



VA CENTER FOR CARE AND PAYMENT INNOVATION (CCPI) VETSmile Program Frequently Asked Questions

VAMC FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is VETSmile?

The VETSmile Pilot Program connects Veterans who do not have a VA dental benefit with community dental providers who offer reduced-fee dental care and/or pro bono care. This care is not funded by VA; however, CCPI is targeting Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers and Dental Schools who have the ability to provide reduced-fee dental care.

How are Veterans connected with the VETSmile Program?

Veterans are connected to community dental providers using two methods: the Cohort Model and the Referral Model. In both models, all dental care is managed by accredited community dental providers.

- **The Cohort Model:** the CCPI VETSmile team pulls names and addresses of Veteran Enrollees who are not eligible for VA Dental benefits. Based on capacity and input from the DCPs, Veterans are contacted directly by CCPI, via email and mail, to notify them of their eligibility to participate in the VETSmile Program and to provide contact information for the participating community dental provider. The Veteran would then reach out to that community provider and become their established patient for ongoing dental care needs.
- **The Referral Model:** local VAMC medical providers refer patients to community dental providers through the Consult Toolbox; medical providers receive Veteran permission to share their name and contact information to community dental providers to be scheduled for dental care. Please note that there is no coordination or approval of services with VA dentistry.

A more in-depth implementation guide will be provided to participating VAMCs, and the CCPI project team will work closely with VAMCs to facilitate the process.

What is the role of local VAMCs in the VETSmile Program?

CCPI partners with local VAMCs to implement the referral model for Veterans without a dental benefit. CCPI will work with the VAMC medical providers and dental community partners to create a bridge for patient referrals, and supports the VAMC with a Consult Toolbox to implement the VETSmile Pilot Program

Is the VA Office of Dentistry running the VETSmile Program?

No. VA Dentistry serves enrolled Veterans who are eligible for VA dental services, while VETSmile is only authorized to connect enrolled Veterans who are not eligible for VA dental services to community providers. The VETSmile Pilot Program is being administered through the VHA Center for Care and Payment Innovation, an office within the VHA Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning, a core program office under the Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks (14 DEAN). VA Dentistry is briefed monthly on the program and provides insights and suggestions as needed.

All communication related to the VETSmile program, including those pertaining to the patient experience, should be referred to the Center for Care and Payment Innovation at vetsmile.vaco@va.gov.



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Who should lead the VETSmile Pilot Program initiative at VAMCs?

The VETSmile Pilot Program, and specifically the Referral Model described above, was designed to be driven by referrals from medical providers. This is because VA Dentistry is solely authorized to see patients who are eligible for VA Dental benefits, and so they are not interacting as much with the Veterans that this pilot is meant to target. In VAMCs where the program has been deployed, Primary Care and/or the Chief of Staff's Office is implementing the program.

While CCPI does not direct which service should serve as facility lead, it is recommended that facility leads for the VETSmile Program be part of a non-dental service to reach as many Veterans with non-dental benefits as possible.

How does VETSmile collect and manage related data?

For both models, CCPI collects high-level, non-PHI/PII data for Veterans who are seen through the VETSmile Pilot Program, with the intent of using that data to identify positive population health outcomes, determine long-term pilot feasibility, and support potential scaling.

How long will the Pilot run?

The Pilot has been authorized by Congress to run for 5 years; at the end of the pilot, CCPI will evaluate the results of the pilot, and make recommendations to Congress on the future direction of the pilot. Veterans already connected to dental care providers will not be impacted by pilot duration. Once the veteran is connected to the DCP they are the patient of the DCP for their lifetime.

What is the difference between VETSmile and the Office of Community Care?

While Community Care serves Veterans with a VA dental benefit and pays for care that these Veterans receive in the community, the VETSmile Pilot Program is designed to connect Veterans who do not have a VA dental benefit with community providers. VA does not pay for this care but works specifically with Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers and Dental Schools to create a network of dental providers who can offer pro bono or discounted dental services, with the ultimate goal of providing the Veteran with a dental home.

How does my facility implement this program? What are the next steps?

If facilities are interested in participating in the VETSmile Program, please have them reach out to Bailee Bannan, Project Manager with the Center for Care and Payment Innovation, at vetsmile.vaco@va.gov. She will work with facilities to initiate the implementation process as the VETSmile Pilot Program is deployed in each region/state.