

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Introducing Veterans Exposure Team-Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME): VA's New National Hub Serving Veterans with Military Environmental Exposures

Presentation for: First Annual PACT Act Research Symposium
Presented by: Anisa K. Moore, MD
Date of briefing: May 3, 2023



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Presenter: Anisa K. Moore, MD

Dr. Anisa K. Moore is the Director of VET-HOME, VA's new national hub serving Veterans with military environmental exposures. A board-certified internist since 2005, Dr. Moore worked for 10 years in primary care before joining VA in 2015, where she became a Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water Subject Matter Expert and the Lead Environmental Health Clinician for VISN 19. As the wife of an Army Veteran deployed to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq as part of Desert Storm/Desert Shield, she understands Veteran's concerns about military environmental exposures and is committed to ensuring that VA provides outstanding care for our Nation's heroes.



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Presentation Overview

Veterans Exposure Team-Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME)

- Who We Are
- How We Serve Veterans
- Conclusion and Questions



Who We Are: A New National Hub

A top priority for Veterans, VA Secretary Denis McDonough, Congress, and the White House, **VET-HOME is VA's new national hub for information and VA services on military environmental exposures.** In fact, VET-HOME was featured in President Biden's 2021 Veteran's Day announcement and in his August 2022 PACT Act announcement:

- [FACT SHEET: Biden Administration Announces Actions to Address the Health Effects of Military Exposures | The White House](#)
- [FACT SHEET: PACT Act Delivers on President Biden's Promise to America's Veterans - The White House](#)



VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

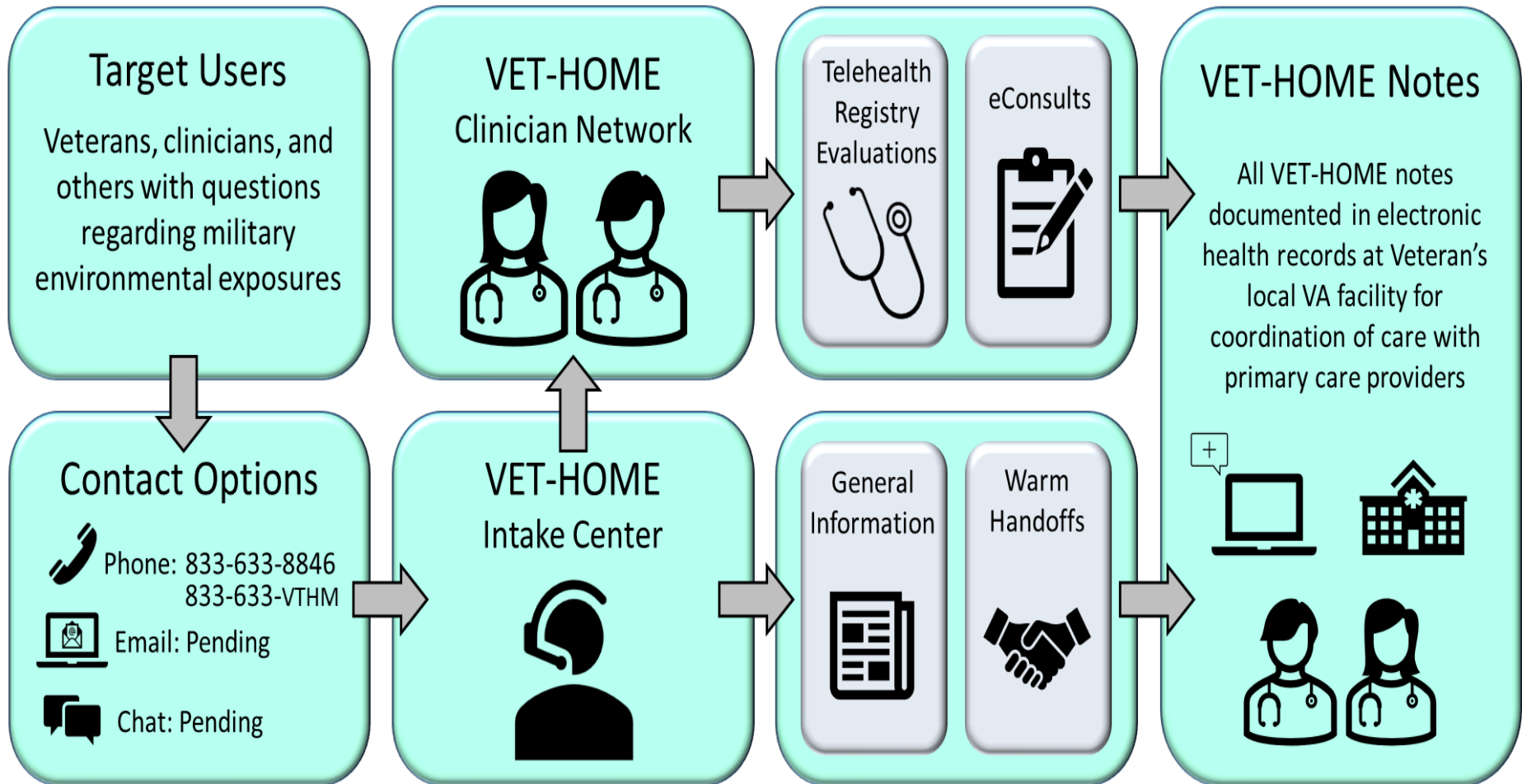
Who We Are: VET-HOME Structure

VET-HOME is composed of two interconnected parts:

- **A centralized intake center in eastern CO with coordinators and nurses** to schedule telehealth registry evaluations and respond to exposure-related questions from Veterans and clinicians.
- **A geographically distributed network of 40 clinicians specially trained in military environmental exposures** to perform telehealth registry evaluations and assessments.



Who We Are: VET-HOME Functional Overview



How We Serve Veterans: Objectives

- **Primary objective**
 - Provide Congressionally mandated registry evaluations to Veterans via telehealth
- **Secondary objectives**
 - Educate Veterans about benefits to which they are entitled
 - Support research on the health outcomes of military environmental exposures



How We Serve Veterans: Registry Programs

VA has six registry programs. **Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA health care to participate, but they must have qualifying deployments that meet the eligibility criteria established by Congress.**

- [Agent Orange Registry](#)
- [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#)
- [Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program](#)
- [Gulf War Registry](#)
- [Ionizing Radiation Registry](#)
- [Toxic Embedded Fragment Surveillance Center](#)

Period of Military Service	Agent Orange	Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit	Depleted Uranium Follow-up	Gulf War	Ionizing Radiation	Toxic Embedded Fragments
1940s–1950s					●	
1960s	●				●	
1970s	●					
1990s		●	●	●		
2000s–Present		●	●	●		●



How We Serve Veterans: Registry Evaluations

A registry evaluation is a clinical assessment that is characterized by:

- a detailed exposure history
- special diagnostic attention to any symptoms or abnormalities potentially related to military environmental exposures

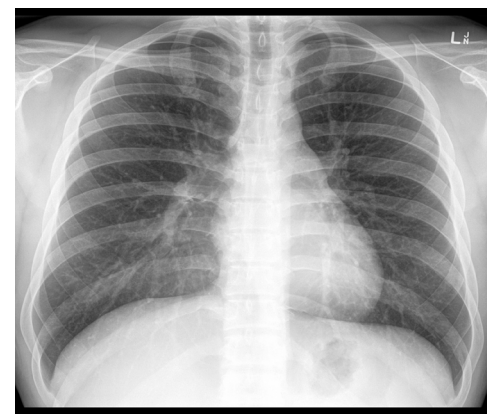
Registry evaluations and clinically indicated diagnostic tests are provided free to eligible Veterans.



How We Serve Veterans: Diagnostic Tests and Results

Clinically indicated diagnostic tests (such as pulmonary function tests, labs, imaging, and diagnostic procedures) will be ordered at the VA facility most convenient for the Veteran.

All Veterans will receive a follow-up letter with a copy of their test results, interpretation in layperson language, and any additional recommendations. Veterans needing treatment or prescriptions are encouraged to follow up with their primary care provider



How We Serve Veterans: Education

Registry evaluations are also an opportunity to educate Veterans about:

- The 2022 PACT Act
- Presumptive conditions
- VA's disability process



The new PACT Act

- » Expands toxic-exposed Veterans access to VA care
- » Extends health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era combat Veterans
- » Adds new presumptive conditions for radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and burn pit exposures

EXPANDED VA CARE & BENEFITS

Learn more at [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov)
1-800-MyVA4111 (800-698-2411)

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



How We Serve Veterans: The 2022 PACT Act

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act was signed into law as [S. 3373](#): Honoring our PACT Act of 2022, on August 10, 2022.

This law dramatically expands VA services (including registry evaluations, health care, benefits, and research) to Veterans who were exposed to toxic substances during military service. It also adds over 20 new presumptive conditions: [The PACT Act And Your VA Benefits | Veterans Affairs](#)



Sergeant First Class
Heath Robinson



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

How We Serve Veterans: Presumptive Conditions

RESPIRATORY:

Conditions

- Asthma Other J45.998 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Asthma, Unspecified, Uncomplicated J45.909 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Bronchitis, not specified as acute or chronic J40
- Chronic Bronchitis, Unspecified J42 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Unspecified J44.9 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Constrictive Bronchiolitis or Obliterative Bronchiolitis (Respiratory Bronchiolitis, Interstitial Lung Disease) J84.115 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Emphysema Unspecified J43.9 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis due to other Organic Dusts J67.8
- Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis due to Unspecified Organic Dust J67.9
- Interstitial Pulmonary disease (ILD) unspecified J84.9 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Obstructive Sleep Apnea G47.33
- Pleuritis (Pleural Condition, Unspecified J94.9 or Pleurisy R09.1) (AHOBPR/GW)
- Pulmonary Fibrosis, Unspecified J84.10 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Sarcoidosis of Lung D86.0 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Sarcoidosis, Unspecified D86.9 (AHOBPR/GW)
- Sleep Apnea, Unspecified G47.30

Symptoms

- Chronic Cough R05.3
- Cough, Unspecified R05.9
- Dyspnea, Unspecified R06.00
- Hyperventilation R06.4
- Hypoxemia R09.02
- Shortness of Breath R06.02
- Wheezing R06.2

Other: *



Choose **VA**

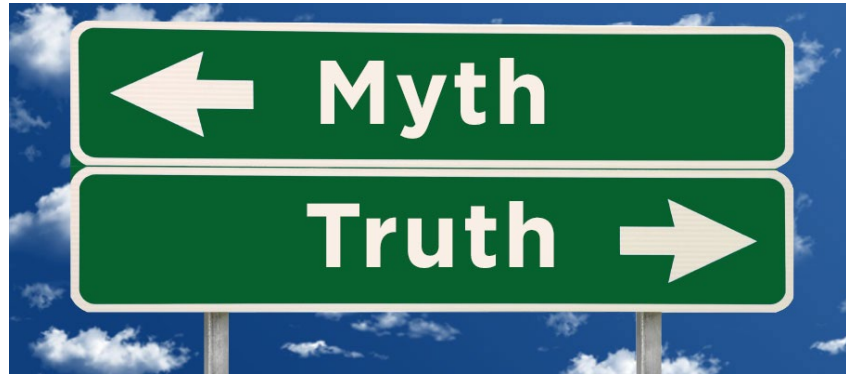
Draft - Pre-Decisional Deliberative Document
Internal VA Use Only

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

How We Serve Veterans: Correcting Myths About Disability



The Myth:

Many people (including Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, and even some VA employees) think that completing a registry evaluation is required to file a disability claim.

The Truth:

Veterans do **NOT** need a registry evaluation to file a disability claim. Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) will process a Veteran's disability claim for military environmental exposures regardless of whether the Veteran has completed a registry evaluation or not.



How We Serve Veterans: Filing a Disability Claim

Veterans with concerns about whether their symptoms or conditions were caused by a military environmental exposure are encouraged to file a disability claim.

In fact, information about presumptive conditions and how to file a claim is automatically included in VET-HOME follow-up letters.



- Website: [VA Disability Compensation | Veterans Affairs](#)
- Phone: 1-800-827-1000
- Address:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
P.O. Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444



Choose **VA**

Draft - Pre-Decisional Deliberative Document
Internal VA Use Only

VA

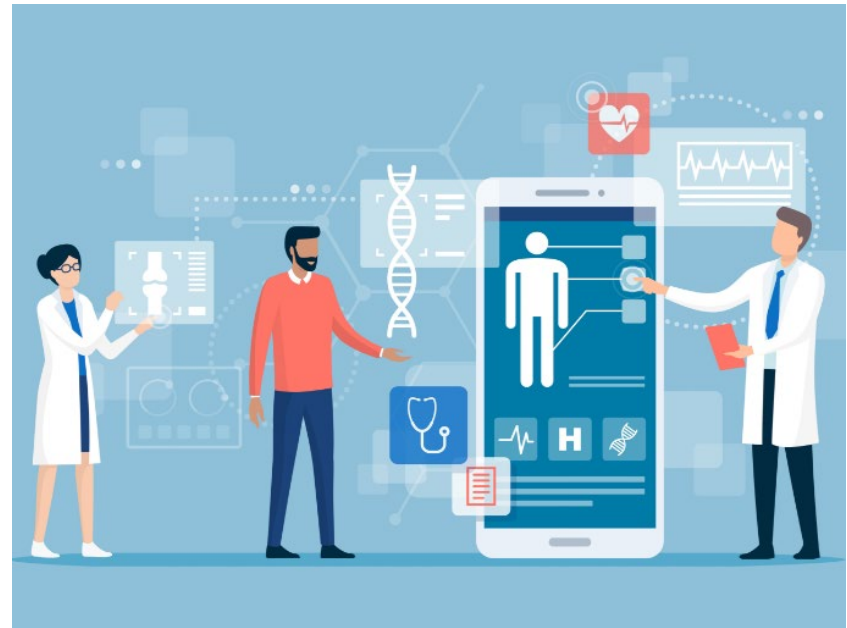


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

How We Serve Veterans: Research

VET-HOME is primarily a clinical program; however, the data we collect from Veterans participating in registry evaluations supports research on the health outcomes of military exposures. By conducting thorough registry evaluations, we help researchers:

- Collect and maintain data on specific persons from a defined population
- Track and monitor health trends within the group
- Generate hypotheses for research on associations between exposures and diseases



Conclusion: Timeline

VET-HOME has already begun initial operations with two VA facilities and is tentatively targeting summer 2023 for national launch.



Choose **VA**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Questions?

