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Third report details VA's continued efforts addressing COVID-19 pandemic

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs releases the third iteration of its [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Response Report - Annex B](#) addressing the pandemic from Jan. 1 through July 31.

This builds on the work captured in the department's two previous reports, [COVID-19 Response Plan](#) and [Annex A](#), which offer the public an [inside look](#) at the nation's largest integrated health care system's response to COVID-19.

"As we continue to address the pandemic and as new variants arise, it is clear that continuous learning and improvement are essential to a successful COVID-19 response," said Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Health, Steven L. Lieberman, M.D. "We will continue to update this report to document our efforts so Veterans, doctors and the public can understand and learn from what we've discovered to better serve our Veterans and communities."

Annex B captures and shares lessons learned from VA's successes, challenges and experiences related to the pandemic, in the interest of shared approaches to national improvement in COVID-19 response efforts. It also presents updated findings and recommendations across broad coordinated efforts, including adaptations as the pandemic evolved. Notably the report details VA:

- Planned and executed a successful mass vaccination campaign that vaccinated over 2.5 million people while sustaining all other aspects of the pandemic response and Veteran health services.
- Implemented a vaccine mandate for all VA employees in health care roles and was the first federal agency and one of the first health care systems to issue such a mandate.
- Conducted extensive COVID-19 testing, processing as many as 70,000-90,000 tests per week.
- Enhanced telehealth services to reach home-based and rural Veterans, resulting in an almost 2,500% increase in home-based primary care throughout the pandemic.
- Published [more than 300 studies](#) on COVID-19.
- Carried out 158 Federal Emergency Management Agency [Fourth Mission assignments](#), including 43 assignments that began during the Annex B period.
- Convened pulmonary community practice experts and other specialists to review data on [Long COVID](#) — a range of symptoms that can last weeks or months after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and/or can appear weeks after infection.

Overall, the report found VA sustained a well-coordinated response across the Veterans Health Administration's 18 [Veterans Integrated Service Networks](#) while playing a strong role in the federal response and contributing significantly to national strategies to enhance preparedness as the nation continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full version of Annex B and the previous reports can be found [here](#).

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