



# *Transforming Oncology Care* Through Medically Integrated Collaboration

2025 NCODA INTERNATIONAL SPRING FORUM



UNITED STATES  
AIR FORCE  
ACADEMY



# *Passion for Patients Who Served* Navigating VA Oncology Benefits 2.0



**John Zieger**

Bristol Myers Squibb

Moderator - Expert Panel Discussion

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION NUMBERS	
Total Living U.S. Military Veterans	> 22 Million
Total Veterans Qualifying for VA Health Benefits	> 9 Million
Total Veterans Enrolled in Community Care	~ 3 Million
Total Newly Diagnosed Veteran Cancer Cases Annually	~ 50 Thousand
Total Veterans on Cancer Care Continuum	> 450 Thousand
Total Prescriptions Dispensed by VA Annually	> 250 Million

**THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION** is America's largest **INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM** serving almost **9 million Veterans** with *service related disabilities*, in more than 1,200 healthcare facilities including over **170 VA Medical Centers (VAMCs)** within **18 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs)** many of which have Specialty Care Services & Academic Medical School affiliations.



Realignments removed VISNs 3,11,13,14,18

### VAMC affiliations with Academic Medical Centers

VA Medical Center hospitals have affiliation agreements with 114 of the 136 accredited medical schools within the United States. Over 370,000 Healthcare Professionals provide VA Health Care services including: > 40,000 medical residents (~70% in the U.S.) >21,000 students and 253 Fellows.

\*Differs From Tricare Coverage

The VA runs its own internal PBM and Consolidated Mail Order Pharmacy System



# VA National Oncology Program

TeleOncology Services  
VA Cancer Registry System  
Pharmacogenomics  
Oncology Clinical Pathways  
Clinical Trials  
*Close to Me*  
Care Delivery Models



## Our Mission

To improve the lives of Veterans with cancer through precision medicine by implementing a learning healthcare model that quickly transitions new knowledge into clinical practice and to maximize learning from clinical practice.

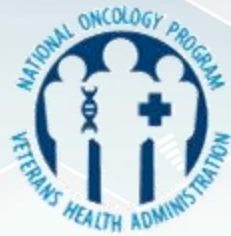


## Our Strategy

To ensure that Veterans have easy access to reliable, excellent cancer prevention, detection and treatment services.



# VA NATIONAL PRECISION ONCOLOGY PROGRAM



**SHOULDER to SHOULDER**  
Every Step of the Way

## PROGRAM HISTORY

NPOP is part of VA's National Oncology Program. Launched in 2016 as part of the White House Cancer Moonshot Initiative to eliminate cancer, NPOP makes molecular testing available to VA cancer patients for whom testing may determine either a prognosis or a course of treatment. Through this program, VA oncologists can also access consultative services to interpret complex results.

### Through NPOP, VA offers:

- Best-in-class cancer molecular testing, through cutting edge technologies like Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS)
- Discussions about tumor test results with clinical experts on the Molecular Oncology Tumor Board (MOTB)
- Pharmacogenomic testing to help providers tailor the options and dosages of commonly prescribed medications
- Access to precision oncology clinical trials based on a patient's genomic profile

### Where is NPOP heading?



- Adopting tumor molecular testing under NPOP VA-wide
- Increasing the number of Veterans tested
- Expanding online ordering for all molecular tests
- Making clinical decision support tools available for providers to utilize NPOP data
- Making precision oncology clinical trials accessible in all VISNs



## EXPLORE COMMUNITY CARE RESOURCES

Veterans



Learn about eligibility, appointments, getting care, costs and billing

Dependents



Learn about eligibility, appointments, getting care, costs and billing

Caregivers



Learn about VA caregiver benefits

Providers



Join the VA network, register for training, file a claim and sign up for updates

Payers



Information for third party insurance companies about billing, rates and charges

Support



Contact us by e-mail, phone or mail

# *Passion for Patients Who Served*

## Navigating VA Oncology Benefits 2.0

### Expert Panel Session



**John Zieger**

Bristol Myers Squibb, Moderator



**Patrick Shipley, LFACHE**

TriWest Healthcare Alliance



**Evan Slater, PharmD**

Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers



**Amanda Roberts**

Optum Serve



**Cindy Bowman, MSN, RN, OCN**

Association of VA Hematology/Oncology



# Optimizing Community Partnership

**Cindy Bowman, MSN, RN, OCN**

Cancer Care Navigation Program  
Coordinator

Oncology Navigation SME

Oncology Consultant



## No Conflict of Interest

The contents of this presentation does not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government

# Association of VA Hematology Oncology

History: AVAHO 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Conference, at The Phoenix Grand Resort and Spa, 9/12/25 -9/14/25.

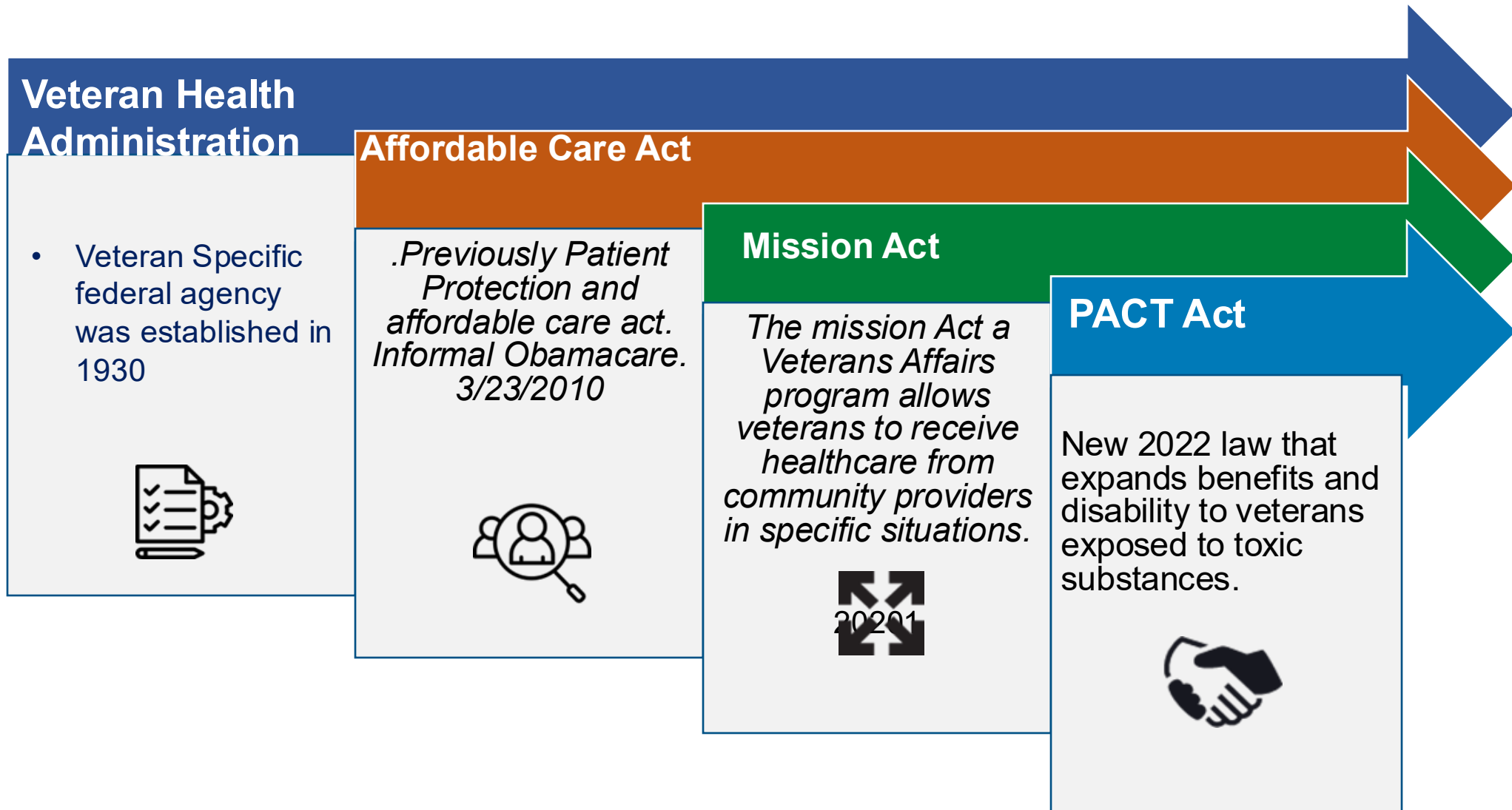
- Mission: AVAHO exists to increase the skills and abilities of veteran-centered cancer care professionals across all disciplines so they can provide the best possible care for our veterans.
- Offering educational programs to members with the goal of improving the quality of cancer care to Veterans
- Facilitating networking between members to broaden knowledge and best practice

• [s://www.avaho.org/about-us/](https://www.avaho.org/about-us/)

<https://www.avaho.org/about-us/>



# History of Benefits



## Veteran Health Administration

- Veteran Specific federal agency was established in 1930



## Affordable Care Act

*.Previously Patient Protection and affordable care act. Informal Obamacare. 3/23/2010*



## Mission Act

*The mission Act a Veterans Affairs program allows veterans to receive healthcare from community providers in specific situations.*



## PACT Act

New 2022 law that expands benefits and disability to veterans exposed to toxic substances.



# Roadmap

## Benefits

- Honorable Military Discharge
- Veteran Care Criteria
- Service Connection
- VA Community Care Criteria

## VA Community Care

- Scenario One, Patient sent from VA to community provider.
- Scenario Two: Patient is seen by community provider without the VA approval.

## Navigation Services Available Across VHA

- Moon Shot Initiative to include navigation and survivorship
- Care Coordinators
- Resources to find nurse navigators in local facilities.

## Treatment and Prescribing

- Preapprovals
- Clinical Pathways
- Non-formulary, 48-72 hours
- Clinical Pathways
- Oral Agents
- Barriers; not having communication between VA Pharmacies and Community Care Pharmacies

# Public Resources

- <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/index.asp>
- <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/Pharmacy-Requirements.asp>
- <https://www.va.gov/formularyadvisor/>
- <https://seoc.va.gov/view/3830>
- Please visit the VHA Storefront [www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/index.asp) for additional resources and requirements pertaining to the following:
  - Pharmacy prescribing requirements
  - Durable Medical Equipment (DME), Prosthetics and Orthotics prescribing requirements.
  - Precertification (PRCT) process requirements
  - Request for Services (RFS) requirement

# *Passion for Patients Who Served*





# NCODA Briefing

Amanda Roberts

April 2025



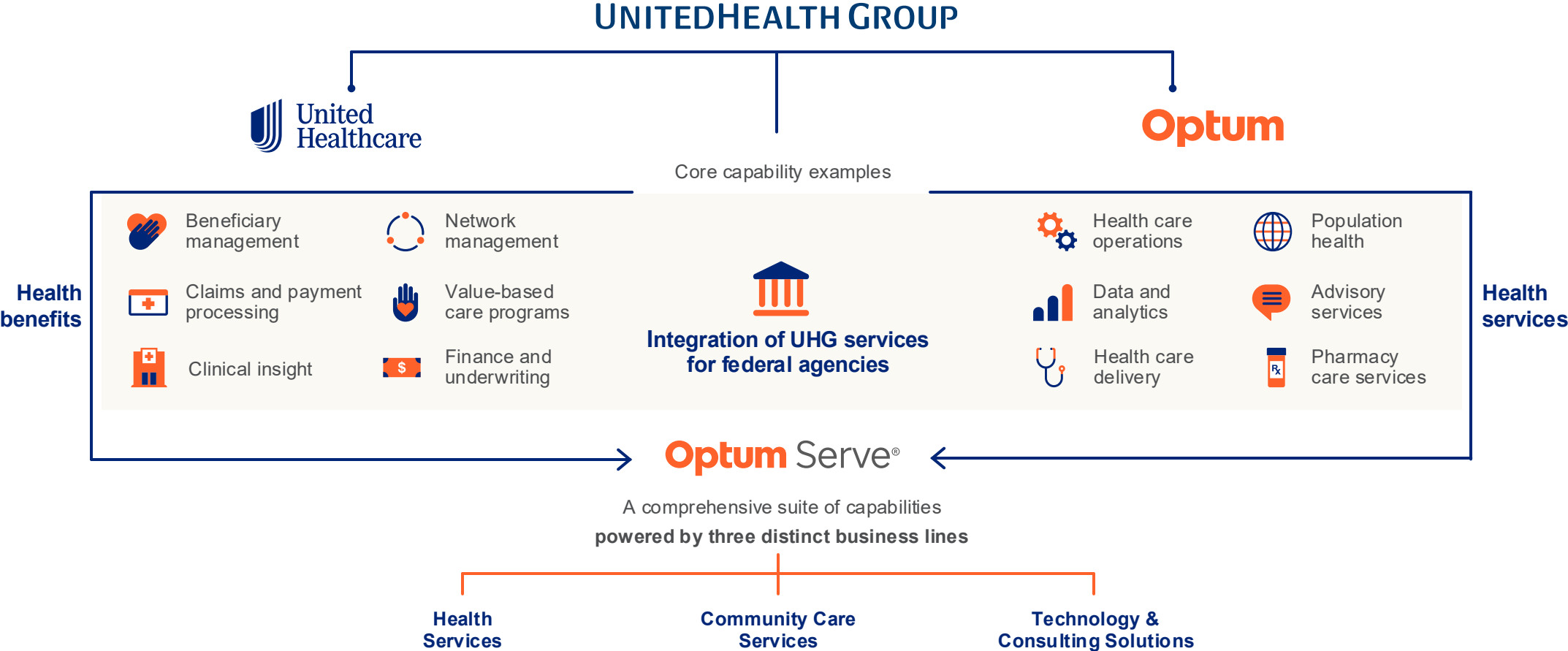
# Optum Serve®

**Helping** clients deliver on their mission by improving the health and well-being of those we collectively serve.

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**Our vision** is to be the preferred partner in delivering transformative health solutions to those we serve globally with compassion and exceptional execution.

# Optum Serve is the federal health services business of UnitedHealth Group





# Optum Serve prioritizes Veteran health from beginning to end

From the moment they embark on their service journey, to long after they've hung up their uniforms, members of the military community deserve reliable care and health services.



## Joining the Service

Optum Serve plays a crucial role in supporting both applicants and the DoD in this process through the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) Program.



## Navigating the Care System

As a prime contractor for the Military Health System (MHS) Global Nurse Advice Line, Optum Serve ensures expert staff is consistently available to Service Members and their families as they seek health advice, assistance in finding and scheduling appointments in their area, and more.



## Transitioning out of Service

Veterans and separating Service Members rely on compensation and pension examinations to receive proper benefits for service-related injuries and illnesses. Optum Serve leverages its network of over 5,700 providers across the nation to administer high-quality examinations in support of MDE contracts with VBA and deploys mobile units, telehealth and other exam modalities for those remote or rural areas.



## Supporting Veteran Care

Optum is the third-party administrator for the VA Community Care Network (VA CCN for regions 1, 2 and 3). Through the CCN, the organization provides Veterans with better access and greater choice over their health care by serving as a bridge between the VA and an integrated system of credentialed, quality providers.

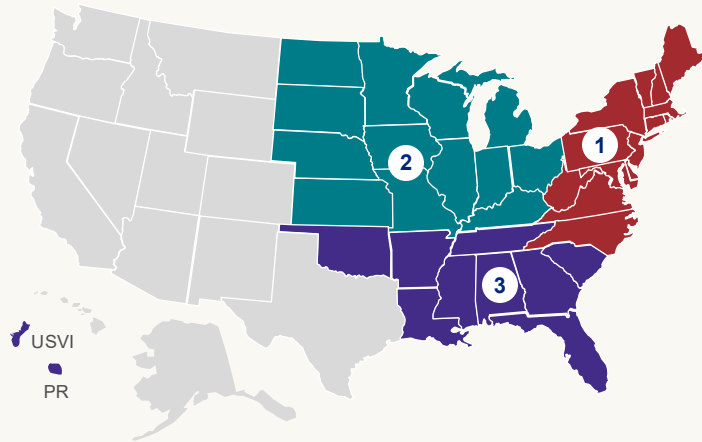


## Aging as a Veteran

To address and maintain the evolving needs of Veterans as they grow older, Optum Serve offers home- and community-based services, caregiver support and palliative care.

# Who We Serve

## VA Community Care Network (VA CCN)



VA Medical Centers Served

**109**

Community Based Outpatient Clinics Served

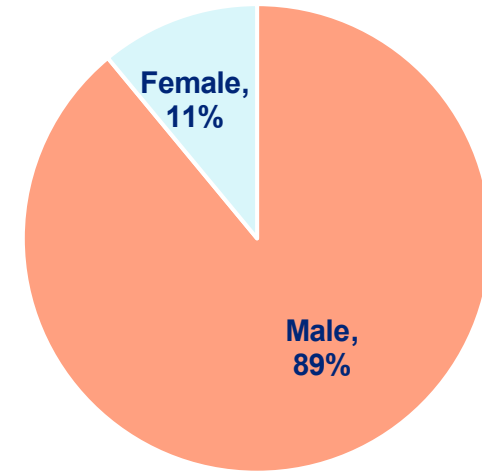
**300+**

Veterans Served

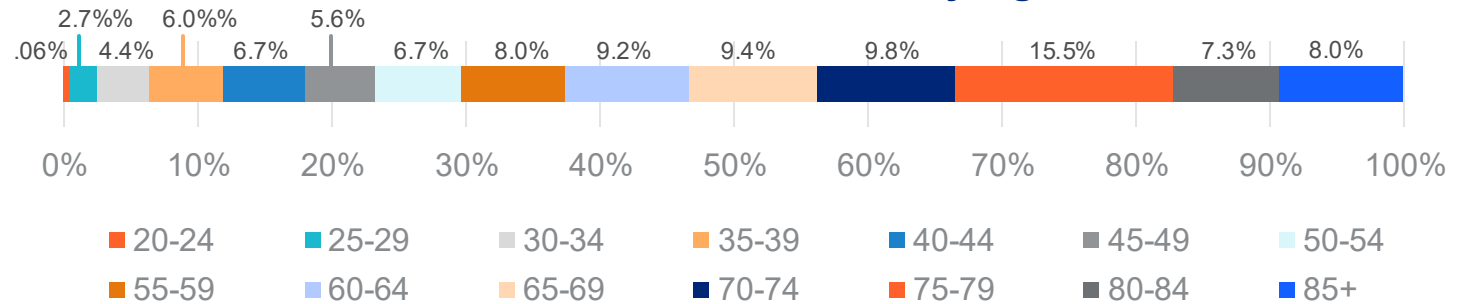
**4.1M+**

## Veteran Eligibility

**6.7M+**  
Eligible Veterans



## Distribution of Veterans by Age





# A Veteran's journey through the VA Community Care Network (VA CCN)

## Meet Edward

Age: 72

Location: Virginia

Edward, a retired factory worker, was drafted into the Army in 1965. Following training, he was deployed to Vietnam and served several tours over his four years of service.



### Health care concern

Edward hasn't been sleeping well and it starts to affect his overall quality of life.



**VA** Edward contacts his local VA clinic to schedule an appointment to get to the bottom of his sleep issues.



**VA** Edward arrives for his appointment at the VA Medical Center (VAMC).



**VA** Edward's VA primary care physician, Dr. Jones, confirms his VA CCN eligibility and informs him of the CCN program. Edward is referred to a CCN sleep specialist.



**VA** Edward receives a call from the VAMC to inform him his referral has been approved and asks how he would like to schedule his appointment.



**O** Edward checks in. When asked for his insurance card, he provides his CCN appointment letter.



**O** The day of Edward's appointment, he arrives at the CCN provider office.



**VA** Edward receives his CCN appointment letter and authorization in the mail from the VA.



**VA** The scheduler is able to make Edward's appointment while on the phone.



**O** Edward attends his appointment with his CCN provider and determines a sleep study is needed. The study is scheduled and performed.



**O** Edward is diagnosed with sleep apnea. The provider orders a continuous positive/airway pressure (CPAP) machine from the VA for Edward, which will arrive at his home.



**VA** Edward receives the CPAP machine and works with his local VAMC to get fitted. Edward starts to use the CPAP machine at night to improve his sleep apnea. He feels relieved knowing his concern was addressed quickly and that he can continue to live a health lifestyle.



Learn more about Optum  
And how we support our  
military and Veterans.

<https://optumserve.com/>





# *Passion for Patients Who Served*





## Veteran Patient Care Resources



› Veteran community care providers seeking information related to claims submitted to the VA can use the [eCAMS](#) provider portal to check the status of a claim.

› Veteran community care providers with billing inquiries about claims submitted to VA can contact the Community Care Contact Center at 877-881-7618.

› VA community emergency providers can verify a Veteran is in the VA system for emergency care while making the 72-hour notification by phone at 844-724-7842. The 72-hour notification can also be made online at: [Veterans Health Administration - Community Care](#).

› For issues with provider vendorization and payment reissues, contact VA's Financial Services Center at 877-353-9791.

› More information for VA community care providers who submit claims to VA is also available at: [File a Claim for Veteran Care - Information for Providers - Community Care](#).

[VA Care-Coordination-Contact List](#)

[VA Community Care Network Overview](#)

[Veteran Community Care: Filing Claims](#)

[Triwest Community Care Network Provider Training](#)

[OptumServe Provider Training and Support](#)

[TRICARE and VA Benefit Comparison | TRICARE](#)

[VA Oncology Services and Tools](#)

[VA Eligibility for Community Care](#)

[VA National Formulary FAQ](#)

[VA Formulary Advisor](#)

[Medication Copayments - Health Benefits \(va.gov\)](#)



PASSION FOR PATIENTS

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# QUESTION & ANSWER

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# THANK YOU !

for your  
*SERVICE* for **SERVICE**

VA



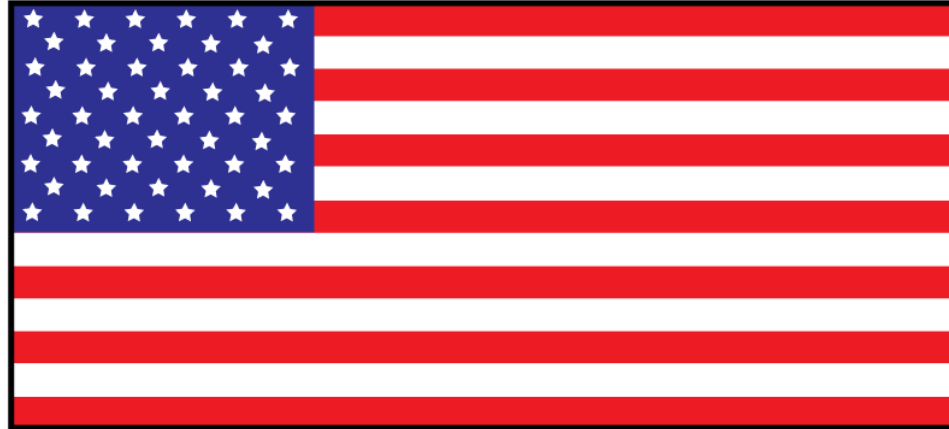
U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



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## HELPING OUR HEROES

*Serving Those  
Who Served Us*

