Connected Care: A Year in review

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Connected Health Implementation Strategies, Office of Connected Care (OCC), Patient Care Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
20 MILLION Veterans in the U.S.

9+ MILLION Receive VA care
Connected Care

- Telehealth
- Electronic Health Record
- Mobile Health
- Patient Portal

Virtual Health
eHealth
Digital Health
Connected Health
Connected Care
VA Connected Care – Our Priorities

Bringing care to the Veteran

Accessibility

• Video care, secure email, telephone care – available in all ambulatory services for Veterans and caregivers to access from their preferred location
• Asynchronous modalities of care that can be used between scheduled visits
• Enhanced Veteran communication channels with their care teams (e.g. clinical chat, secure messaging, text)

Matching clinical supply and demand

Capacity

• Resource hubs for primary care, mental health, and other high-volume specialty services, accessible as a shared telehealth service, delivered across VA facilities.
• Increased clinic efficiency, resulting from more efficient just-in-time resolution of simple health issues or transactions through virtual modalities.

Providing the right care at the right time

Quality

• Expert consultation & coordination of services that are difficult to find, expensive to manage, or low volume in any given market.
• Promote self-management of health and proactively engage patients using digital health tools that leverage analytics
• Reduce hospitalizations & emergency visits through remote monitoring
COVID

Changing VA & Healthcare
Growth in VA Connected Care Services

Telehealth

Total Encounters
Note: RPM-HT data not available prior to FY12

(Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021)
Growth in VA Connected Care Services

My HealtheVet

(Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021)
Growth in VA Connected Care Services

Annie

New Annie Users per Week  Total Active Annie Users

(Fixed of Veterans Affairs, 2021)
Increase in Provider Utilization

• **64% to 94%** - % of VA primary care providers that had conducted at least 1 video telehealth visit before and after COVID

• **67% to 98%** - % of VA mental health providers that had conducted at least 1 video telehealth visit before and after COVID
Our Tools and Our Lessons
Managing Stress related to COVID

1. **Education**
   Education on impact of COVID, how to stay safe and healthy, and ways to build resilience

2. **Tools for Managing Stress**
   Tools for self-care and to improve emotional well-being and trackers to check mood and measure growth toward personal goals.

3. **Resources**
   Wide range of resources including crisis support, substance use support, meeting food and housing needs, local COVID information, support for parents, caregivers, healthcare workers, veterans and service members.

Learn more at: www.mobile.va.gov/app/covid-coach
“Annie” is the VA’s automated text message platform

Learn more at:
www.mobile.va.gov/app/annie-app-clinicians/
Let’s Test Annie

Text keyword ANNIE to 1-844-480-0303
Get answers to questions about COVID, VA benefits and services.

Learn more at:
www.va.gov/coronavirus-chatbot/
Streamlined access

VVC NOW provides VVC links via a text message and/or by email to both the Veteran and clinician.

Learn more at:
www.staff.apps.va.gov/vvc-now/
Connected Care Academy

One stop access to all virtual care training

Learn more at:
https://vaots.blackboard.com/
Telehealth Expansion in 2020

• Maintaining continuity of care – quickly shifting to remote delivery of care and remote work for staff

• Increasing access to tools/resources – quickly deploying necessary hardware and software for staff and patients

• Expanding workforce trained in virtual care – quickly ramping up virtual care training for healthcare staff
VA Tele-Critical Care

Resource sharing across the enterprise to increase access and quality
Clinical Resource Hubs

Resource sharing across the enterprise to increase access and quality
VA Virtual Health Resource Centers

Provide support to Veterans, Veteran Families and Caregivers, and VA staff in the set up and use of virtual care tools.

Goals:
1. Provide education and training to Veterans and VA staff to increase knowledge and skills for use of virtual health care tools
2. Provide Veterans and VA staff consultations, coaching and hands-on experience using virtual health tools
3. Provide access to materials and resources to increase awareness and use of virtual health care tools to Veterans and VA Staff

VHRC Phone Line: 1-844-813-4361
Who accesses services at VHRCs?

- Patient 14K (87.49%)
- VA Staff 2K (11.52%)
- Patient, VA Staff
- Patient, Family Member
- Other
- Patient, Caregiver
- Caregiver

Open in Power BI
COE & MOVE! Dashboard
Filtered by Encountee (groups) (is not (Blank) or Blank), Facility (is New Orleans, San Diego, St Cloud, or Tampa)
What services are being provided at VHRCs?

- Mobile Device 1702 (36.38%)
- Telehealth 1391 (29.73%)
- My HealthE Vet 231 (4.9%)
- Other 147 (3.14%)
- Wearable Device 145 (3.1%)
- Device 905 (19.35%)

Open in Power BI
COE & MOVE! Dashboard
Filtered by Encountee (groups) (is not (Blank) or Blank), Facility (is New Orleans, San Diego, St Cloud, or Tampa)
Impact of VHRCs on Virtual Tool/Technology Utilization

Percentage Change in Tele1: Q4FY20 - Q4FY21

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>New Orleans</th>
<th>San Diego</th>
<th>Tampa</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
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Source: VSSC, Connected Care Report

Percent Change in Number of MHV, Premium Accounts: Q4FY19 to Q4FY21

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
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Source: VSSC, My HealtheVet/Secure Messaging Statistics

Percent Change in Number of Unique VVC Encounters: Q4FY19 to Q4FY21

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>1854.2%</td>
<td>328.6%</td>
<td>2294.1%</td>
<td>1787.4%</td>
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Source: VSSC, VVC Encounter Report

Percent Change in Number of Annie, Number of Unique Veteran (Participant) Users: Q4FY19 to Q4FY21

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<th>San Diego</th>
<th>Tampa</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>616.3%</td>
<td>676.7%</td>
<td>1710.5%</td>
<td>1545.2%</td>
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Source: Metrics_Annie_Power BI
• To meet the need for the development of VHRCs across the VA, the Office of Connected Care is creating a VHRC Implementation Consult Service (VHRC ICS), providing guidance to facilities in the development of additional VHRCs.

• The VHRC ICS program will leverage best practices in implementation science and lessons learned in the establishment of current VHRCs to support the development of additional VHRCs across the VA.
Partner with VAMCs to provide:
- Short term intensive facilitation implementation consultation
- 6-month implementation cycle, new cohorts starting quarterly as of January 2022
- Long term support and partnership with VA VHRC ICS team
  - sustainment support x12 months

Goals:
- Enhance innovative, world class health care delivery in support of our Veterans life journey
- Enrich staff and Veteran virtual care experience(s)
- Support VA's Strategic Plan, 2018-2024 priorities and goals 1-4

Objective:
Employ evidence based best practices in implementation science including lessons learned from the field to support virtual health utilization and positive care outcomes
Population Trends in Virtual Care

Physicians Using:
- Telehealth for Clinical Visits
- Remote Patient Monitoring

Motivation for Using Sensors and Wearable Devices

“Allows me to provide care to my patients remotely.”
% indicating this as important or very important

VHRC Resources

- VHRC public facing website
- VHRC Promotional Video
- VHRC ICS Leaf Request site
- VHRC Microsoft Teams shared document site (pending)
- VHRC Power BI Data Dashboard

- VHRC Phone Number: 1-844-813-4361
- VHRC Implementation Consult Team: VHAVHRC@va.gov
“Virtual Care Best Practices”
Provider Toolkit
“Virtual Care Best Practices” Community

Scan this with your VA or personal mobile device to access the Virtual Care Best Practices Community while you are away from your VA computer.
‘VA Virtual Care Best Practices’ Series

Part 1: Virtual Care Basics (TMS course # VA 45280)
Part 2: Virtual Care to Improve Patient Care (TMS course # 45307)
Part 3: Assessing Patient Readiness for Use (TMS course # 45107)
Part 4: Integrating Virtual Care Tools into Clinical Workflow (TMS course # 46020)
Part 5: Prescribing Virtual Care (TMS course # 45988)
Part 6: Security and Privacy Issues with Virtual Care (TMS course # 44604)
Part 7: Ethical and Legal Issues with Virtual Care (TMS course # 46019)
Part 8: Increasing Technological Cultural Competency to Meet Patient Needs (TMS course # 45989)

VA Mobile Health Practice Guide

- Guide for integrating VA virtual care tools into clinical practice
- Provides further information on 5 core knowledge areas for integrating virtual care into clinical practice
- Activity sheet examples:
  - Increasing Your Technological Cultural Competence
  - Introducing a Mobile Health App in Clinical Care
  - Prescribing a Mobile Health App in Clinical Care
- Script for assessing Veteran readiness to use VA apps

Available at: connectedcare.va.gov/outreach-toolkit
Clinician’s Guide: VA Virtual Care Tools

Provides VA health care staff with a way to choose which virtual care tool to use based on symptoms, platform, and functions.

Available at: connectedcare.va.gov/outreach-toolkit
Clinician’s Guide: VA Virtual Care Tools (cont.)

Available at: connectedcare.va.gov/outreach-toolkit
Prescription for VA Virtual Care Tools

- Access Your Health Goals
- Improve Your Mental Health
- Contact Your Care Team
- Manage Your Care

Share with Veterans:
- What virtual care tool to use
- The goal of the virtual care tool
- How to use and access the tool
- The expected frequency of use

Available at: connectedcare.va.gov/outreach-toolkit
Video Demonstrating Integration into Clinical Care
Additional Resources for Prescribing Virtual Care

Clinician’s Guide: Virtual Weight Management Intervention

Clinician’s Guide: Virtual Pain Management

VA Virtual Care Guide for TeleOncology

Available at: connectedcare.va.gov/outreach-toolkit
Custom Prescription Pad

- ‘My App List’ can be accessed at: https://mobile.va.gov/my-app-list
- Find it on the dropdown menu in the VA App Store:

![VA Mobile My App List](image)

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VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

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What’s Next?
The healthcare system is forever changed

• The healthcare system will be feeling the direct impact for the next five to ten years we’re going to continue feel the effects. To prepare we need:
  – Further the development and integration of emerging virtual care tools
  – Changes in policies and practices to ensure continuity of operations and prepare for future emergencies
  – To invest in workforce expansion trained in virtual care and in infrastructure improvements to support virtual care
Developing and Implementing Virtual Care Technologies

- Sensors, Wearables, and Remote Patient Monitoring
- Patient-Generated Health Data
- Prescribing Virtual Care
- Rolling out new EHR and creating interoperability with existing infrastructure
Changes in Policies and Practices

Pre-pandemic
- MISSION Act

During pandemic
- CARES Act
- VHA Directive 1914
- SAVES Lives Act
- VHA Directive 6506
- American Recovery Plan Act
Current PGHD toolkit:

- PGHD Introductory Video (YouTube)
- PGHD in VCM Introductory Video (YouTube)
- VHA Directive 6506 – Review and Use of PGHD
- PGHD Communications SharePoint
- PGHD Fact Sheet
- PGHD in Virtual Care Manager Fact Sheet
- PGHD and Shared Vitals in My HealtheVet Fact Sheet
- Published Competencies for Sensor, Wearable and Remote Patient Monitoring

_In development:_ PGHD section in Connected Care Academy (vaots.blackboard.com), as well as several on-demand continuing education training modules (Introduction to PGHD (this should be available by the end of October); Clinical Use of PGHD in Virtual Care Manager (this should be available by the end of December); What VA Healthcare Staff Need to Know about Veteran Use of PGHD in VA Health Hub (this should be available by the end of February)).
Resources

Connected Care Training Resources

- Connected Care Academy
- Connected Care Outreach Toolkit
- Connected Care Discussion Series
- Attend our monthly VA Connected Care Community of Practice (email CHImplementation@va.gov to be put on distribution list)
Questions?
Thank you!

Office of
CONNECTED CARE

connectedcare.va.gov