



ISSUE BRIEF: ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION

The Situation

- The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Office of Information Technology provides day-to-day support and development for all of VA's information technology (IT) needs, including those of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).
- In 1994, the VA created the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA), which is currently used to sustain the needs of patient care. After almost three decades, the system is no longer able to meet VA's needs for patient care and is not interoperable with other public and private health systems.
- In 2018, VA awarded Cerner Corporation a 10-year, \$16 billion contract to convert VA's VistA electronic health record system to Cerner's MHS Genesis platform. In June 2022, Oracle Corporation acquired Cerner, and became Oracle Cerner, and is working to complete VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) transition.

The Challenge

- Efforts to incorporate VA's VistA system into a commercial system to aid interoperability, which would allow enhanced communication between VA and others, have encountered significant problems causing patient safety issues, cost over-runs, implementation delays and user dissatisfaction.

The Solution

- VA must continue modernizing its information systems to make them more interoperable with other care systems and aid in the exchange of information between VA, its Community Care Network and with veterans, which is critical to successfully developing an integrated health care network.
- VA must continue to support its current EHR system—VistA—until the conversion is complete, to maintain and provide safe, uninterrupted and timely patient care.
- Congress must continue to oversee the implementation of VA's new EHR system to ensure that veterans' health and safety remain paramount, employees receive the appropriate training and can use the system easily and accurately, and that its implementation is within budget and timely.