



Fact Sheet

VA Telehealth Services

Operating the nation's largest health care system, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) uses a wide variety of technologies to ensure excellence in care delivery. New technologies are revolutionizing health care and VA is recognized as a world leader in the development and use of telehealth. Telehealth services are mission-critical to the future direction of VA care to Veterans.

Telehealth increases access to high quality health care services by using information and telecommunication technologies to provide health care services when the patient and practitioner are separated by geographical distance. VA is committed to increasing access to care for Veterans, and has placed special emphasis on those in rural and remote locations.

Telehealth is Transformational. Telehealth is one of VA's major transformational initiatives aimed at ensuring care is convenient, accessible and patient-centered.

- In fiscal year (FY) 2016, about 12% of Veterans received elements of their care via telehealth.
- Telehealth in VA provides mission-critical services that help Veterans to live independently in their own homes and local communities.
- VA providers and patients discuss and decide together which telehealth care services are available in their location and clinically appropriate for the patient to opt into.

Telehealth is Robust and Sustainable. Telehealth is an effective and convenient way for patients to receive, and clinicians to provide, VA care. VA has implemented national quality, implementation, and development resources to ensure local services from more than 900 VA locations.

Telehealth is Visionary. Telehealth in VA is the forerunner of a wider vision in which the relationship between patients and the health care system is changed with the full realization of the "connected patient". The high levels of patient satisfaction and positive clinical outcomes attest to this.

VA Telehealth by the Numbers Fiscal Year 2016

- The number of Veterans receiving care via VA's telehealth services grew approximately 4% in FY16, and is anticipated to grow by approximately 4% in FY17.
- VA provided care to more than 702,000 patients via the three telehealth modalities. This amounted to over 2.17 million telehealth episodes of care.
- Forty-five percent 45% of these Veterans lived in rural areas, and may otherwise have had limited access to VA healthcare.

VA Telehealth Modalities

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) is defined as the use of real-time interactive video conferencing, sometimes with supportive peripheral technologies, to assess, treat and provide care to a patient remotely. Typically CVT links the patient(s) at a clinic to the provider(s) at another location. CVT can also provide video connectivity between a provider and a patient at home. CVT encompasses more than 50 clinical applications in VA such as specialty and primary care.

Home Telehealth (HT) is defined as a program into which Veterans are enrolled that applies care and case management principles to coordinate care using health informatics, disease management and technologies such as in-home and mobile monitoring, messaging and/or video technologies. The goal of Home Telehealth is to improve clinical outcomes and access to care while reducing complications, hospitalizations, and clinic or emergency room visits for Veterans in post-acute care settings, high-risk Veterans with chronic disease or Veterans at risk for placement in long-term care.

Store and Forward Telehealth (SFT) is generally defined as the use of technologies to asynchronously acquire and store clinical information (e.g. data, image, sound and video) that is then forwarded to or retrieved by a provider at another location for clinical evaluation. VA's national Store-and-Forward Telehealth programs operationalize this definition to cover services that provide this care using a clinical consult pathway and a defined information technology platform to communicate the event/encounter between providers, as well as enabling documentation of the event/encounter and the associated clinical evaluation within the patient record.

Signature VA Telehealth Programs

In developing VA Telehealth programs, VA has focused on Veteran patients as the main driver to prioritize areas of care. Signature VA Telehealth Programs that have been developed, or are currently under development include, but are not limited to:

- TeleAddiction Services
- TeleAmputation Care
- TeleAudiology
- TeleBipolar Disorder
- TeleCardiology
- TeleDental Care
- TeleDermatology
- TeleCardiology
- TeleChaplain
- TeleDentistry
- TeleDermatology
- TeleEpilepsy
- TeleGastroIntestinal/Hepatitis Care
- TeleGenomic Counseling
- TeleInfectious Disease
- TeleIntensive Care
- TeleKinesiology
- TeleMental Health
- TeleMOVE! Weight Management
- TeleNephrology
- TeleNeurology
- TeleNutrition
- TeleRetinal Imaging
- TeleOccupational Therapy
- TelePain Management
- TelePathology
- TelePodiatry
- TelePolytrauma Care
- TelePrimary Care
- TelePulmonology
- TeleRehabilitation
- TeleSchizophrenia
- TeleSpinal Cord Injury Care
- TeleSpirometry
- TeleSurgery (Pre - & Post- Care)
- TeleTransplant (Pre - & Post- Care)
- TeleWound Care
- Women's Telehealth

Veteran Enrollment in Telehealth

- Telehealth has been implemented in over 900 VA sites of care.
- Providers and patients agree on suitability for Telehealth.
- Veterans can elect to have traditional in-person care instead of Telehealth.
- Telehealth is available for over 50 specialty areas of care.

Telehealth by Modality

Veterans accessed VA care through one (or more) of the following telehealth types in FY16:

- More than 307,000 Veterans used Clinical Video Telehealth
- More than 150,000 Veterans used Home Telehealth
- More than 304,000 Veterans used Store-and-Forward Telehealth

Training for VA Physicians and other Clinicians

VA provides its national telehealth training for VA staff virtually. In FY16:

- VA provided 282 training sessions, with a total of 45,700 training completions. More than 10,000 staff attended at least one training session. VA conducts annual competency testing.

VA Telehealth Outcomes

Improved patient outcomes resulting in reduced utilization of inpatient care in FY16:

- Veterans enrolled in Home Telehealth for non-institutional care needs and chronic care management had a 59% decrease in VA bed days of care and a 31% decrease in VA hospital admissions.
- Mental Health services provided to Veterans via Clinical Video Telehealth (TeleMental Health) reduced Acute Psychiatric VA bed days of care by 39% and a 32% decrease in VA hospital admissions.

High Veteran satisfaction scores in FY16:

- 92% for Clinical Video Telehealth
- 88% for Home Telehealth
- 94% for Store and Forward Telehealth

Learn More Online about VA Telehealth Services:

- <http://www.telehealth.va.gov/>