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VA Video Connect Expands Veterans' Access to Health Care

With a few clicks, more Veterans are meeting with their providers in virtual medical rooms

WASHINGTON — More and more Veterans are receiving health-care treatment virtually, thanks to efforts by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to expand telehealth.

One of the recent successes has been with VA Video Connect, which allows Veterans to connect with their health-care teams over live video from a computer, tablet or smart phone from the comfort of their homes, thereby increasing their access to VA health care and reducing travel times.

Since its launch in August 2017, more than 20,000 Veterans have used VA Video Connect to receive care, and currently more than 4,000 VA providers across the country are set up to use the system.

“We are taking big steps to make VA health care more accessible,” said VA Acting Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA Video Connect provides our Veterans with a convenient option to connect with their providers from their preferred locations in the United States.”

VA Video Connect also has proven to be an important tool for VA after emergencies. The Office of Connected Care’s mobile and telehealth programs, in coordination with the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Houston and VA’s regional network, quickly organized telehealth capabilities to assist Veterans at two “[mega-shelters](#)” and four community based outpatient clinics after Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

As part of that effort, remote clinicians used VA Video Connect and other video technologies to hold virtual health-care appointments with Veterans. VA teams have been coordinating since last year’s hurricane season to prepare for how VA Video Connect can be used to mobilize clinical resources in the face of future emergencies and disasters.

VA Video Connect can be used on almost any computer, tablet or mobile phone with an internet connection, a web camera and microphone. VA Video Connect uses encryption to ensure privacy in each session.

In March 2018, VA released an iOS version of VA Video Connect to the Apple App Store. Soon after, VA Video Connect began trending as a top 10 app in the “medical” category.

“The response from patients has been incredible,” said Dr. Margaret Carrico, a VA primary care provider based at VAMC, Tampa. “Overall, they are delighted. Because wherever they are, they don’t have to come in here to see me. Their daughter doesn’t have to get off work, or they don’t have to drive in traffic.”

To learn more about VA Video Connect, visit the VA App Store at mobile.va.gov/appstore.

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