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# News Release

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(202) 461-7600  
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## VA VETSmile pilot program to improve affordable dental care access for Veterans

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs launched a new initiative with community dental care providers to help improve dental care access for Veterans enrolled in [VA health care](#) who are [currently ineligible](#) for [VA dental services](#).

[VETSmile: Connecting Veterans with Dentists in their Communities](#) started early July to help [eligible](#) Veterans access free or discounted dental services at pilot sites in New York City and New Jersey through dental care providers at New York University College of Dentistry, Zuffall Health Center and Rutgers School of Dental Medicine.

VETSmile is a Community Provider Collaborations for Veterans pilot program authorized under [Section 152 of the VA MISSION Act of 2018](#). It is the pilot program with a waiver request submitted to Congress under this authority.

“VETSmile is an opportunity for us to bridge the gap in Veterans’ access to continuous, accessible and affordable oral care, which is crucial for their overall wellbeing,” said [Center for Care and Payment Innovation](#) Acting Executive Director Roshni Ghosh, M.D. “[VHA’s Center for Care and Payment Innovation](#) plans to rapidly accelerate efforts to broaden VETSmile dental care partnerships in additional states after implementation at initial sites.”

For eligible Veterans who do not have regular dentists, partnering dental care sites will provide dental care and services. Depending on the community provider, the services offered to eligible Veterans will include:

- Acute emergency dental care.
- Preventive oral care.
- Treatment of oral disease.
- Dental restoration, endodontics and periodontics.

Additionally, dental care partners provide Veterans with oral health education to encourage adoption of routine oral hygiene practices.

VETSmile expects to serve 3,900 Veterans through 9,000 Veteran patient visits in the first year. The numbers are expected to increase as the pilot reaches other geographic locations.

The program will carry on for the next five years and will be assessed for scaling or an extension. Sustained partnerships with the American Dental Association, the National Association of Community Health Centers, and VA Dentistry support the development and success of this pilot.

Learn more about the VETSmile program, visit [VETSmile | VA Center for Care and Payment Innovation](#).

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