

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

# News Release

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## VHA observes 75 years, 1 billion hours of volunteerism

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) celebrates its 75-year milestone anniversary during National Volunteer Week, April 18–24.

In 1946, VA established the Department of Medicine and Surgery (DM&S), the organization that would later become the Veterans Health Administration and provide health care to Veterans as a core mission.

[VA Voluntary Service](#) (VAVS) was one of the foundational programs created in the newly established DM&S which is marking 1 billion hours volunteers have given of their time in service to Veterans at VA facilities.

“Volunteers are a priceless asset and our Veterans greatly appreciate what they do and have done for three quarters of a century,” said Center for Development and Civic Engagement Director Sabrina Clark. “VA volunteerism is a tradition that has created opportunities for volunteers to serve Veterans, even during a global pandemic.”

At the beginning of VHA’s COVID-19 response, VAVS adapted its program to meet the needs of Veterans. Although in-person volunteer engagements were limited, VAVS designed new virtual assignments and galvanized volunteers and organizations to donate items, such as handmade masks, personal protective equipment, smart tablets for Veterans to stay in touch with loved ones, and even meals for frontline workers.

Where many believed volunteer operations to be suspended, VAVS continued its mission to involve the American public in civic engagement activities on behalf of the nation’s Veterans. They saw approximately 46,000 volunteers on the rolls during 2020, contributing more than 4.4 million hours of service, and \$108 million in gifts and donations; resulting in a value-added resource of approximately \$227 million to VA, Veterans, families and caregivers.

To learn more about available volunteer opportunities and join the mission to honor the sacrifice and service of America's Veterans, contact [VA Voluntary Service](#).

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