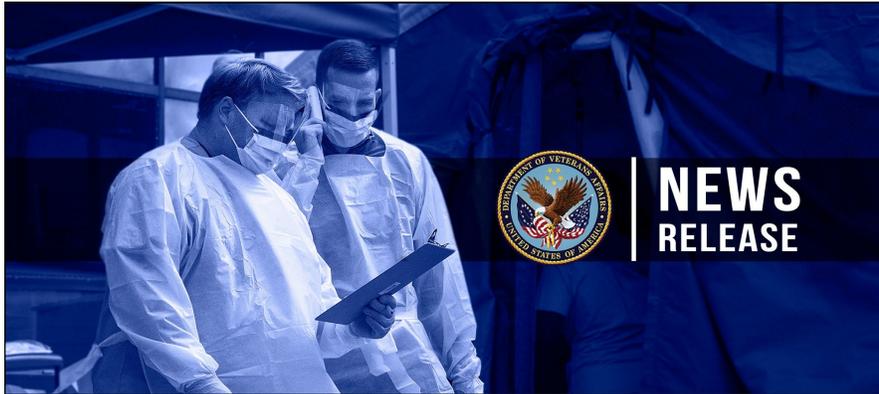


# VETERANS UPDATE

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## VA STUDIES COVID-19 EFFECTS ON VETS



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs began a national four-year study on the impact of COVID-19 on Veterans to help address critical questions about the disease.

Known as EPIC3, for Epidemiology, Immunology and Clinical Characteristics of COVID-19, researchers will study data and specimens, such as throat swabs and blood, to

learn how the virus that causes COVID-19 has affected Veterans.

“By analyzing data on COVID-19 risk factors, progression, outcomes and immunity, this VA research promises to significantly advance the fight against the disease,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The study will complement a similar effort by the Department of Defense.”

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*All in-person events and meetings are being rescheduled during the response to COVID-19.*

Wednesdays in June, **Women Veteran Networking Group**, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., telephone meeting, 844-376-0278, code 646380655#

The study involves Veterans infected with COVID-19 and those who have recovered or who may be at risk, but have not been infected. The Veterans are volunteer inpatients, outpatients and residents from VA’s Community Living Centers. Each study cohort consists of hundreds of Veterans.

To learn more about VA research, visit <https://www.research.va.gov>.

## WE’RE STILL HERE FOR YOU — IN PERSON AND ONLINE

The "new normal" caused by the coronavirus can be frustrating. It's not always easy conducting VA business online when you're used to a more personal touch. We're still here for you, both in person — allowing for safety measures — and online.

While Rhode Island and other states begin to reopen for business, it's important to keep up good habits to reduce coronavirus exposure, like safe distancing, handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes.

Learn more at [www.va.gov/coronavirus](http://www.va.gov/coronavirus).



## VA NEW ENGLAND SUPPORTS COMMUNITY



Photo of the Providence VA Medical Center in Providence, R.I. Volunteers from the VA Providence, along with the rest of the VA New England Healthcare System, continue to help Veteran and community facilities in New England during the COVID-19 response. (VA Providence photo by Winfield Danielson)

**V**A New England Healthcare System staff continue to do their part in helping Veteran and civilian patients overcome COVID-19, volunteering with community facilities in New Jersey and New England.

The efforts are part of VA's national initiative to exercise its "Fourth Mission" to help local communities and health care facilities in times of national emergency. States may request assistance from the federal government through their state's Department of Health and Human Services Regional Emergency Coordinator as part of FEMA's National Response Coordination Center. Counties and other municipalities make their requests for federal support through their respective states.

"We are in this fight for as long as our nation needs our help," said Ryan Lilly, VA New England network director. "Our highly trained clinical teams are saving lives, and it's a testament to our volunteers that they are doing what they can with great empathy and humility to serve others

— no matter if it's here in New England or anywhere."

As part of this effort, 11 certified nursing assistants and one licensed practical nurse were sent in May to the state-run Rhode Island Veterans Home in Bristol, R.I. The volunteers came from VA medical centers in Providence, West Haven, Conn., and the VA Central Western Mass. Healthcare System.

Another 13 staff members from VA medical centers in Augusta, Maine, West Haven, Conn., and Manchester, N.H. — including six registered nurses, five certified nursing assistants and two nurse practitioners — are supporting care for civilians at five nursing homes in New Jersey that have been hard hit with COVID-19.

"This is an opportunity for serving Veterans with top quality care — to help those who have served us," said Ashley James, a certified nursing assistant at the West Haven VA Medical Center in Connecticut, who is on a two-week assignment to the Rhode Island State Veterans Home.

Since early March, more than 240 VA New England staff mem-



### Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:  
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):  
401-457-3336

Pharmacy Call Center:  
866-400-1241

Website:  
[www.providence.va.gov](http://www.providence.va.gov)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/  
VAProvidence](https://facebook.com/VAProvidence)

Twitter:  
[twitter.com/VAProvidence](https://twitter.com/VAProvidence)

bers have deployed to assist in COVID-19 operations, including 31 who assisted with care for civilian patients at private nursing homes and group homes in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. More than 150 staff were also sent from various VA New England medical centers to assist sister VA facilities in Bedford, Mass., and Boston.