

VA Achieves Critical Milestone in Its Electronic Health Record Modernization Program

July 29, 2019 | Department of Veterans Affairs | [VA Press Release](#)

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently transferred the health records of 23.5 million Veterans to a Cerner Corp. data center, setting the stage for the records to be processed this summer in support of VA's and Department of Defense's (DoD) common electronic health record solution.

This initial data migration phase of VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM), which began in late spring, is an important milestone reflecting the decision to replace Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture (Vista) with the Cerner Millennium EHR solution that powers DoD's Military Health System (MHS GENESIS).

"For decades, VA and DoD have been struggling to achieve interoperability and seamlessly share patient records between our health systems — placing an unfair burden on our Veterans and their families," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "No Veteran, family member or caregiver should have to carry boxes of paper, medical and service records around. This data migration is the first step to solving that problem for good."

To date, over 78 billion records have been compiled from all VA medical centers, accounting for 50 terabytes (equivalent to about 850,000 hours of music) of data storage across 21 clinical areas of patient health records, which includes lab results; pharmacy prescriptions; inpatient and outpatient diagnoses and procedures; and other medical data of both living and deceased Veterans.

New data will move into the Cerner system automatically from Vista in near real time, and then make its way to the Cerner Millennium EHR, which will provide shared access with VA, DoD and community care providers. As future phases are completed, service members' medical records from their years of active duty will reside in one comprehensive EHR.

This modernization effort moves VA one step closer toward achieving an interoperable EHR system that will improve military career transitions and drive better clinical outcomes.

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