

VA's Access to Health Information Grows

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The [Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization \(FEHRM\) program office](#) worked with the Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to expand the joint health information exchange (HIE) by adding the [CommonWell Health Alliance](#) on Oct. 9, providing VA with increased access to community care health information from a growing network of providers. CommonWell brings a nationwide network of more than 15,000 hospitals and clinics to the 46,000 community partners already part of the joint HIE.

The addition of CommonWell to the joint HIE — a data-sharing capability among VA, Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and community partners — increases access to patient information and enhances care for service members, Veterans and their families.

"The CommonWell connection means DOD, VA and USCG providers can access even more information about their patients to make the best care decisions," said FEHRM Director William Tinston. "The FEHRM remains committed to driving federal capabilities, such as the expanded joint HIE, to improve health care delivery regardless of where patients get care."

The joint HIE is a critical element of the Electronic Health Record Modernization program, which integrates the electronic health record systems for active-duty service members and Veterans nationwide. It is the first step toward creating a unified ecosystem where DOD, VA and USCG share a common health record.

Improving the patient experience

Health information exchanges are widely used in the health industry to improve continuity of care, avoid clinical errors and avoid redundant medical tests, improving the cost, quality and safety of patient care. Since its implementation in April 2020, the new joint HIE platform has improved the health care experience for patients receiving care through VA, DOD or their network of community care partners as part of VA's commitment to the MISSION Act.

With this platform in place, patients visiting a new provider will no longer need to repeat the tests, imaging or procedures they have completed at other medical centers, as they will now be accessible from a single system. Patients can rest assured that a more complete set of health records are available to the providers they visit, whether they receive care at a VA medical center or a community care provider.

Benefiting clinicians nationwide

Health care providers are already benefiting from the system and have expressed how access to the joint HIE supports their clinical decision-making and leads to better outcomes for Veterans, service members and their families.

It allows health care providers to see a more complete view of patients' health, helping them make more informed treatment decisions.

The ability to easily gather a patient's past prescriptions, illnesses, radiology results, medical procedures, allergies, immunizations and medical notes allows clinicians to provide safer, higher quality and more advanced continuity of care.

Learn more about the [Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization program office](#).