Transforming veterans' healthcare: Driving innovation and efficiency at the VA

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Leaning into the future: Addressing the challenges of the Veterans Health Administration system

As the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) looks to the future, it is faced with challenges from a variety of directions that will spur the need for innovation in the way that patient care is designed, delivered and managed. Veterans are getting older and as they age, the cost and complexity of the care they need will continue to rise.

Recent legislation such as the [Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act](#) (the PACT Act) and the [Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Care Act](#) (the Dole Act) have added to this challenge, expanding the VA's breadth, scope of services, and the range of patients it serves.

Concurrently, nurses and other clinical staff members are leaving the profession—some suffering burnout and others retiring. Recruitment and training initiatives across the industry are struggling to keep up with the personnel demands.

Budgets are also stretched and all players in the healthcare arena are looking at innovative ways to deliver more care at a lower cost, with technology and innovation seen as the core drivers to ensure sustainable care delivery models into the future.

Navigating workforce and budget challenges, aging patients and old and siloed systems will require the adoption of new technology and new approaches. Reducing technical debt, modernizing systems and bringing healthcare data together to seamlessly connect patients and providers inside the VA health system, in community care, and in the home are imperative for the VA to deliver its mission.

> **"Top 5 future-proof care delivery models, per chief nursing officers"**
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> https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/quality/nursing/top-5-future-proof-delivery-models-per-chief-nursing-officers/

Greater efficiencies in care delivery can be brought by adopting enterprise-wide platforms for medical imaging, virtual nursing, EEG reading and many other types of connected patient data. CGI has experience in delivering regional and provincial vendor neutral archiving systems in Canda and the Nordic countries, centralizing medical imaging to bring efficiencies to imaging across the enterprise. Utilizing AI and machine learning capabilities on these centralized data sets allows for the adoption of new tools and methods that can speed up diagnosis as well as reducing the burden of routine and administrative tasks thru intelligent automation.

CGI, with its global reach and expertise in both the healthcare payer and provider landscape, and our extensive partnership network, brings globally proven best practices to build best-in-breed solutions for VA's unique set of challenges.

Reflecting on the future landscape the VA faces and reviewing the potential impact of legislation, we can identify several areas where the portfolio of capabilities of CGI intersects with the emerging challenges of the agency:

- Improving patient and provider scheduling

- Enhancement of the Veterans Community Care Program

- Advancing value-based healthcare and interoperability

- Supporting remote health and home-based services including mental health

- Expanding telehealth services

- Strengthening oversight and training

Delivering efficiency, innovation and automation

The following examples outline how CGI could partner with the VA to improve patient outcomes, by bringing global best practices to streamline workflows, and support healthcare delivery thorough the adoption of innovative IT services and solutions, enabling the VA to deliver more care to more veterans safely and with less staff.

Improving patient and provider scheduling: Timely access to care is a critical aspect of any health system. Matching patients, technology and a wide range of clinical specialists' availabilities to effectively deliver care across an expansive network of facilities and systems is paramount to maintaining health outcomes and delivering cost-effective care. Patient no-shows, provider conflicts, and ineffective use of resources across geographies add to appointment delays, and overall inefficiencies in the system.

Enabling self-scheduling, employing digital reminders and leveraging artificial intelligence for staff planning and future demand forecasting has been shown to significantly reduce the number of patient no-shows and enable more effective staff utilization at various health systems across the world.

Over the last decade, CGI has built, maintained, and recently re-released the Atlas360 system, built on CGI's Scheduling Platform, which is an integrated suite of services. It provides scheduling, financial and document processing solution for the U.S. Department of State (DOS), enabling the successful planning and delivery of the State department's complex visa scheduling demands.

At State, Atlas360:

- Provides self-scheduling options including appointment information, guidance visibility, date/time scheduling, calendar management, resource management, document delivery and communications
- Delivers 80,000 visa appointments per month
- Provides services to approximately 5 million U.S. visa applicants a year in 72 countries
- Offers support in 39 languages
- Integrates the DOS with federal partner agencies across the Defense, Intelligence, Homeland Security, and other stakeholder communities in a high-trust mission environment

Ensuring effective and timely access to specialty care services is essential for early intervention, which reduces costs while improving patient outcomes. Easy, accurate scheduling is the foundation of that access.

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Enhancement of the Veterans Community Care Program: When veterans' care is outsourced to non-VA providers, it is important that the record of these care episodes is shared seamlessly with VA specialists, to ensure the continuity of care for veterans.

Enabling the capture and integration of medical data across different practices, clinics and geographies is at the heart of CGI Omni360 solution. This patient information system is widely used in several markets, including in Nordic healthcare systems in Finland, to streamline the delivery of care services across multiple agencies.

- Integrates and consolidates patient information to single system and reduces unnecessary duplication of tests
- Provides financial savings to single payer clients through streamlined interoperability
- Provides easier way to process patient data, especially for professionals and patients moving between different clinics across geographies
- Creation of vendor neutral medical image archiving solutions at regional and provincial scale

Advancing value-based healthcare and interoperability: By adopting value-based care models, the VA seeks to enhance the quality of care provided to veterans while optimizing costs.

CGI has successfully supported healthcare payers, providers and other organizations, leveraging emerging technology to build connected healthcare experiences within digital health ecosystems, incorporating data analytics and IT services to support value-based care models.

In that environment, we:

- Deliver value-based care solutions to more than 230 hospital or departments of health, globally
- Serve health plans that cover over 195 million people
- Detect fraudulent claims with our portfolio of solutions, including CGI ProperPay, CGI Hotscan360, and a document validation and verification tool

By engaging with the VA in advancing value-based care models, we can support both cost optimization, fraud waste and abuse alongside advancing patient experiences.

Supporting remote health and home-based services including mental health: The VA, like many health systems, will continue to explore home-based care services as appropriate, given their lower costs and increased patient experience benefits. When healthcare moves from the hospital to the home, a key challenge emerges in the orchestration and management of home care human resources and technologies.

CGI has supported the orchestration of home-based care services through a partnership with Totalmobile delivering measurable operational improvements in housing and social care services in Scotland. This collaboration will be extended across multiple industries in the United Kingdom and Australia, including government, health, and housing, with the aim of better allocating resources and enhancing workforce productivity through digital transformation.

"We are delighted to partner with Totalmobile, bringing the very best of our respective organizations to provide innovation and proven outcomes. Our deployment of Totalmobile to our local authority clients has been transformative, driving operational improvements and productivity gains through digital transformation. We look forward to working with

Totalmobile in partnership across a range of sectors for the benefit of our joint clients and their workforce."

- Tara McGeehan, President of UK & Australia at CGI

Expanding telehealth services in the home: The VA has been a pioneer in the exploration and adoption of telehealth, a trend that is likely to continue as treating patients in the home is both cost effective for the system and advantageous to patients and caregivers. Telehealth is a broad term and covers many different types of care, from routine phone calls to remote patient monitoring. The trend to move more and ever more complex care into the home to be monitored by specialists aided by AI systems, will continue to expand.

Leveraging CGI's expertise in telehealth technology, VA can expand access to care for veterans in rural or underserved areas, reducing the need for in-person visits and improving overall healthcare accessibility. This would:

- Reduce the need for hospital visits
- Improve patient satisfaction
- Free up hospital capacity

Combining remote patient monitoring technologies with AI-assisted providers supports the cost-effective delivery solutions of home-based care solutions.

A recent collaboration between CGI, Delta Wellbeing, Enovation, and Totalmobile in Wales delivered a first-of-its-kind platform solution that enables health and care services to become fully integrated, allowing patients, families, and professionals to work together as one team, enabling a seamless transition between home and hospital services.

Enterprise inpatient telehealth solutions: Alongside treating more patients remotely, the wider adoption of telehealth capabilities in an inpatient setting for the VA can expand capacity creating efficiencies across the enterprise. Technology enabled and AI supported capabilities such as virtual nursing, TeleEEG, centralized monitoring and over the shoulder video specialist support will:

- Extend reach of scarce resources
- Expand workforce availability
- Reduce staffing ratios without impacting care outcomes

However, for these solutions to be most effective the adoption of enterprise-wide platforms that centralize data and standardize approaches are necessary changes to drive maximum efficiencies.

Strengthening oversight and training: Training and workforce development are vital in modern healthcare systems, for maintaining licensing and attracting top talent. Many enterprises are actively looking for innovations in

delivering training programs. Some common innovative efforts include introducing AI assistants or digital coaches, creating training curriculum that is bespoke to each employee as well and actively delivering training in the context of the work as it occurs.

CGI has successfully partnered with a global financial institution (a similar regulatory-complex industry) to implement an enterprise-wide training management solution. This comprehensive system includes a centralized Learning Management System (LMS), customizable training programs, and robust analytics and reporting tools. It provides scalable deployment models and tools to support regulatory compliance.

CGI's innovative approach to workforce development is in alignment with VA's goal of becoming a High Reliability Organization.

Delivering high quality care for those who serve

One of VA Secretary Doug Collins' stated priorities is to "reduce red tape and get things done for those who served." CGI is ready to take on this challenge and fully supports the desire to move fast in support of veterans. To enable speed of action, at our disposal we have a ready-made solution to enable the rapid procurement of technologies in the form of our SBIR contract vehicle.

This unique contracting vehicle enables team CGI to support the VA in the swift deployment of innovative approaches to healthcare automation, addressing the wide spectrum of challenges faced by the VA from scheduling, staffing to telehealth which we outline in this paper.

CGI Federal's capabilities in data analytics, IT infrastructure, program delivery, telehealth, training, and communication align well with the challenges the VA faces in terms of patients, providers and technology. By leveraging CGI's expertise, the VA can improve service delivery, enhance access to care and ensure timely and effective support for veterans. CGI is committed to supporting the VA in its mission to provide high-quality care and cost-effective care and services to those who have served our nation

For more information on how CGI Federal, visit CGI's federal health services webpage at
www.cgi.com/federalhealth.