Provider shortages, long distances to health care facilities and limited transportation options often keep rural Veterans from obtaining timely, quality care.

To overcome these access challenges, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Rural Health (ORH) uses telehealth technology to help the nearly 3 million rural Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system access clinical services from their home or nearby medical facilities. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, ORH:

- Enabled telehealth care for more than 964,659 rural Veterans
- Funded more than 32 virtual programs
- Dedicated $199 million to telehealth programs

As the largest provider of telehealth services in the country, VA is leading the nation in telemedicine advancement. In FY 2018, 13% of Veterans who received care from VA did so via telemedicine.

Expanding Telehealth Access

Telehealth technology helps VA improve rural Veterans’ health and well-being by connecting rural communities with qualified clinicians. VA continues to work to expand telehealth access through the ‘Anywhere to Anywhere’ initiative, a new federal rule that allows VA doctors, nurses and other health care providers to administer care to Veterans using telehealth technology regardless of where they live.

As part of its commitment to this initiative, ORH works closely with the Office of Connected Care, which oversees the three modalities of telehealth to provide rural Veterans with care regardless of their location.
The Office of Rural Health (ORH) works to see that America's Veterans thrive in rural communities. To support the health and well-being of rural Veterans, ORH and its Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers establish and disseminate initiatives that increase access to care for the 2.7 million rural Veterans enrolled in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system. Key focus areas include programs that address workforce shortages, transportation, primary care, mental health, telehealth and specialty care. To learn more, visit www.ruralhealth.va.gov.