



# FUND THE EXPANSION OF HEADACHE DISORDERS CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR VETERANS

In June 2018, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) established the Headache Centers of Excellence (HCoE) program in accordance with VA Public Law 115-141 (Military Construction, VA, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 2018; Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018), which provided \$10,000,000 for the creation of at least five headache centers.

HCoEs are charged with improving headache care quality, delivery, and access for Veterans living with headache. They also prioritize training and research. There are currently 28 Headache Disorders Centers of Excellence within the VHA but not all of these Centers are full hub sites. The need for speciality care for veterans experiencing headache is far greater than the current Centers can support.

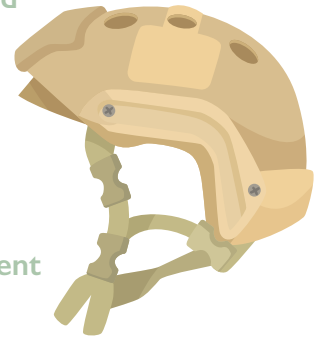
## WE SEEK FUNDING TO EXPAND THE SERVICES OFFERED IN THE 28 HEADACHE CENTERS IN FY25.

Headache disorders are prevalent in the veteran population, and studies show that veterans are more likely to develop migraine or other persistent headache disorders than civilians. Not surprisingly, migraine diagnoses increased by 27% among all branches of the armed forces from 2001 to 2007, according to a report by the Department of Defense, as a result of deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, post-traumatic headache was found to occur in up to 92% of military personnel who sustained a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) and was associated with chronic daily headaches. Another study showed that 36% of veterans who had completed a 12-month deployment to Iraq were either diagnosed with or exhibited symptoms of migraine.

Migraine diagnoses increased

**27%**

among all branches of the armed forces from 2001 to 2007 as a result of deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan



**92%**

of military personnel with mild TBI have post-traumatic headache



**36%**

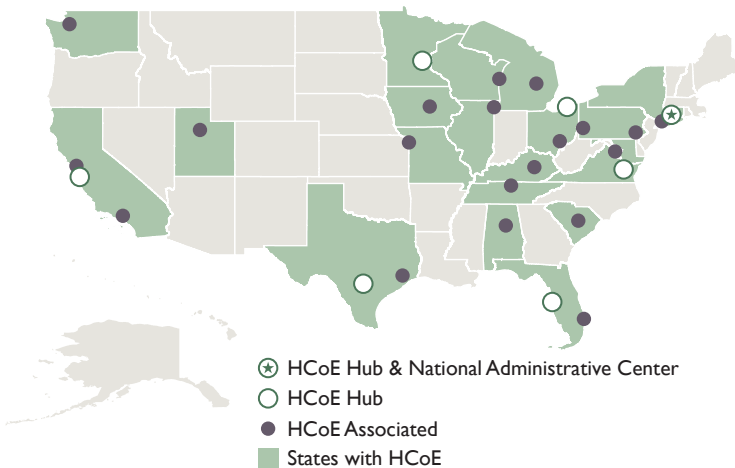
of veterans who completed a 12-month deployment to Iraq have migraine

**ALLOCATE AT LEAST \$28,000,000 FOR THE HEADACHE DISORDERS CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN FY25.**

As of fiscal year 2023, more than 1.99 million Veterans received headache care across more than 12.6 million visits for headache within VA Medical Centers. This represents 17% of the Veteran population receiving care within VHA.

The increase in headache seen within VHA has been associated with increased utilization of VHA in general, and more specifically among patients at highest risk for headache – women Veterans and Veterans with TBI/concussion. Additionally, because of the PACT Act, more Veterans than ever are using VHA for their healthcare.

## Headache Centers of Excellence



HCoE hub sites have a full complement of multi-modal, interdisciplinary headache services including neurologists, health psychologists, clinical pharmacists, whole health/complementary and integrative health specialists, headache nurses, and rehabilitation medicine experts. Hub sites also provide telehealth care throughout their geographic catchment region. HCoE Associated sites are currently resourced to offer access to a Headache Medicine-trained neurologist and some components of interdisciplinary headache care but not the full range of services of a hub site.

Additional funding for the HCoEs would permit all HCoEs to be resourced to a hub level, thereby ensuring that all HCoEs will be able to provide the highest level headache care while increasing their ability to reach out into surrounding areas to improve headache care access.

As of 2023

**2M** Veterans received headache care within VHA Medical Centers

BECAUSE OF THE PACT ACT

**More Veterans than ever use VHA for their healthcare**

More women Veterans and Veterans with TBI & concussion use Veterans Health Administration



## AHDA ASK:

Allocate at least \$78,000,000 for the VA Neurology Centers of Excellence. Within this total, at least \$28,000,000 should be reserved for the Headache Disorders Centers of Excellence.



ALLIANCE FOR HEADACHE DISORDERS ADVOCACY

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