a·tune
a Transnet**YX** Company

VA | **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

From research on tuberculosis in the 1940s, to today's developments in advanced robotic prosthetics, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has ranked as one of the nation's leaders in health research. The VA's mission is to improve the lives of both veterans and people around the world.

With more than 750 active research projects, funded by 95 different entities, VA Puget Sound Health Care System maintains the VA's fourth-largest research and development program. Its AAALAC-accredited animal facility embodies the VA's commitment to providing the highest quality care to animals used in research.
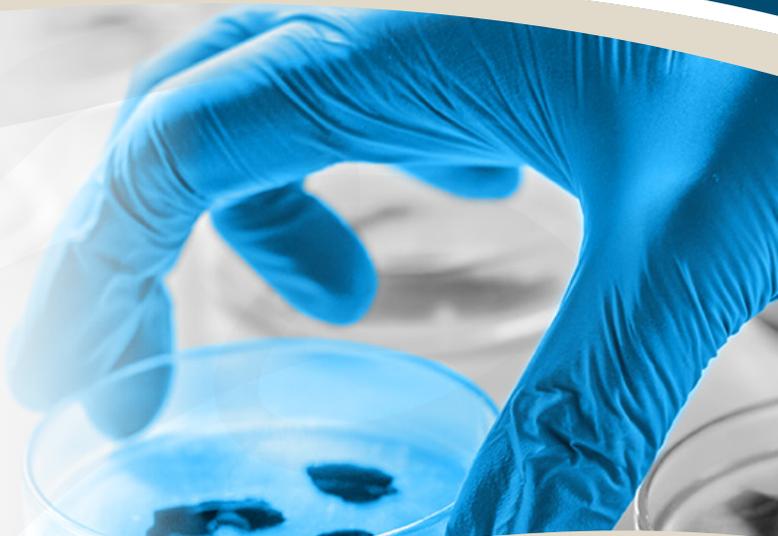
Situation

VA Puget Sound sought to replace their manual, paper- and spreadsheet-based system with a centralized database. The manual system impeded timely and accurate tracking and reporting, including per diems, cage counts, breeding efficiency, updates to protocols, and veterinary responsiveness.

Of particular interest was the advancement of the organization's commitment to a culture of care for humans and animals. Because of their focus on combat-related conditions, including exposure to blasts, VA Puget Sound prioritizes rigorous attention to pain categories in protocols and animal welfare.

Implementation

VA Puget Sound adopted **tick@lab** in 2019. The a-tune team of specialists leveraged their industry knowledge to apply best practices to the organization's needs and map out an implementation plan.

The organization uses the **tick@lab** Continuing Education Program at group meetings to network with other users, who comment that "the a-tune family is real."

Outcome

The adoption of **tick@lab** has dramatically increased VA Puget Sound's efficiencies, saving time and streamlining research. The centralized data pool, with same-day data input, provides near real-time visibility into the organization's animal populations.

tick@lab automates and facilitates control of incoming orders, per diem costs, protocol tracking, digital care logs, pain categories, breeding line insights, and the clinical care of sick animals.

VA Puget Sound particularly values having access to all data, anywhere, anytime. For example, animal health tracking features notify veterinarians and techs of sick animals, enabling immediate care to limit pain and distress.

More broadly, **tick@lab** has facilitated overall research management through data transparency and effortless communication – both of which have enhanced institutional collaboration.

The success of **tick@lab** within a federal government research framework has motivated VA Puget Sound to promote the value of the platform to other VA research institutions.

> "**tick@lab** has been a life saver. It took us out of the stone age, bringing transparency to our work, facilitating research management in transformational ways, and increasing our ability to work as a team. We would never go back."
>
> *– Cynthia Pekow, Chief, Veterinary Medical Unit, VA Puget Sound and Traci Weber, Supervisor, Veterinary Medical Unit, VA Puget Sound*