Welcome to the ninth edition of the Department of Defense (DoD)/Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Interagency Program Office’s (IPO) quarterly bulletin, The IPO Bridge! Inside, we highlight our recent accomplishments, activities, and engagements to achieve our overall mission of enhancing health data interoperability. We look forward to continue to support collaboration efforts across the Departments and facilitate information sharing between DoD and VA, as both Departments implement a modernized electronic health record (EHR). With your support, we continue to achieve remarkable milestones, progress towards advancing global health data interoperability, and work to ensure our service members, veterans, and their families receive dynamic, world-class healthcare.

If you have feedback or questions, please contact dhc.ncr.peo-ipx.mbx.ipx@mail.mil.

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VA Signs Contract with Cerner Corporation!

Last month, the VA signed its contract with Cerner Corporation, continuing its efforts to adopt the same EHR as the DoD, with its core consisting of Cerner Millennium, as well as Henry Schein’s Dentrix, a best of breed dental module. Over time, the Departments’ use of a single clinical system will ease the transition of patient health record data and eliminate the need to reconcile and manually or electronically transfer clinical data between the DoD and VA. In light of this, the IPO will continue to serve as a central resource for modernization activities between the Departments, by supporting collaboration efforts, facilitating information sharing between the DoD and VA, and utilizing engagement opportunities between DoD and VA Chief Information Officers and other senior leadership to facilitate future activities relating to EHR modernization. This milestone signifies the VA’s ongoing commitment to ensure a patient-centric healthcare experience, seamless care transitions, and overall improved healthcare delivery. As noted on the VA’s EHRM website, “The EHR will be designed to accommodate aspects of health care delivery that are a high priority and unique to VA, while bringing industry best practices to improve Veteran care.”

U.S. Coast Guard to Implement MHS GENESIS

In April, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) announced it will partner with the Program Executive Office, Defense Healthcare Management Systems (PEO DHMS) to implement the DoD’s EHR, MHS GENESIS, for its clinics and sick bays. A published notice of intent states, “The USCG’s analysis indicated that all of its requirements would be satisfied by the MHS GENESIS solution and that it would achieve the same critical benefits of a single standard solution as DoD and VA; most notably to ensure that every military beneficiary and retiree has access to a single, unified Electronic Health Record.” Program Executive Officer of PEO DHMS, Ms. Stacy Cummings, expressed her excitement over this development, stating, “The work that we’re doing now in DoD will benefit both the Coast Guard and the VA, and as we move forward together, we’re going to be able to make the best decisions for all the partners.” This new partnership signifies the continuous efforts to transform the delivery of healthcare and advance data sharing through a modernized EHR. Click here to read the full notice of intent.

Dr. Thompson’s AAMI Win!

In early April, the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) Foundation honored Dr. Thompson with its prestigious Laufman-Greatbatch Award. This is AAMI’s most prestigious award. Named after two pioneers in the field—Harold Laufman, MD and Wilson Greatbatch, Ph.D.—this highly regarded award honors an individual or group that has made a unique and significant contribution to the advancement of healthcare technology and systems, service, patient care, or patient safety. She is honored for more than 30 years of experience dedicated to advancing health information technology and the impact she makes through her leadership of the IPO to improve health data interoperability between the DoD, VA, and private sector partners. Click here to learn more.

IPO Hosts ONC Coordination Session

The IPO continues its collaboration with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to ensure the seamless integration of health data between the two Departments and private healthcare providers. In April, the IPO hosted the quarterly ONC Coordination Session, a forum to exchange information, engage in activities, and provide updates on the IPO’s efforts with the DoD, VA, and ONC to extend interoperability. Dr. Thompson gave opening remarks, discussing the importance of collaboration between the IPO and ONC. Director of Standards Implementation and Testing for ONC, Mr. John Snyder, gave updates on the U.S. Core Data for Interoperability and the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement, an agreement which defines standards and goals for interoperability as required by the 21st Century Cures Act.
This month, Dr. Thompson attended the 2018 FedHealth IT Innovation Awards and Networking Event and served as a keynote speaker during a panel discussion titled, “Leading for Impact in Federal Health IT.” The event brought together over 300 senior Federal Health IT executives from industry and government and recognized federal health innovation, technology, and consulting sector programs nominated by their peers for driving innovation and results. The panelists included leaders from the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Veterans Health Administration. They discussed the importance of “leading for impact” within each organization and driving positive disruption and innovation.

**FedHealth IT 2018 Innovation Awards**

Dr. Thompson discusses leading for impact while serving as a keynote panelist alongside senior leaders from government.

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**Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work® Day!**

In April, the IPO, along with other program management offices of PEO DHMS, hosted activities in honor of Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work® Day. Originally founded by Gloria Steinem and the Ms. Foundation for Women in 1993, this year the event marked its 25th anniversary of inspiring young dreamers. PEO DHMS participated in the event by allowing staff to share their daily activities as part of the organization with their children. Dr. Thompson and Dr. Rippen provided an IPO overview to the participants, staff hosted a coloring activity, and the IPO’s Chief Medical Informatics Officer (CMIO), Dr. Norman Stone, gave a special presentation sharing an x-ray and providing a brief lesson on fractures. Click here to learn more about this great event.

**DoD’s NCR Positive Spirit Award**

The IPO congratulates Mr. Charles “Jay” McCloud, the IPO’s Interoperability Process Lead and Chief of the Joint Modernization and Interoperability Hub, as the recipient of the 2018 DoD National Capital Region Public Service Recognition Week Positive Spirit Award. This award recognizes an individual who consistently demonstrates sincere cooperation, positive attitude, and an exceptional willingness to assist others, while improving morale through desirable and feasible personnel services that increase productivity.

**The Journey of Interoperability**

In May, the IPO hosted the DoD/VA Industry Interoperability Roundtable, “The Journey of Interoperability,” discussing the current capabilities and future state of healthcare information technology possibilities, highlighting the Departments’ continued need to collaborate with external partners to ensure our EHR capabilities serve the unique needs of those in uniform. The event also provided an overview and demonstration of the Joint Legacy Viewer and served the unique needs of those in uniform. The event also provided an overview and demonstration of the Joint Legacy Viewer and facilitated an in-depth discussion on evolving standards to enable health information exchange. Chief Health Information Officer of Intermountain Healthcare®, Dr. Vivek Reddy, discussed Cerner’s implementation best practices and lessons learned. Dr. Thompson and Dr. Rippen both delivered remarks, emphasizing the importance of expanding these collaborative relationships to enhance health data interoperability for the benefit of our service members, veterans, and their families.

**Meet Our Staff – Lt. Col. Norman Stone**

Lt. Col. Stone serves as the IPO’s CMIO. In this role, he provides a clinical perspective on the strategy and development of medical information systems, with an emphasis on health data interoperability systems and technologies. He works with stakeholders in the DoD, VA, and partner organizations to advance modernization efforts and health data interoperability enhancements. Along with his role at the IPO, Lt. Col. Stone serves as a Staff Orthopaedic Surgeon for the U.S. Air Force, treating a variety of musculoskeletal conditions and trauma. Thank you, Dr. Stone, for your hard work and dedication!

If you would like to contribute to The IPO Bridge, please contact dha.ncr.peo-ipo.mbx.ipo@mail.mil.