



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
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www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2020

VA, DoD implement new capability for bidirectional sharing of health records with community partners

WASHINGTON - On April 18, the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization (FEHRM) program office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) launched a modernized health data sharing capability, enhancing both departments' ability to securely exchange records with community health care partners.

The joint DOD and VA health information exchange (HIE) allows providers in both departments to quickly and securely access electronic health record (EHR) data for their patients seen by a participating community partner or health system. Equally important, participating community providers now have a single point of entry to request and access DOD and VA electronic health records for use in their treatment of those patients.

"The recent COVID-19 pandemic underlines the importance for clinicians on the front lines to quickly access a patient's health record, regardless of where that patient previously received care," said Dr. Neil Evans, the interim director of the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization program office. "As the DOD and VA implement a single, common record, the joint health information exchange and the associated expansion of community exchange partners is a critical step forward, delivering immediate value to all DOD and VA sites."

The benefits of the new joint HIE capability are currently available to all VA and DOD care providers and to all participating community partners. The joint HIE also provides a platform for future interoperability expansion, including connecting to CommonWell, a network of more than 15,000 community providers, expected later this year.

As part of an effort to transform health care delivery for Service members and Veterans, the departments are implementing a new electronic health record system at all their care facilities. By implementing the same EHR system and sharing the same health care data source, VA and DOD will document care from the time the patient enters the military through veteran care in one single, common health record.

The joint HIE capability honors patient consent, so that health records of patients who opt out of sharing will not be exchanged through the HIE.

For more information about VA and DOD's electronic health record modernization program, visit <https://www.ehrm.va.gov/> and <https://www.health.mil/About-MHS/OASDHA/Defense-Health-Agency/Defense-Healthcare-Management-Systems>.

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