

News Release - January 14, 2021

Contact: Chrissie Howorth – V.P. of Philanthropy and Communications
(630) 482-8132 choworth@vnahealth.com

THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY and NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE AWARD \$50,000 GRANT TO VNA HEALTH CARE TO SAFELY INCREASE CANCER SCREENING DURING COVID-19.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) and National Football League (NFL) have awarded a grant to VNA Health Care to [safely increase cancer screenings](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant funding was made possible through ACS's partnership with the NFL and the League's [Crucial Catch campaign](#).

This grant is part of ACS's latest Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity ([CHANGE](#)) program, which provides funding opportunities as part of the ACS's commitment to reduce cancer disparities. VNA Health Care will receive \$50,000 over a 15-month period.

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to decreases in breast, colorectal, and cervical cancer screenings. These postponed screenings are creating a backlog that systems need to address as healthcare facilities gradually re-open for non-COVID-19 care. These funds will help support health centers as they create and adopt new processes and protocols to tackle this backlog and safely restart cancer screening.

"VNA Health Care has been diligently working to ensure that our patients receive preventive care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included opening Catch-Up clinics and increasing education and awareness of the need for individuals to complete important screenings in an effort to reduce risk and save lives through early detection. We sincerely appreciate this generous grant and partnership with the American Cancer Society and the NFL's Crucial Catch campaign which will be used to support care coordination and navigation services to increase completion of Breast and Cervical Cancer screenings by vulnerable women at increased risk of health disparities," said Linnea Windel, VNA Health Care President & CEO.

VNA Health Care is encouraging women to make an appointment for their annual or delayed breast and cervical cancer screening by calling: (630) 892-4355. In honor of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, all women receiving their breast or cervical cancer screening between January 20th and January 31st 2021 will receive a free tote bag while supplies last.

"The partnership between the American Cancer Society and the NFL demonstrates the ongoing efforts to offset the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to cancer screenings in which both preventative and diagnostic cancer screenings rates have significantly decreased, specifically among vulnerable people and minority groups," said Peter Steele, a regional team leader for The American Cancer Society. "ACS continues to address the social determinants of health in relation to quality cancer screening programs to ensure health equity in communities that face socio-economic challenges."

The American Cancer Society is committed to saving lives and addressing the burden of cancer through early detection.

Since 2009, the NFL's Crucial Catch has raised more than \$22 million in support of ACS. Funding raised since 2012 has supported ACS's CHANGE program. This program promotes health equity and addresses cancer early detection disparities through community-based cancer prevention programs that increase access to necessary cancer screenings. Since 2012, the NFL has funded over 200 projects in safety-net, primary care systems within 100 miles of an NFL market to increase cancer awareness and access to potentially life-saving screenings. To date, more than 1 million individuals have been reached with education, navigation, and screening reminders.

VNA Health Care is the largest Federally Qualified Health Center in suburban Chicago and operates 16 clinics serving over 72,000 people a year. VNA is recognized by the Health Resources and Services Administration as a Health Center Quality Leader at the Gold level and ranks in the top 10% of health centers nationwide for overall patient outcomes. Outcome measures include prenatal care, adolescent weight screening and counseling, vascular disease treatment, blood pressure control, healthy birth weights, and asthma care. VNA's combination of convenience (by appointment at this time), patient-centered technology and expert, cost-effective care delivered with respect and compassion have led to these results. VNA is accredited by The Joint Commission and certified as a Primary Care Medical Home for all sites. # # #