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New report highlights VA's role in IT innovation, key to successful coronavirus pandemic response

Cutting-edge digital and infrastructure solutions powered VA's seamless delivery of benefits and services to Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today, the release of the [Office of Information and Technology's \(OIT\) 2020 Year in Review, "Driving Digital Transformation at VA,"](#) a multi-media report highlighting VA's innovative IT initiatives that dramatically improve Veterans' access to benefits and services they have earned.

The Year in Review also details the essential role of OIT's [digital transformation](#) strategy in driving a swift, effective emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Major investments in digital and IT transformation of VA's chief data systems and service-delivery platforms provided a solid foundation for OIT's deft pivot to COVID-19 mobilization, including rapidly shifting over 415,000 staff and contractor personnel to telework and quickly expanding and securing telehealth access at VA Medical Center facilities nationwide.

"By ensuring that VA employees have the tools and technology they need to do their jobs — no matter where they are or what situation they're in — our nation's Veterans continue to have access to the care they need and deserve," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The 2020 Year in Review offers real-time examples to Veterans and taxpayers of the important benefits of federal modernization efforts, highlighting the results and the achievements we've made as an organization so far in 2020."

VA-OIT's targeted mobilization of IT assets and quick development of COVID-19 tools and applications ensured that millions of Veterans and family members safely continued receiving health care benefits and supported VA's activation of its ["Fourth Mission"](#) — opening its medical facilities to support national emergency preparedness efforts.

A few notable achievements featured in the Year in Review include:

- Facing a once-in-a-century pandemic, OIT rose to the challenge delivering innovative IT solutions in record time like the [digital pre-entry screening tool](#) that enables Veterans, caregivers and employees to answer questions on their mobile phones and share their results at VA medical facility entrances.
- The [COVID-19 chatbot](#) reduces center call volume so representatives can help callers with urgent medical needs as quickly as possible.
- OIT also fast-tracked retrofitting the [Garland VA Medical Center](#), a 140-bed capacity shuttered hospital — in a matter of weeks — to treat COVID-19 Veteran patients.
- Digital transformation laid the groundwork for a remote workforce of more than 415,000 employees and contractors, the doubling of gateway bandwidth, quadrupling virtual servers and migration of VA staff to Microsoft Teams — while deploying 199,000 laptops, approximately 11,000 mobile devices and 499 VAVO routers to Veterans Health Administration clinicians.
- Expanded [VA Video Connect](#) systems helped Veterans conduct more than 1.5 million telehealth appointments from their homes or other non-VA sites — a 1,066% surge compared to 2019.

Access the full 2020 Year in Review to view the summary video or learn more about [VA's continuing IT transformation achievements](#) and innovative accomplishments in response to an unprecedented set of COVID19-related challenges.

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