

SERVING VETERANS IN HEALTH CENTERS

Veterans and the Community
Care Network (CCN):
A Backgrounder and Toolkit
for FQHCs

July 2022 Update

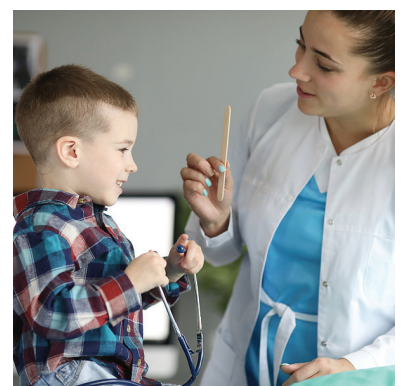


NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers

THE NACHC MISSION

America's Voice for Community Health Care

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.



TOOLKIT PURPOSE

This toolkit is intended to provide information about Veterans, Veteran healthcare, and how health centers can provide care to Veterans through VA's Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP).

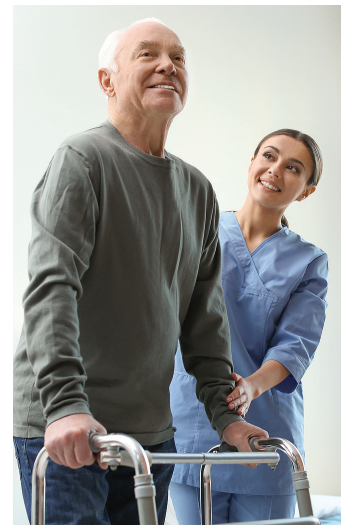
The toolkit also includes resources for health centers generally interested in expanding their efforts to serve Veterans.

The information provided in this toolkit can be used to educate healthcare providers and other health center employees and guide outreach to Veterans in the community.

Please note: The Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP) is the official name of the VA's community care program. The Community Care Network (CCN) refers to the network of Third-Party Administrators (TPAs) that VA contracts with to provide these care services. In this document, VCCP and CCN are used interchangeably to generally refer to VA's community care program.

TOOLKIT TOPICS

1. Veterans & Healthcare
2. Veteran Services in Health Centers
3. Veteran Community Care Today
4. Providing Community Care to Veterans
5. Resources

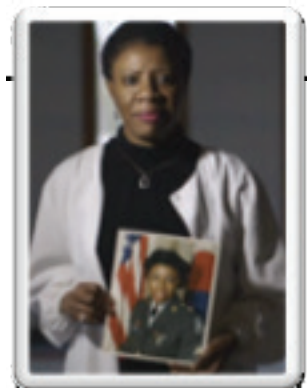
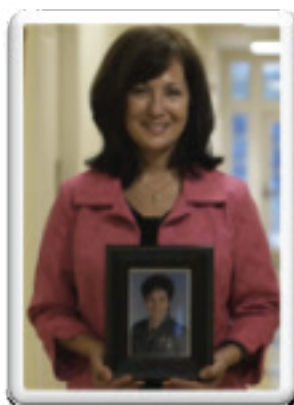
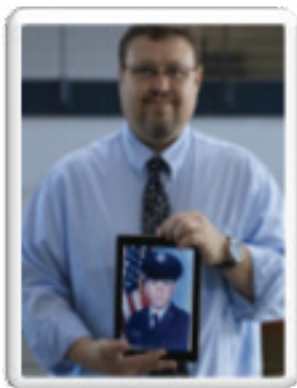
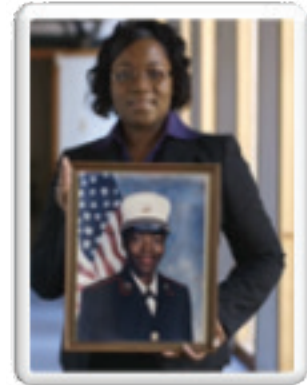


1.

VETERANS & HEALTHCARE

Who is a Veteran?

In general, a Veteran is a person who served on active duty in the Coast Guard, Army Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Commissioned Officers of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and did not receive a dishonorable discharge.*



* Please note that the eligibility criteria is subject to change.
For the most current list of eligibility criteria, please visit:
<https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp>

1.

VETERANS & HEALTHCARE

Veterans Eligible for VA Healthcare

Are all Veterans eligible for VA Healthcare?

No; only veterans who:

- were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
- are former or current Reservists, if they served for the full period of active duty for which they were called (excludes training purposes)
- are former or current National Guard members if activated/mobilized by a federal order for active duty

There are more than 19 million Veterans in the United States, and approximately 9 million are enrolled in VA Healthcare¹

DID YOU KNOW?

Many Veterans don't self-identify. Asking if someone has "ever served" results in more accurate responses than asking if someone is a "Veteran," especially among women.

HEALTH CENTER PRO TIPS!

- Health Centers can help eligible Veterans enroll in the VA healthcare they've earned by asking everyone ***"have you served?"***
- Health Centers can connect individuals who've served to their local county or state Veteran service officers to determine eligibility and enrollment

¹ <https://www.va.gov/health/>

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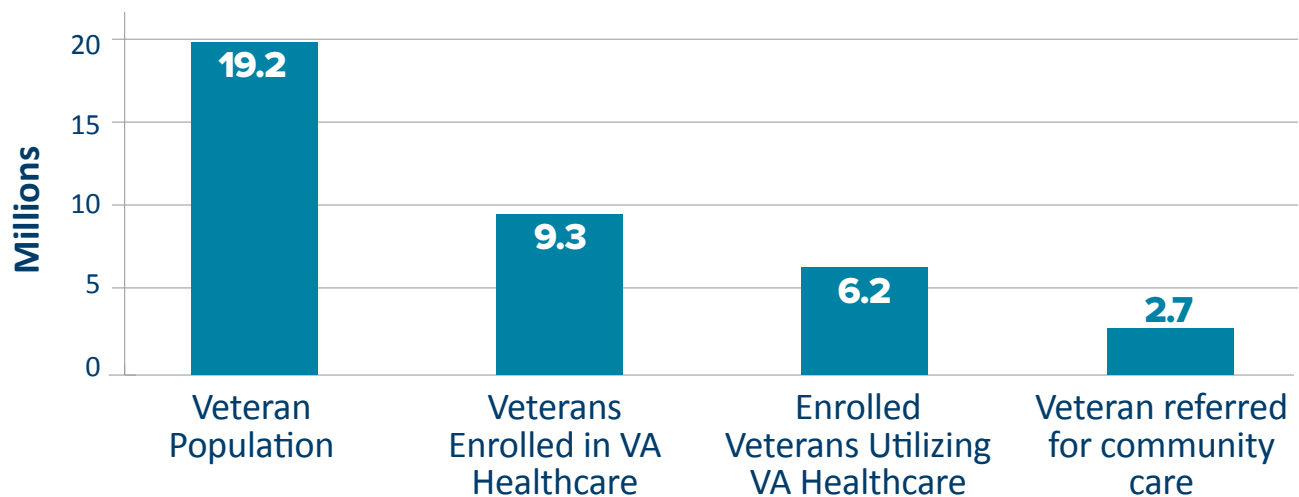
VETERANS & HEALTHCARE

Veteran Population Snapshot

Veteran Population in the U.S. & Utilization of Community Care

- There are **19.2 million living veterans**¹
- **9.3 million veterans are enrolled in VA healthcare system, and potentially eligible to receive care from providers in VA's Community Care Network**¹
- **6.2 million veterans received care from VHA in 2020**²
- **2.7 million veterans were referred by VA for community care since implementation of the VA MISSION Act on June 6, 2019**³

Veteran Utilization of Community Care



- While only **14%** of veterans have been referred by VA for community care since 2019, FQHCs can still serve veterans in their community regardless of a veteran's enrollment status in VA healthcare.
- In fact, it is estimated that there are over **1.5 million uninsured veterans**, and over **2 million veterans who defer receiving care because of cost**.⁴

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VETERANS & HEALTHCARE

Veteran Population Snapshot

Demographics of Veterans compared to US Population

	Veterans	US Population
Gender (percent female)	10% ¹	51% ⁵
Working Age Adults (18 – 64 years old)	54% ⁶	61% ⁵
Median Income	\$43,541 ⁷	\$35,384 ⁵
Poverty Rate	6.7% ⁷	11.4% ⁵
Geography (percent rural)	24% ⁸	14% ⁹

1. Department of Veterans Affairs Statistics at a Glance, March 31, 2022. https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/Stats_at_a_glance_3_31_22.PDF
2. The Veterans Community Care Program: Background and Early Effects. 2021. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/57583>
3. Innovations in Community Care Programs, Policies, and Research, May 2021. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8132891/#:~:text=Since%20the%20implementation%20of%20the,Community%20Care%20Network%20\(CCN\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8132891/#:~:text=Since%20the%20implementation%20of%20the,Community%20Care%20Network%20(CCN))
4. Lack of Care for those who Serve: Healthcare Coverage and Access among US Veterans, 2019. <https://www.citizen.org/wp-content/uploads/Lack-of-Care-for-those-Who-Serve-Final-DS.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=1e9e9344-4acd-46ca-b7ee-3bf9862d7ed9>
5. US Census Bureau 2021 Population Estimates. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045221>
6. National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics, The Veteran Population Projection Model. https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp
7. American Community Survey. U.S. Census 2020. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2101&tid=ACSST5Y2020.S2101>
8. VA Office of Rural Health, Rural Veteran Health Care Challenges. 2022. <https://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/aboutus/ruralvets.asp>
9. USDA Rural America at a Glance, 2021. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102576/eib-230.pdf?v=4409#:~:text=The%2046%20million%20U.S.%20residents,23%2C000%20people%20compared%20with%20245%2C000.>

1.

VETERANS & HEALTHCARE

Where do Veterans Receive Healthcare?

VA healthcare is the country's largest integrated healthcare system with more than **1,200 care locations**.

Community Health Centers (CHCs) Role:

- **Community Care.** If the nearest VA location cannot provide the services a Veteran needs, they can receive care from a provider in their local community through the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP), provided they meet at least one of the six eligibility criteria (see page 10). Providers that join the VCCP participate in the Community Care Network (CCN).

Veterans receive care in the following VA settings¹:

- **VA medical centers (VAMCs),** which offer a range of traditional and advanced hospital services.
- **VA community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs),** which provide the most common outpatient services (like health and wellness visits) for routine appointments in a convenient location.
- **Vet Centers,** which provide community-based counseling, outreach, and referral services to Veterans who served in a combat zone as well as to their families. Mobile Vet Centers also help bring care to more rural locations.
- **VA Community Living Centers,** which support Veterans who need more intense nursing care and help with everyday tasks.
- **Veteran's own home.** If needed, Veterans may get medical treatment, nursing care, or help with everyday tasks in the comfort of their own home.
- **Telehealth.** Veterans who qualify to receive VA care and live in one of the 50 states or a U.S. territory are eligible to use VA telehealth. Learn more: <https://telehealth.va.gov/>

¹ Some Veterans are eligible to receive care in other federal health facilities such as DOD Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). <https://www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/where-you-go-for-care/>



VETERAN SERVICES IN HEALTH CENTERS

Why NACHC is Working to Expand Health Center Capacity to Serve Veterans

Veterans are often forgotten – but are valuable members of our communities who have struggled with access to high quality healthcare in places where there’s not an existing VA facility

For over 50 years, health centers have proudly served Veterans and their families in need of care. Serving Veterans is enabled by VA authorizing legislation (VA MISSION Act 2016, 2018):

- Section 101 of the VA Mission Act specifically identifies that any Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) may provide care to eligible Veterans under the provisions of the VA VCCP
- The MISSION Act makes it easier for Veterans to access the local health care they need, when and where they need it

Providing care to Veterans in our communities:

- Is aligned with a FQHC’s mission to ensure access for all
- Provides an opportunity for potential additional revenue
- Creates community impact
- Offers opportunity for partnership with Veteran Service Organizations, Veteran Service Officers, and other Veteran-focused non-profits or philanthropic organizations

2.

VETERAN SERVICES IN HEALTH CENTERS

Who Can Receive Community Care?

Under the MISSION Act, there are six eligibility criteria for a Veteran to seek community care:

1. The specific care they need is not provided by any VA facility
2. They reside in a U.S. state (AK, HI, or NH) or territory (Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, or U.S. Virgin Islands) that does not have a full-service VA medical facility
3. They have “grandfathered” eligibility based on their residence and the 40-mile eligibility criterion from the Choice program
4. The specific care needed is not available within designated access standards
5. The Veteran and their referring clinician decide it is in the Veteran’s best medical interest to seek specific care in the community
6. VA has designated the VA medical service line delivering the specific care needed as not providing care that complies with VA’s standards for quality

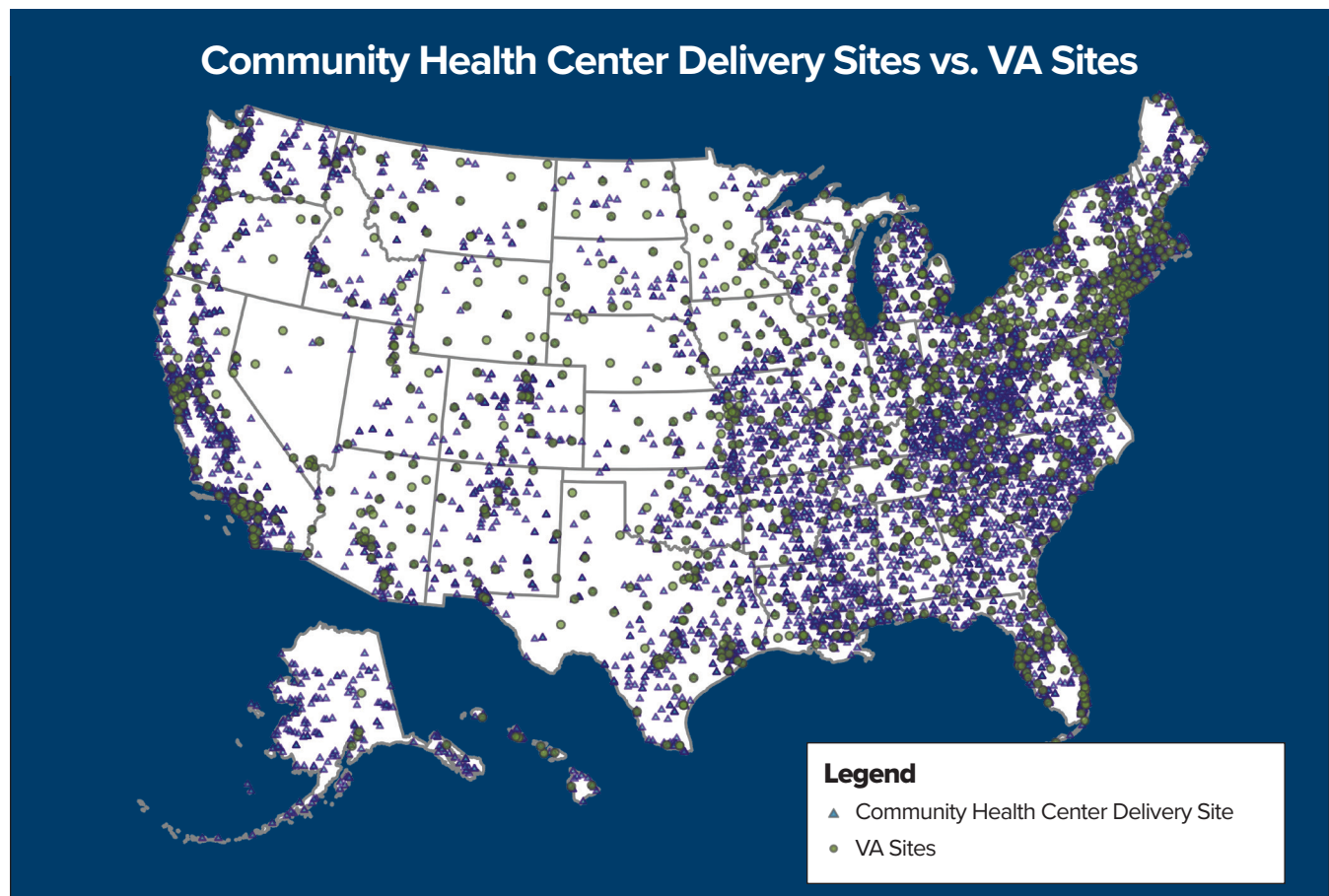
If a Veteran meets any of these criteria, they are eligible to receive care from a community provider in VA’s network.

2.

VETERAN SERVICES IN HEALTH CENTERS

Why Health Center Capacity Matters for Veterans

Nationally, nearly 1,400 HRSA-funded health centers operate over 12,000 sites and provide care to **29 million people; over 385,000 are Veterans**².



The VA can't be everywhere. With 1,239 VA sites across the country, community health centers help fill the gap in thousands of communities.

About 95% of health centers and 70% of health center look-alikes served Veterans in 2018.

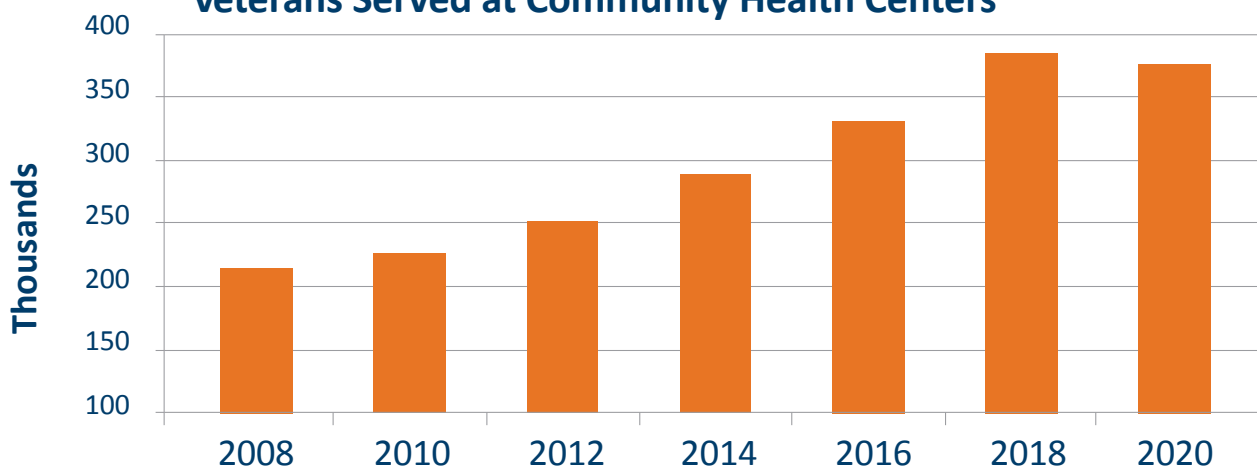
²<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bphc/datareporting/pdf/2020-uds-manual.pdf>



VETERAN SERVICES IN HEALTH CENTERS

Health Centers Increase Access for Veterans

Veterans Served at Community Health Centers



2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2008-2020 growth
213,841	226,019	251,188	289,391	330,271	385,222	376,634	76.1%

Source: <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/data-reporting/program-data/national>

Source: 2020 Uniform Data System. Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, DHHS.
<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/datacenter.aspx?q=t4&year=2018&state=>

2.

VETERAN SERVICES IN HEALTH CENTERS

Community Health Center—Veteran Service Success Stories

Health Centers around the country have made efforts to actively engage and serve Veterans in their communities. NACHC continues to help Health Centers understand and participate in VA programs.

Health Center Spotlights

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, Washington

Lincoln Community Health Center, Oregon

Four Health Centers Target Health and Wellness for Missouri's Veterans
Ozarks Community Health Center, KC Care Health Center, Affinia Health Care, and Northeast Missouri Health Council

Family Health Center of Marshfield, Wisconsin

Northwest Michigan Health Services Inc., Michigan

Union Community Health Center, New York City

Zufall Community Health Center, New Jersey

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services

Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc.

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN Health Services Inc

UCCHC UNION COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

ZUFALL HEALTH COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Find the full stories here:

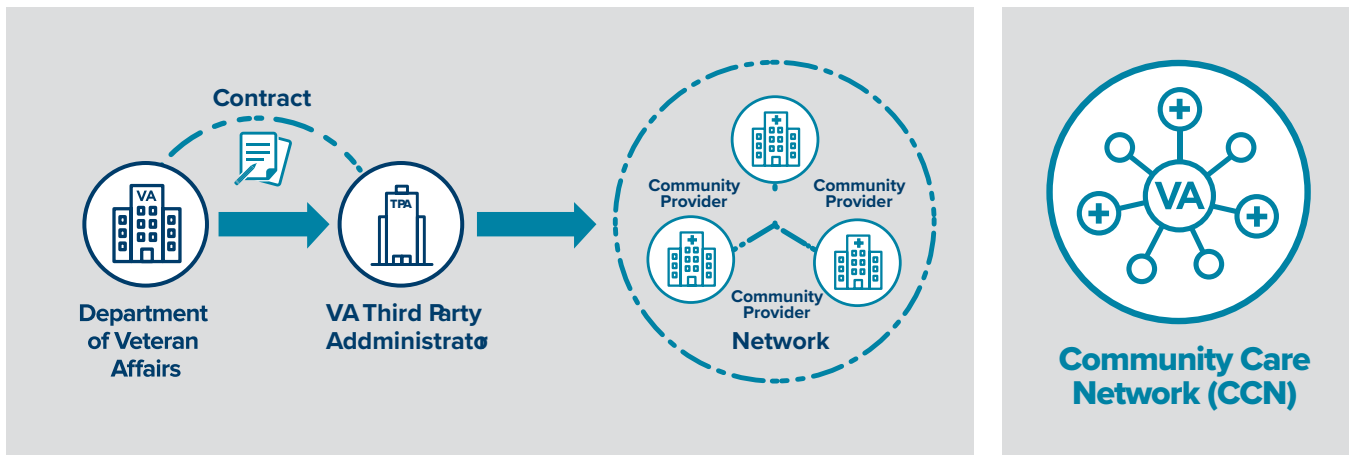
Health Center Resource Clearinghouse www.healthcenterinfo.org (Search Veterans)

3.

VETERAN COMMUNITY CARE TODAY

Veteran Community Care Program

Community Care Network (CCN) is a high-performing network of credentialed healthcare providers and practitioners that provide medical, surgical, complimentary and integrative health services (CIHS), durable medical equipment (DME), pharmacy, and dental services to Veterans.



The program purchases care for Veterans in their community and is the preferred national network of the VA. When Community Health Centers participate in the VA Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP) they become members of the CCN.

CCN Fact Sheet:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/pubfiles/factsheets/FactSheet_26-01.pdf#

4.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY CARE TO VETERANS

Over 3,820 Federally Qualified Community Health Center delivery sites currently participate in the CCN, providing nearly 4,000 health services*.

Requirements to Become a Community Care Provider:

- Enter into a contract with the TPA for your region of CCN
- Have a National Provider Identifier (NPI) from the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System, which is issued at no cost
- Use NPI and referral number to conduct all business activities with VA, including medical, dental, and pharmacy transactions
- Be credentialed in accordance with the requirements for your region of CCN. Work directly with the TPA to complete the credentialing process
- Work with the TPA to become a preferred provider. Requirements are being established but may include training on Veteran-related subject matters



*Reported by VA-VHA Office of Community Care as of March 2022

4.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY CARE TO VETERANS

Enroll with Regional Third Party Administrators (TPAs) to Join the VA Community Care Program

All Community Health Centers must execute a new contract with their region's TPA, even if they had Choice contracts in place previously.



FQHCs in **Regions 1–3**
Contact Optum:
Region 1: 888-901-7407
Region 2: 844-839-6108
Region 3: 888-901-6613



FQHCs in **Regions 4-5**
Contact TriWest:
Web Form (Preferred): <https://ccn.triwest.com/Forms/AddProvider.aspx>
ProviderServices@TriWest.com
877-CCN-TRIW (877-226-8749)

4.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY CARE TO VETERANS

Who Does What in Community Care? Key Functions and Roles

Function	Roles
Building the Network	TPA has responsibility to build the network and provide a credentialed network.
Care Coordination	VA does the care coordination with the Veteran and providers.
Eligibility	VA determines and exchanges information with the Provider
Referral and Authorization	<p>VA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA sends referrals to providers through a cloud-based system called HSRM <p>TPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives and processes referrals throughout the day (immediately and hourly) <p>FQHC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives referrals from VA
Scheduling	<p>VA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurs at local VA facility or directly by Veteran Uses master directory of care provider options provided by TPAs <p>TPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can occur by TPA when the VA Medical Center opts in for this contracted task <p>FQHC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives appointment request from VA
Customer Service	<p>VA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA manages Veteran touchpoints Refers Veterans to CCN directly to community provider (not through TPA) <p>TPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to inquiries from VA staff and community providers <p>FQHC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives approved referrals directly from VA to care for Veterans
Medical Documentation	<p>VA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share directly with providers through health information exchange <p>FQHC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submits directly to VA through an accepted and secure method of transmission
Provider Updates	<p>TPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and adjudicates claims once received from provider <p>FQHC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit claims to appropriate TPA assigned to CCN region with referral number

4.

PROVIDING COMMUNITY CARE TO VETERANS

Value of FQHC Services to the VA Community Care Network

- The Community Care Network values all the services provided by FQHC's
- FQHC's are crucial "gap fillers," offering services needed in communities that the VA doesn't fulfill. What those services are varies by community and over time
- If the CCN does not need a particular service today from a FQHC, it does not mean the VA won't need it tomorrow. The needs of the population, as well as the VA services offered, are constantly changing

5.

RESOURCES

NACHC strives to support health centers serving veterans in their communities via advocacy, resource development, and targeted education assistance. The following list highlights areas where NACHC continues to assist health centers.



Federal Environment

- Choice Act
- 2015 Choice Act amendments
- Implementing regulations
- 2018 Mission Act
- Pilot programs (VETSmile)



Communication

- Fact sheets
- Toolkits
- Veterans Interest Group



Assistance

- Targeted technical assistance
- Document “FQHCs Serving Veterans Success Stories”
- Engaged communication with VHA staff

5.

RESOURCES

NACHC & Health Centers: Working Together for Veterans

NACHC Veterans Interest Group (VIG)

- An informal networking and information group to share promising practices, policy updates and operational information regarding increased access to care and services for the Veteran populations served in community health centers
- **To receive Veterans-related updates via email, please send your contact info to trainings@nachc.org**

Partnerships

- NACHC supports the development of partnerships between health centers, the VA, graduate medical education programs, VA's Third Party Administrators, Veteran Service Organizations, and other service providers
- These partnerships have helped Veterans access high-quality care in their communities more easily
- NACHC strives to increase understanding between federal, state and local organizations serving Veteran patients, including education on systems, reporting processes and health needs of the population

5.

RESOURCES

NACHC & Health Centers: Working Together for Veterans (CONTINUED)

Health Center Resource Clearinghouse: <https://www.healthcenterinfo.org>

The screenshot shows the Health Center Resource Clearinghouse website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: ABOUT, PARTNERS, SEARCH, LEARNING, PRIORITY TOPICS, PROMISING PRACTICES, and CONNECT. Below the header, there are two red banners: "New Resources: HRSA COVID-19 Therapeutics Program Resource Guide | HRSA Health Center COVID-19 Therapeutics Program Overview" and a search bar with the text "Search the Clearinghouse: Enter Search Terms Here". The search bar contains the word "Veterans" and a "SEARCH" button. On the left side, there is a "Edit Your Search" section with various filters: Free Text Search (Veteran), Topic and Subtopics (All Topics and Subtopics), Population (All Populations), Organization (Any Organization), Primary Audience (Any Primary Audience), Resource Type (Any Resource Type), Language (Any Language), and Date Published. On the right side, there is a "Sort By" dropdown menu set to "Newest Materials in the Collection". Below the search results, it says "Displaying records 1 through 16 of 16 found." Two results are visible: "NACHC Veterans Interest Group Office Hour (2022). Resource Type: Archived Webinar. Description: This recording is from NACHC's April 14, 2022 all-virtual Veterans Interest Group Office Hour. More Details..." and "Improving Behavioral Health Screening & Access to Treatment for Veterans in Community Care: Phase II: Improving Behavioral Health Screening & Access to Treatment for Veterans in Community Care (2022). Resource Type: Toolkit. Description: This toolkit describes a partnership between the Iowa Primary Care Association (Iowa PCA), Community Health Centers of Southeastern Iowa (CHC/SEIA), and the VA Office of Rural Health (ORH) Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Iowa City (VRHRC-IC). These partners came together with the goal of establishing mechanisms to ensure veterans seeking care at all CHC/SEIA locations could be systematically identified, screened for behavioral health issues, and engaged in healthcare guided by their choice to remain in the community or engage in a VA care setting. More Details..."

- Veteran patient characteristics by national, state and health center level: <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/datacenter.aspx?q=t4&year=2018&state=>
- VA Sites of Care (HRSA Data Warehouse): <https://data.hrsa.gov/>

For more information about NACHC's efforts to support Veterans or to join our mailing list, contact the training and technical assistance program: trainings@nachc.org

5.

RESOURCES

VA Resources for Serving Veterans through Community Care

VA Community Care Program

- Community Care Program
Main Page: <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/>
- Provider Page: <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/index.asp>
- Fact Sheets: https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/pubfiles/factsheets/FactSheet_26-01.pdf

Training Courses for Providers

- https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/EDU_Training.asp#training
<http://deploymentpsych.org/military-culture-course-modules>

VHA Community Care Monthly Provider e-letter – sign up here:

- <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVHA/subscriber/>



VHA TRAIN Courses

VHA Training Finder Real-Time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) provides a wealth of training and education resources for community providers. These offerings are no-cost, Veteran-focused, and accredited for continuing medical education. The VHA TRAIN video describes the training course offerings and how to access them.

Visit the VHA TRAIN website to get started. More information about how to enroll, a list of available courses, and additional instructions for how to register can be found in the VHA TRAIN fact sheet.

VHA TRAIN delivers free, VA-approved training on Veteran-specific health topics. Published on Nov 22, 2017.

[VHA TRAIN website](#) [VHA TRAIN Fact Sheet](#) [Access the VHA TRAIN login page](#)

5.

RESOURCES

Additional Resources for Serving Veterans in the Community

- **Make the Connection** — a publicly available, free website that features more than 600 videos of Veterans and their loved ones speaking about their experiences with mental health and everyday life during and after service. For more information visit
Make the Connection: <https://maketheconnection.net/>
- **PTSD Consultation Program for Community Providers:**
<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/resources.asp>
- **Veteran Resources, Data, and Maps** — publicly available information health centers can use to get smart about the needs of their local Veterans:
 - National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics
 - U.S. Census Bureau — Veterans Data
 - The Bureau of Labor Statistics — Veterans Data

All available here:

https://www.va.gov/vetdata/additional_sources_of_information_about_veterans.asp



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Community Health Centers

THANK YOU

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