

To the NACHC Veterans Interest Group:

We hope this Veterans Interest Group (VIG) Update finds you in good health and brings appreciation for your continued efforts to fight the covid-19 pandemic in your local communities!

This week we celebrate **National Health Center Week** and send appreciation to all health center providers, staff and Boards for your commitment, service and dedication to your patients and your community during the past year! Make sure to visit healthcenterweek.org for daily clips highlighting celebration events from around the country!

Here are items of interest since our last Veterans Interest Group Update (March 2021):

Health Centers Serve 377,000 Veterans in 2020 - HRSA just released the 2020 Uniform Data System (UDS) which is the annual reporting by health center program grantees. We see a 20,000 decrease in Veteran patients over 2019. This decline is consistent with the overall health center patient decrease in 2020, partially attributed to pandemic lock-down and delayed care and patient visits last year. As a reminder, it is critical for every health center to implement consistent Veteran status screening. An evidence-based, FQHC-tailored screening approach is documented in a 2019 Journal of Community Health <https://www.healthcenterinfo.org/details/?id=2368>

Local VA-CHC Partner to Provide Dental Care in New Pilot Program - The VA Center for Care and Payment Innovation (CCPI) launched a pilot program that permits VA providers to refer VA-enrolled patients to community dental providers. Historically, VA patients have had very limited dental benefits and VA health care providers were not permitted to formally refer patients to non-VA dental providers. This new pilot program provides authority for VA to help patients connect with local dental care. The first pilot is based in NY/NJ and includes a community health center! Congratulations to Zufall Health Center (NJ) for their selection into the pilot. Read more at <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/92784/va-launches-vetsmile-dental-pilot-program-in-new-york-new-jersey/>

VA Offers COVID-19 Vaccine Supply to Community Providers – The VA has alerted NACHC and HRSA/BPHC to available covid-19 vaccine supply for community providers, like health centers. If your health center needs covid vaccines and you are unable to acquire those through your HRSA (federal) or State direct supply program, please contact NACHC at trainings@nachc.org Learn more about VA's vaccine law on their COVID-19 webpage <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/>

Spotlight: Union CHC dedicates a full-time position to serve Veteran patients - Did you miss our June 17th Webinar Featuring this Health Center-Foundation Partnership? Check out the recording and presentation "Serving Military Veterans in Health Centers: Exploring Unexpected Partners and Resources". <https://conferences.nachc.org/nachc/articles/4650/view>

NACHC Community Health Institute (CHI) August 22-24 – The Veterans Interest Group will not be meeting informally at CHI this year, as we usually do during our in-person national conference. We hope to resume the tradition at NACHC's Policy and Issues Forum in Washington, DC in March 2022. In the meantime, please consider registering for our fabulous education program and/or Board Member Boot Camp, offering both in-person or virtual options at <https://www.nachc.org/conferences/chi/>

Thank you, Stay in Touch, Spread the Word: Please share information about the Veterans Interest Group with your colleagues. Anyone can sign up to join this group, email trainings@nachc.org to be added. Check out additional information on NACHC's "Supporting Our Veterans" webpage <https://www.nachc.org/health-center-issues/special-populations/veterans/>