



VA Blue Button: Exploring Your Mental Health Notes

Research Fact Sheet

*The VA Blue Button feature offers My HealtheVet users the ability to download their health information. This feature seeks to benefit Veterans by improving the quality and accessibility of their health information so they can more fully participate in their care. **So far, the evidence indicates that for most patients, providing online access to health information is positive.***

My HealtheVet Pilot Program

Between 2000 and 2010, Veterans at nine VA facilities participated in the My HealtheVet Pilot, the first version of VA's personal health record. Over 7,000 Veterans had online access to their clinical notes, discharge summaries, and test results. In a study of VA patients enrolled in the pilot program, patients reported that:

- They found the information available through My HealtheVet was valuable to their health (80%)
- They felt the information helped improve their healthcare (66%)

VA Blue Button Users

VA patients who download their clinical notes from VA Blue Button report that it will help them to:

- Better remember the plan for their care (92%)
- Take better care of themselves (91%)
- Feel more in control of their health care (91%)
- Understand their conditions better (92%)

Interviews with Patients

In 2014, researchers conducted interviews with VA patients in mental health care who have downloaded their progress notes from VA Blue Button. These patients reported that:

- They learn important information about their health and recovery
- They are able to keep track of details related to their health care
- They are able to see their progress over time

A small number of patients report that reading their notes can be stressful or upsetting. These patients may choose to stop reading their notes.

Cromer R, Denneson LM, Pisciotto M, et al. Online access to clinical notes affects patients' trust of mental health clinicians. 2016, under review.

Nazi KM, Turvey CL, Klein DM, et al. VA OpenNotes: Exploring the experiences of early patient adopters with access to clinical notes. J Am Med Inform Assoc. 2015; 22:380-389

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