



Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs *Good News*



Volume 2 Issue 1

Welcome to Good News. This Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) newsletter highlights the accomplishments and sharing activities at both the local and national levels.

Senator Akaka visits Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

On Tuesday, October 28, 2008 Senator Daniel Akaka, HI, visited the Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes and the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The primary purpose of this trip was for Senator Akaka to gain a better understanding of the integration efforts of the future Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. As the Senator and his staff were given a brief and tours of both facilities, the focus was on the primary goals of this collaboration; to improve access, patient satisfaction, operational readiness, and the timely delivery of services for both the VA and DoD beneficiaries while improving efficiencies and reducing costs. Senator Akaka expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to learn and understand this major initiative between the two organizations and recognized some of the challenges still remaining, being mindful of the overwhelming benefit of the continued provision of accessible, high quality health care for active duty, their family members, retirees, and veteran patients.

Joint development of Pharmacy Technician Training Programs

In FY 2008, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and DoD Health Executive Council (HEC) Continuing Education and Training Workgroup undertook with the support of a Joint Incentive Fund grant one of the most ambitious collaborative web based training projects launched by a federal entity. This project, which will be completed by the end of FY 2009, is believed to be the largest collaborative Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) conformant web based training effort in the federal system. The result of this collaborative effort will be the deployment of 80 hours of web based instruction for pharmacy technicians in VHA and DoD. The developmental strategies and architecture resulting from this project can be used as a template for large scale development of SCORM conformant training in the future. This collaborative effort has been so collegial and successful that additional large scale projects in areas such as Surgical Technician training are now being proposed. What makes this project so important is not just the creation of a suite of web based pharmacy technician training courses which will accelerate training and result in significant cost avoidance for

both VHA and DoD but also the development of a collaborative model and developmental architecture that can be used for future large scale training development ventures involving two or more federal agencies.

This project is just one of several initiatives undertaken by the Continuing Education and Training Workgroup in FY 2008. The goal of the workgroup is to maximize access to quality in-service training and continuing education to VHA staff and DoD personnel utilizing a minimum of additional resources while maximizing the Return on Investment. Since its inception in FY 2005 the VHA DoD HEC Continuing Education and Training Workgroup has facilitated and managed the sharing of 1,024 training programs between VHA and DoD and has generated a direct cost avoidance of thirty one million dollars. Other projects undertaken by the workgroup in FY2008 will be highlighted in future issues of the newsletter.

VA and DoD Health Information Sharing

On September 30, 2008, using the Bidirectional Health Information Exchange (BHIE), DoD and VA implemented the capability for DoD/VA providers to view family history, social history, other history, and questionnaires in real-time for shared patients among all sites.

First implemented in 2004, BHIE provides a real-time, bidirectional interface between the DoD's electronic health record (EHR), AHLTA, DoD's inpatient documentation system, and the VA's EHR called VistA. Providers in both agencies can access and view allergy information; outpatient pharmacy data; demographic data; inpatient and outpatient laboratory and radiology results; ambulatory encounters/clinical notes; procedures; problem lists; vital sign data; and Theater clinical data, including inpatient notes, outpatient encounters, and ancillary clinical data, such as pharmacy data, allergies, laboratory results, and radiology reports regardless of information location. BHIE is used when a collaborative treatment, healthcare operation, and/or a payment relationship exists for a shared DoD and VA patient population.

To increase the availability of clinical information on a shared patient population, VA and DoD have collaborated to further leverage the BHIE functionality to allow bidirectional access to inpatient documentation from DoD's Essentris System. This capability is now operational at DoD inpatient facilities representing over 50% of DoD inpatient beds. Additional DoD Essentris site deployments are planned for FY 2009 that will raise this number to over 85% of DoD inpatient beds. The Departments currently share inpatient discharge summaries. DoD has also tested the ability to share with VA operative notes, consultations, history and physical reports summary notes, initial evaluation notes, procedure notes, evaluation and management notes, pre-operative evaluation notes, and post-operative evaluation and management notes. VA has this capability operational at one VA site with potential expansion in FY 2009.

For questions please contact the appropriate point of contact below.

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If you have any good news stories and or accomplishments from your local teams, please send them to Maura Brady at maura.brady.ctr@tma.osd.mil and your stories may be included in a future issue of the newsletter.

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