succeeding in their efforts to eliminate certain types of health care-associated infections. However, the prevalence of pneumonia in hospitalized patients has not changed and continues to be the most common health care-associated infection.”

With the support of VA’s [Diffusion of Excellence](#), [Office of Nursing Services](#) and [Quality Enhancement Research Initiative](#), the practice has spread to 107 VA facilities across the nation, helping make Veterans under VA care safer.

Learn more about [NOHAP](#).

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