



OHI News You Can Use

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Craig's Corner

Taking Our Message to the Streets

The Office of Health Information (OHI) is making it a priority to spread VA's message about the health care technology we use to help our Nation's Veterans. Why is it important to educate Veterans on how to proactively manage their health using VA's award-winning Personal Health Record, My HealthVet? The more they know about our health care technology, the more they can impact and improve their lives.

If you've attended any conferences or exhibits lately like AARP (Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons), Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, or the American Legion National Convention, you may have noticed one of our displays. This past fiscal year alone, we reached out to nearly 20,000 Veterans and interested on-lookers that were curious about VA's offerings.

Using attractively designed displays and exhibits, OHI is proud to be VA's ambassador and demonstrate our award-winning electronic health care system in an interactive and memorable way. With the help of subject matter experts from the National Training & Education Office (NTEO) who demonstrate the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), My HealthVet, Bar Code Medication Administration, and VistA Imaging, OHI's large, 400-square foot exhibit touts four key messages from several distinct quadrants. OHI also partners with Veterans Benefits Administration staff who address popular questions that arise concerning compensation, pension, and health care eligibility.

One of the perks for Veterans, from Iraqi Freedom to World War II, is the ability to enroll, on-the-spot, for My HealthVet. Younger and older Veterans alike are excited to have access to a personal health record which actively engages them in their care.

Nothing succeeds like success. No matter where OHI exhibits, stories of praise resound about the outstanding care VA provides to America's heroes. We are proud to know our efforts are helping Veterans and their families achieve their goals. When you have a leading health care technology platform, taking the message directly to Veterans is one of the most important aspects of what we do as civil service employees.

I am proud of OHI's outreach efforts and thankful to all of the NTEO, OI&T, and OHI staff who continue to make this success a reality.

Your Resident Patient,

Craig B. Luigart
Chief Information Officer



From Craig's Rules®

“Listen to the ‘old guys’ and understand the role of culture.”



Technology Aids in Saving Lives

You may have heard about VA's suicide prevention hotline. By calling 1-800-273-TALK, Veterans and their families in emotional distress or suicidal crisis can access national, around-the-clock counseling and behavioral health services.

The Suicide Hotline software was created to replace and enhance the paper documentation process previously used at VA's National Suicide Prevention Hotline Center in Canandaigua, New York. With the new software, mental health professionals at VA facilities have a mechanism in which to document responses and interventions with Veterans who have called the hotline.

The Medora field development team, in close coordination with VHA OHI Enterprise Systems Management (ESM) Office, Suicide Prevention Hotline Center, Mental Health Strategic Healthcare Group, and OI&T played an intricate role in ensuring the technology matched up with the mission to save lives.

Technology at Work

When a call is received at the hotline center, it is logged to facilitate intervention, treatment, and reporting. If a caller wishes to receive treatment, he/she is referred to a local VA Medical Center Suicide Prevention Coordinator. If a suicide is imminent, the hotline staff contacts emergency responders.

The Suicide Hotline software has two web-based components which allow responders and mental health professionals to go to work:

- 1) A log application used by call responders at the National Suicide Hotline Center to document calls from Veterans.
- 2) A response application, used by mental health professionals (Suicide Prevention Coordinators), to see the phone log of referrals sent to their facility, take follow-up action with the Veteran, and upload response information into CPRS as a progress note.

As a Class III-to-I project, Suicide Hotline software was placed on hold in May 2008 because it was unstable, the project lacked definitive requirements, and coordination was needed between developers and subject matter experts. The ESM Office stepped in to provide leadership and get the project back on track. The result was collaboration between VA OI&T, VHA OHI ESM, business owners, and field developers. After a year of teamwork,

iterative development, and field testing, Suicide Hotline software was nationally released this summer.

Impact on Veterans

Since the new software's launch, call volume has increased steadily to over 300 calls per day.

The new application makes it possible to log calls more efficiently and transmit information more accurately to local Suicide Prevention Coordinators. As a result, coordinators make better decisions about contacting Veterans. Early reviews demonstrate that with the new software, almost twice as many hotline callers are receiving timely services and new access to care. This early access to care may ultimately reduce the number of crisis episodes resulting in suicide.

Model Development

The team adopted an agile development approach involving iterative prototypes shared with customers as frequent small releases. Customer and developer interaction combined to deliver a usable product that met user needs.

Thanks to a number of clinical and information technology staff and developers, Veterans experiencing suicide crises benefit from smooth day-to-day operations and an efficient call management platform which quickly routes them to the help they need.



Technology Aids in Saving Lives - con't

The National Veterans' Suicide Hotline recently received a full 3-Year accreditation by the American Association of Suicidology. One of the surveyors quoted, "Telephone system is fabulous; very impressed with program technology overall - excellent." Another commented, "Great database of community resources and Suicide Prevention Coordinators for linkage."

Jan Kemp, VA's National Director, Suicide Prevention Program, was named 2009 Federal Employee of the Year for establishing the national suicide prevention hotline for Veterans, which has resulted in more than 3,000 immediate rescues.

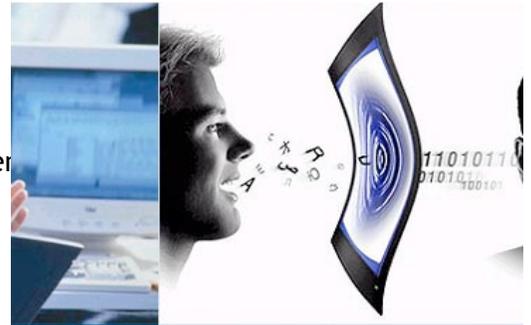
Congratulations to all who are diligently working to make the National Veterans' Suicide Hotline a success.

Clinical Data Repository/Health Data Repository (CHDR)

Part II

Bonjour again! In the last edition of OHI News, CHDR Part I described a joint health initiative between VA and Department of Defense (DoD). CHDR is a bidirectional interface between DoD's Clinical Data Repository (CDR) and VA's Health Data Repository (HDR). CHDR enables the permanent exchange of outpatient pharmacy and medication allergy data between DoD clinicians using Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application (AHLTA) and VA clinicians using CPRS.

A planned future enhancement to CHDR is the ability to exchange computable hematology (blood tests) and chemistry laboratory results between CPRS and AHLTA. This capability will help prevent unnecessary duplication of laboratory tests for a patient receiving treatment in both VA and DoD health care systems and will also ensure providers have access to the most current lab reports from the other's EHR system. Additional benefits include increased patient comfort and a significant reduction in associated lab costs.



CHDR is one of several initiatives currently in use that enable VA and DoD to electronically share health information. These initiatives directly support the seamless continuum of care provided to Service members and Veterans receiving health care from both Departments.

Happy Birthday BCMA!

Bar Code Medication Administration 10-Year Commemoration



Genius is at work everyday at VA Medical Centers across the country. This year marks 10 years of Bar Code Medication Administration (BCMA) use at VA. Did you know it was a VA nurse's idea to implement bar code technology for medication administration? In August 1999, BCMA was deployed throughout all of VA. Each day, VA administers more than 678,000 medications using BCMA, improving the safety and quality of patient care. What began as one nurse's stroke of genius is now an integrated innovation throughout the health care community. Happy 10th birthday, BCMA! To celebrate at your local facility, log on to: <http://vaww1.va.gov/bcmampm/>

New Corporate Database Monograph Published

OHI's National Data Systems Office has released the 2009 VHA Corporate Databases Monograph. The document provides an overview of every VHA database along with key features about each. The databases, which include Health Data Repository and Corporate Data Warehouse, are listed alphabetically and can be accessed directly by clicking through the Monograph's table of contents. This makes it an easily accessible resource for research, business planning, and policy development.



View the Monograph at: <http://vaww.va.gov/NDS/CorporateDatabasesMonograph.asp>

OHI Outreach...Around the States



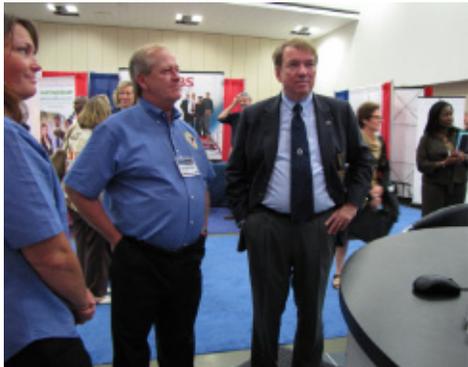
Melinda Gentry and Joe Tastrom from OI&T prepare the equipment in the server closet at the American Legion National Convention. Louisville, Kentucky, August 2009.



World War II Veteran Lennard Martin and his wife talk to Monica Cabrera, Phoenix VBA Regional Office, about VA benefits at the Veterans of Foreign War Convention. Phoenix, Arizona, July 2009.



Harold Bonds and Dr. Jessica Murphy gave visitors at the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) an update on VA's electronic health record. Grapevine, Texas, October 2009.



Angela Grimes and Ed Heitman show Dr. Gerald Cross, Acting Under Secretary for Health, remote data sharing functions through VistA Imaging at the American Legion National Convention.



Jim Gregory and Jaime Nasuti shared the great features of My HealthVet and registered almost 100 Veterans for the personal health record at the American Legion National Convention.



Mary Johnson and Pam Heller (front l to r) and Jennifer Teal share Health Information Management career information with potential recruits at AHIMA.

Hot Links!

To find important links, report IT issues, and find information about project requests and status, go to OHI's Hot Links:
http://vaww.va.gov/VHAOI/Hot_Links.asp

Editorial:

OHI News You Can Use is produced for the employees and friends of VHA's Office of Health Information. We welcome your feedback. Thanks to Monica A. Smith who has served as our editor since October 2008. For future story ideas, contact Koby South at Koby.South@va.gov.