



Department of  
Veterans Affairs

# NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:**  
VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System Office of  
Public Affairs  
Christopher Conklin (615) 225-4690

## **VA Offers Tennessee Valley Patients Free Screening**

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The Department of Veterans Affairs will notify approximately 6,400 Veterans who have undergone colonoscopy procedures at the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System's (VA TVHS) Alvin C. York Campus in Murfreesboro, who may have been exposed to a minimal risk of infection from equipment outfitted with an incorrect tube/valve connection.

“Our top priority is to ensure our patients are safe,” said Juan Morales, Director of VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System. “Although there is a very small chance patients were exposed to infection, it is our practice to notify those under our care of even the slightest risk.”

On December 1, 2008, during a colonoscopy procedure at the Alvin C. York Campus, an irrigation tube used during the procedure was discovered to have an incorrect valve. This part of the equipment is used distant from the patient. While this valve/tube connection does not come in direct contact with a patient, there is a possibility patients could have been exposed to infection. Additionally, it was discovered that a separate tube used externally during the procedure may not have been properly changed between procedures.

“We know this will upset many Veterans, and we sincerely apologize,” Morales said. “Both circumstances present a minimal risk of exposure to the Veterans who had this procedure. We believe this aggressive approach to notification enforces our commitment to those we serve.”

The notification and subsequent screenings are part of VA TVHS’ commitment to provide quality care to Tennessee’s veteran population. In addition to screenings, VA TVHS has established a communication center to enable those Veterans notified to make expedited appointments and receive additional information. Patients can call 1-877-345-8555 Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

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