

The Precision Oncology Program for Cancer of the Prostate (POPCaP)

Prostate cancer significantly impacts both active duty servicemen, Veterans, and their families; in fact, active duty males are **twice as likely** to be diagnosed with prostate cancer as their civilian counterparts, with negative effects on their ability to serve. In addition, servicemembers exposed to toxins such as Agent Orange, burn pits, and PFAS and PFOA, are considered to be at increased risk of death from prostate cancer. **Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system.**

WHAT IS POPCaP?

In 2016, the VA Office of Research & Development launched the VA Precision Oncology Program to conduct state-of-the-art precision oncology research to improve care for Veterans and others with cancer. As part of this initiative, in 2016 the VA partnered with the Prostate Cancer Foundation to establish the Precision Oncology Program for Cancer of the Prostate (POPCaP). This program seeks to use precision medicine to tailor individualized treatments for Veterans with prostate cancer.



Since its inception in 2016 and launch in 2018, the POPCaP program has operated a network of precision oncology centers across the country, giving Veterans with prostate cancer access to genetic testing and counseling, prostate cancer clinical trials, and FDA-approved drugs targeted to specific cancer mutations.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

In Fiscal Year 2024, Congress had allocated \$5 million in funds to expand POPCaP to new sites. However, the VA responded by outlining plans to shutter POPCaP sites, close the POPCaP administrative office in Seattle, and fold POPCaP into a newly created Precision Oncology Program by September 2025. This would dilute the quality of care that Veterans with prostate cancer receive, and potentially make it more difficult for Veterans to receive state-of-the-art treatments.

We ask that your office cosponsor legislation soon-to-be-introduced by Representative Greg Murphy (R-NC) to protect the POPCaP program in law, ensuring our Veterans continue to receive the highest quality cancer care through the VA. To cosponsor, please contact Ray Celeste (Raymond.Celeste@mail.house.gov)