Overview

The Office of Connected Care is responsible for the implementation and evaluation of eHealth technologies across the VA healthcare system. eHealth is a model for the delivery and receipt of healthcare services with an expanding evidence base and great potential to increase access and support the transition from episodic to continuous care. In this model, Veterans, their families, and clinical team members use eHealth technologies that support functions (i.e., communication, behavior support, transactions) that are critical to disease prevention and health management, which, in turn, influence behaviors, processes, and outcomes. In an effort to successfully fulfill its mission, the Office of Connected Care is helping fund the eHealth Partnered Evaluation Initiative to support the further implementation of eHealth technologies and to measure their impacts on dimensions of access and other outcomes.

Developed in close consultation with leadership from the Office of Connected Care, the objectives of the eHealth Partnered Evaluation Initiative are to:

- Implement a patient-level “supported adoption intervention” for secure messaging, and evaluate the impact of secure messaging use through a one-year randomized trial;
- Evaluate the initial rollout of “Annie”—VA’s automated telehealth text messaging system—to Veterans and clinical team members; and
- Evaluate VHA’s distribution of telehealth tablets to Veterans with geographic and health-related barriers to in-person care.

The evaluation activities associated with these objectives are guided by the Practical, Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model (PRISM)—a comprehensive model for integrating research findings into practice.
Methodology

Evaluation activities are being conducted at multiple VA facilities and encompass mixed qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. Attributes of particular note include:

- Development of a patient-level supported adoption intervention for secure messaging comprised of theory-driven reminders, motivational messages, and educational materials delivered across multiple channels (mail, telephone, secure messaging, and face-to-face) to encourage and support use of the technology.
- Evaluation of the impact of secure messaging as part of a two-group, patient-level, randomized trial among Veterans who have opted in, but not used secure messaging.
- Development of an augmented implementation strategy for VA's automated telehealth text messaging system through case comparison of high and low adoption sites to identify barriers and facilitators to adoption.
- A pilot randomized evaluation of VA's automated telehealth text messaging system that compares usual implementation to an augmented implementation strategy.

All activities include a focus on access as a multi-dimensional construct for measurement, as well as Veteran and clinical team member experience, healthcare process measures (i.e., impact on utilization—traditional encounters, telephone), and improvements in specific processes of care (e.g., information sharing, treatment adjustments, preventive services, and appropriate consults).

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Operational Partner
The eHealth Partnered Evaluation Initiative is working in close collaboration with the Office of Connected Care.

For More Information
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