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VA shares implementation plan and locations of PAWS Act pilot program

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs published a [Federal Register Notice](#), March 30, on its plan for implementing the pilot program required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act.

The [PAWS Act](#), signed into law Aug. 25, 2021, requires VA to conduct a five-year pilot program to provide canine training to eligible Veterans diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder as an element of a complementary and integrative health program.

“Our pilot will help us explore the benefits of service dog training and give us the data we need to make recommendations to Congress on the way forward,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “There are many effective treatments for PTSD and we’re looking at service dog training as an adjunct to those options to ensure Veterans have access to resources that may improve their well-being and help them thrive.”

Veterans participating in the program will have the opportunity to train potential future service dogs with the goal of helping Veterans manage their PTSD symptoms.

The pilot program will be offered at the following five VA medical centers:

- Anchorage, Alaska.
- Asheville, N.C.
- Palo Alto, Calif.
- San Antonio, Texas.
- West Palm Beach, Fla.

Clinicians at the pilot sites will determine the eligibility of Veterans interested in the pilot program. Agreements with the participating organizations that will furnish the training have not yet been finalized.

Visit [Implementation of the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act](#) for information on the PAWS Pilot program and timeline.

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