Current VA/Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE) Approach to Health Record Integration and Availability

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Conflict of Interest

Joseph R. Nelson, MSA, has no real or apparent conflicts of interest to report.
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Agenda

• Veteran Health Information Exchange (VHIE) Overview

• Growth and Progress

• Sharing More VA Health Information (VA Mission Act Section 132)

• VHIE Modernization

• Network Expansion
Learning Objectives

• Describe the Veteran Health Information Exchange (VHIE) business approach to enable VA to fulfill the requirements of the Maintaining Systems and Strengthening External Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018

• Describe VA/VHIE Network Expansion
How VHIE Provides Interoperability

The VHIE Program works toward seamless care between VA and community care providers through their two main products, VA Exchange and VA Direct Messaging.

**VA Exchange**
- Allows VA to securely exchange health information at the organizational level
- Partners include other federal agencies, health care organizations, electronic health record vendors, and Health Information Exchange (HIE) networks
- Exchanged health information shared through the Joint Legacy Viewer (JLV) and the My HealtheVet Blue Button

**VA Direct Messaging**
- Allows VA providers to exchange health information at the individual level
- Partners include individual community care providers within DirectTrust
- Share health information through a secure, email-like messaging portal
Timeline: VA Exchange

Pre-NHIN*  
2006-2008

- Data Standards work – HL7, FHA
- Wounded Warrior Program Demo of hand built QD RD
- ONC Connectathon Testing

NwHIN* Pilots

- 2009
  - VHIE Legislation to create lifetime record passed
  - 1st Production Exchange between VA and KP

- 2010
  - VHA Nationwide Deployment

- 2011
  - VA migrate to C-CDA

- 2012
  - Veterans can download their C32 Blue Button Enabled

- 2013
  - Sending CCDs to SSA for disability claims

- 2014
  - Section 132 Mission Act Signed

- 2015
  - 197 Partners, 74 Community Coordinators

- 2016
  - 542,750 VA Authorizations, 2,710,248 Partner Correlations, 2,351,064 Outbound documents, 999,245 Inbound Documents

- 2017
- 2018

*NHIN/NwHIN – Nationwide Health Information Network
Timeline: VA Direct Messaging

**Direct Growth (2014 – Present)**

- **2012**: VA Direct Messaging development contract awarded
- **2013**: President Obama’s mandate & Executive Order 13410 supporting electronic health records
- **2014**: VA Direct Messaging Web portal in production
- **2015**: First Admission, Discharge, and Transfer (ADT) notification received
  - 2,000th Direct message
  - DirectTrust accreditation achieved
  - Connected with IHS (Indian Health Service)
- **2016**: Widget functionality
  - Began pilot with HCA (Hospital Corporation of America) and Surescripts
- **2017**: Implemented use cases for tissue typing, lab, suicide prevention, and home health
- **2018**: Connected with 480+ non-VA facilities
- **2019**: 40,000 Direct messages sent / received
  - 660+ VA users

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**Validated Non-VA Partners**: ~500

**Shared Messages**: >40,000
Growth of VHIE through 2018

Steady growth in # partners, inbound and outbound documents
Rapid Acceleration in the last 24 months

VA Clinicians viewing community health data

Community Health Clinicians viewing VA health data

Explosive growth in the last 24 months: 197 partners

* Have experienced system performance issues since March 2018, leading to an extensive downturn of inbound documents.
Exchange - Community Care Partners Nationwide

Value: Over 2,710,246 unique Veteran patients supported by bi-directional health information exchange with 197 Community Care Partners that support the following types of healthcare facilities.

Exchange Partner Demographics

- Clinics - 28,974
- Hospitals - 1,495
- FQHCs - 818
- Labs - 975
- Pharmacies - 8,770
- Nursing Homes - 267
- Other Ancillary Sites - 1,217

Production Partners

Testing Partners

FY19 Prioritized Partners

VA Medical Centers
Direct Messaging: Last 60 Months

Connected Community Providers
- Total*: 1,454
- New in FY19**: 265
- FY19 Goal: 360

Total Direct Messages Sent/Received
- Total*: 91,958
- New in FY19**: 14,474

* 3/1/14-12/31/18  ** 10/1/18-12/31/18

Direct Messaging has grown steadily
Direct Messaging: Validated Partners/Community Care Providers

- Clinic: 757
- Hospital: 432
- LTC/Rehab: 199
- Home Health/Hospice: 21
- Behavioral Health: 19
- Laboratory: 10
- Pharmacy: 6
- FQHC: 5
- Federal Agency: 3
- Dialysis: 1
- CCP/HISP: 1

VAMCs with Direct Messaging partners

VAMCs with no Direct Messaging partners yet

Community care partners/providers connected with VA Direct Messaging
Sharing More VA Health Information

VA MISSION Act Section 132
VA MISSION Act Section 132: Improving Information Sharing with Community Providers

Amends 38 U.S.C. Section 7332(b)(2)

From allowing the Secretary to disclose Veterans’ protected health information with consent

(H) To a non-Department entity…that provides hospital care or medical services to Veterans as authorized by the Secretary…

To allowing the Secretary to disclose Veterans’ protected health information without consent

(H)(i) To a non-Department entity (including private entities and other Federal agencies) for purposes of providing health care, including hospital care medical services and extended care services, to patients or performing other health care-related activities or functions.
MISSION Act, Section 132

VA plans to implement an informed Opt Out model for Veteran care consistent with DoD and will be available nationwide June 2019

Section 132 of the MISSION Act streamlines the VA health information sharing with community partners. It removes sharing restrictions between VA and community providers.

VHIE will now be securely sharing Veteran health information electronically with participating community partners (unless the Veteran chooses to not allow VA to share their health information).

This does not create an exception to, or weaken in any manner, the protections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Public Law No:115-182, VA MISSION Act of 2018, was signed June 6, 2018.
Benefits for Veterans

Sharing health information saves time and improves Veteran care. It could even save a Veteran’s life. The more information a provider has about a Veteran’s medical history, the better. Currently, health care providers can share information*, such as:

- Prescriptions and medications
- Allergies
- Illnesses
- Laboratory and radiology results
- Immunizations
- Procedures
- Clinical Notes

* Unless the Veteran chooses to not allow VA to share their health information
Improved Care Coordination

How will this affect VA clinicians?

VA and participating VHIE community care providers have access to complete and accurate information about their shared Veteran patients. VHIE shares the right information at the right time with providers to improve patient safety, coordination of care, and continuity of care for our Veterans.
VHIE’s Plan for the MISSION Act

Dramatic Growth

VHIE has grown dramatically. Its usage plays an important role in VA interoperability with community providers and the nation.

Current Products Cannot Sustain Growth

VHIE’s current products cannot meet the needs of the rapid growth that the VHIE program sees and predicts.

Commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) Product Solution

A COTS solution will improve VHIE’s performance, and will meet the expectations of growth moving forward.
VHIE Modernization

This effort will modernize the VHIE information system and incorporate new policies for information sharing, and supports the following activities:

• Improve performance

• Increase Health Information Exchange rates

• Support Mission Act

• Support future growth and expansion

• Improve Data Quality scalability

• Position VHIE in line with the new Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) transition
Timeline

- VDIF Generates CDAs: Mar 2019
- Implement Mission Act: June 2019
- Connect VA to eHX National Level Gateway Service (NLGS) (Hub): ~Q3 FY19
- Optional Pre-IOC: Optional tasks to reduce risk: Nov 2019?
- IOC: Cerner HIE + CommonWell: Mar 2020
Network Expansion

- We plan to continue engage with eHealth Exchange partners.
- As the eHealth Exchange National Level Gateway Service (NLGS) hub becomes available, we plan to connect to it to optimize our connections.
- As we implement the Cerner HIE, we will enable our CommonWell Connection.
- We plan to connect to Carequality partners and are determining the best path.
# VHIE Web Resources

## Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHIE Program - VA Exchange and VA Direct Messaging</td>
<td><a href="http://www.va.gov/VLER/">www.va.gov/VLER/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eHealth Exchange Participants</td>
<td><a href="http://sequoiaproject.org/ehealth-exchange/participants/">http://sequoiaproject.org/ehealth-exchange/participants/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Your VA Health Record</td>
<td><a href="https://youtu.be/lbovgj195JM">https://youtu.be/lbovgj195JM</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>How VA Direct Works video* <em>(Describes the functionality and benefits of VA Direct to Veterans and VA staff)</em></td>
<td><a href="https://youtu.be/mAIKaUy-7ak">https://youtu.be/mAIKaUy-7ak</a></td>
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## VHIE Program Office Point of Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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Questions?

Visit us online at www.va.gov/vler