

# VA slashes use of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 patients

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The VA health system has stopped nearly all use of hydroxychloroquine

to treat COVID-19 patients, Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie said at a House hearing on Thursday.

Wilkie said VA hospitals "ratcheted it down" to just three prescriptions in the last week as new research highlighted possible dangers and other possible treatments became available, the *Associated Press* reported. "I expect that [trend](#) to continue in the future," Wilkie added. He defended the VA's initial use of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 patients, saying there were few treatment options at the time.

The VA health system has recently turned to the antiviral drug remdesivir and convalescent plasma from people who have recovered from infection with the new coronavirus, the *AP* reported.

The VA's website says 13,657 veterans have been infected with the new coronavirus, and 1,200 have died. Some veterans' groups demanded the VA explain its use of hydroxychloroquine after data showed that the drug provided no benefit to veterans who received it. The death rate for veterans who received the drug plus usual care was 28 percent compared with 11 percent of those who received usual care alone, the *AP* reported.

**More information:** [AP News Article](#)

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