



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2009

**Secretary Shinseki Announces Strict Accountability Process for IT
Project Management**
Aggressive Action Being Taken to Address Technology Program Failures

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it is implementing a new IT management approach department-wide. Effective immediately, all new IT programs and projects at VA must be implemented using the Project Management Accountability System (PMAS). PMAS is an incremental development approach that ensures frequent delivery of new functionality to customers, coupled with a rigorous management approach that halts programs that fail to meet delivery milestones. This new system will ensure early identification and correction of failing IT programs.

“A strong information technology capability is essential to achieving the President’s vision of a 21st Century VA,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said. “Incremental development and strict management of missed milestones will ensure that we are successfully delivering the functionality we need to serve our Veteran clients. By halting programs that fail to meet their delivery milestones, we will prevent wasteful spending and demand accountability from everyone involved in delivering and supporting the technologies that will help transform the VA.”

With incremental development, a program must establish milestones to deliver new functionality to its customers in short increments of at most every six months. Failure to achieve customer acceptance of a delivery by the committed milestone date indicates a problem within the program. Under PMAS, a third missed customer delivery milestone will cause the program to be halted and re-planned. Before the program can restart, substantial changes must be instituted, including a re-evaluation of the need for the program and the program approach, replacement of the program manager, contractors, and a portion of the government staff.

- More -

PMAS Announcement 2/2/2/2

“Incremental development is a proven approach followed by most commercial product providers,” Roger Baker, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, said. “It ensures frequent feedback from customers, and avoids the ‘big bang’ program failures that can occur in government.”

An analysis of 282 ongoing development programs at VA has indicated that many of those programs exhibit at least one characteristic that could indicate a failing program; either significantly behind schedule, significantly over budget, or showing deteriorating product release quality. To ensure that these programs do not continue on a path to potential failure, they will be paused within the next few weeks and required to create an incremental development plan with milestone commitments. The new program plan must be approved by the CIO, and the program managed under PMAS, before development on the program can restart.

“Missing three customer delivery milestones is a strong indicator that a program is likely to fail, and that a change of direction is needed,” Baker said. “The Program Management Accountability System will ensure that customers, program staff and contractors are motivated to work together as a team to avoid program failure.”

Over the next year, all IT development programs within VA will be required to move to the Project Management Accountability System.

#