



VA
Caregiver
Support

2023
**Annual
Report**

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Caregiver Support Program

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Message From the Director

Greetings caregivers, Veterans, stakeholders, and staff. Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report. In 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP) accepted a critical mission – to promote the health and well-being of Veterans’ caregivers. Fourteen years later, CSP has grown tremendously, serving more than 74,000 Veterans’ caregivers in fiscal year 2023. As CSP grows in the number of caregivers we support, the program offers more resources than ever. In addition to the skills training and education provided to help caregivers support Veterans, we also offer resources that help caregivers care for themselves.

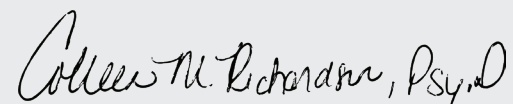
Caregivers nationwide now have access to resources such as CSP’s Legal and Financial Planning Services, Caregiver Health and Well-being Coaching, and Virtual Psychotherapy Program for Caregivers. Our commitment to enhancing our services to Veterans’ caregivers does not stop there. As CSP continues to push forward to greater heights, we recognize the importance of communication and transparency. As a result, CSP is launching its first annual report.

This annual report provides insight into CSP’s Fiscal Year 2023’s:


- Budget allocation
- Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) resources
- Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) services
- Annual theme: Year of the Caregiver
- Celebration of National Family Caregivers Month
- Staff development
- Caregiver Support Line (CSL)
- Enhanced communication with caregivers and Veterans
- Standardization and consistency

As a Veteran and the Executive Director of CSP, I’m proud to be part of such a critical mission. On behalf of all of us at CSP, I want to thank every caregiver for supporting our Nation’s heroes and entrusting CSP to walk alongside you throughout your caregiving journey.

With gratitude,



Colleen M. Richardson, Psy.D.
Executive Director, Caregiver Support Program



Serving more than
74,000
Veterans’
caregivers



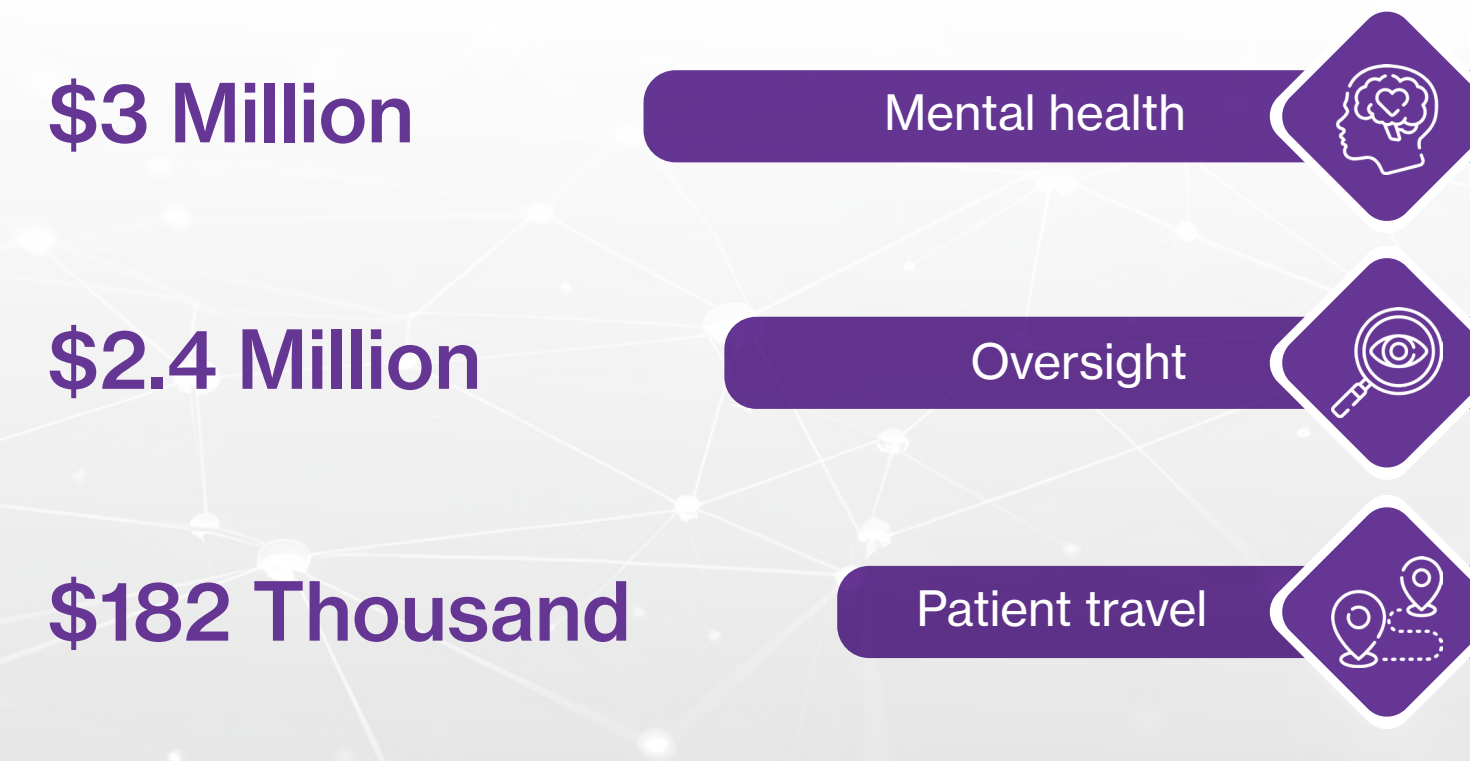
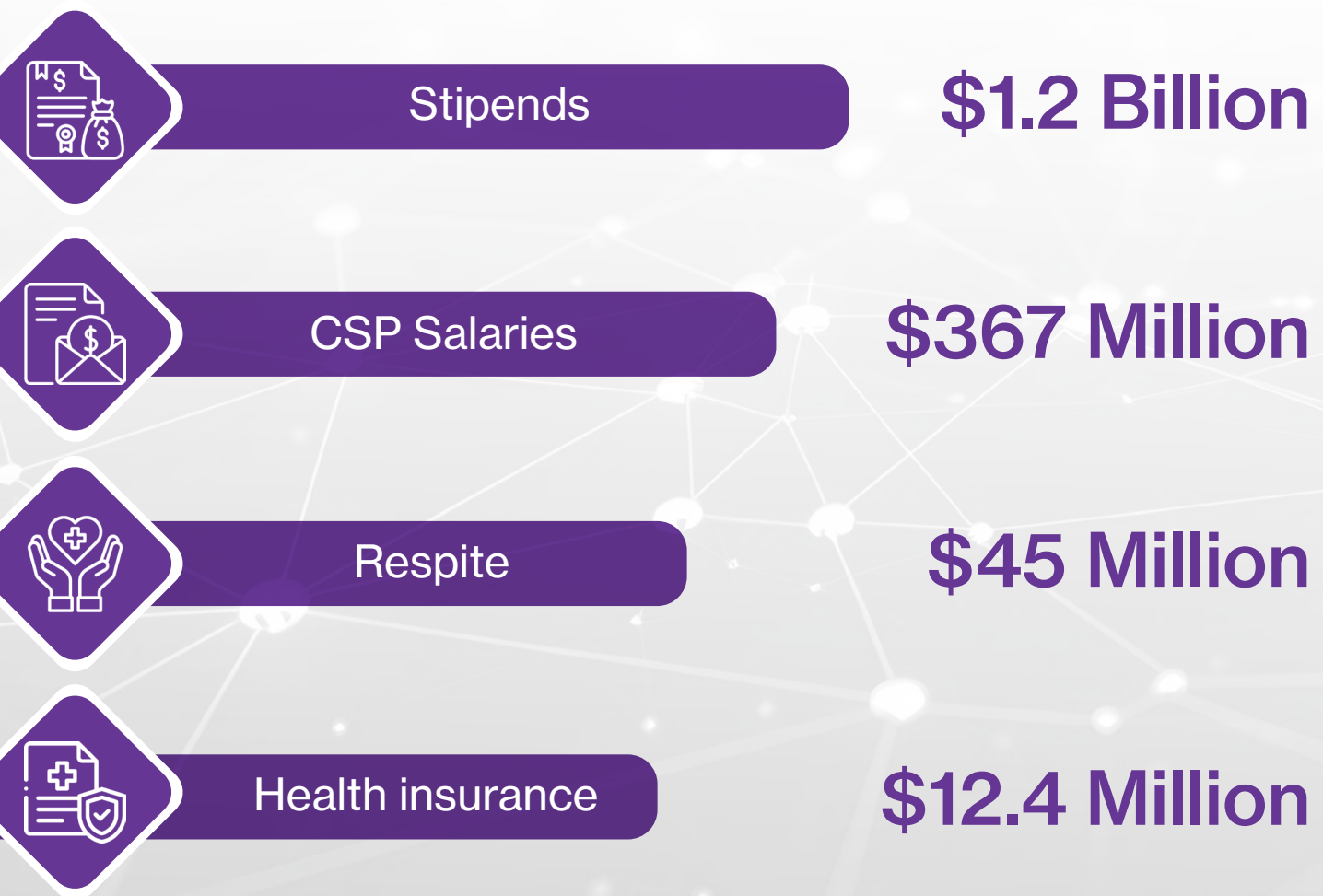
Annual theme
Year of the
Caregiver



Caregiver
Support
Line

CSP's Budget Allocation

CSP is committed to transparency, including how we allocate funds. Here's how CSP leveraged its budget to support caregivers:



Detailed breakdown:

Stipends for Primary Family Caregivers enrolled in PCAFC: \$1,232,678,501*
 Health insurance for caregivers through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA): \$12,456,156
 Mental health resources: \$3,023,677 | Oversight: \$2,419,764 | Patient travel assistance: \$182,754
 Respite: \$45,949,405 | VA- respite: \$2,318,100 | Non-respite: \$43,631,305
 CSP Salaries: \$367,227,944 | Local CSP teams: \$323,596,639 | Program Office Staff: \$43,631,305

One Program, Two Components

CSP promotes the health and well-being of Veterans' caregivers through two programs, the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) and the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

19,800

Caregivers received the right support at the right time through PGCSS services such as



Peer Support Mentoring



Caregivers FIRST



Reach VA



Caregiver Health and Well-being Coaching; and more

CSP successfully launched the second phase of expansion for the (PCAFC) to eligible Veterans of all service eras. As of December 2023, CSP provided services and resources to more than 57,000 Family Caregivers enrolled in PCAFC.

- 98 percent of PCAFC applications were processed within 90 days or less.
- 4,300 Legal and Financial Planning services to Primary Family Caregivers enrolled in PCAFC. The services provide access to more than 13 expert-led legal and financial planning services, including:
 - Simple wills
 - Advance directives
 - Debt and credit management
 - 90-day financial coaching
- The participant self-referral link is now live: <https://www.caregiverfinanciallegal.va.gov>

Year of the Caregiver

In Fiscal Year 2023, CSP became laser-focused on putting the “support” back into CSP through the theme “Year of the Caregiver.” Here’s what we saw during the Year of the Caregiver:

- 1,990 visits through CSP’s Virtual Psychotherapy Program for Caregivers
- A 20.1 percent increase in caregivers enrolled in insurance through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)
- 4,538 caregiver referrals to Building Better Caregivers
- 1,924 caregiver participants in Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH)
- 9,978 new subscribers to the Annie Text Message Program for Caregivers
- 4,533 caregiver participants in self-care courses
- Enhanced functionality within the Caregiver Record Management Application (CARMA) to add chosen pronouns and Self-Identified Gender Identity (SIGI) into Veteran and caregiver CARMA records



Staying connected to the needs and wants of caregivers is critical to CSP’s mission. Roughly 10,043 caregivers completed CSP’s Veterans Signals (VSignals) survey in fiscal year 2023. VSignals is a VA Veterans Experience Office platform that allows VA to collect customer experience feedback from Service members, Veterans, caregivers, and other stakeholders.



CSP is a leading VA program across all categories, including Trust, Satisfaction, Quality, Efficiency, and Employee Helpfulness. Of survey participants:



93 percent

More than 93 percent have confidence and trust in CSP.



95 percent

Were satisfied with the efficiency and speed of CSP services.



93 percent

Found CSP employees helpful.

National Family Caregivers Month

Each November, National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM), is observed to celebrate family caregivers nationwide. CSP celebrated NFCM through the theme Year of the Caregiver – The Whole Caregiver. Through this theme, CSP empowered caregivers to prioritize their needs and raise awareness of the resources and services dedicated to their health and well-being. In addition to promoting resources such as respite, Peer Support Mentoring, and Caregivers First, local VA facilities celebrated Veterans' caregivers with various events, workshops, and opportunities to connect with other caregivers.



CSP Staff

A Commitment to Serving Caregivers



CSP is comprised of approximately 2500 staff, each committed to serving the caregivers who support our Nation's Veterans. From our teams at local VA facilities to our staff at the Caregiver Support Line, CSP is here to support caregivers wherever they are and with whatever they need.

We invest in our staff so they can support caregivers. In Fiscal Year 2023, our CSP staff training efforts included:



A two-day virtual, all-CSP staff conference attended by more than 2,000 staff per day.



21 virtual National Education Calls, averaging 500-800 participants.



93 CSP employees trained to serve as Caregiver Health and Well-being Coaches (CHWC), and 11 employees were trained to serve as CHWC mentors.

CSP also launched:

- Four pilot sites for staff training in the American Heart Association's (AHA) Friends and Family cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) model. Staff trained in this modality can provide life-saving CPR training to caregivers across the VA enterprise.




- Award Winning Contacts program to ensure every caregiver and Veteran receives excellent service every time.


- Successfully launched a training initiative with the Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Team (CEAT).
 - CEAT completed initial eligibility and determination letters on over 82,600 applications with all initial consults completed in five days (national average) and final consults completed in one day (national average), resulting in a grant rate of 30% nationally.
 - CEAT processed 97% of clinical reviews in under 45 days.
 - Despite a 31% increase in applications, we experienced a 35% decrease in Clinical Reviews compared to Fiscal Year 2022.
 - Developed a Letter Builder Tool to support CEAT
 - Trained and successfully rolled out the Decision Letter Communication Process.

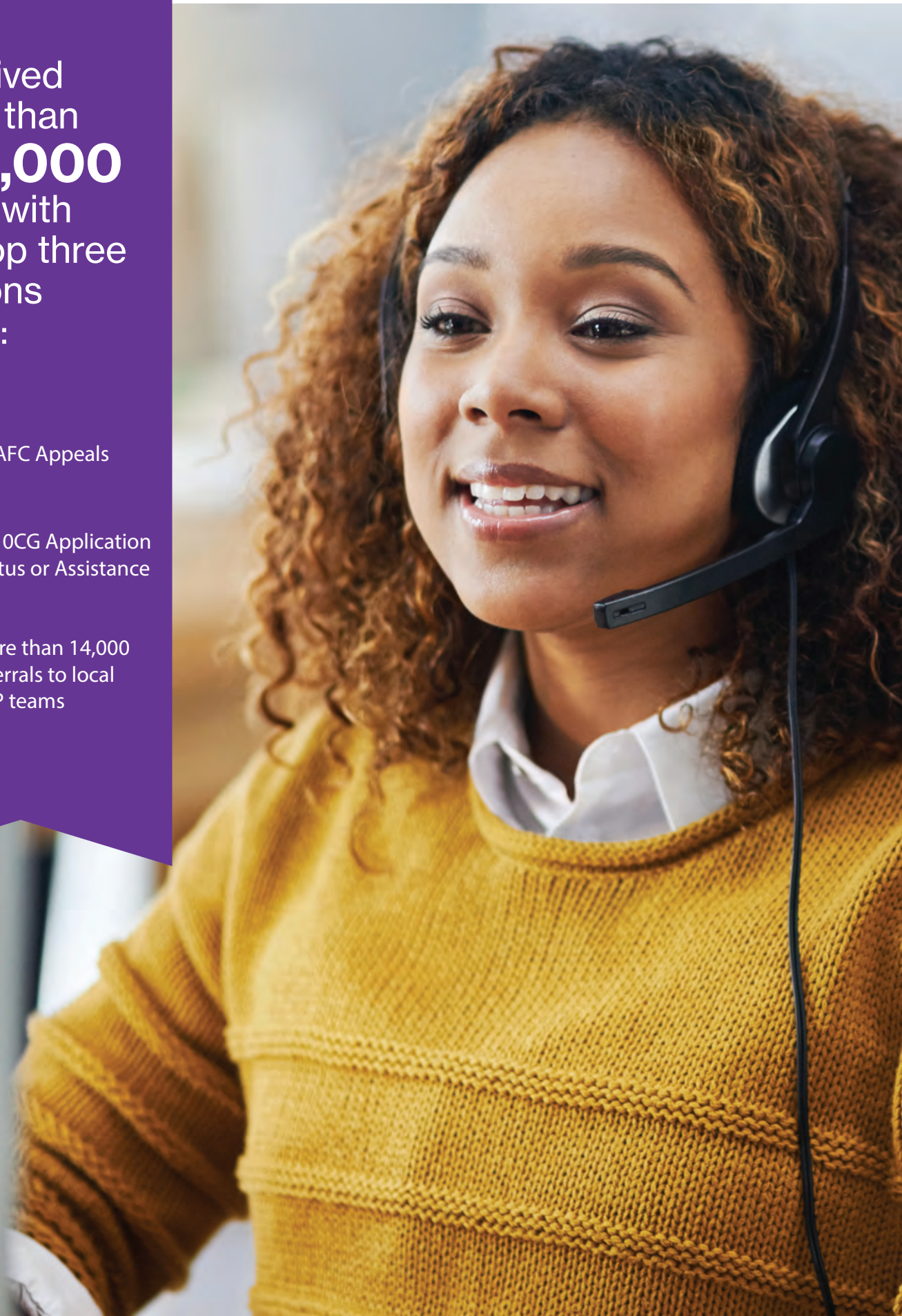
Caregiver Support Line

Received more than **150,000** calls, with the top three reasons being:

 PCAFC Appeals

 1010CG Application Status or Assistance

 More than 14,000 referrals to local CSP teams



To continue CSP's standard of providing excellent customer service to Veterans, caregivers, and other stakeholders, we've realigned the Caregiver Support Line to operate under CSP. Within fiscal year 2023, the CSL:

Common CSL call trends include:

- Caregivers, Veterans, and stakeholders seeking support and guidance in navigating VA programs, services, and benefits.
- Caregivers inquiring about supportive counseling, problem solving, resources and referral information to address the complex and challenging experience of being a family caregiver.

CSL representatives assisting Veterans and their families in connecting with needed health care/ caregiving services such as home health aides, adaptive equipment, transportation, and respite.



Enhanced Communication with Caregivers and Veterans



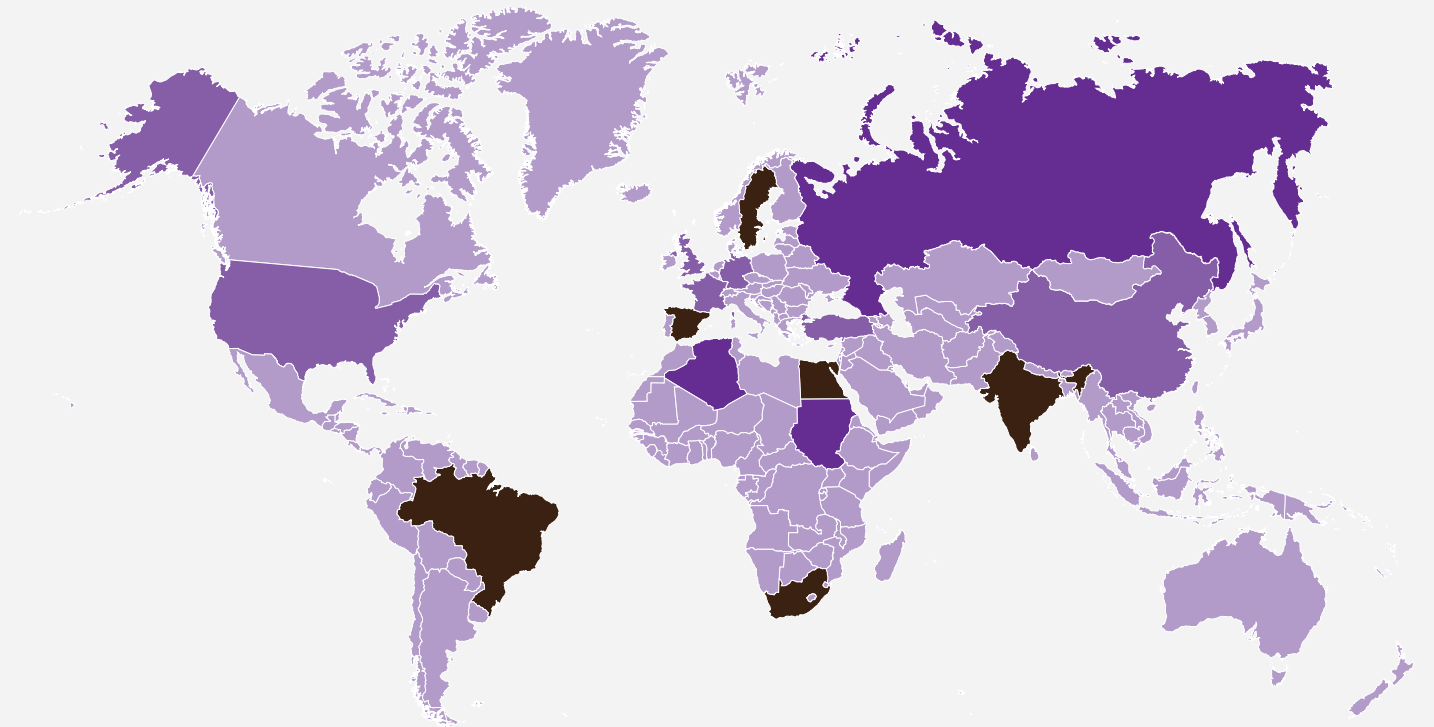
CSP continues to enhance how we communicate with caregivers ensuring they have the right information at the right time. Here's what we've done:

The Review and Appeals team improved communication with Veterans and caregivers by:

- Sending letters for confirmation of receipt and clarification letters
- Developing a four-stage claim process
- Training the CSL to provide Veterans and caregivers with updated information regarding the stage of their claim

We translated our national training curriculum into Spanish, and made the curriculum available in workbook form in the following languages:

Chinese, Tagalog, Japanese, Thai, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Dari Persian, Khmer Cambodian, and Tigrinya Ethiopian.



Standardization and Consistency: Accelerating High Reliability



Excellence is the standard at CSP, no matter the location. CSP has taken the following steps to ensure every caregiver receives the same standard of excellent support:

- Continued efforts to develop and maintain role-specific orientation checklists and processes to prepare CSP staff for effective and consistent delivery of services:
 - Monthly CSP staff orientation calls utilizing a comprehensive overview of CSP's key elements, tools, and resources.
- Opened access to Palantir for all CSP staff:
 - Created numerous new dashboards and metrics to guide the local CSP staff and improve care around:
 - Respite metrics
 - Wellness metrics and the wellness map
- Becoming a leading VA program with risk registers. Risk registers are a project management tool allowing us to identify recognized or potential risks that could have a negative impact on VA's ability to deliver its product or service. The development of a register allows leaders to prioritize the risks, develop mitigation controls, and establish ongoing monitors for sustainment.



Thank you for your service!





Looking Ahead - Year of the Caregiver - the Whole Caregiver

In addition to providing caregivers with more services than ever, CSP remains committed to helping caregivers live full lives by focusing their whole well-being. That's why we've extended our Fiscal Year 2023 theme to "Year of the Caregiver" to our Fiscal Year 2024 theme, "Year of the Caregiver – the Whole Caregiver". Our focus on the "whole caregiver" strives to provide resources specifically designed to meet the unique needs of caregivers and tailored to support all aspects of their lives. Throughout Fiscal Year 2024, CSP will support the whole caregiver through:

- Continuing site visits and listening sessions with VA facilities nationwide.
- Improving the caregiver and Veteran experience and by continuing to train staff on "Award Winning Contacts, Every Caregiver, Every Veteran, Every Time".
- Enhancing the provision of mental health services offered to caregivers and expanding availability of the Virtual Psychotherapy Program for Caregivers within all 18 VISNs.
- Building the awareness and accessibility of respite through a variety of efforts for Veterans and their caregivers enrolled in PGCSS and PCAFC.
- implementing a respite subject matter expert at every VA facility and piloting a Veteran Directed Care-Respite initiative at 11 sites to increase accessibility and awareness through various efforts.
- Continuing efforts to improve appeal communications including the issuance of timely decision letters and status update letters.
- Leveraging the CSL in providing the status of submitted appeals.
- Designing a dashboard to track the time for appeal status and provide proactive notification letters of status to caregivers and Veterans.
- Leveraging Centralized Eligibility Appeal Teams (CEAT) to assist with remands from the Board of Veteran Appeals.
- Continuing to provide Legal and Financial Planning services to eligible caregivers.
- Building awareness of spirituality resources.

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