

Innovation in VA, The Story of VistA

Video Transcription – Full Video

(Time: 4:22)

MALE NARRATOR:

Ideas, like the dawning of the new day, hold endless possibilities.

Most significant accomplishments are born from a vision of the future, a resolute belief in the value of an idea and the perseverance to transform a dream into reality.

This is the story of one such dream.

Over thirty years ago, a group of visionaries were committed to improving VA's health care system. Idealistic doctors, nurses, computer technicians and other VA medical staff worked to replace a burdensome paper record system. This pioneering work led to the nation's first practical system of electronic health records. A true innovation in technology, the VistA Software Program transformed VA's medical practice and ushered in 21st century health care.

MARVIN B. CORNISH, Jr.:

VA truly has a remarkable story to tell about VistA. The medical staff developed a secure, national health network, and to me that's just pretty amazing. And they didn't stop there. They continued to search for ways to improve VistA.

MALE NARRATOR:

VistA was significantly enhanced with the addition of the Computerized Patient Record System, or CPRS. CPRS is a fully integrated electronic health record providing a single interface for clinicians to review and update a patient's medical information.

SAMANTHA D. MCINTOSH, MD:

It was VA doctors who originally designed the record system, and now when something new comes up where we feel like there could be an improvement made, we do work with the IT staff to get what we need to actually take care of the patients.

MALE NARRATOR:

Using CPRS, clinicians can place orders for medications, lab tests, special procedures and x-rays.

VA Staff also developed VistA Imaging, a powerful tool that manages multimedia from medical specialties such as cardiology, radiology and pathology. Multimedia, including digital images, motion video clips, graphics and scanned documents are integrated into VistA CPRS and available on the clinician's secure desktop.

VA set a national standard in patient safety using the Bar Code Medication Administration system.

FAZALIT C. ALI, MSN, RN:

The BCMA, Bar Code Medication Administration, is leading the way in patient safety because, what happens is, the nurse actually scans the patient's bracelet, identifying the patient, then she scans the medications.

MALE NARRATOR:

BCMA is another example of VA Medical Staff developing technical solutions to improve the care of Veterans.

VA staff developed My HealthVet, a secure web-based Personal Health Record that's linked with VistA CPRS. In this online environment, Veterans can take an active role in managing their health. Using My HealthVet, Veterans can order prescription refills and keep track of health readings, such as blood pressure, cholesterol and weight.

The VistA software package is the result of the dedication and hard work it takes to turn a vision into reality.

VA is already at work creating tomorrow's medical best practices...

Medical innovations, such as home tele-health technologies...

Innovative partnerships, such as the one between VA and The Department of Defense...

The Nationwide Health Information Network...

The Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record....

VA's story is far from over. There are still visionaries imagining what the future can hold... innovators etching their dreams on the pages of tomorrow.