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VA announces steps to increase life-saving screening, access to benefits for Veterans with cancer

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced three new steps to expand health care and benefits for Veterans with cancer:

1. **VA is making urethral cancers presumptive for service connection for eligible Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans.** This means that Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans who deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire [Southwest Asia theater of operations](#) will not need to prove that their service caused their urethral cancer to receive benefits for it; instead, VA will automatically assume service connection for the disease and provide benefits accordingly to Veterans who have submitted claims. In the next 90 days, urethral cancers will be added to the list of 300+ conditions considered presumptive under the PACT Act, along with [many other cancers](#).
2. **VA is beginning the process to formally evaluate urinary bladder and ureteral cancers for presumptions of service connection for eligible Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans.** Over the coming months, VA will evaluate whether there is a relationship between urinary bladder and ureteral cancers and toxic exposures for Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans who deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire [Southwest Asia theater of operations](#). VA will then determine whether these conditions become presumptive conditions for Veterans who served in those locations and time periods.
3. **VA is expanding access to genetic, lung, and colorectal cancer screening for Veterans.** By the end of this year, VA will offer genetic testing to every Veteran who may need it, which will help VA understand, treat, and ultimately cure patients with cancer by reading the code locked in their DNA. VA will also bring a lung cancer screening program to every VA medical facility, which will help save the lives of the nearly 5,000 Veterans who die from lung cancer every year, and VA will expand screening for colorectal cancer – the second leading cause of cancer death in America – by providing more than 1 million Veterans nationwide with convenient, safe, and effective tests that can be completed in the comfort of their homes.

This work is a part of fulfilling President Biden's Unity Agenda and [Cancer Moonshot](#) and VA's aggressive efforts to provide world-class care for over one million Veterans on the cancer care continuum, from screening to survivorship.

"Cancer impacts far too many Veterans every year, and under President Biden's leadership, we are fighting to end cancer as we know it," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "These steps will help us save lives and provide the world-class care and benefits that Veterans with cancer so rightly deserve."

"VA is planting the seeds for the future of cancer care," said **VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** "By investing in screenings, expanding access, and embracing cutting-edge technologies, VA is revolutionizing cancer care delivery, providing the best care possible to our nation's heroes."

This effort builds on VA and the Biden-Harris Administration's comprehensive efforts to care for Veterans with cancer. Last July, VA [expanded cancer risk assessments and mammograms \(as clinically appropriate\)](#) to Veterans under 40, regardless of age, symptoms, family history, or whether they are enrolled in VA health care. Last September, VA and the National Cancer Institute announced a historic data-sharing collaboration to better understand and treat cancer among Veterans. VA has also [prioritized claims processing](#) for Veterans with cancer — delivering [nearly \\$516 million](#) in PACT Act benefits to Veterans with cancer between August 10, 2022 and March 3, 2024. And VA has [screened more than 5 million](#) Veterans for toxic exposures under the PACT Act — a critical step to detecting, understanding, and treating potentially life-threatening health conditions like cancer.

Moving forward, through advancements in cancer care and forward-thinking research endeavors, VA aims to save even more lives and significantly improve the long-term health outcomes in Veterans for generations to come. For more information about VA cancer care, visit cancer.va.gov.

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