

## [Military Legacy Health Systems Update Their Services](#)

Major advances include automated appointment reminders and online prescription refills.

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While the focus at DHITS 2019 was on the rollout for MHS Genesis (the Defense Health Agency's new electronic health record), advances to existing health care services were also on display. DHA has updated TRICARE Online (TOL), for example, to include several services that provide active-duty service members, veterans and their families with 24/7 access to care and online health services.

One particularly successful service has been providing email reminders for doctor's appointments, said TRICARE Online Project Manager Jim Copeland. TOL now includes an automated appointment request and reminder system as part of the patient portal, where beneficiaries can enter as many email addresses as they'd like to receive reminders ahead of their appointment. Not only have the automated requests and reminders helped to lower administrative costs, said Copeland, but also have led to a drastic reduction in the number of missed appointments.

One audience member, who is registered with TRICARE, agreed and said that it takes him a fraction of the time to schedule an appointment online than it did when he had to schedule doctors' visits by phone.

Additionally, beneficiaries can now request prescription refills through the TOL portal, resulting in a 700% increase in weekly prescription refills through TOL. Other benefits include a secure instant messaging app where patients can speak to a registered nurse and get advice on treatment. Taken together, these advances are increasing beneficiary participation in TRICARE and their access to the full range of services TOL offers, leading to improved satisfaction with the system.

Recent advancements to the system facilitate aggregation of health record information across systems and teams, said the program manager for the Health Artifacts and Image Management Solution at DHA, Brenda Stevens. In particular, the advancements will make it easier for beneficiaries to transfer their health records from DHA to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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