

# HIMSS<sup>®</sup>19 CHAMPIONS OF HEALTH UNITE

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interoperability  
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## Current VA/Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE) Approach to Health Record Integration and Availability

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# Conflict of Interest

Joseph R. Nelson, MSA, has no real or apparent conflicts of interest to report.



# Acknowledgements

- Thanks to Margaret Donahue, M.D., Director VHIE and Jonathan Nebeker, M.D., Deputy CMIO
- Work funded by VHA Office of Health Informatics



# Agenda

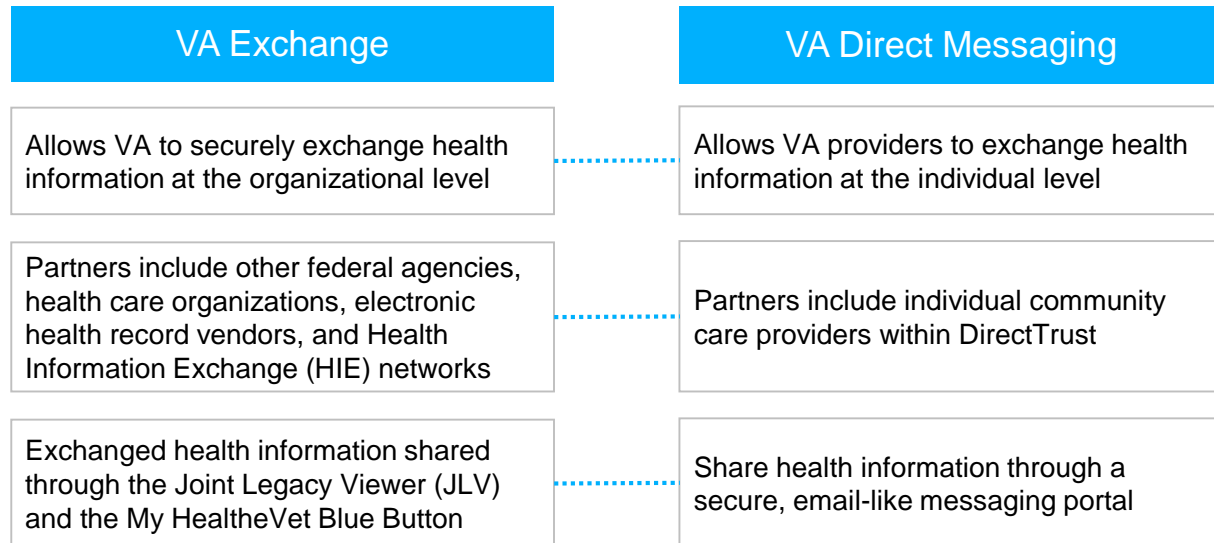
- Veteran Health Information Exchange (VHIE) Overview
- Growth and Progress
- Sharing More VA Health Information (VA Mission Act Section 132)
- VHIE Modernization
- Network Expansion

# Learning Objectives

- Describe the Veteran Health Information Exchange (VHIE) business approach to enable VA to fulfill the requirements of the Maintaining Systems and Strengthening External Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018
  
- Describe VA/VHIE Network Expansion

# How VHIE Provides Interoperability

The VHIE Program works toward seamless care between VA and community care providers through their two main products, *VA Exchange* and *VA Direct Messaging*.

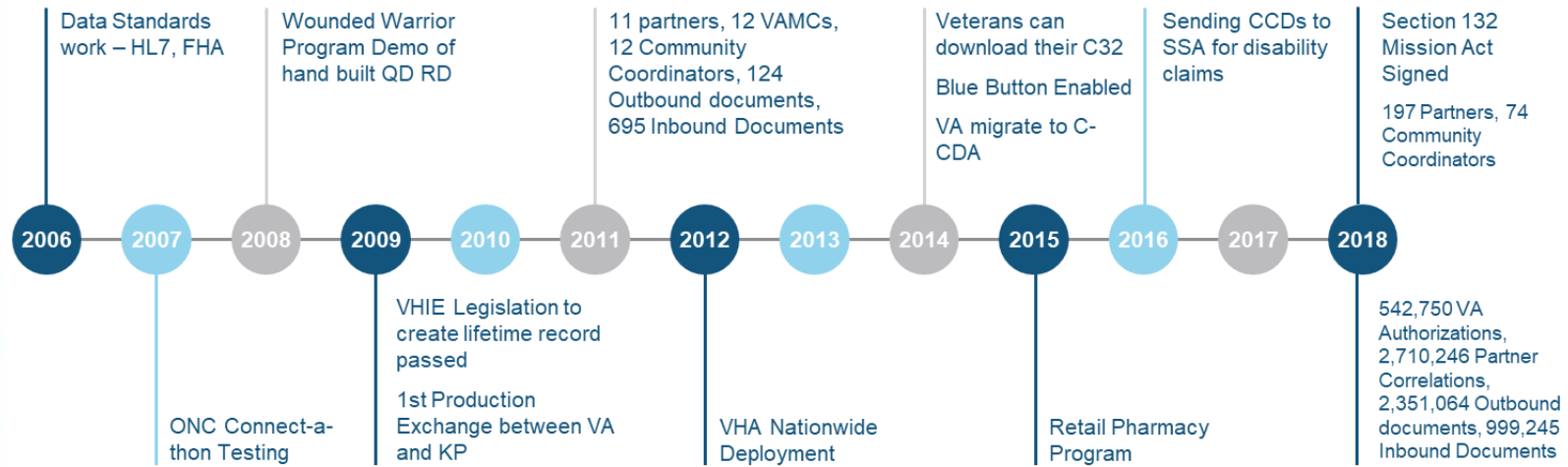


# Timeline: VA Exchange

## Pre-NHIN\*

2006-2008

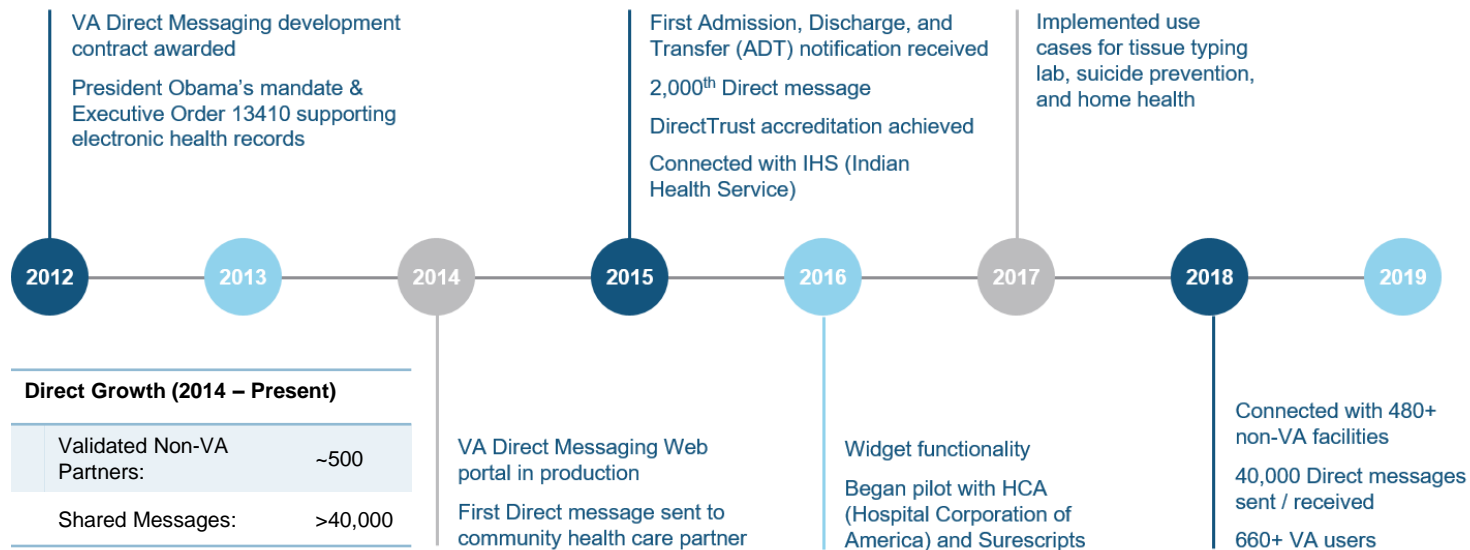
## NwHIN\* Pilots



\*NHIN/NwHIN – Nationwide Health Information Network



# Timeline: VA Direct Messaging



**Direct Growth (2014 – Present)**

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Validated Non-VA Partners: | ~500    |
| Shared Messages:           | >40,000 |

VA Direct Messaging Web portal in production

First Direct message sent to community health care partner

Widget functionality

Began pilot with HCA (Hospital Corporation of America) and Surescripts



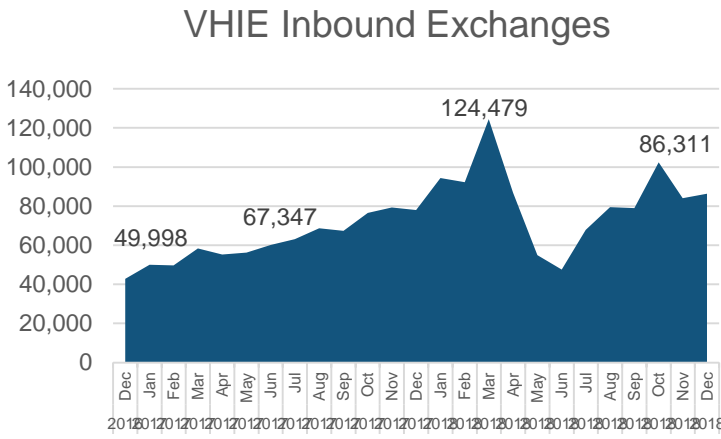
# Growth of VHIE through 2018

Steady growth in # partners, inbound and outbound documents

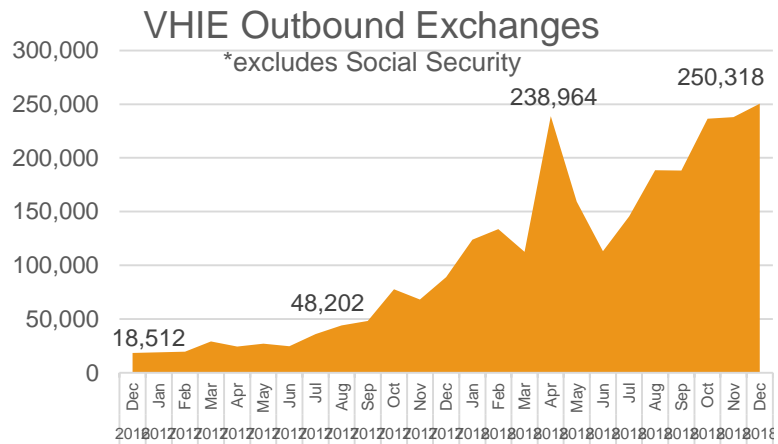


# Rapid Acceleration in the last 24 months

VA Clinicians viewing community health data



Community Health Clinicians viewing VA health data

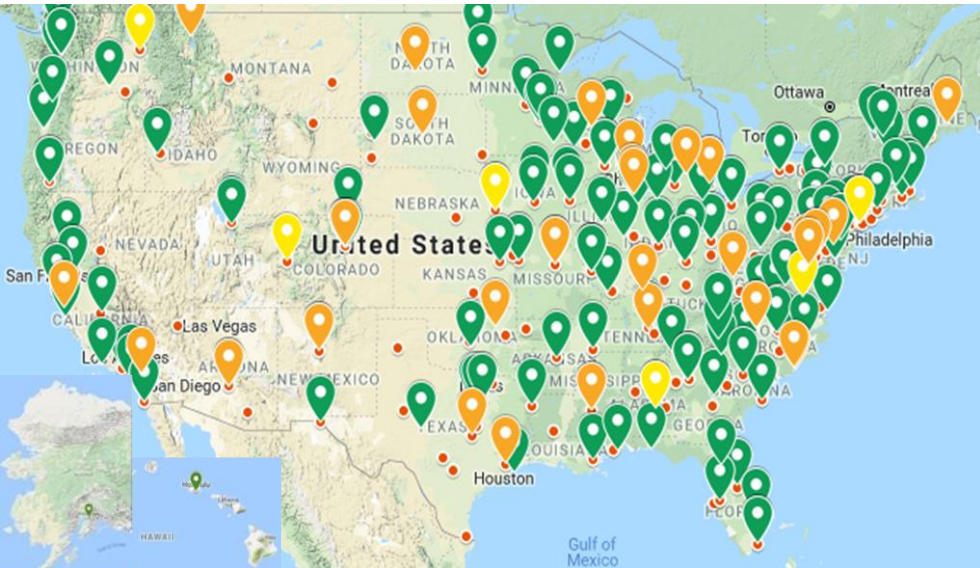


Explosive growth in the last 24 months: 197 partners

\* Have experienced system performance issues since March 2018, leading to an extensive downturn of inbound documents.

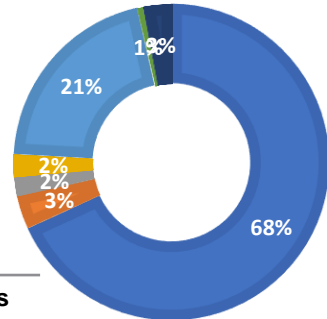
# Exchange - Community Care Partners Nationwide

**Value:** Over **2,710,246** unique Veteran patients supported by bi-directional health information exchange with **197** Community Care Partners that support the following types of healthcare facilities.



## Exchange Partner Demographics

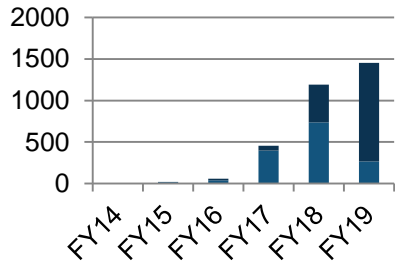
- Clinics - 28,974
- Hospitals - 1,495
- FQHCs - 818
- Labs - 975
- Pharmacies - 8,770
- Nursing Homes - 267
- Other Ancillary Sites - 1,217



# Direct Messaging: Last 60 Months

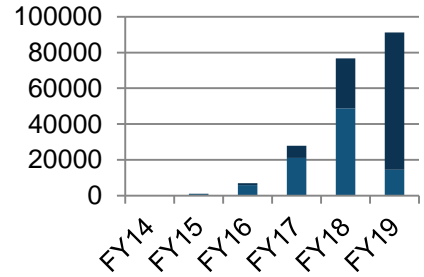
## Connected Community Providers

Total\*: **1,454**     
 New in FY19\*\*: **265**     
 FY19 Goal: **360**



## Total Direct Messages Sent/ Received

Total\*: **91,958**     
 New In FY19\*\*: **14,474**



\* 3/1/14-12/31/18

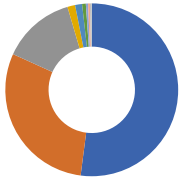
\*\* 10/1/18-12/31/18

Direct Messaging has grown steadily

# Direct Messaging: Validated Partners/Community Care Providers



- Clinic - 757
- Hospital - 432
- LTC/Rehab - 199
- Home Health/ Hospice - 21
- Behavioral Health - 19
- Laboratory - 10
- Pharmacy - 6
- FQHC - 5
- Federal Agency - 3
- Dialysis - 1
- CCP/HISP - 1



📍 VAMCs with Direct Messaging partners     ● VAMCs with no Direct Messaging partners yet     ● Community care partners/ providers connected with VA Direct Messaging

# Sharing More VA Health Information

VA MISSION Act Section 132



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# VA MISSION Act Section 132: Improving Information Sharing with Community Providers

Amends 38 U.S.C. Section 7332(b)(2)

**From** allowing the Secretary to disclose Veterans' protected health information with consent

(H) To a non-Department entity...that provides hospital care or medical services to Veterans as authorized by the Secretary...



**To** allowing the Secretary to disclose Veterans' protected health information without consent

- (H)(i) To a non-Department entity (including private entities and other Federal agencies) for purposes of providing health care, including hospital care medical services and extended care services, to patients or performing other health care-related activities or functions.



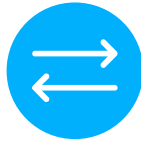


# MISSION Act, Section 132

VA plans to implement an informed Opt Out model for Veteran care consistent with DoD and will be available nationwide June 2019



Section 132 of the MISSION Act streamlines the VA health information sharing with community partners. It removes sharing restrictions between VA and community providers.



VHIE will now be securely sharing Veteran health information electronically with participating community partners (unless the Veteran chooses to not allow VA to share their health information).



This does not create an exception to, or weaken in any manner, the protections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

# Benefits for Veterans

Sharing health information saves time and improves Veteran care. It could even save a Veteran's life. The more information a provider has about a Veteran's medical history, the better. Currently, health care providers can share information\*, such as:



- Prescriptions and medications
- Allergies
- Illnesses
- Laboratory and radiology results
- Immunizations
- Procedures
- Clinical Notes

\* Unless the Veteran chooses to not allow VA to share their health information

# Improved Care Coordination

## How will this affect VA clinicians?

VA and participating VHIE community care providers have access to complete and accurate information about their shared Veteran patients. VHIE shares the right information at the right time with providers to improve patient safety, coordination of care, and continuity of care for our Veterans.



# VHIE's Plan for the MISSION Act

Dramatic Growth

VHIE has grown dramatically. Its usage plays an important role in VA interoperability with community providers and the nation.

Current Products  
Cannot Sustain  
Growth

VHIE's current products cannot meet the needs of the rapid growth that the VHIE program sees and predicts.

Commercial-off-  
the-shelf (COTS)  
Product Solution

A COTS solution will improve VHIE's performance, and will meet the expectations of growth moving forward.



# VHIE Modernization

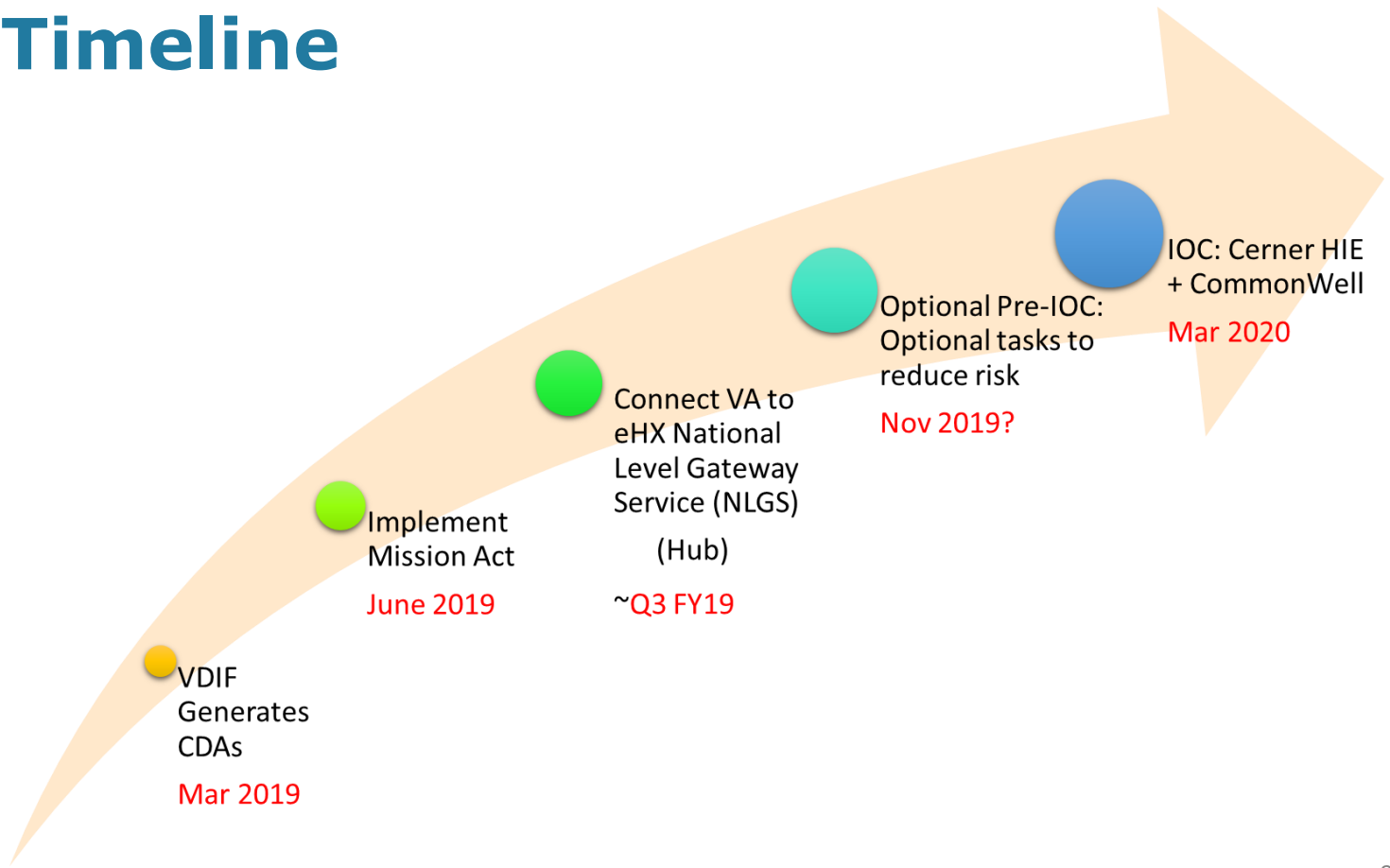
This effort will modernize the VHIE information system and incorporate new policies for information sharing, and supports the following activities:

- Improve performance
- Increase Health Information Exchange rates
- Support Mission Act
- Support future growth and expansion
- Improve Data Quality scalability
- Position VHIE in line with the new Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) transition





# Timeline



# Network Expansion

- We plan to continue engage with eHealth Exchange partners.
- As the eHealth Exchange National Level Gateway Service (NLGS) hub becomes available, we plan to connect to it to optimize our connections.
- As we implement the Cerner HIE, we will enable our CommonWell Connection.
- We plan to connect to Carequality partners and are determining the best path.



# VHIE Web Resources

## Websites

VHIE Program - VA Exchange and VA Direct Messaging [www.va.gov/VLER/](http://www.va.gov/VLER/)

eHealth Exchange Participants

<http://sequoiaproject.org/ehealth-exchange/participants/>

Share Your VA Health Record

<https://youtu.be/lbovgj195JM>

How VA Direct Works video\*

*(Describes the functionality and benefits of VA Direct to Veterans and VA staff)*

<https://youtu.be/mAlKaUy-7ak>



# VHIE Program Office Point of Contacts

| Role   | Name                   | E-mail   | Phone        |
|--|------------------------|--|--------------|
| VHIE Program Director                            | Margaret Donahue, M.D. | <a href="mailto:Margaret.Donahue@va.gov">Margaret.Donahue@va.gov</a>           | 585-208-4660 |
| VHIE-Community Engagement Program Manager        | Joseph Nelson, MSA     | <a href="mailto:Joseph.Nelson@va.gov">Joseph.Nelson@va.gov</a>                 | 412-592-9523 |
| VA Exchange Partner Engagement Program Manager   | Vacant                 | <a href="mailto:vaexchangeinformation@va.gov">vaexchangeinformation@va.gov</a> | N/A          |
| VHIE Business Technology Systems Program Manager | Todd Turner            | <a href="mailto:Todd.Turner@va.gov">Todd.Turner@va.gov</a>                     | 240-494-2876 |
| VA Exchange Team mail group                      | N/A                    | <a href="mailto:vaexchangeinformation@va.gov">vaexchangeinformation@va.gov</a> | N/A          |
| VA Direct Messaging Program Manager              | Glen Crandall          | <a href="mailto:Glen.Crandall@va.gov">Glen.Crandall@va.gov</a>                 | 801-588-5081 |
| VA Direct Messaging Team mail group              | N/A                    | <a href="mailto:VADirectInfo@va.gov">VADirectInfo@va.gov</a>                   | N/A          |



# Questions?

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