2019 Midyear Review
Office of Information and Technology

Over the past 6 months, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) have driven aggressive progress toward VA’s Digital Transformation, enabling a seamless, unified Veteran experience.

MISSION Act Success — Standing Shoulder-to-Shoulder with our VHA partners

June 6, 2019 marked a significant date in VA history: the enactment of the Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018, better known as the MISSION Act. This legislation expanded community care options for Veterans who previously faced long drives or wait times, allowing them to seek care from community providers. To determine which Veterans are eligible for community care, VA needed to build a tool that collected information from 11 different programs. OIT worked tirelessly through the first half of 2019 to develop and successfully launch this tool, known as the Decision Support Tool.

VA Makes Progress on Highly Visible Appeals Modernization

Rolling out the new Benefits Appeals Status tool is relieving the burden of VA’s legacy appeals process for over 24 million Veterans. This digital resource improves the Veteran experience by modernizing the claims process, allowing Veterans to see the status of their claim decision, make updates, request additional review, and more, all from a user-friendly, easy-to-navigate website.

Statistics Show Our Multi-Level Cyber Defense Works

VA’s layered defense-in-depth approach to information security protects Veteran data by guarding against inbound threats and other data-exposing incidents. Statistics through May demonstrated 295 million blocked malware attempts and 1.2 billion blocked emails.
New VA.gov Improves Veteran Experience

Beginning in March 2018 and launching a few months later in November, VA redesigned and streamlined the VA.gov site so Veterans can more easily access the information and services they need. Dramatic increases in customer approval and a surge in user engagement followed, so that by February 2019 customer satisfaction increased by more than 20 points.

VA Increases Telehealth Access Through Partnerships with T-Mobile and Verizon

VA’s new partnerships with T-Mobile and Verizon give Veterans mobile access to VA telehealth—for free. Veterans using these mobile network providers can now access VA systems and telehealth resources using VA Video Connect (VVC) via the public internet without being billed for the data used, removing cost barriers for participating and receiving the VA health care they need.

VHA and OIT Partnership Leverages Provider Data to Improve Veteran Care

The release of version 3.0 of VA’s Provider Profile Management System (PPMS) is revolutionizing the ways OIT and VA collect, store, and utilize provider data internally and within the external health care network. PPMS provides a comprehensive repository of partner provider information that’s seamlessly interoperable with VA’s other tools, systems, and applications.

VA Launches New Tool that Streamlines the Process for Veterans to Submit Disability Compensation Claims

Filling out long paper claim forms can be a tedious, frustrating experience. That’s why VA is continually looking to streamline processes for Veterans who apply for VA benefits. In March of this year, VA rolled out an online Disability Compensation Claim Tool to make it more efficient and easier for Veterans to submit disability claims. In the first month alone, Veterans submitted 3,000 benefits compensation claims using this new tool.

VA Piloting Telehealth and Suicide Prevention Program

OIT and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Telehealth Program in Wichita, Kansas, partnered to pilot the VA Video Connect face-to-face video consult tool specializing in mental health. The new video capabilities build on VA’s Telehealth Suicide Prevention Program and provide a high-tech way to help Veterans in distress.
Upgrade Improves Accessibility and Safety for Blind and Visually Impaired Veterans

VA’s new ScripTalk® technology is a state-of-the-art information tool that generates prescription labels a Veteran can hear.

Recent enhancements help the device capture and read longer prescription labels, further reducing accessibility barriers for over 130,000 Veterans in the United States who are legally blind.

Move of My Health eVet to Cloud Brings Many Unseen but Important Benefits for Veterans

My Health eVet’s (MHV) migration to the VA Enterprise Cloud is resulting in improved system reliability and faster response speeds for Veterans. The latest improvements to this online health care information gateway enable OIT to better monitor the MHV system, connections, and applications to identify fine-tuning opportunities to continually improve the user experience.

Benefits Intake API Reaches 900 Weekly Submissions and 30,000 Total

VA’s new Benefits Intake application programming interface (API) is speeding up the submission of Veterans’ claims. The API is built on VA’s Lighthouse API platform, which supports standards-based APIs that are easy to use and facilitate collaboration. APIs connect different systems to each other in a standardized way, similarly to how an electrical wall outlet connects various devices to electricity. APIs give core VA business owners, developers, and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) a standard interface to link to VA’s “wall outlet” to help Veterans connect and send documents quickly and securely to VA. As of June 2019, VA surpassed 30,000 of these digital submissions, first reaching a 900 weekly submission milestone in May.