

# The VA is rolling out Apple Health Records to its 9 million patients

Zoë LaRock 11-07-2019 - Business Insider

Nearly a year after [announcing](#) a deal was in the works, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Apple have [finished](#) opening up Apple's Health Records to iPhone users among the VA's more than [9 million](#) patients, CNBC reports. Health Records acts as a one-stop shop where users can access and share medical records, lab results, and data extracted from health-tracking apps with multiple providers.



An impressive list of partners link up with Health Records — over 40 health systems and 300 clinics — and this VA team-up will drill Apple's footprint even deeper. The VA is the US' largest integrated care system, operating more than 1,200 facilities, including 170 medical centers.

We know that Apple has been leaning on Health Records to ignite its health play, and the VA's sign-on won't just grant the tech titan access to a bevy of new customers. Approval from a huge, government-led medical system should up Apple's value and send a positive signal to other systems considering integrating Health Records.

Meanwhile, the VA is empowering veterans to take a more active role in sharing health data with providers, which could drive more effective care delivery. Cracking open the line of communication among patients' multiple providers could help the VA save time on scouting out old records as well as slim hefty costs associated with unneeded tests and treatments.

The VA has to contend with a subset of the population that's far more likely to be afflicted by costly chronic conditions: 25% of VA patients

suffer from diabetes compared with 9% of the general population, for example, meaning that the system is shouldering a sizable chunk of the \$237 billion spent on diabetes annually in the US.

Apple's slew of Health Records partnerships suggest its health record strategy is largely hinged on working alongside existing systems, rather than replacing them entirely:

- We think Apple is aiming to transform — rather than disrupt — the electronic health record (EHR) vendor market. Apple's solution serves to boost — not override — traditional medical record software offerings. When Apple tied up with EHR vendor Allscripts in August to get the service to Allscripts' hospital clients, we **posited** that Apple will continue to expand via link-ups with top EHR vendors. And we think Apple will continue to notch up its collaboration efforts in the coming months — but we don't expect it to change its health record strategy drastically: For example, we don't think rumors that Apple could **buy** Epic will come to fruition.
- But Apple isn't alone in this endeavor: Google also aims to address common pain points in the

complex world of EHRs. The search engine giant signaled that it could potentially **augment** clinical workflows by outfitting EHR systems with search functionality that mimics what users have come to expect when they "Google" something, allowing docs to more quickly mine through patient files. This could add some major relief to overburdened physicians, who **spend** over half of their days nose-deep in EHRs.

original article:

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