



Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Timeline of Attacks

- **February 5, 2025:** The VA's press secretary [confirmed](#) to Military.com that a DOGE agent was present at the department, claiming that the employee would improve efficiency, but "not have access to veterans' or VA beneficiaries data." The employee was later [confirmed](#) by Bloomberg to be Justin Fulcher.
- **February 13, 2025:** The VA [announced](#) it was terminating over 1,000 employees.
- **February 25, 2025:** DOGE [announced](#) the cancellation of 875 VA contracts amounting to nearly \$2 billion. The contracts funded medical services, cancer programs, recruited doctors, and provided burial services according to a Washington Post analysis of VA documents. VA Secretary Douglas Collins celebrated the cuts, [tweeting](#) "No more paying consultants to do things like make Power Point slides and write meeting minutes!"
- **February 25, 2025:** The VA [announced](#) that another 1,400 probationary employees had been terminated.
- **March 4, 2025:** A leaked memo obtained by *Government Executive* [revealed](#) that the administration planned to cut VA staff by 83,000 employees by the end of the year. Secretary Collins later [confirmed](#) that he intended to cut the workforce by 72,000 employees.
- **April 4, 2025:** *Wired* [reported](#) that, in late March, DOGE Agent Sahil Lavingia was attempting to insert coding changes into the VA's government website. Lavingia was reportedly using AI to write code for the department's systems.
- **May 20, 2025:** 14,000 VA employees [applied](#) to accept DOGE's deferred resignation program. The agency [initially approved](#) resignations of crisis hotline staff before later walking back that decision.
- **June 6, 2025:** DOGE agents built an artificial intelligence tool to identify VA contracts that it considered non-essential and labeled them "Munchable." *ProPublica* [found](#) that the tool used the label on 2,000 contracts and regularly produced false information about the size of the contracts. VA employees attempting to retain a given contract had to justify doing so in 255 characters or fewer and often only had a few hours to do so.

Impacts on Capacity

The massive DOGE cuts at the VA were intended to bring the department back to 2019 levels, [reversing](#) a massive hiring surge undertaken by the Biden Administration to prepare for expanded veteran health care coverage under the 2022 PACT Act.

Personnel responsible for mental health support for veterans were [included](#) in the first two rounds of cuts. According to *Rolling Stone*, the VA [lost](#) PTSD specialists, crisis hot line staffers, and a suicide prevention counselor. DOGE also ended support



contracts for the National Center for PTSD. Not only were these services for veterans eliminated, but a [large majority](#) of the canceled contracts supported veteran-owned businesses.

Material Harms

The extensive DOGE cuts to VA staffing and contracts reverberated in communities throughout the country as VA operated clinics were gutted. For example, 14 employees [were fired](#) at the Boise VA Medical Center in Idaho in February 2025, with potentially 300 more terminations coming through Secretary Collins' reduction in force plan. Local workers and representatives said the cuts [would](#) "devastate" the ability to provide adequate care.

The administration claimed patient care would not be affected by cuts, but VA employees told a different story. Speaking anonymously with NBC News, VA employees [expressed concern](#) that the cancelled contracts will impact patient safety, as the cuts included contracts for sterilization of hospitals and equipment and maintaining safe air quality in VA facilities.

Mental health care was also on the chopping block. DOGE cuts [initially included](#) probationary employees at the VA's crisis hotline before public outrage forced a reversal. This chaos, in conjunction with the increased stress among veterans caused by DOGE, overwhelmed remaining staff, as call volume [increased](#) to 80,000 calls per month in the first three months of 2025. Furthermore, the cuts targeted other call centers that help veterans access care. The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, for example, [lost](#) 30% of its staff.

To make matters worse, the return-to-office mandates risked the confidentiality of patients speaking to VA therapists, as telehealth meetings could be overheard by other staff. The American Psychological Association [criticized](#) the mandate, stating it "could compromise access to care and confidentiality standards."

By June of 2025, DOGE had cancelled about 600 VA contracts. While it's unclear how many of these were part of the 2,000 contracts flagged by the AI tool Munchable, *ProPublica* identified two dozen contracts from the DOGE list that had been cancelled. Per *ProPublica* [reporting](#), among the contracts were "a gene sequencing device used to develop better cancer treatments" and a "blood sample analysis in support of a VA research project."

Notable Names

DOGE Agents

- Justin Fulcher
- Cary Volpert



- Christopher Roussos
- David Malchers
- Sahil Lavingia