

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2011

**VA Announces Winner of “Blue Button for All Americans” Contest**

WASHINGTON – RelayHealth, McKesson’s connectivity business, has been named the winner of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) “Blue Button for All Americans” contest.

RelayHealth won the $50,000 contest prize by making a Blue Button personal health record (PHR) system available to all patients, including Veterans, of more than 25,000 physicians across America. VA’s Innovations Initiative (VAi2) sponsored the contest.

“We held this contest to help Veterans across America to be able to download their health data regardless of where they get their care,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We wanted to give Veterans and their families easy access to their health data with the Blue Button so they can have greater control over the health care they receive. RelayHealth’s contribution to this goal is more than commendable.”

RelayHealth has announced that it will donate the prize to the Wounded Warrior Project, which supports programs that assist injured Servicemembers, Veterans and their families.

“RelayHealth has always offered one-click download of the continuity of care document (CCD) and is proud to support the Blue Button initiative,” said Jim Bodenbender, president, RelayHealth Connectivity Solutions. “By allowing patients – including veterans and active-duty service members – to easily access their healthcare information, the initiative will increase patients’ ability to actively engage in managing their own health care.” Bodenbender continued, “We’re honored to donate the prize to the Wounded Warrior Project.”

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**Blue Button 2/2/2/2**

Blue Button personal health records (PHR) allow patients to see, download and keep their health data by clicking the “Blue Button” on a secure Internet site. Patients can then choose to share their data with their physicians or family members or make it available if emergency treatment is needed. Blue Button downloads are delivered in text files that can be downloaded, read, stored and printed on any computer without special software. Patients can also authorize use of a Blue Button transfer of their medical data from a treating physician to another medical provider.

“The Blue Button initiative, a flagship open government initiative of the VA with active multi-agency collaboration, has scaled from a promising 'startup' to a national service," said White House Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra. “By tapping into our country's entrepreneurial spirit through challenges and prizes, we celebrate the engagement of the private sector to ensure Blue Button is available to – and will be used – by millions of Americans.”

A recent study by New York-based Manhattan Research found that 56 million Americans have accessed their health information on electronic systems maintained by their physicians – and 41 million more are interested in doing so.

“This contest proves that patient-controlled PHRs using the Blue Button can be simple, secure and inexpensive,” said Peter L. Levin, VA’s chief technology officer. “It also proves that through collaborations like this, the government and private-sector organizations like RelayHealth can make health care information exchanges part of the mainstream of American medicine.”

The Blue Button concept was developed by VA in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Markle Foundation. VA was the first health system to offer Blue Button functions to its patients in August 2010; since then, hundreds of thousands of Veterans have downloaded their data from VA’s MyHealth***e***Vet website ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)).

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**Blue Button 3/3/3/3**

“We know from our own experience that the six million Veterans who receive their care through VA want to have access to their health data using the Blue Button,” said VAi2 Director Jonah Czerwinski. “We thought it important that the more than 17 million Veterans across the country who get their care from non-VA providers have access to Blue Button downloads through their private physicians as well.”

RelayHealth provides information exchange services to more than 200,000 physicians and their staffs and more than 2,000 hospitals and health systems. More than 17 million patients and patient health records are available using RelayHealth applications. To win the prize, RelayHealth had to show that it had upgraded its PHR to use Blue Button technology, and at least 25,000 of its physicians offered the new Blue Button functions to their patients.

“We stopped counting after we got past 25,000,” said Czerwinski.

The VA Innovation Initiative solicits the most promising ideas from VA employees, the private sector, non-profits and academia to increase Veterans’ access to VA services, improve the quality of services, enhance the performance of VA operations, and deliver those services more efficiently.  Through prize contests, private-sector innovators help improve federal government operations and technology developed using tax dollars is made available to the public.

DOD also provides Blue Button download capabilities to its TRICARE beneficiaries, and Medicare beneficiaries can download their claims histories using the CMS Blue Button functions.  Many other health plans and health systems have adopted Blue Button-enabled PHRs to their patients.

More information about Blue Button and its use across the health care industry is available at:

* <http://bluebuttondata.org/>
* [www.va.gov/bluebutton](http://www.va.gov/bluebutton)/
* [http://www.medicare.gov/navigation/manage-your-health/personal-health-records/blue-button-download.aspx](http://www.medicare.gov/navigation/manage-your-health/personal-health-records/blue-button-download.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)
* [www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/10/07/blue-button-provides-access-downloadable-personal-health-data](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/10/07/blue-button-provides-access-downloadable-personal-health-data)
* <http://manhattanresearch.com/News-and-Events/Press-Releases/ehr-consumer-online-medical-records>

Information about the contest is available at <http://challenge.gov/VAi2/198-blue-button-for-all-americans>.

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