

OEF/OIF/OND Veterans' Use of Primary and Specialty Care through Choice

Palo Alto, CA

Overview

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) changed the landscape for Veterans who need health care. Veterans who are provided with Choice Cards can more easily access care that is provided in the community but is paid for by VA ("Fee" or purchased care). For example, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans can use Choice Cards to access primary care closer to home. The primary focus of this QUERI project was to examine OEF/OIF/OND Veterans' use of purchased primary care and primary care provided at VA before and after implementation of the Choice Program.

Objectives

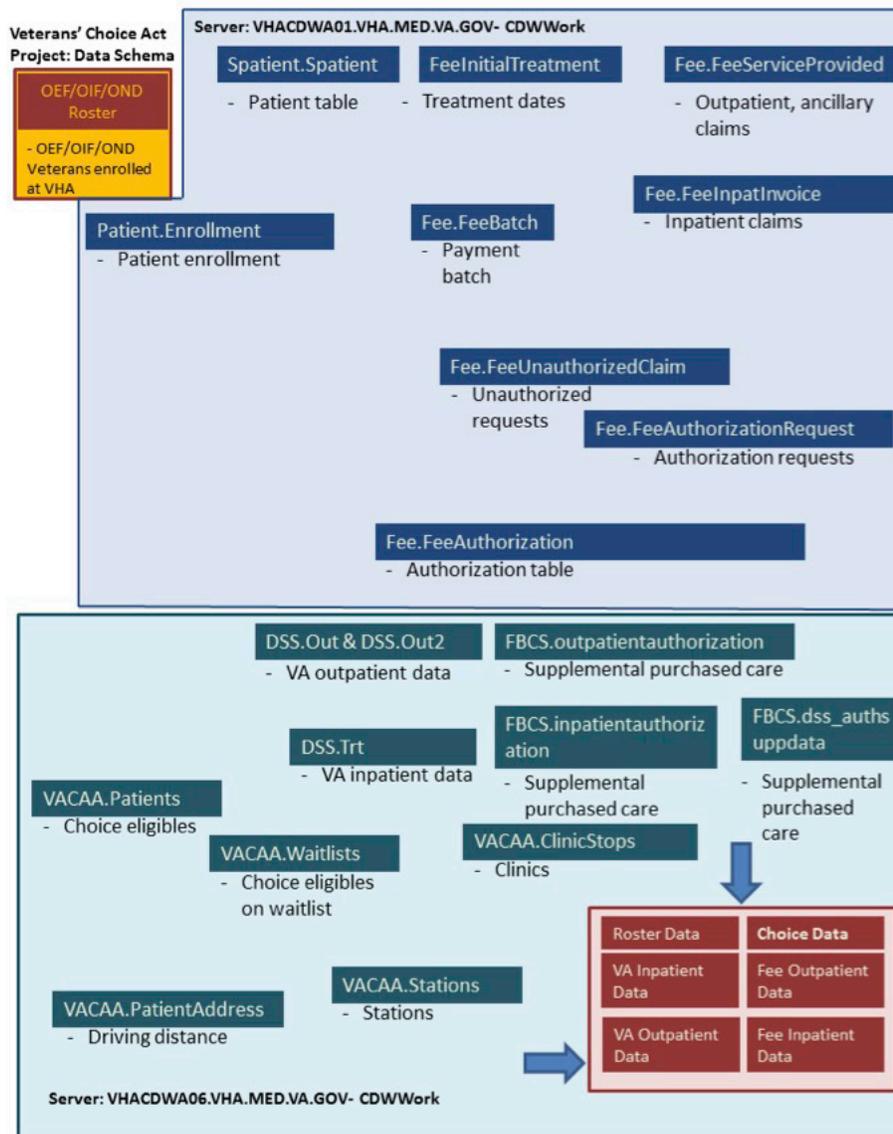
Investigators developed a method to identify Veterans' use of primary care in the purchased care data. Investigators then calculated the relative change in purchased primary care and VA primary care utilization after the Choice Act for a cohort of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans. This preliminary work is guiding future work examining the impact of the Choice Act.

Implementation Strategy

Information about how the investigators created their dataset may be of interest to others looking to study outpatient utilization by Veterans eligible for and using the Veterans Choice Program. In order to create the dataset for their cohort, the investigators linked OEF/OIF/OND Roster data to demographic and healthcare utilization data in VA's Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW). Of key importance, the CDW contains data regarding the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA), including information on those eligible for the Veterans Choice Program, as well as outpatient information, which includes the "category of care" variable. The category of care variable indicates types of outpatient care, including primary care. A summary of the data schema is shown on the reverse side.

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Project Data Schema



Principal Investigators

Todd H. Wagner, PhD
Todd.Wagner@va.gov
 Megan Vanneman, PhD
Megan.Vanneman@va.gov

Operations Partner

VA Clinical Analytics and Reporting