



Annie App for Clinicians

Quick Start Guide



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century



Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Annie mobile application (app) is a Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging capability that promotes self-care for Veterans enrolled in VA health care. Patients using Annie receive automated prompts to track and monitor their own health and motivational/educational messages. Annie also sends VA appointment reminders and messages from the patient's local VA medical center.

NOTE: Annie is for patient self-care and not for direct texting between Veterans and staff.

The Annie App for Clinicians allows clinicians to use and create care protocols that allow patients to easily to submit their health readings back to Annie. Messages and patients' data is stored in the Annie system where clinicians can view the texts and readings as needed.

Annie is named after Lieutenant Annie G. Fox, the first woman to receive the Purple Heart for combat. She was Chief Nurse in the Army Nurse Corps at Hickman Field, Pearl Harbor.

General Info

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Prerequisites

To use the Annie App for Clinicians, you must have Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) credentials.

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Admin View, Staff View and Broadcast Admin

The Annie App for Clinicians offers three functions:

- Staff View – Find and register a patient, view and assign a protocol, edit active protocols, review messages to and from a patient, see charts and tables of patient data
- Admin View – Create and edit protocols assigned to patients in Staff View
- Broadcast Admin View – Send messages on behalf of your VA medical facility to all Veterans who subscribed to messages from your VA medical facility

The Staff View is available to all users. You may also have Admin View and/or Broadcast Admin privileges.

NOTE: Not everyone will have access to all of Annie's features. While each clinician with appropriate scope of practice privileges will be able to assign and edit protocols for their patients, only some staff members will be able to create protocols and even fewer to send messages on behalf of their VA medical facilities.

If you are able to access more than one view, you can switch among them by tapping the greeting that says, "Welcome, [Your First Name]." A drop-down menu will appear, and tap one of the potential opposing views: **Switch To Admin View**, **Switch To Staff View** or **Broadcast Admin**.

Staff View

Find and register a patient, view and assign a protocol, edit protocols, review messages to and from a patient, see charts and tables of patient data.

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Navigate the Staff View Screen

In Staff View, there are four tabs that allow you to navigate:

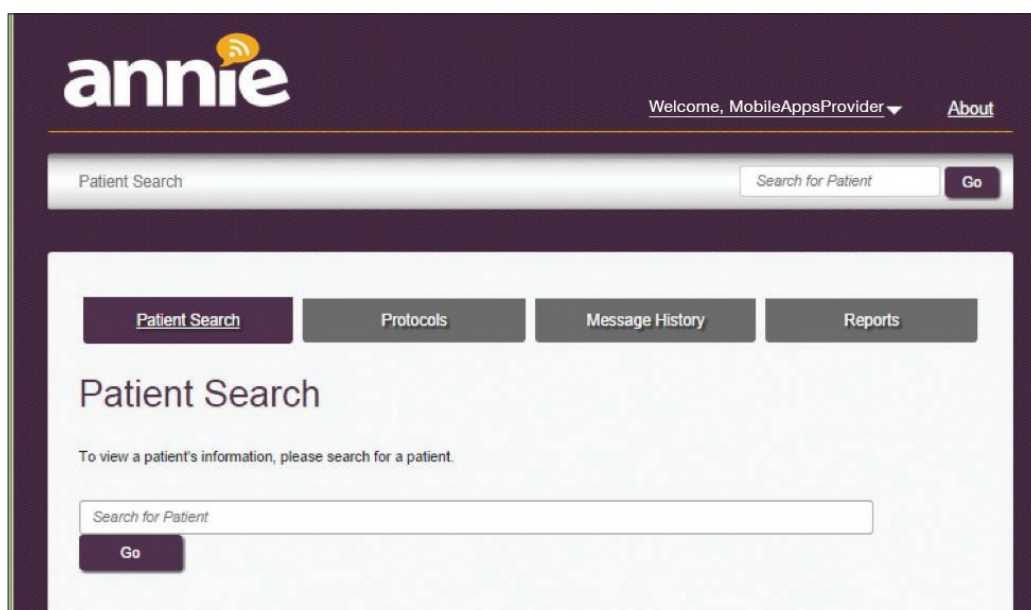
- Patient Search – Search for a patient by last name, full social security number (SSN) or first letter of last name combined with last four digits of SSN.
- Protocols – View and edit active protocols, audit changes made to inactive or active protocols, enable or disable protocols, assign protocols and adjust patient account settings.
- Message History – See the conversation history between your patient and Annie.
- Reports – See charts and tables of patients' health tracking data sent to Annie.

Tap on a tab to go to the corresponding screen.

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Search for a Patient

There are two ways to search for a patient: use the Patient Search bar at the top of the screen, or the Patient Search tab. Enter patient last name, full social security number in the format of XXX-XX-XXXX or first initial of last name and last four digits of social security number in search bar. Tap **Go**, and a list of patients who match your search will appear. Tap the patient you would like to view, and you will go to the patient's Protocols screen. The patient's name and additional identifying information will always display at the top of screen in Staff View as you switch among the four tabs.



Understanding Protocols

Protocols use templates that send to and collect information from your patient. Protocols can be accessed by any Annie App for Clinicians user, so you can use protocols other users have created. There are three types of protocol templates:

- Vitals – The Vitals template is to request and receive readings from patients, such as blood pressure. You will have the option for designating the lowest and highest feasible readings for patients in the Reading/Alerts section of the Vitals template. **NOTE:** Patients will receive alerts if their readings are below or above the thresholds you set, so be sure to create thresholds that are clinically relevant and that the alert messages you create tell patients what to do if their readings are too low or too high.
- Motivational/Educational – The Motivational/Educational template is to send messages to patients that do not request a response, but help motivate or educate patients. **NOTE:** Pre-drafted Motivational/Educational messages are not built into Annie; you will need to write messages or edit a protocol that has already created motivational/educational messages.
- Custom – A Custom template allows you to combine two or more of the other templates (i.e., Vitals and Motivational/Educational) to make a more complex protocol.

IMPORTANT: Messages sent to patients should NEVER reference Section 7332 information, which includes information pertaining to drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or sickle cell anemia. VA's approval to use the system is conditional on the exclusion of this information.

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Writing an Ideal Message

Each protocol has a message area, which you can draft in the Admin View and customize in the Staff View, and will be the exact message the patient receives. **REMEMBER:** Messages are designed to motivate and help patients improve their self-care, so write all messages in ways that are inspiring and friendly.

If you request a Vitals reading, please include the format the patient should use to send in his or her reading within the Service and Reminder Messages. When a patient responds to a request from Annie to send in a reading (e.g., blood pressure measurement), the response **MUST START** with a keyword or abbreviation so that Annie understands the message. Annie uses these keywords to know what kind of information the patient is sending. The letters can be upper or lower case. Spelling has to be EXACT. Depending on the information the patient is sending, the message must begin with one of the following keywords or abbreviations (see terms in bold):

When Annie requests this information	The patient must start the message response with
Blood Pressure	BP or BLOOD
Pulse Oximetry (SpO2) or Oxygen level	OX or OXYGEN
Blood Glucose or Sugar	BG or GLUCOSE or SUGAR
Glucose Before Eating	BGB or BEFORE
Glucose After Eating	BGA or AFTER
Weight Loss	WE or WEIGHT
Caloric Intake	CAL or CALORIES
Amount of Exercise	EXERCISE
Temperature	TEMP
Pulse	PULSE

For example, if the request is to send in a temperature reading, then write the Service and Reminder messages to include the appropriate keyword or abbreviation. "Please send me your temperature in the following format: TEMP 98." If the patient responds without the using the correct format, Annie will not understand the message.

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Enable or Disable a Protocol

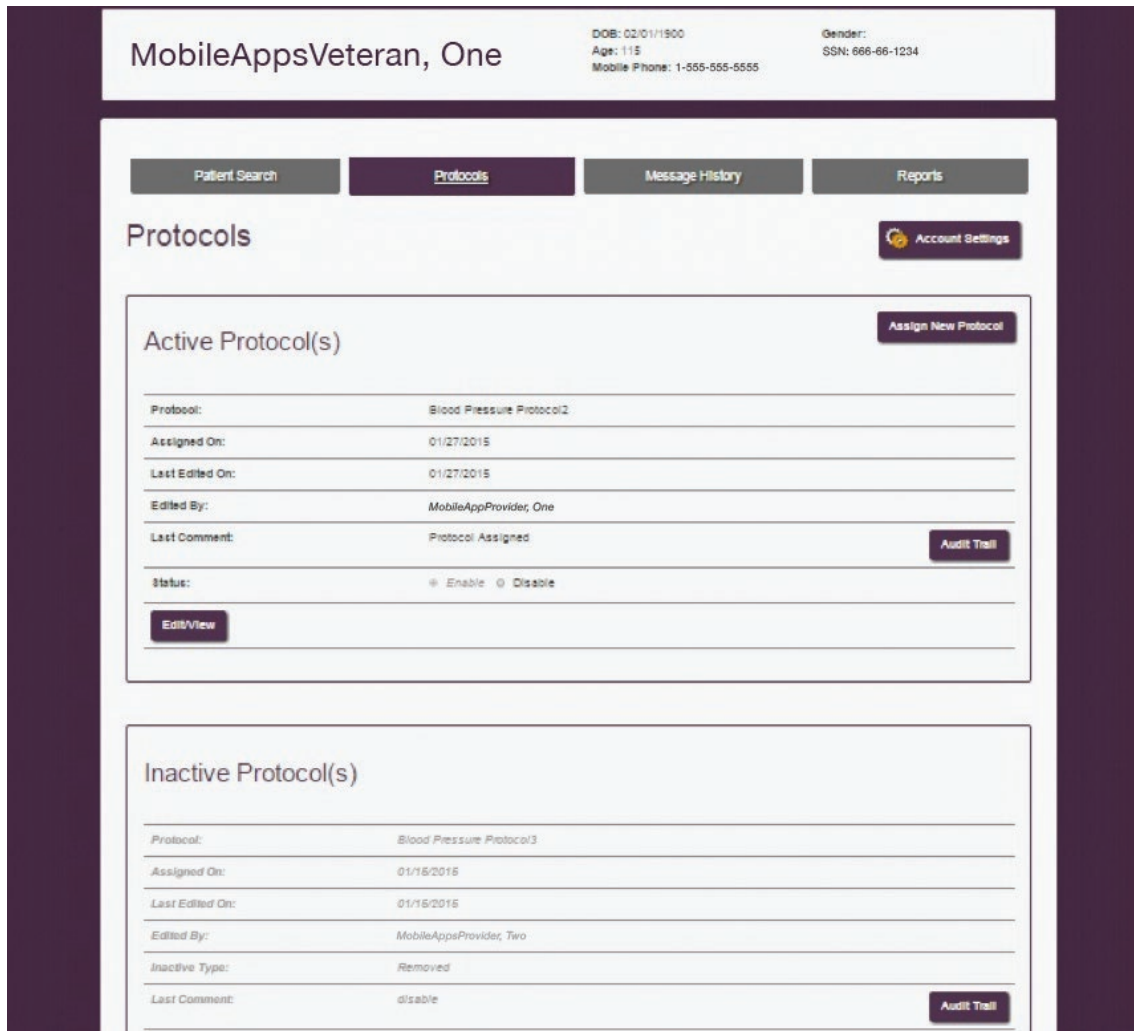
Tap the circle next to either Enable or Disable. A pop-up box will appear asking if you are certain you want to enable or disable the protocol. Type in the reason for the change, and tap **OK**. **NOTE:** Once a protocol is disabled in Admin View, it cannot be assigned in Staff View.

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Assign Protocols

You can assign protocols to patients who are registered with Annie and who have not paused or stopped protocol messaging. First search for and select the patient to whom you would like to assign a protocol. Tap **Assign New Protocol**, and you will go to a list of protocols that have already been created. Tap **Assign New Protocol** for the protocol you would like to set up for your patient, and follow the prompts to customize the protocol as desired.

NOTE: Before you assign a protocol, make sure the health readings information (e.g., blood pressure) requested is not already requested by another protocol.



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Edit or View a Protocol

If a protocol is enabled, you will be able to edit or view its details. Tap **Edit/View** under the active protocol you would like to edit or view. You will go to the protocol's screen, which shows its name, description, focus area and template(s) you set up. Adjust the areas like you would when setting up the protocol, and tap **Save**. To exit without saving, tap **Cancel**.

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Register a Patient

To register a patient, you must be in Staff View and have searched for and selected the patient you would like to register. Tap on the **Account Settings** tab, and you will go to an Account Screen. On the Account screen, tap the **Consent to Participate** tab, and tap **Annie Information and Disclosure Factsheet**. A pop-up box with background information about Annie, patient responsibilities and risks will appear. Read over the information, and provide an overview to your patient to make sure he/she understands and consents to the Annie messaging service. Tap **Dismiss** to close the box. Tap the checkbox next to "Patient-Provider Informed Consent Discussion Occurred" to confirm the patient understands and agrees to participate in Annie.

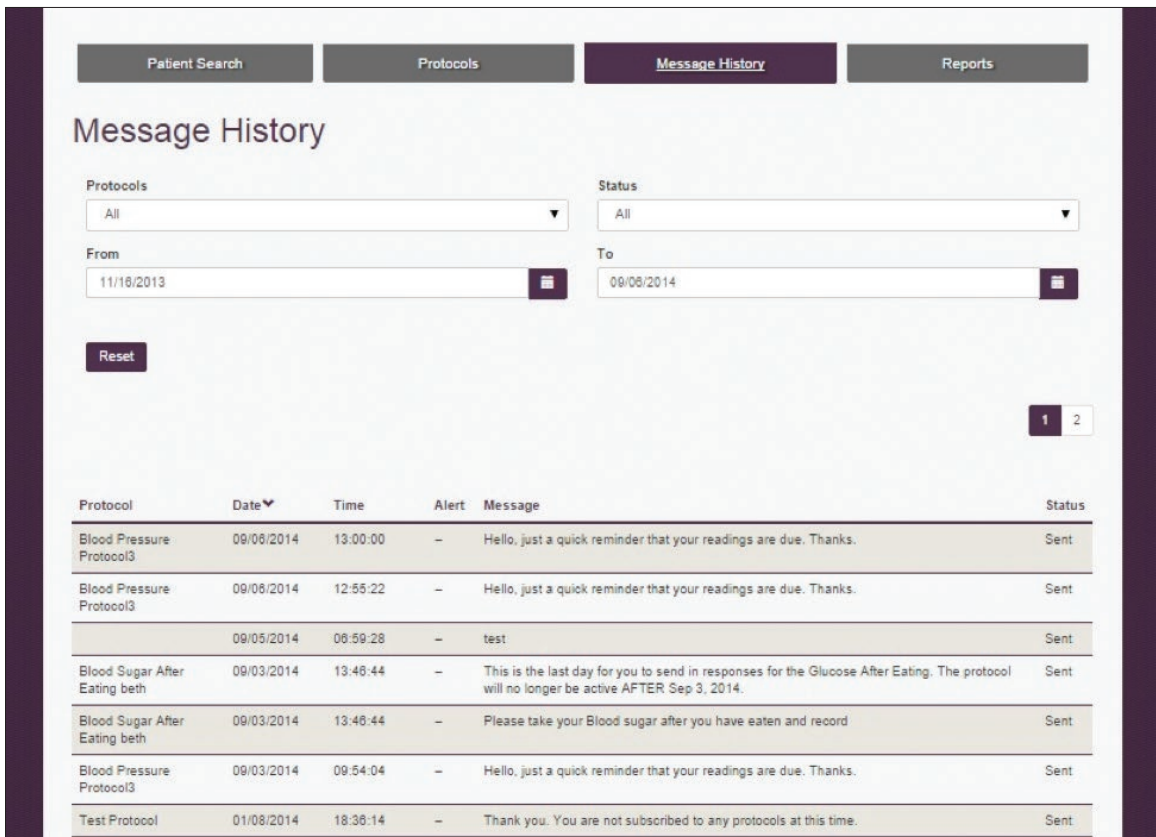
NOTE: You may notice that some of the information in these sections is already filled out if the patient has self-registered to use Annie. However, you will still need to discuss Consent with your patients in order for them to use the Protocols features of Annie, otherwise they are limited to only receiving appointment reminders and VA medical facility broadcast messages.

IMPORTANT: While the checkbox is only selected once, the patient's informed consent to use Annie should be obtained each time a new protocol is assigned to the patient and the consent/assignment noted in CPRS.

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View Message History

First search for and select a patient whose message history you would like to view, and then tap the **Message History** tab. You will see the details of the messages exchanged between Annie and your patient, including the name of the protocol, the date and time the messages were sent, the contents of the message, whether the message was sent by Annie or the patient and any alerts that were triggered by the patient’s responses.



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View Patient Reports

First search for and select a patient whose reports you would like to view, and then tap the **Reports** tab. Tap the **Select Reading** bar under the Readings heading, and a drop-down list will appear of the types of readings your patient sends. Tap the reading you would like to view, and you will see the report.

The Report consists of two sections – a Chart and a Table – and each shows the readings sent to Annie, and the date and time the information was sent. You can change the information shown in a report by adjusting the chart.

NOTE: You may find problems when seeing readings using Reports. If you encounter difficulties, please do not limit the readings using the From/To Boxes, or the scroll bar and buttons.

Admin View

Create and edit protocols that can be assigned to patients in Staff View.

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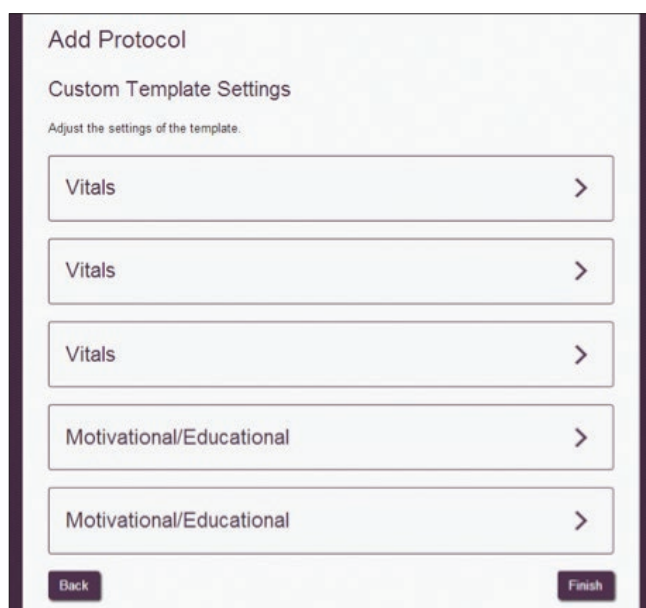
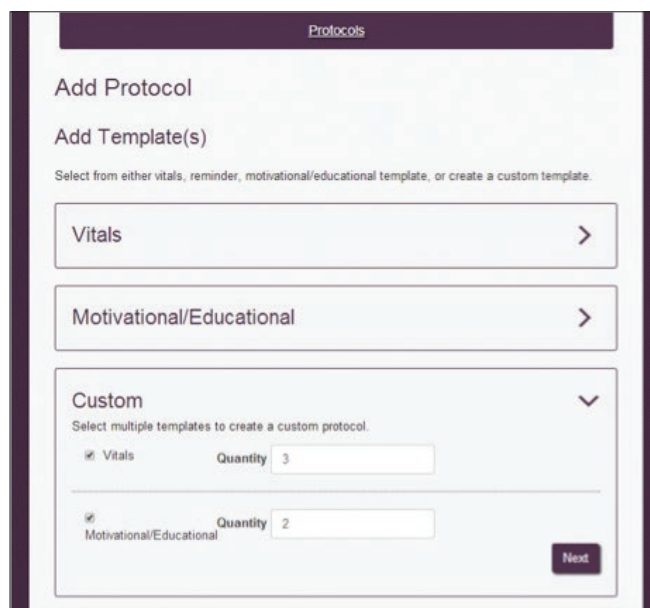
Add a Protocol

To create a protocol, make sure you are in the Admin View, and then tap **Add Protocol** to go to a Protocols screen. Type in the Protocol Name, Description and Focus Area (The Focus Area is like a tag that will help you categorize the protocol (e.g., blood pressure)). Tap **Next**, and tap **Add Template** to select the template you would like to use (Vitals, Motivational/Educational or Custom).

After selecting the type of protocol, you will need to complete the template settings for the protocol, and the format will depend on the type of protocol you selected. Tap the headings of the settings you may need to complete, which will expand the template details below. Set the details of the setting, usually by tapping to fill in a circle or to select an option from a drop-down menu. Tap **Save**, and a pop-up box will appear confirming that your changes have been saved. Tap **Finish**, and a pop-up Success box appears that confirms you created a new protocol. Tap **OK**, and you will be taken back to the Protocols screen.

IMPORTANT:

- (1) If you are adding a Vitals template, you have the option in the Schedule Settings to tap the circle next to Yes or No pertaining to whether you would like to receive any unscheduled readings from your patient. Please always ensure that Yes is selected so that Annie will respond appropriately to all messages sent by patients.
- (2) Please ensure that the threshold levels and messages for your Vital template are appropriate to your patient population and your VA medical facility's clinical procedures for providing care.
- (3) Creating a reminder message is not required, but is strongly recommended to help ensure your patient submits readings and receives the appropriate responses from Annie.
- (4) Visit the Staff View section of the Quick Start Guide to learn more about protocols.



Broadcast Admin

Send messages on behalf of your VA medical facility to all Veterans who subscribed to messages from your VA medical facility.

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Add a Broadcast Message

To create a new broadcast message, tap **Add Message**. Type in the title up to 40 characters (the title will not be sent as part of the message). Type your message up to 160 characters, and specify how often your messages should be sent. Tap **Save**, and then tap **OK**.

VA Facility Broadcast Messages

+ Add Message

Created From

Created To

Progress

View

Reset

1 2

Simple Weekly Message

Created By: MobileAppsProvider One

Created On: 01/15/2015

Progress: Delivery In Progress

Message This simple message is sent out on a weekly basis.

Schedule 01/15/2015 – 02/15/2015
@ 1:00 AM

Status Enable Disable

Edit/View

Sort your Broadcast Messages

After you have created messages, you can easily find them by using the filters on the Broadcast Admin main screen. As you change the filters, the messages below will adjust accordingly. To go back to viewing all of your messages, tap **Reset**.

Help and Additional Information

Additional Training Materials for the Annie App for Clinicians: More resources, such as a User Manual, Slideshow and FAQs, can be found on mobile.va.gov/training/annie-providers. To go to the site from the app, tap the **About** tab at the top of the screen, and tap the **Training Materials** hyperlink.

Help Desk Information: If you need technical assistance with the Annie App for Clinicians, dial **1-855-500-2025** to speak with a VA representative. The Help Desk is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT. For TTY assistance, dial 711.

If you feel that you or your patient's information may have been compromised, contact your local VA medical facility to obtain the contact information for your Privacy Officer. To locate your local VA facility, visit VA's Facility Locator: at va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1. **NOTE:** You should never use this app in an emergency situation. If you encounter an emergency, call your local medical center or dial 911.