



CIO Cheat Sheet – Veterans Affairs Telehealth Rule

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been working to better serve our nation's veterans as stated in their mission statement, "to care for he who has borne the battle, his widow and his orphan." One of the ways they are advancing quality of care for veterans is through the expansion of telehealth outside of the traditional VA medical facilities.

The VA has been passionate about executing higher quality and more flexible care through their 'Anywhere to Anywhere' initiative. The VA made the [announcement](#) in May and effective June 11, the VA implemented the rule titled "[Authority of Health Care Providers to Practice Telehealth.](#)" This rule allows VA healthcare providers to administer care to veterans through telehealth and other virtual communications technology regardless of provider and patient locations. Specifically, telehealth care can be provided both across state lines and outside the brick and mortar walls of a physical VA facility. Effectively, this rulemaking allows the VA to provide care by preempting state licensure laws in order to furnish care through telehealth no matter where the patient and provider are located.

Another big improvement that came through the rule was the establishment of the [VA Video Connect](#) phone application. This app has now become the exclusive VA app to help veterans connect with their healthcare providers from anywhere via their personal web-based devices. This is a huge step toward the greater goal of putting patients in control of their care and allows veterans to set up and attend appointments from the comfort of their own home. This is especially important for those who live in rural areas with limited access to physical VA healthcare facilities.

CHIME supported this rule via a [comment letter](#) last October and is happy to see the further growth of telehealth. The use of technology in healthcare delivery allows for greater veteran access to care, choice and flexibility, with the intention of delivering better care.

Just days before the implementation of the new VA rule on telehealth, the president signed the Veterans Affairs Maintaining Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act, otherwise known as the [VA MISSION Act](#). A summary of the law is available [here](#). Among the many ways this law aims to strengthen the efficacy of VA health programs is by seeking to codify the use of telemedicine across state lines for veterans. This strategy originated in the CHIME-supported [VETS Act of 2017](#).