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Solving the Problem of Exchanging Medical Information between the DoD and the VA

Strategic Interoperability

Executive Overview

This white paper discusses the critical requirements for the U.S. Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) to share Service members' medical records – including real-time access to a complete composite health record – and it proposes an immediate solution via implementation of a health informatics platform. This approach will provide significant and clearly visible results in a matter of months, while positioning the Departments for strategic improvements in the years ahead.

Whereas in the past the frontier of healthcare it was providing access to medical data at the point of care through health information systems (HIS), today the frontier is strategic interoperability. this shift is vital in creating a “ more connected ” care environment in which clinicians provide better care through access to complete up-to-the-minute patient information – and at lower cost due to the elimination of costly duplicate tests and the reduction of medical errors. This evolution is especially pertinent to government healthcare due to:

- Mobility of patients – approximately 60% of DoD and 40% of VA healthcare is provided outside of government facilities by private providers. Thus access to complete information at the point of care requires the ability to consolidate information from multiple facilities through interoperability.
- Expanded data usage – healthcare data is now needed for more purposes than just access at the point of care – for example, analytics and reporting, eligibility and disability processing, health surveillance, patient and clinician gateways, and research. It does not make sense to try to burden an HIS with an ever expanding list of user requirements such as these.

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