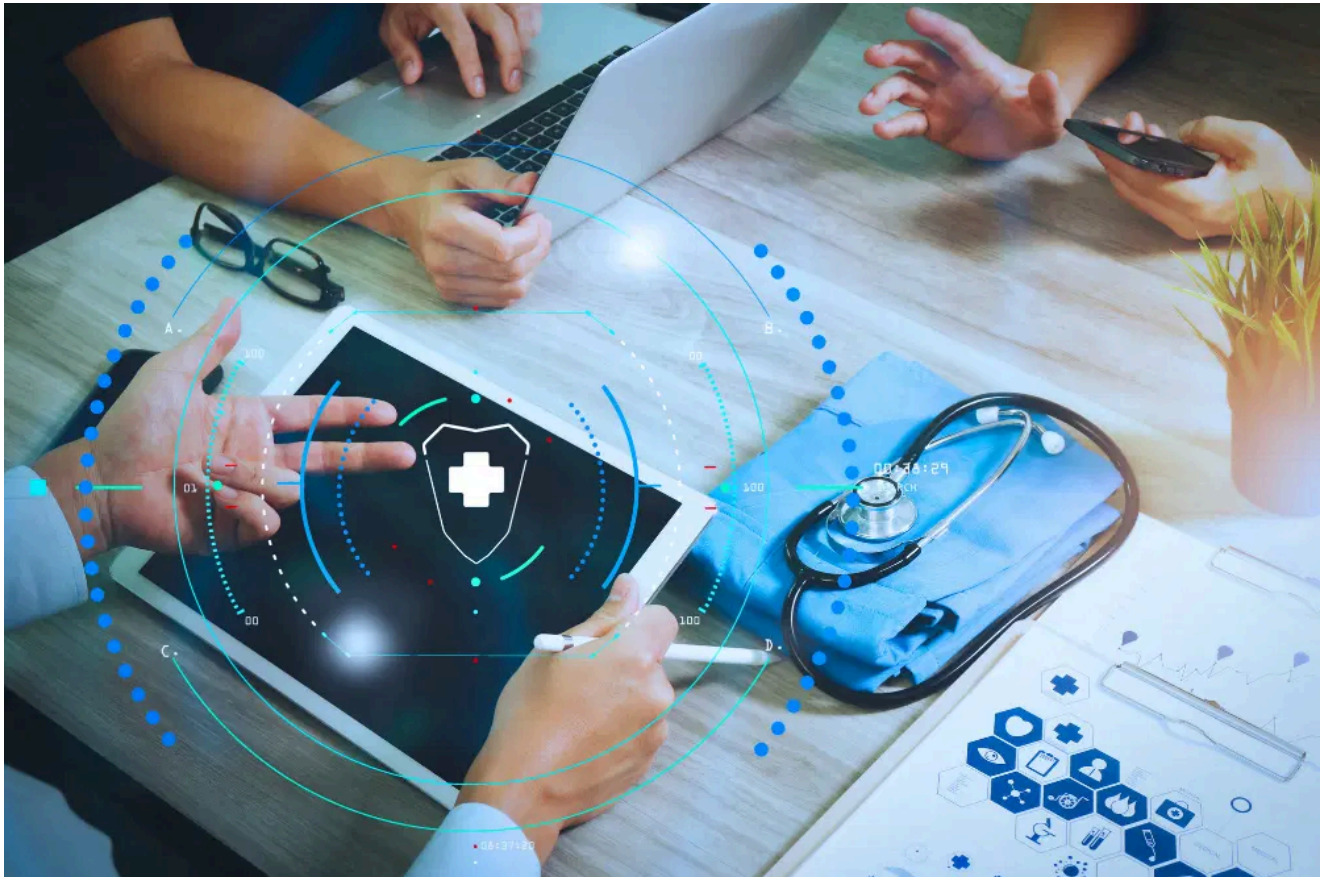


# How Tech is Expanding Care Access and Improving the Health of Military Veterans

HBT [healthcarebusinessstoday.com/tech-expanding-care-health-military-veterans](https://www.healthcarebusinessstoday.com/tech-expanding-care-health-military-veterans)

March 2, 2025



Although it doesn't receive the press coverage it deserves, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Health Administration has been a bold innovator in expanding access to care for decades.

For example, the VA has offered virtual care and remote health monitoring to an estimated 2.4 million Veterans in their homes and other locations since 2003. Similarly, the Veterans Community Care Program was created in 2018 to enable our former service members—particularly the many Veterans living in rural areas—to obtain care from non-Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities. Today, however, that program comprises 40% of the VA's contractual expenses and threatens to impact Veterans' ability to access timely care.

## Care Shifts to the Home

---

To reduce demand for Community Care and VA brick-and-mortar facilities, the VA is actively scaling its highly successful remote patient monitoring/virtual care program, which grew rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the VHA's Office of Connected Care (OCC) announced a \$1-billion program expansion. OCC officials anticipate the need for virtual care services given the large population of older Veterans, particularly those in rural communities. OCC offers healthcare services through telehealth and digital technologies, working in conjunction with the VA's Office of Health Innovation and Learning (OHIL).

Yet how will this healthcare program ensure it avoids the growing pains that other brick-and-mortar programs faced? The answer lies in the technology that will be deployed and how it transforms healthcare delivery from its traditional reactive approach to a proactive and preventive strategy.

However, this technology-enabled, reactive-to-proactive transformation is not unique to the VA. Numerous other leading healthcare institutions are embracing safe and effective data and data-science-driven care to slow the growth of healthcare spending while improving patients' health outcomes and quality of life.

## Following the Four P's

---

The VA's virtual-care expansion embraces the vision of Leroy Hood, MD, PhD, and Nathan Price, PhD, laid out in their seminal book, *The Age of Scientific Wellness*. Hood and Price contend that technological and scientific discovery enables healthcare services and drugs to become more personalized and effective, a trend that will continue for the foreseeable future.

They envision a healthcare system where providers can identify early disease indicators before symptoms appear and then deliver precise treatments to prevent the illness from progressing. Hood and Price believe such a high-functioning healthcare system will follow the "Four Ps": Predictive, Personalized, Preventive and Participatory.

## Data Leading the Way

---

One of the most significant drivers of this shift was the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003. This project kicked off the era of personalized medicine, exploring how genes influence our health. Thanks to recent advances in data analytics technology and AI, researchers and providers can make such discoveries faster and apply that evidence to help prevent disease or design the most effective treatments.

Similarly, the VA will expand care access and improve healthcare quality for Veterans regardless of location through real-time data aggregation and analysis, supported by emerging AI tools. Instead of transforming Veterans' homes into mini-hospitals or doctors' offices, providers will equip them with small, wearable biosensors and ordinary home medical devices, such as blood pressure cuffs and weight scales, to supply the data. Information will be automatically and wirelessly sent to VA-affiliated providers managing the patients.

After analyzing that data, AI technology will determine whether Veterans need support from a live clinician or simply an automated digital "nudge" to take their medications or answer health-related questions, for example. The AI also will notify the provider assigned to that patient of its recommended course of action, which the expert human clinician can review and approve or modify based on her knowledge and experience.

## A New Era for Veterans' Care

---

Continuous data collection and analysis, combined with automated or live clinician outreach, will enable the VA to monitor and proactively manage a population of Veterans cost-effectively. More importantly, by focusing on preventing disease instead of reacting when symptoms emerge, the VA hopes to grow this virtual-first care program to reach up to two-million Veterans in their homes.

As other healthcare organizations witness the VA's transformation, they, too, will embrace Hood's and Price's vision for how care should be, instead of how it is today.



Kent Dicks

Founder and CEO at Life365

Kent Dicks is Founder and CEO of Life365.