



VA

Prostate Cancer Screening and Treatment for Veterans

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prostate cancer will affect 13 out of every 100 men in the United States. Approximately 15,000 Veterans are diagnosed with prostate cancer per year, and there are over 200,000 Veterans that are prostate cancer survivors. Exposure to Dioxin (Agent Orange) or other toxic substances in herbicides could increase a Veteran's chance of developing prostate cancer during their lifetime, so being proactive in seeking preventive care for early detection and treatment of this type of cancer is essential. Veterans should discuss the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening with their primary care provider and determine if screening is right for them. One of VA's initiatives for preventive care and cancer treatment is the work being done by VA's National Precision Oncology Program (NPOP). NPOP personalizes cancer treatment options, providing increased access to clinical trials, and using genetics and innovations, which is one of the most promising areas of interventions, treatments, and cures for Veterans.

In support of VA's continued efforts to promote prostate cancer screening and provide state-of-the-art treatment, The Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2022 (Cleland-Dole Act) was signed into law on December 29, 2022, as Division U of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328). The law is in honor of Senators Dole and Cleland, both of whom were Veterans, and it is based on over 30 different bills on Veteran issues introduced during the 117th Congress. One focus of The Cleland-Dole Act is to ensure Veterans receive high quality, comprehensive care at all stages of prostate cancer, from screening to diagnosis to end-of-life treatment. Clinical Pathways (CPs) are just one way VA is providing that.

What Are Clinical Pathways?

Evidence for cancer treatment is constantly evolving, which can result in lag times for implementation of new, proven treatments, and could cause variability in care for Veterans. CPs are published by VA's National Oncology Program, and prostate cancer CPs are developed by a team of subject matter experts (SMEs) in Primary Care, Radiology, Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Surgery, Genetics, Pathology, and Pharmacy. CPs are a decision support tool that bridges this gap by using current, published evidence to develop treatment process maps to help guide care decisions. CPs are published for VA providers in a location accessible to all VA providers across the nation, and they are reviewed quarterly by the SMEs. CPs standardize proven practices to ensure high quality, cost-effective care for Veterans at each point in their care. CPs recommend a preferred treatment based on effectiveness, harmfulness, and cost.

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How Do Clinical Pathways Benefit Veterans?

Veterans will always have access to the highest quality of care, no matter where they live. CPs are updated no less than quarterly to ensure the latest data is incorporated into treatment recommendations.

Veterans are provided the most effective and least harmful treatment options. CP recommendations are based upon national guidelines, published literature, and SMEs experience with effectiveness, harmfulness, and cost.

Veterans still have treatment options. Although CPs are designed to accommodate most Veterans' treatment needs, VA providers may choose not to follow a CP when clinically appropriate.

Resources For Veterans

Learn about the benefits of Prostate Cancer Screening at [Is Prostate Cancer Screening Right for You?](#)

There are many risk factors for developing prostate cancer. Discuss your individual risks with your health care provider.

Veterans already established with a VA primary care provider care can speak to their provider to assess their risk for prostate cancer. Veterans who are not already enrolled or using VA health care can access further information via this link <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply> or scan the QR Code Below.

