

VAntage Point

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VA Connected Care improves access to care through technology



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Imagine sitting down with your family in a restaurant for a meal together. Everyone is gathered around the table when suddenly, you can't hear your spouse. Your server comes up and you think she is asking you if you'd like to have something to drink — but it's not clear. You can't hear normally and your hearing aid needs to be adjusted. What do you do in that situation?

When this happened recently to a Veteran patient at the Cleveland VAMC, he immediately called his audiologist, Christopher Galizio, who was able to adjust the Veteran's hearing aid remotely through the new Hearing Aid Distance Fitting Application (HADFA). The issue was resolved quickly and essentially at the moment the Veteran was having difficulty, allowing him to get back to his meal with his family.

Now imagine, you live hours away from your primary care provider. It can be difficult to make it to appointments due to scheduling, weather, or other issues. But with Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT), you can now have an appointment with your doctor without worrying about the long drive. CVT allows real-time audio and video streaming between a patient and his VA care team. With CVT, the doctor can examine the patient, see vital sign readings, or listen to the heart beat – all remotely.

“The patient is literally seen by their doctor, but mileage is no longer a concern,” says Michael Deutsch, a lead telehealth technician with VA, and a Veteran himself.

HADFA and CVT are just two examples of digital health innovations being developed and implemented by VA’s Office of Connected Care (<https://connectedcare.va.gov/>), which includes VA Telehealth Services, My HealthVet, VA Mobile and the VHA Innovation Program, to help Veterans access the health care they need in ways that are most convenient for them.

Through two new videos available (<https://connectedcare.va.gov/terms/connected-health/single/What%27s-New>) on the Office of Connected Care website, you can learn more about these technologies, as well as others such as VA Pressure Ulcer Resource, a new mobile app that helps Veterans and their Caregivers with pressure ulcer treatment, and provides them with access to other health resources to help them monitor and maintain their health, MOVE! Coach, an app to help Veterans meet fitness and weight loss goals, and My HealthVet, VA’s personal health record, which allows Veterans secure online access to their health records to help them manage their own care.

Office of Connected Care



This is the intrinsic power of connected care: Veterans can track health information, access their health records, communicate with their care teams, and even get a checkup – all in ways that fit best with their mobility, location and schedules.

“We are seeing that as Veterans use these digital technologies, they are able to take unprecedented ownership for their own health care,” said Dr. Neil Evans, chief officer of Connected Care, “at the same time, providers are able to deliver more patient-centered care. These technologies improve access and communication, enhancing the patient experience, and patient and care team interactions.”

In fiscal year 2015, more than 677,000 Veterans received care through Telehealth, more than 3 million Veteran-users registered for the My HealthVet website, and more than 1.6 million Veterans took advantage of VA secure messaging to communicate with their VA care teams. VA is continuing to work to make sure Connected Care technologies are available to all Veterans across the country.

Visit the Office of Connected Care (<http://connectedcare.va.gov>) to learn more about VA's digital health tools and technologies for Veterans and their care teams, and how the full portfolio of Connected Care technologies can provide a more integrated experience of care for patients.



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