

Building a continuum of care: How Optum Serve prioritizes Veteran health from beginning to end

From the moment they embark on their service journey to long after they've hung up their uniforms, members of the military community deserve reliable care and health services.

The 2023 Veterans Day proclamation captured this sentiment, stating: "As a nation, we have many obligations, but we only have one truly sacred obligation: to prepare and equip the brave women and men we send into harm's way and to care for them and their loved ones when they return home."

Recent executive action prioritized Veteran and Service Member welfare, recognizing that service-related injuries can leave mental and physical barriers that make adjusting to civilian life challenging. Veterans often require specialized, culturally competent care tailored to their needs and requirements.

To meet this mission, providers and organizations involved in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) health programs and systems must have the expertise and skills necessary to effectively serve the military community.

Optum Serve is ready to answer this call, and in fact, has been serving Veterans, Military Service Members, and their families for more than 2 decades.

As a Veteran-led organization and a top employer of Veterans, Optum Serve harnesses its extensive knowledge of the military population to aid the VA and DOD in their development of specialized care solutions for every part of the Service Member and Veteran journey.

Optum Serve is the federally focused business of UnitedHealth Group, a Fortune 4 and market-leading health organization. As such, Optum Serve has access to a vast integrated network of medical, physical, mental, behavioral and wellness providers in the country, as well as a suite of advanced data-driven analytical capabilities, robust health services and administrative offerings. Optum Serve leverages this breadth of commercial resources in pursuit of providing the best possible care to the military and Veteran communities.

Establishing a continuum of care

Central to the Optum Serve approach is a commitment to forging a comprehensive continuum of care that spans the military journey. The organization acknowledges each individual as a part of the larger ecosystem and works to provide the essential services to sustain health, stability and productivity across every facet of their lives.

Joining the service: Signing up for the military is one of the most important decisions a person can make. Optum Serve plays a crucial role in supporting both applicants and the DOD in this process through the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) Program. The organization provides medical services, and mental and physical requirements. It employs clinicians to conduct comprehensive medical tests for applicants, ensuring they meet the physical requirements to successfully embark on their military journey.

Navigating the care system: Those stationed across the world may need guidance and support when navigating to find the right care. As a prime contractor for the Military Health System (MHS) Nurse Advice Line, Optum Serve ensures that expert staff is consistently available to Service Members and their families as they seek health advice, assistance in finding and scheduling appointments in their area, and more.



Access care 24/7/365 via MHS Nurse Advice Line

Within 30 seconds, reach a nurse for advice, a care coordinator for customer service or be redirected back to the MHS for support.

Optum Serve has performed exams verifying warfighters are physically and mentally ready to deploy. Optum Serve offers a wide variety of assessments, including dental, audiology, vision, immunizations, behavioral health, physicals and X-rays. The organization is working with various states to continue helping Service Members with readiness requirements.

Transitioning out of service: Once their time in uniform is ending, Veterans and separating Service Members rely on compensation and pension examinations to receive proper benefits for service-related injuries and illnesses. Optum Serve leverages its network of over 5,700 providers across the nation to administer high-quality examinations in accordance with service requests from the VA. Additionally, the organization deploys mobile units, telehealth and other exam modalities those in remote or rural areas.

Readjusting to civilian life: Optum Serve has helped provide long-term solutions as a part of the Task Force Movement (TFM). TFM is a nonprofit initiative that connects transitioning Service Members and Veterans with sustainable, lucrative supply chain employment opportunities in the trucking, national security, cybersecurity, health care, aviation and maritime industries.

Optum Serve also facilitates the development of clinical practice guidelines for the DOD and the VA, encompassing suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorder, diabetes, hypertension and other chronic conditions. These guidelines empower clinicians to make informed decisions for Veterans so they can experience the best possible outcomes.



Developed and updated 20+ clinical practice guidelines since 2012

Maintaining health and well-being: Health extends far beyond medical exams, which is why Optum Serve supported the Veterans Health Administration's Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC) pilot program. This program helped Veterans achieve their health and wellness goals, addressing key behaviors like maintaining healthy eating habits, physical activity, stress management and limiting alcohol intake to improve and maintain Veteran health.



TLC addressed the following behaviors:

- Striving for a healthy weight
- Eating wisely
- Being physically active
- Managing stress
- Limiting alcohol

Supporting Veteran care: Even with the VA's robust offerings, long wait times and lack of access can be obstacles for those seeking care. To fill this gap, Optum Serve proudly serves as the third-party administrator for the VA Community Care Network (VA CCN) for regions 1, 2 and 3. Through the CCN, the organization provides Veterans with better access and greater choice over their health care by serving as a bridge between the VA and an integrated system of credentialed, quality providers. High-quality complementary services – including medical, behavioral, chiropractic, nursing, vision, pharmacy, dental, hypnotherapy and tai chi – are all available to eligible beneficiaries.



Example of a Veteran's journey through the VA Community Care Network

- 1 Veteran seeks care from VA.
- 2 VA determines, based on eligibility criteria, Veteran should receive care from a community provider. Veteran agrees.
- 3 VA engages community provider to accept referral and method of delivery (referral packet to include medical record).
 - VA schedules appointment with community provider and sends referral packet.
 - Veteran self-schedules his or her appointment following community provider acceptance of referral.
- 4 Veteran receives care from community provider.
- 5 Provider sends medical record to VA.
- 6 Provider bills Optum® for the care and Optum processes claims in an average of fewer than 8 days.



22.3M+

referrals

146.8M+

visits



36 states

including
Puerto Rico and the
U.S. Virgin Islands



107.7M+

claims processed in
an average of fewer
than 8 days



2.4M+

contracted
care sites

Date range: June 2019 to September 2024

Aging as a Veteran: To address and maintain the evolving needs of Veterans as they grow older, Optum Serve offers home- and community-based services, caregiver support and palliative care. The Optum HouseCalls service provides staff to meet patients where they are to provide specialized care.



91%

member satisfaction



91%

repeat visit acceptance rate

Moving forward in partnership with the DOD and VA, Optum Serve will continue to help Service Members, Veterans and their families live healthier lives and to improve the health system for everyone. Through commercial and industry best practices and federal expertise, we will ensure high-quality, robust and innovative health care is delivered to the military and Veteran community.



[Learn more](#) about how
**Optum Serve helps clients
deliver on their mission.**

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