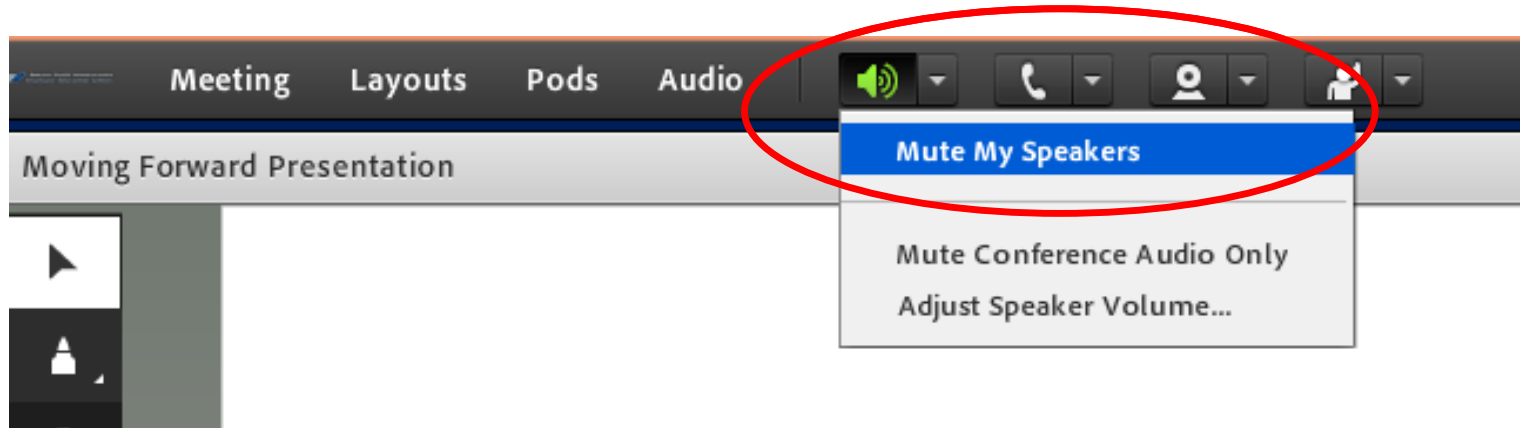


Please remember to mute your speakers.



## Connected Care Discussion Series

For audio, please dial in using VANTS:  
**1-800-767-1750 pc: 43950#**

Thank you for joining. We will begin shortly.



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Connected Care



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Connected Care Technologies for Caregivers

Presenter:

Becca Bixler, Caregiver Support Coordinator



- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Outcomes (to date)</b>  |   | <b>VVC Visits</b><br>visits completed 213<br>dyads with >1 visit 67<br>completed via VVC 85%<br>on smartphone 63% |
| <b>Pilot CSCs</b><br>19 pilot CSCs<br>16 VA Sites<br>100% implemented<br>100% 1+ VVC visit | <b>146</b><br>Veteran/<br>Caregiver<br>dyads<br>served  | <b>Participants</b><br>Rurality 49%<br>Spouses 79%<br>CG Age 44 yrs<br>Vet Age 42 yrs                             |
| <b>Satisfaction</b><br>Caregivers 86%<br>CSCs 87%<br>Improved access                       | <b>TECHNICAL ISSUES</b><br>34% required technical assistance<br>57% no time to troubleshoot<br>23% 1-5 minutes<br>15% audio issues<br>6% video issues |   |



- VVC use for monitoring assessments will be implemented throughout the VA healthcare system nationwide this summer in the Caregiver Support Program.
- During this pilot, national telehealth gave permission to use VVC for groups with local VA authorization.
  - Caregiver's most frequent request is a support group, however getting to a central location, finding childcare or supervision for Veteran, taking time off work, etc. make it more difficult and often prevent involvement.
  - Tips:
    - Use Group Informed Consent National Template- document in CPRS.
    - Ensure safety/location of participants.
    - Review ground rules.



# Annie Caregiver Text Care Program

Caregiver Support was a part of a pilot project with Annie. Since it's implementation nationwide, **22 of 57** family caregivers have been enrolled.

The screenshot shows the Annie Caregiver Text Care Program interface. At the top left is the 'annie' logo with a speech bubble icon. To the right of the logo are links for 'Welcome, Rebecca', 'About', and 'Help'. Below the logo is a 'Patient Search' section with a search bar and a 'Search' button. Underneath the search bar is a row of five buttons: 'My Patients/Teams' (active), 'Patient Search', 'Protocols', 'Message History', and 'Reports'. Below these buttons is a 'Flagged Patients' section. On the right side of this section is a 'Search:' label and a search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter keyword to search'. Below the search bar are three tabs: 'Flagged (0)', 'Associated Patients (605)', and 'Teams (1)'. The 'Flagged (0)' tab is selected, and below it, a box displays '0 Patients'.



# Benefits

## Care Team Benefits

- Provides automated clinical **feedback**, increasing caregiver safety and education
- Provides care and **encouragement outside of visits**, reducing the need for staff interaction between visits
- **Assists with review** for self care management

## Caregiver Benefits

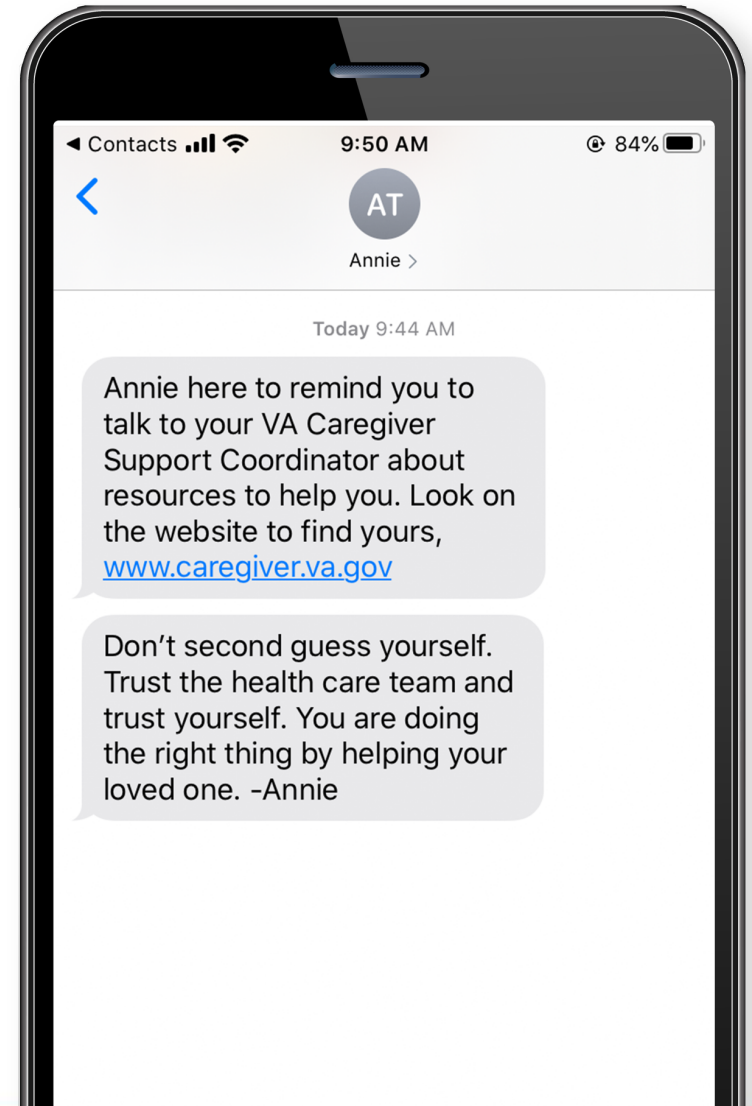
- Empower Caregiver self-care, enhancing active partnership with the care team
- Enhances Caregiver ability to care for the **Veteran**
- Caregivers **feel more connected** to their care teams
- Caregivers are **supported** in completing health tasks and achieving improved outcomes
- Sends **automated clinical protocol messages**
- Allows modification of data parameters, messages, and timing to **fit individual clinical needs and lifestyle**





# Details

- Sent three times a week
- Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
- No response required from caregiver
- Types of messages
  - Education
    - Stress relieving strategies
    - Breathing
    - Give yourself a break
    - Taking care of yourself
    - Setting boundaries
    - Mindfulness
  - Motivation
    - Validation
    - Inspiration





# Examples

Education	Activity	Motivation
Stress is normal in life- it's how we react to threats. Let us help you develop effective ways to manage stress. -Annie	Inhale for 4 seconds; hold for 6 seconds; exhale for 4 seconds; hold for 6 seconds. Repeat 5 times -Annie	In order to carry a positive action, we must develop a positive vision. - Dalai Lama
As a caregiver you're at risk for high blood pressure, heart problems, colds, & flu. Be sure to watch your own health. - Annie	Go outside and enjoy the sun and the breeze for a few minutes. - Annie.	Annie here. It's important to remember that you are doing a good job taking care of your loved one. Keep it up!
If our demands keep increasing, we get overloaded and our health may suffer. Know your limits & say no. -Annie	Write down 3 things you're grateful for. -Annie	Thank you for taking care of your loved one. Even if no one remembers to tell you, what you are doing is appreciated and makes a difference.
Free online Building Better Caregivers class? Call our Caregiver Support Coordinator. <a href="https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSP_Page.asp">https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSP_Page.asp</a>	De-clutter your brain. Spend 15 minutes tidying up your living space or work area. -Annie	From caring comes courage. - Lao Tzu





## Join Our Annie Caregiver Text Care Program Team

- Annie Caregiver Text Care Program promotes self-care and requires a basic cell phone.
- Caregivers will get stress management, educational, and motivational messages.
- Available to all caregivers with a collateral chart.
- After a brief training, you will be able to enroll your caregivers into the Annie System.
- You will send a referral to the Caregiver Center to enroll the caregiver into the Stress Management Protocol.

**A QUICK AND EASY WAY TO LET CAREGIVERS  
KNOW THAT WE ARE THINKING ABOUT THEM!**

### From the pilot program, caregivers reported...

*"The fact that it's a Caregiver Program. To know I'm not alone and that you're thinking of us. Caregiving is very lonely, so a phone call or text saying, hey, how are you today? I'm thinking about you makes a big difference."*

*"Used breathing exercises - those were great. Take time for myself to calm down and breathe, then rethink the situation."*

*"I don't always know what to do when I'm stressed. Reading the messages calm me down."*

**To learn how to enroll your caregivers in Annie, please contact the Caregiver Center:**

**Carolyn Clark**  
(901) 523-8990, dial 1, ext. 5079  
carolyn.clark3@va.gov  
VHAMEMTextcare@va.gov



## **Annie: YA's SMS Text Messaging Program Information and Disclosure Factsheet for Caregivers**

### **What is the VA Text Messaging Program, and How Can it Help Me?**

"Annie" is a text messaging program developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that you can use with either a basic cell phone or smartphone. The program helps you take a more active role in your health care. Annie is a computer system that sends you personalized text messages that provide information to help you manage your well-being and provide care for your Veteran.

### **How Will Text Messages from Annie Work?**

Important! This text messaging program is not for urgent or emergency issues.

After you agree to participate in the program and exercise your right of access, Annie will send text messages to your cell phone. Text messages from Annie will help you stay on course as a Caregiver. Some text messages will simply be reminders to take care of yourself. Others from Annie will provide you with strategies to try to help you provide care. All text messages are for your self care. Sending a text message to Annie does not send a text message directly to the person who referred you to Annie or to the Caregiver Center or to your Veteran's provider, rather, your messages will be stored in the computer system. The health care team will be able to see these text replies but will not regularly read or review your text messages.

### **What Do I Have to Do to Use Annie?**

You need to know about your responsibilities and the risks associated with using Annie.

- Both the health care provider who registers you for Annie and a staff member from the Caregiver Center will speak with you about how Annie will be used as part of your personal care plan.



## You are Responsible for:

- Your health and well-being. If you do not feel well you are responsible for taking appropriate action to seek professional care.
- Your care plan. You are responsible for monitoring your health and well-being.
- Informing your Veteran's provider. Let your Veteran's health care team know if you have concerns.
- Text messaging costs. You will need to pay text message charges billed to you by your phone company as a result of using Annie.
- Your phone number. Notify the health care provider who registered you and the Caregiver Center about any changes to your phone number. You can contact the Caregiver Center by calling (800) 636-8262 ext. 7485 or (901) 577-7485. You may also email [vhamemtextcare@va.gov](mailto:vhamemtextcare@va.gov).
- Your phone. Keep your cell phone safe and in your possession at all times.



## What Are the Risks with Using Annie?

By agreeing to use Annie, you accept the risks of sending and getting text messages that are **not secure**. Text messages are not secure when being sent or received and when on your cell phone because they are not encrypted (scrambled to make it hard for people to get your information). Texts can remain on a phone and with the cell phone companies that transmit the messages forever and can be read by people who can access your phone. When sending text messages from Annie, VA will assume that you have your phone and are opening the text messages. If anyone else has your phone, they will be able to read text messages from Annie intended for you.

VA will collect personal information such as your cell phone number, home phone number, time zone and email address, as part of your registration in the program. The information that you are participating in Annie Text Care will also be in your medical record.



## How Do I Start or Stop the Program?

If you agree to use the program, Annie will send you a text message that asks you to confirm that you want to participate. To start the program, you simply need to text START to Annie when prompted. You can also stop, pause, or resume the service at any time, using simple text replies to Annie. Texting STOP will allow you to choose which types of messages to stop or to completely end your participation in the Annie program. Texting PAUSE will temporarily halt all messages until you text RESUME to start receiving the text messages again. Within each Annie protocol you are participating in, there are other commands to allow you to receive different types of messages. Caregiver Center staff will discuss these with you.

## What If I Change my Cell Phone Number?

If you plan to change your cell phone number, please complete the following steps as needed:

1. Text PAUSE to Annie from your old phone number. This halts all texts to that number.
2. When you have your new phone number, notify the Caregiver Center to update your cell phone number in Annie. You can contact the Caregiver Center by calling (800) 636-8262, press 1, then ext. 7485 or (901) 577-7485. You may also email [vhamemtextcare@va.gov](mailto:vhamemtextcare@va.gov).
3. After steps 1 and 2 have been completed and you have your cell phone with your new phone number, text the message RESUME to Annie and service will resume.



# Questions



## QUESTIONS?

Please use the chat feature on the right to submit your questions.





# Survey

Have an idea you want to share on how we can improve the discussion?

Let us know by providing feedback at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/S2B9TM5>