



DID YOU KNOW?

VA Research Benefits Us All

Most Americans believe the veterans' healthcare system serves only veterans. But that is not the case. In addition to providing high quality healthcare to more than nine million veterans, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) serves us all.

The VHA is second only to the National Institutes of Health in the scope and impact of its research. To name just a few of its [innovations](#), the VHA developed the shingles vaccine, the nicotine patch, the implantable cardiac pacemaker, and the use of beta blockers to reduce mortality rates after surgery.

The VHA's multi-site [COVID-19 Observational Research Collaborative](#) has collected a vast database on 250,000 veterans infected by COVID-19. VA researchers recently released [two studies](#) detailing new information on the severe consequences of long COVID.

The [Prostate Cancer Research Foundation](#) recently [launched](#) a “unique public-private biomedical research partnership” with the VHA. Why? Because the VHA has treated millions of patients who have prostate cancer. The analysis of decades worth of information has allowed VHA researchers to understand, for example, why prostate cancer is so lethal for African American men.

The VHA's [Million Veteran Program](#) has created the largest genomic database in the world. The work of more than 600 researchers across VHA's 80-plus projects have led to new discoveries about how to understand and treat anxiety, heart disease, kidney disease, cancer, Parkinson's Disease, osteoarthritis, and many other ailments.

The VA's [Biorepository Brain Bank](#) has the largest collection of brain tissue in the world, with researchers using it to study post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Alzheimer's disease, traumatic brain injury, ALS, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), and other neurological conditions. VHA researchers have, among other things, helped to confirm the connection between repeated concussions in football players and the development of CTE.

The VHA's [National Centers for PTSD](#) has helped develop the gold standard treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder. VHA research on PTSD has been used to help first responders suffering from PTSD following the 9/11 attacks and many other emergencies.

The VHA is also the only system able to answer vexing research questions about [medication side-effects](#). That's because the VHA not only prescribes drugs but also pays for medications. Researchers know which patients actually fill and renew their prescriptions and can access long-term data about medication side-effects.

