



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Funding Highlights:

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to providing military veterans and their survivors with the benefits, care, and support they have earned through sacrifice and service to the Nation.
- The 2020 Budget fulfills the President's promise by making critical investments in high priority initiatives that ensure veterans receive top quality care, benefits, and services—wherever they work or live. The Budget provides dedicated resources to implement the historic VA MISSION Act of 2018 and gives veterans greater choice and access to the medical care they deserve. The Budget also provides resources to improve the veteran experience across all programs and services, as well as promote efficiency, transparency, and accountability within the Department.
- The Budget requests \$93.1 billion for VA, a \$6.5 billion or 7.5-percent increase from the 2019 enacted level. In addition, the Budget requests \$87.6 billion in advance appropriations for VA medical care programs in 2021 to ensure the Department has sufficient resources to continue providing the premier services that veterans have earned. The request also includes new legislative authorities and \$123.1 billion in mandatory budget authority, including \$129.5 billion in 2021 advance appropriations for other critical veteran and survivor benefits.

### The President's 2020 Budget:

VA's mission is to deliver world-class benefits, care, and support to America's military veterans, their families, and survivors. The Budget provides the necessary resources to meet the Nation's commitment to veterans to help them recover from illnesses, injuries, or wounds sustained in service and to enable their successful reintegration into civilian life.

The Budget fully funds VA to operate one of the largest integrated healthcare systems in the United States with over 9.3 million enrolled veterans, provide disability compensation benefits to nearly 5.5 million veterans and their survivors, and administer pension benefits for approximately 440,000 veterans and their survivors.

In addition, the Budget makes investments across a broad range of veteran services and programs including: educational assistance for nearly one million students; rehabilitation and employment benefits for approximately 149,000 veterans; servicemember and veteran group life insurance plans for approximately six million enrollees; home mortgages, including more than three million active loans; and memorial and burial benefits in more than 137 national cemeteries and thousands of other cemeteries across the Nation.

## ***Expands Veterans' Choice and Access to Medical Care***

**Invests in World-Class Healthcare.** The Budget proposes \$80.2 billion to fully fund VA medical care requirements in 2020, a \$7.0 billion or 9.6-percent increase from the 2019 enacted level. The Budget also proposes \$87.6 billion in advance appropriations for VA medical care programs in 2021.

*"Our Nation's veterans fulfilled their duty to this country with brave and loyal service; it is our moral and solemn obligation to demonstrate to them our continuing gratitude, unwavering support, and meaningful encouragement."*

President Donald J. Trump  
October 31, 2018

**Implements the VA MISSION Act of 2018.** The Budget fully supports implementation of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 and provides veterans greater choice on where they receive their healthcare—whether at VA or through a private healthcare provider. The Budget consolidates all veterans' community care programs into a single program, reducing bureaucracy and making it easier for veterans to navigate their healthcare needs.

**Increases Veterans' Access to Urgent Care and Expands the Caregivers Program.** As part of the VA MISSION Act of 2018, the Budget supports VA's brand

new urgent care benefit. Veterans would be able to use more convenient, urgent care facilities in the community, often times closer to home. The Budget also supports the VA MISSION Act of 2018's expansion of the Caregivers program to include eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty before September 11, 2001. Expansion of the Caregivers program would coincide with new information technology (IT) updates necessary to effectively manage the program.

**Prioritizes Funding for Suicide Prevention.** Reducing deaths by suicide among the Nation's veterans continues to be VA's top clinical priority. The Budget provides essential resources for VA's suicide prevention programs and supports the expansion of key initiatives aimed at advancing VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.

## ***Improves the Veteran Experience***

**Provides Critical Funding for IT.** The Budget provides \$4.3 billion for essential investments in IT to improve the online interface between the veteran and the Department. This includes an increase of more than \$200 million to recapitalize aging network infrastructure, to expedite VA's transition to the cloud, and to support emerging VA MISSION Act of 2018 IT requirements.

In addition, the Budget includes \$1.6 billion as part of a multiyear effort to continue implementation of a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) system. The EHR is a high-priority initiative that would ensure a seamlessly integrated healthcare record between the Department of Defense and VA, by bringing all patient data into one common system.

**Addresses Infrastructure Deficiencies.** The Budget provides \$1.6 billion for VA's construction program to complete high priority major and minor construction projects. More than \$1.2 billion is provided to begin construction of a new hospital in Louisville, KY, complete construction of other ongoing major medical facilities, make critical seismic corrections, and expand

*"More importantly, the interoperability of the new electronic health records system will connect VA to the DOD, private doctors and private pharmacies to create a continuum of care and organize the healthcare around our veteran's needs."*

Robert L. Wilkie  
Secretary  
June 27, 2018

VA's national cemeteries. An additional \$399 million would be used to renovate existing office and patient care space across the Department. The Budget also provides \$1.2 billion for non-recurring maintenance projects to maintain and modernize medical facilities. These critical investments enhance the safety and security of VA facilities, help implement new patient-centered designs, and ensure VA programs and services keep pace with modern technologies.

**Modernizes the Veteran Appeals Process.** The Budget provides sufficient resources for the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Veterans Benefits Administration to implement the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, a new streamlined framework that will provide quicker decisions on new veteran compensation appeals and resolve the remaining legacy appeals inventory. The new framework will provide veterans with increased options to resolve their appeals and improve the timeliness of appeals decisions.

**Increases Access to Burial and Memorial Benefits.** The Budget includes \$329 million, a 4.2-percent increase from the 2019 enacted level, to expand veteran access to memorial benefits, deliver premier services to veterans' families, and provide perpetual care for more than 3.9 million gravesites. This funding would sustain 144 cemeteries and sites, including the initial activation of five new cemeteries to support VA's goal of providing veterans with a burial option within 75 miles of their home. The Budget also funds the transfer of 11 cemeteries from the Department of Defense as part of the President's *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* plan. In addition, the Budget increases funding by \$13 million to improve customer service, responsiveness, and efforts to better memorialize veterans and tell their stories.

### ***Promotes Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability***

**Targets Investments to Create Efficiencies.** The Budget prioritizes investments in areas that would create cost savings over time, as well as improve the efficiency and effectiveness of VA programs. Targeted investments to IT systems, to include more than \$200 million for cloud migration and replacing aging infrastructure to support the new EHR system, would result in cost savings as VA consolidates data centers and reallocates resources to higher priority needs. VA is also committed to modernizing the disability compensation program and identifying innovative pilot programs aimed at providing meaningful empowerment opportunities for disabled veterans seeking employment.

**Streamlines Government.** The Budget promotes fiscal discipline by implementing Federal reorganization proposals that would more effectively and efficiently utilize taxpayer funds. The Budget better aligns small business certification programs across Government by ensuring proper management of Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business certification programs under the Small Business Administration.

**Reduces Waste, Fraud, and Abuse.** The Budget provides \$229 million for VA programs designed to improve oversight, accountability, and performance within the Department. This includes \$22 million, a 25-percent increase from the 2019 enacted level, in direct funding for the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection. Since the President's signing of the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, which has allowed the Department to more efficiently discipline poor-performing VA employees, more than 4,300 employees have been removed, demoted, or suspended. The Budget also provides \$207 million, a 7.8-percent increase above the 2019 enacted level, for the Office of the Inspector General to strengthen accountability, promote transparency, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.