VA Connected Care:
Enhancing Veteran Access and Experience
Session #135, February 21, 2017

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Speaker Introduction

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Conflict of Interest

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Has no real or apparent conflicts of interest to report.
Agenda

• Learning Objectives & STEPS
• Connected Care at VA
• Three Fundamentals of Approach
• Lessons Learned
• Q&A
Learning Objectives

- Distinguish the attributes that make up an effective patient-facing digital strategy across a national/regional health enterprise

- Identify opportunities and pitfalls for provider and patient technology adoption

- Explore how patients respond to accessing information in their electronic health record (EHR) (e.g., VA Open Notes)

- Apply best practices in scaling digital technologies across a health system
How Benefits Were Realized

- VA Connected Care has realized benefits in all STEPS areas. Key Highlights:
  - More than 12 percent of Veterans served by VA receive at least a portion of their care yearly through one of VA's telehealth modalities
  - 55.8 million visits / 502 million page views to VA's personal health portal, My HealtheVet, in FY16
  - Access to care, both primary and specialty care, is significantly improved across the vast geography that VA serves
  - Very high patient satisfaction levels across all VA Connected Care modalities

Realizing the Value of Health IT
Health IT creates five kinds of value of benefit to patients, healthcare providers and communities

- **S** - Satisfaction
- **T** - Treatment/Clinical
- **E** - Electronic Secure Data
- **P** - Patient Engagement and Population Management
- **S** - Savings
Veterans Health Administration

- Largest integrated health care system in U.S.
  - 144 Medical Centers
  - 1,221 Outpatient Clinics
  - 130 Community Living Centers
  - 103 Domiciliaries
  - 300 Vet Centers

- 33% of Veteran patients live in rural America

- 21 Million Veterans living in U.S.
  - More than 9 million enrolled, 6 million receiving care

- 305,000 VHA employees

https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/Stats_at_a_glance_06_04_16.PDF
VA is undergoing a radical transformation to improve our relationship with our Veterans. This relationship is the cornerstone for all that VA does... The foundation of that relationship is built on trust and respect. It must be built to last a lifetime.

-- VA Secretary Bob McDonald (2014-2016)

Five Broad Strategies

• Improving the Veteran experience
• Improving the employee experience
• Achieving support services excellence
• Establishing a culture of continuous performance improvement
• Enhancing strategic partnerships
VA’s Connected Care Strategy

Vision
Access and the Veteran experience will be enhanced by health information technologies that effectively integrate into the daily activities of Veterans and VA staff.

Mission
To deliver high-quality, Veteran-centered care; optimize individual and population health; advance health care that is personalized and proactive; and enhance the health care experience through virtual modalities of care.
VA Connected Care Products/Services

• My HealtheVet
  o Prescription Refill and Tracking
  o VA Blue Button (Download my Health Records, including VA Open Notes)
  o Veterans Health Library
  o Appointments

• VA Mobile
  o mobile.va.gov/appstore
  o Apps for Veterans
  o Apps for VA Staff
  o VA Beta App Store

• Telehealth
  o Clinical Video Telehealth, VA Video Connect
  o Store and Forward (Asynchronous) Telehealth
  o Remote Home Monitoring
  o Regional/National Telehealth Hubs
  o Tele-ICU

• VHA Innovation
  o Employee Innovation Competitions (2,000+ ideas in FY2016)
  o Examples: Rx Tracking, One-VA Pharmacy, E-Screening, Hearing Aid Distance Fitting Application (HADFA)
User Adoption of VA Connected Care Technologies
Three Fundamentals of VA’s Approach

• Access to Trusted Relationships
• Access to Trusted Health Information
• Improving the Care Experience for Veterans, Caregivers and Health Care teams
Access to Trusted Relationships

Connecting Veterans With Their VA Care Teams
VA Telehealth Services

• 12 percent (677,000) of Veteran patients enrolled in VA care accessed through telehealth
• 2.14 million visits in FY16

• Home Telehealth: 156,000 Veterans
  o Reduction in bed days of care – 59%
  o Reduction in hospital admissions – 31%
  o Patient satisfaction – 88%

• Video Telehealth: 307,000 Veterans
  o Clinical Video Telemental Health Reduction Acute Psychiatric care – 39%
  o Patient satisfaction – 92%

• Store & Forward Telehealth: 304,000 Veterans
  o Patient satisfaction – 94%

*Statistics as of September 2016
Clinical Video Telehealth (>45 Clinical Specialties)
VA Video Connect
Moving Video Visits to Veterans’ Personal Devices

Episodes of Care

FY 09 FY 10 FY 11 FY 12 FY 13 FY 14 FY 15 FY 16
All CVT 149,172 188,082 249,262 387,529 542,661 659,650 758,011 837,851
CVT to home 3,648 3,660 4,890 6,945 11,023 20,447 31,279 39,453

Episodes of Care

0 100,000 200,000 300,000 400,000 500,000 600,000 700,000 800,000 900,000
An Example: VA’s Tele-Genomic Medicine Service

- Centralized Genomic Medicine and Counseling service started in 2012
- Reaches areas of the country where genetic services are generally unavailable
- Provides direct patient counseling and support to local clinicians
- Care delivered through community-based outpatient clients (CBOCs) as well as VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) to reach Veterans in their communities
- Now reaches 80 VAMCs
Another Example: Tele-ICU

- **Minneapolis**
- **V23 Sub-Hub**
- **Active Affiliate**
- **In Development**
- **JIF site (USAF MTF)**

- **Cincinnati**
- **Sub-Hub**
- **Active Affiliate**
- **In Development**
- **JIF site (Navy proposed)**
From Accessibility to System Capacity
An Example: Regional Telemental Health Hubs
My Health eVet
Secure Messaging

- Research Findings
  - Increases access and satisfaction
  - Increases convenience and efficiency
  - Enhances patient/provider relationships
  - Patients want to use with “all of their providers”
  - Timely response is critical

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<td>Outbound Team Member Messages</td>
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<td>555,554</td>
<td>509,187</td>
<td>1,636,609</td>
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Benefits of Secure Email

- Shimada et.al. 2013 study found that the use of secure email reduced the rate of urgent care visits in VA.

- Kaiser 2010 study found that the use of secure email was associated with improvements in HEDIS measures, including HbA1c, cholesterol and blood pressure control.

- Group Health Cooperative study evaluated the impact of managing depression care using secure email and found the group using secure email had > 50% lower rates of depression compared with the control.

- VA studies have shown that the use of secure email improves the provider-patient relationship and improves patient engagement.
Realizing the Benefits

My HealtheVet
Access to Trusted Health Information

Connecting Veterans With Their Health Information
My HealtheVet

- Registrants: 3,817,629
- Identity Proofed VA Patients: 2,255,495
- Patients Opted-in for Secure Messaging: 1,885,724
- Rx Refill Requests: 14 million per year
- VA Blue Button Download My Data: more than 1.55 million unique users
- Web Data: 55.8 million visits/502 million page views in 2016
  - 40% of all of VA.gov Web traffic
  - Consistently the 4th most visited site in Federal Government
Born in 2010

Blue Button
Download My Data

OpenNotes

http://www.opennotes.org/
VA Open Notes Launched in January 2013

All VA patients can access their clinical notes using the VA Blue Button on My HealtheVet:

• Requires a Premium (authenticated) account
• Includes primary care, specialty care, mental health, social work, nursing and Secure Messaging notes, consult result notes, and note addendums
• Notes from January 1, 2013 forward available
VA Open Notes Experience

About the Survey

22 JUN 2013 to 15 SEP 2013

4% random sample of website visitors who navigated 4 or more pages during their visit

N=37,103 (62% survey completion rate)

Data filtered to remove potential duplicates and focus on patients receiving VA care (N=29,191)

Research Team:
Kim Nazi, Carolyn Turvey,
Dawn Klein, Timothy Hogan,
and Susan Woods
Knowledge and Use of VA Open Notes

- 34% knew that VA Notes could be viewed
- 24% viewed their VA Notes at least once
- VA Open Notes users (N=6861):
  - were predominantly male (90%) and aged 50-79 years old (87%)
  - tended to have more education and more frequent VA use
  - tended to be more frequent My HealtheVet users
- VA Open Notes use was not significantly associated with gender or self-rated health status
- More than half of both users and non-users had previously requested paper medical records
- VA Open Notes users were asked additional questions about their experience
Summary of Key Findings (VA Open Notes Users)

Patients who viewed their notes anticipated considerable benefits from having access to clinical notes similar to VA Open Notes study, including:

- doing a better job of taking medications as prescribed (80%)
- being better prepared for clinic visits (89%)
- feeling more in control of their health care (91%)
- taking better care of themselves (91%)
- understanding their conditions better (92%)
- being better able to remember the plan for their care (92%)
Summary of Key Findings (continued)

• Although some users may not have understood all of the information contained in their notes, overall satisfaction with access to VA Open Notes was generally rated high (and significantly higher if users did understand the information)
• The majority of users reported that they felt no need to contact their provider. Those who did (or planned to) mostly wanted to learn more about a health issue, medication or test result
VA Open Notes – Subsequent Findings

- **Use**: Veterans using VA Open Notes are still minority, but are more engaged in VA services

- **Open Notes + Secure Messaging (SM)**: Accessing VA Open Notes does not seem to result in increased use of SM. But, Veterans who have increased their SM use are more likely to use VA Open Notes

- **Visits**: Accessing VA Open Notes does seem to be associated with an increase in primary care visits

- **Physician Behavior**: Veterans’ access to VA Open Notes does not change documentation behavior of primary care providers
The Broader Open Notes Story

More than 12 million patients have easy access to their clinicians’ notes

Realizing the Benefits

My HealtheVet

Gwen McMillian
My HealtheVet Coordinator, Richmond VA Medical Center
Improving the Care Experience
For Veterans, Caregivers and Health Care teams
Voice of the Veteran - Key Themes

- **Transactions** – Make it easy for me to take care of simple health-related tasks online and on my mobile device
- **Communication** – Make it easy for me to communicate with my health care team when I need to do so
- **Information Sharing** – Make it easy for me to see my health care records, give me control of my health care data, and let me share health-related data with you
- **Expert Care** – Make it easy for me to access VA expertise when and where I need it. Provide me with tools I can trust when it’s my health on the line

Voice of the Provider - Key Themes

- **Workflow Integration** – Make it easy for me to deliver care virtually. Seamless electronic health record integration would be great.

- **Technology** – Make it easy for me to use any VA Connected Care technologies. Set-up should be simple and training needs minimal.

- **Workload / Compensation** – Connected Care (virtual care) should be valued equal to face-to-face care. Recognition of this added workload is critical.

- **Patient Support** – Make it easy for the patient to get the support they need to access and use virtual care tools.

- **Patient-Generated Data** – Patient-generated data is valuable and supports patient self-care, but needs to be thoughtfully integrated into workflow and care.

VA Mobile

- [https://mobile.va.gov/appstore](https://mobile.va.gov/appstore)
- 32 VA mobile apps
  - National Release – 21
  - Field Testing - 11
- Links to commercial apps stores and direct links to mobile and web apps
- Training materials
- App feedback
Messaging Enabled Self-Care

A mobile messaging system that promotes self-care for Veterans. Annie sends regular, automated text message reminders to Veterans to help them track health information requested by their VA care teams. Annie can also send Veterans reminders and messages from their local VA facility.

Named after Lt. Annie G. Fox
First woman to receive Purple Heart for combat
Annie PGD data is Available to the Clinical Team
Realizing the Benefits

MOVE! Coach App
Lessons Learned

• When building an enterprise VA Connected Care program, technology should not be the primary focus
  o Quality care
  o Ease of use
  o Workflow / life integration
  o Adequate technical support
  o Maintaining brand / reputation
  o Preserving relationship

• Scaling requires more resources than you think
  o Active sponsorship by your executive team
  o Clinical leadership buy-in
  o Communities of practice
  o Standardization of practice
  o Training (multi-channel)
  o Dedicated customer support, for both patients and health care teams
  o Assurance of quality
  o Perseverance and partnerships!
Lessons Learned (continued)

• Design for your entire patient population. Beware of the digital divide
  o Personas can be very helpful
  o It’s ok to have more than one digital solution accomplishing the same thing
  o Multiple channels (telephone, SMS, web, mobile, video, etc.)
  o Tailored user support and training

• VA Connected Care won’t market itself
  o Recommended to a patient by a trusted staff member is by far the best option
  o Helping health care team members understand the advantages of VA Connected Care, and the convenience it affords for patients should be a primary goal
  o Be sure virtual work is adequately recognized.
  o Health care team staff members are your most capable marketing team
  o Careful user-centered design of online and mobile sites is critical
Value of Health IT

High patient satisfaction strong across Connected Care programs

Treatment efficiencies realized for all stakeholders (patients, providers, & the health system)

Significant utilization by Veterans of secure access to their data – help with understanding/managing care

- Home Telehealth – 88%
- Store-and-Forward Telehealth – 94%
- Clinical Video Telehealth – 92%
- My Health eVet – Out of more than 120,000 surveys - sat score of 76 / 100

- Travel savings / Decreased barriers to access / Patient convenience
- Leveraging scale of the VA Health Care System

- 1.4 million VA Blue Button feature users
- 15.7 million VA Blue Button file downloads
Value of Health IT

**P** Patient Engagement is a primary goal of all Connected Care technologies

**S** Operational, Business and other savings can be realized through enterprise planning for connected care

- **1.7 million** VA patients opted in to use Secure Messaging
- **81 million** VA prescription refills since August 2005

- Home Telehealth reduced bed days of care – **59%**
- Home Telehealth reduced hospital admissions – **31%**
Questions?

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