VFW Post 6786 First Site in Innovative Initiative Giving Veterans Access to VA Health Services Close to Home

Philips, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Team Up to Make Telehealth Remote Virtual Care a Reality for Veterans

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Andover, Mass. and Kansas City, Mo. (October 16, 2019) – For the first time ever, U.S. veterans will be able to receive U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) health services at their local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or American Legion (Legion) Posts through a multi-site pilot program dubbed ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations).

This first-of-its-kind telehealth initiative is the product of an alliance between the VFW, VA, global health care leader Philips (NYSE: PHG, AEX: PHIA) and The American Legion, which allows veterans to conduct virtual appointments with their VA providers without having to travel to a distant VA regional medical facility or outpatient clinic.

"Our goal is to make sure every veteran has access to health care," said VA Secretary, Robert Wilkie. "ATLAS eliminates another health care hurdle for Veterans living in rural areas or with limited Internet access, and it's a great example of how public and private organizations can work together to solve the challenges of health care."

The program is launching its first installation today at VFW Post 6786 in Eureka, Montana. Other initial sites will be in Linesville, Pennsylvania at VFW Post 7842 and Los Banos, California at VFW Post 2487/American Legion Post 166. The first American Legion site will be in Springfield, VA at Post 176.

"VFW Post 6786 in downtown Eureka addresses the access challenge for local veterans,"

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said VFW National Commander William J. "Doc" Schmitz. "Sitting inside state-of-the-art, private, Internet-connected health care pods developed and donated by Philips, veterans will benefit from virtual appointments in familiar surroundings conducted by VA medical professionals. This removes geographic and digital barriers and is the latest way today's VFW Posts are innovating to address the needs of our Veterans and their families."

About a quarter of the nation's nearly 20 million U.S. veterans live in remote or rural areas. These rural areas provide challenges to delivering health care such as long travel times to facilities or limited Internet connection. Many rural veterans may also live with multiple chronic, service-related disabilities or mobility limitations which further hinder their ability to easily access health care.

"I am very proud and honored to have our VFW Post as an ATLAS site," said VFW Post 6786 Commander Rick Weldon. "Our Veterans currently expend a great deal of time and effort to reach the nearest VA clinic. ATLAS provides a solution to this issue that benefits both veterans and VA staff."

The Convergence of the VA, Veteran Service Organizations and Philips Technology

In May 2018, the VA announced the passage of the MISSION Act, which allows VA doctors, nurses and other health care providers to administer care using telehealth technologies, regardless of location of the provider or the Veteran.

The VFW and The American Legion are among the most prominent Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in the country with a combined membership of more than 3 million. ATLAS leverages the ubiquity of these Posts and extends the VA's "Anywhere to Anywhere" initiative to bring access to VA care to Veterans who live in remote or rural areas.

ATLAS will use Philips telehealth patient monitoring solutions including Wi-Fi-enabled electronic scales, blood pressure cuffs and thermometers, as well as glucose meters and pulse oximeters linked to a secure, high-speed Internet line. The sites will offer services that do not require hands-on exams but may include primary care, mental health counseling, clinical pharmacy, nutrition services and social work.

To improve access to care, the VA has become a leader in developing telehealth services delivering more than 1.3 million video telehealth visits to more than 485,000 Veterans since the VA Video Connect app was launched in 2017. In fiscal year 2019, VA telehealth provided over 2.5 million episodes of care to veterans.

About Royal Philips

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