

Funding of Interoperability Initiatives at the Veterans Administration

Summary: There are several interoperability efforts under way at the Veterans Administration, including one in partnership with the Department of Defense. In total, the VA requested almost **\$151.54 million for development and maintenance of health record and health data interoperability projects for fiscal year 2022.**

- Office of Information Technology Health Portfolio
 - Health Data Interoperability Development (\$2.1 million)
 - Health Data Interoperability Operations and Maintenance (\$109 million)
- EHR Interoperability projects (\$22.3 total)
- Joint Health Information Exchange (\$17.9 million)

Office of Information Technology (OIT): Health Portfolio

Health Data Interoperability

(dollars in thousands)	Development	Operations and Maintenance
2020 Actual	\$8,719	\$17,273
2021 Enacted	\$8,423	\$55,178
2022 Budget Request	\$2,125	\$109,207*

*In the FY22 Budget Request, several programs have been realigned to the OIT Health Portfolio which is reflected in the budget increase.

Health Data Interoperability Development

For the FY22 Budget Request, the OIT allocated \$2.1 million for a National Clozapine Coordination project to create a clozapine registry to monitor Absolute Granulocyte Counts (Clozapine is used to treat schizophrenia. Agranulocytosis is a potentially fatal side effect.) There are no other health data interoperability projects proposed for funding.

However, in FY20, the OIT spent \$5.250 million on the development Direct Secure Messaging Phase 3 which is a secure electronic messaging system that allows users at any VA Health Care System nationwide to share patient health information with Community Care Providers.

Health Data Interoperability Operations and Maintenance

The OIT also requests \$109 million for Operations and Management of Health Data Interoperability projects.

Under this account, Health Data Interoperability systems that provide the exchange of Veteran health information between VA and non-VA partners include:

- Joint Longitudinal Viewer (JLV) is a clinical application that provides an integrated, read-only display of health data from the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and private sector partners in a common data viewer.
- Direct Secure Messaging,

- Veterans Authorization and Preferences, and
- Clinical Health Data Repository (CHDR).

Electronic Health Record Modernization

VA is requesting \$1.425 billion for Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) and within that funding **\$22.3 million is allocated for enterprises costs supporting interoperability with the community and DOD.**

“The new EHR solution is being implemented in phases to integrate health records between VA and DOD, that can be shared externally. The departments work together to implement a seamless, interoperable platform that shares the same source of data. In an effort to ensure joint systems satisfy existing and emergent interoperability mandates and guidance, additional funding is required to enhance VA legacy products as well as joint (VA/DOD) shared solutions. These investments will ensure we can perform the upgrades necessary to include engineering, development, application interfaces and system upgrades required to ensure interoperable health data, images and processes are maintained.”

	(dollars in thousands)
2020 Actual	\$23,592
2021 Planned Obligations	\$32,723
2022 Budget Request	\$22,319

VA/DOD Joint Health Information Exchange

The EHRM’s budget request also includes \$17.9 million to fund joint responsibilities between DOD and VA. Part of the VA’s Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) effort, the JHIE connects DOD and VA providers with hundreds of private sector providers and suppliers, representing more than 2,000 hospitals, 8,800 pharmacies, 33,000 clinics, 1,100 labs, 800 federally qualified health centers and 300 nursing homes, to help them make more informed treatment decisions. This single exchange establishes the foundation for integration with the single, common EHR and for future expansion of health information exchange networks

Unfortunately, it does not break out the interoperability funding for JHIE, although the request does break out contract support from the total.

	(dollars in thousands)
2020 Actual	\$4,502 (\$4,442 for contract support)
President’s Budget Request	\$0
2021 Current Estimate	\$17,010 (\$16,500 for contract support)
2022 Budget Request	\$17,885 (\$16,500 for contract support)