

SAVE OUR VA!

TALKING POINTS

THE VA'S VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA) IS WORLD CLASS

KEY POINTS

Upholding the VA's mission and obligation as the primary provider of veterans' healthcare services must remain a priority for Congress and the VA. The goal must always be to achieve the best healthcare outcomes for veterans.

In a press conference, ask any veteran who uses the VHA to describe his/her positive experiences with VA healthcare especially its integrated system.

VETERANS BELIEVE THE VHA PROVIDES THE BEST HEALTHCARE ANYWHERE FOR VETERANS.

When surveyed veterans overwhelmingly give positive consumer satisfaction with VA healthcare. More than 86% of veterans say they want continued, uninterrupted care from their VHA. All the major veteran's organizations support the excellent services provided by the VHA and oppose privatization.

THE VHA IS THE LARGEST, FULLY-INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN THE U.S.

Its doctors and nurses view healthcare as a system, not just a collection of individual doctors treating individual patients. Primary-care is organized by teams of physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals who work together in collaboration and complementary ways to meet the needs of their patients. Patients are treated in a holistic, whole person manner, rather than as a collage of disparate clinical conditions. For example, the primary care team may refer a patient with diabetes or PTSD, for example, to talk to a nutritionist about a diet, a pharmacist about how to correctly administer insulin, or a mental health professional, all of whom are just a walk down the hall.

VHA PROVIDES HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE.

VHA nurses, doctors, and mental health providers have the cultural awareness and competency to treat veterans. The VHA is the only health care system in the country that offers a holistic approach to health care that can help patients with transportation, caregiver support, clothing allowances and provide family caregivers relief support. It is also the only health care system in the country that addresses social determinants of health such as homelessness, poverty, or abuse.

VHA EXPERTISE COMBAT INJURIES.

The VHA has unparalleled expertise in combat related diseases and illnesses such as spinal cord injury, PTSD, military sexual trauma-related conditions, traumatic brain injury, prosthetic rehabilitation, and mental health services.

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VHA CARE BETTER THAN PRIVATE SECTOR.

Although the VHA treats veterans who are sicker, poorer, and have fewer support services than patients of the same age who are not veterans, study after study documents the VHA's integrated health care system provides high-quality care that, with few exceptions, meets or exceeds health care outcomes provided by private sector doctors and hospitals. A recent Dartmouth study found the VHA provided care that outperformed private hospitals in most health care markets across the country.

VHA WAIT TIMES BETTER THAN PRIVATE SECTOR.

Those who seek to privatize the VHA amplify the notion that isolated incidents of long waits are the norm at the VHA, instead of the exception. A JAMA published study in January 2019, shows wait times are better at the VHA for care than in the private sector, 18 days compared to 30 days on average. There is no guarantee that a veteran who is referred to the private sector will be seen any faster than staying with the VHA.

VHA - NOT THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- PROVIDES VETERANS COMMUNITY.

The VHA is a place where veterans heal together as a community and find camaraderie with others who share similar experiences. Thirty percent of the staff at the VHA are veterans themselves.

TREATS PTSD AND DEPRESSION.

The VA is uniquely qualified to work with those suffering from PTSD or depression and will dispatch a team to check in on veterans who have a history of mental health issues if they fail to show up for their appointments or meetings.

HELPS HOMELESS VETS.

The VA sends teams into the community to find homeless veterans who may live "off the grid" in encampments, or in unconventional lodging situations to make sure they are offered the care or medications they may need.

THE VHA TRAINS MOST OF AMERICA'S HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.

After World War II the VHA began to partner with the nation's medical schools and soon were using their facilities to help train medical internists and residents. Now they have established partnerships with 1,800 educational institutions for health professionals and train 62,000 medical students and residents each year, as well as 23,000 nursing students and 33,000 health professional students in other fields.

About 70% of all physicians in the United States have received all or part of their training in VHA facilities. No other institution in America trains more healthcare professionals than the VHA.

THE VHA IS A HEALTHCARE RESEARCH POWERHOUSE.

Most VHA doctors have faculty appointments with academic hospitals. **The VHA is one of the nation's largest research powerhouses that conducts cutting-edge, evidence-based research to improve the health of veterans.** Over the years two VHA researchers have won the Nobel Prize for medicine. VHA innovations have included the development of the CT scanner, the first artificial kidney, the development of the cardiac pacemaker, the first successful liver transplant and the nicotine patch, plus many advanced prosthetic devices, including hydraulic knees and robotic arms. In 2015 alone, VHA researchers published 9,489 papers. Its staff has produced scientific advances benefiting all Americans like the shingles vaccine.

Visit the VFP website
www.veteransforpeace.org
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