

ENTERPRISE ROLLOUT AT THE NATION'S LARGEST HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

PATIENT SELF-SERVICE AT THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS DRIVERS

Veterans Point of Service Initiative

Veterans Point of Service (VPS) is a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) initiative that provides Veterans with convenient control of their own health information, while streamlining and standardizing basic patient-facing activities at VA medical centers and community-based clinics nationwide.

The VA's goal was to procure and deploy an enterprise commercial self-service platform (hardware, software, and services) to VA health facilities throughout the US and its territories. As the result of a competitive RFP process, Vecna was selected to implement VetLink in 2009 as part of an initiative to gain efficiencies in patient workflow.

Prior to using VetLink, the preregistration processes at VA medical centers were manual, resulting in concerns around patient queues and patient information accuracy.

At full deployment to the 154 VA medical centers and hundreds of community-based outpatient clinics associated with these medical centers, the organization installed 6,000 VetLink kiosks serving 9 million patients.



VA |  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- 1245 healthcare facilities, including 170 medical centers and 1065 outpatient sites
- Serving 9 million patients annually
- Annual budget of \$68 Billion

“

We are firm believers that business needs should drive technology. We're definitely taking a bottom-up approach, listening to requirements arising from business needs from front-line staff in the field then identifying innovative technologies and solutions that meet them.”

Mike Davis
Director, Veterans Point of Service
Veterans Administration

SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

Project Methodology

The 1,245 VA health facilities are separated into 21 geographical regions known as Veterans Integrated Service Networks, or VISNs. To handle the implementation for a project of this scale, the VPS roll-out was coordinated by VISN over three years. The following activities were orchestrated by region:

Site Assessment: A small team from Vecna visited each location within a VISN to observe clinic workflow, patient visit volume, and to determine kiosk placement in relation to HIPAA requirements, facility foot traffic, and privacy.

Network Preparation: Facility managers installed network and power drops in each clinic based on site assessment kiosk placement recommendations.

Software Deployment: The VA selected a locally hosted solution due to government security policies. A regional OI&T team coordinated with the IT team at each site to install the operating system on the server and testing network ports. Once tested, Vecna deployed the VetLink solution.

Installation and Training: Vecna deployment specialists visited each site to install hardware, configure software, and conduct train-the-trainer sessions and desk-side coaching.

By using this methodology, the VA went live at up to 4 sites per week. Together with the cooperation of VA site leads, Vecna rolled out enterprise software and 6,000 devices to 152 VA Medical Centers and 708 Community Based Outpatient Clinics to 50 states and five US territories.

Tips and Tricks

An enterprise healthcare solution is often spread across diverse landscapes.

Rural sites are subject to poor network connections. For the VA's locally hosted solution, Vecna factored in extra time to load the application on the kiosks.

Large sites have many associated clinics. It's important to install the solution at a pilot clinic within the hospital to train a core team. These staff members then become early adopters, advocates, subject matter experts, and valuable resources over the course of the roll-out.

Scaling Up

The VA initially went live with limited functionality. The solution included express check-in for onsite registration, and demographics updates. To enable this functionality, VetLink integrated with VistA, the VA's EMR system, with real-time bidirectional interfaces.

Shortly after the deployment was complete, and initial return on investment realized, the VA opted to turn on additional functionality. Because the integration was already complete, Vecna enabled waiting room management and electronic forms remotely, and conducted training via webinars.

“ **We have a happier veteran population.**

There are no delays at registration. And we've seen a 95% to 97% satisfaction rate with the kiosks. Patients find them easy to use.”

Christine Fuoss
Chief of Health Information Services, VISN 4

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Success Metrics

VetLink is responsible for checking in over 75% of all VA appointments – or almost 4,000,000 appointments per month – and in its first five years, has saved the Veterans Administration nearly **half a billion dollars**.

The benefits of the VetLink system include:

- 253,000 demographic updates monthly
- 59,000 insurance discrepancies identified monthly
- 21% patient contact info changes
- 42% patient email address changes
- Check-in reduced from 10 to 2.5 minutes
- 35% answers to meaningful use demographics questions

According to Forrester, the VA achieved 110% ROI over 2 years (Forrester, Total Economic Impact Study, 2014).

Adoption

The VetLink solution is used daily by 73,000 staff users and processes 4 million patient check-ins per month.

Administrators report high patient utilization rates of the VetLink kiosks, with one site reporting rates as high as 90%.

One site that had VetLink for at least two years noted that patient utilization rates were initially at 40%. It saw an incremental rise in kiosk use as a result of hiring medical support assistance and gathering volunteers to assist in kiosk usage.

Another site noted that its preregistration rates went up from 33% to 90% with its deployment of VetLink.

4,000,000
patient
interactions
per month

2.5 minute
check-in time

110%
ROI over
two years

**\$500
million**
saved over
five years



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