

**VA**

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Phoenix VA Health Care System

News Release

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Phoenix VA Health Care System opens beds to non-Veteran COVID+ patients

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) has continued to answer the nation's call to serve and protect Veterans, and now – the general public.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently opened 10 beds (5 acute care and 5 intensive care) at its Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix to non-Veteran, critical and non-critical COVID-19 patients to help assist Arizona's pandemic response efforts.

The transfer of non-Veterans began on July 11, with the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) accepting three critical and non-critical COVID-19 positive patients.

The decision to accept and care for non-Veterans came in response to a request from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state of Arizona through the state's surge line.

“Because Arizona continues to see coronavirus cases and high occupancy in hospitals, we're proud to open our doors to our community as we expand our participation in VA's fourth mission,” said Dr. Alyshia Smith, director of the PVAHCS. “We made the decision to open these beds because we're confident in our ability to continue our primary mission of caring for our nation's Veterans.”

From the outset of this crisis, the VA in Phoenix was able to [respond swiftly](#) to the pandemic, saving untold lives.

Earlier in the pandemic, the Phoenix VA supported the American public by sending 16 nurses to support Native Americans in Kayenta and Tuba City, Arizona; and four nurses to Los Angeles to support a community nursing home.

In addition to sending personnel to areas hard hit by COVID-19, Phoenix VA staff donated supplies to Navajo Nation and lent clinical expertise across the region.

Smith credits the dedicated staff and close collaboration amongst all three Arizona VA Medical Centers for the ability to care for those suffering from COVID-19.

“In the beginning, we partnered to support each other to help Veterans across the whole state,” she said. “I'm incredibly proud of the staff of all three of our Arizona VA facilities as we've continued our care for Veterans, and now our fellow Americans across the state.”

States may request assistance from the federal government through their local Department of Health and Human Services' regional emergency coordinator (REC) as part of FEMA's National Response Coordination Center. Counties, cities and other municipalities should route all requests for federal support through their respective states.

VA released its COVID-19 [response guide](#) to the public for other medical systems to review and learn from and is working closely with FEMA and other federal agencies as part of the nation's response.

VA continues to encourage Veterans, staff members, and their families to [take everyday precautions](#) to protect against respiratory illnesses caused by COVID-19, the flu and the common cold, and to follow the guidance of their local and state healthcare and emergency management officials.

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