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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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We invite any media interested in interviewing our VA staff to learn more about care and services to contact our Public Affairs Officer at 989-497-2500, extension 13020 or e-mail tara.scheuer@va.gov

Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center Surpasses Video Visits in 2020

VA Video Connect visits increase over 1000% nationwide during COVID-19 pandemic

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced that video telehealth appointments to Veterans' homes [increased over 1000%](#), as Veterans increasingly chose virtual care through VA Video Connect during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our medical center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics have conducted over 8,200 VA Video Connect appointments between October 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

VA Video Connect allows Veterans and their caregivers to meet virtually with their VA care teams on any computer, tablet, or mobile device with an internet connection. As in-person interactions decreased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, VA Video Connect supported Veterans' abilities to continue care and remain safely at home. Usage of video to home services has been increasing since mid-March with peak usage reaching over 29,000 appointments per day.

This increase represents a 441% increase in VA Video Connect appointments from March 2020 to June 2020. Other telehealth milestones from our facility include:

- Home Telehealth has graduated 39 COVID positive/COVID symptom patients from the remote patient monitoring program.
- Store and Forward Telehealth embraced stay home, stay safe guidelines and implemented a teledermatology protocol which allows Veterans to securely upload dermatology images from their personal devices to Store and Forward Imagers which are then placed in the computerized record system and reviewed by a dermatologist.
- 100% of primary care providers and mental health providers are capable of providing a VA Video Connect appointment to Veterans.

VA is also taking strides to bridge the digital divide for Veterans who lack the technology or broadband internet connectivity required to participate in VA telehealth services. At the national level, [VA is working with strategic partners](#), through the [VA Secretary's Center of Strategic Partnerships](#), to increase access to the technology that Veterans need to connect with their VA health care team virtually.

“As we near the three-year anniversary of the launch of VA Video Connect, even during these challenging times, VA has and continues to maintain access to high-quality health care for Veterans,” said Barbara Bates, Medical Center Director. “As the service becomes more popular, VA remains committed to providing a seamless user experience to ensure Veterans have access to care where and when they need it.”

Read more about [VA Video Connect](#). For information about VA’s telehealth services visit connectedcare.va.gov.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center. It provides care to over 37,400 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at www.saginaw.va.gov.

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