

Audio Transcription

Season /Episode #:	Season 1 Episode 8
Guest:	Dr. Dennis Oh, Dr. Helen Hoenig, Dr. Desiree Oliveros, Dr. Farrukh Merchant, Dr. Kathleen Holst, Margaret Leas, Karen Lines, Dr. Adeola Oke, Jennifer Davis-Diaz, Brenda Ashley
Title:	My VA Images technology features and expansion / A Dynamic Conversation with VISN 22 Clinical Resource Hub (CRH) Primary Care Team

Doctor Maia Carter	Hello, my name is Doctor Maya Carter, and welcome to Let's Talk Virtual Care podcast episode eight, Doctor Dennis Oh, Doctor Helen Hoenig and Doctor Desiree Oliveros discuss my VA image technology, features and expansion. Each episode unpacks key approaches for operationalizing virtual care from exceptional VA staff and health care innovators. You will gain valuable and timely insights for the mobilization of virtual tools for veteran health and well-being.
Doctor Maia Carter	This blog was produced by the Office of Primary Care Virtual Care Integration Team. Joining me is Doctor Dennis Oh, co-lead, a dermatology office of connected Care and assistant chief of dermatology at San Francisco, VA. Also, Doctor Helen Hoenig, who is rehabilitation and extended care lead, and Durham, North Carolina, and also professor of medicine and geriatrics at Duke University.
Doctor Maia Carter	Both are trailblazers and pioneers of My VA Images. Lastly, I have Doctor Desiree Oliveros, who is a front-line primary care physician, a virtual care champion and early adopter of My VA Images, and Hoffman Estate clerk in Illinois. I am so thrilled to have this conversation with the three of you to learn more about My VA Images. So, let's jump in.
Doctor Maia Carter	Doctor Oh, let's start with you. Please describe My VA Images. Let us know what it is and also the functionality with Cerner.
Doctor Dennis Oh	My VA images is a patient facing app that VA health care providers can ask veterans to use to share photos and videos of themselves. So, it's an important new option for store and forward telehealth with patients who are at home. It's important to know that patients can only use my images if a VA provider initiates the process. It also allows the patient to read the provider's findings and instructions, and it lets the provider save patient submitted data along with the clinic note in Vista.
Doctor Dennis Oh	So, my VA images is highly integrated into the patient care process and can supplement and even replace an in-person care encounter. It will

	work for sites with Cerner, though it can't yet save data or documentation discernment. Tele rheumatology is an obvious application for my VA images. The app has a tele dermatology pathway that asks patients skin specific health history questions and, guides them to take photos of specified skin sites.
Doctor Dennis Oh	But providers can also place requests for patients to submit photos or videos of other subjects relevant to other medical specialties.
Doctor Maia Carter	Great. Sounds like a very veteran centric value-added tool. Doctor Hoenig, could you please discuss with us the My VA image evolution and expansion over time?
Doctor Helen Hoenig	Sure. My VA Images, photo and video functions originally rose independently, but eventually were combined with the tele dermatology function. My VA images, photo and video arose out of research on Tele rehabilitation, where we found that the remote therapists routinely referred to store and forward videos to supplement the live video visits. So, we asked Office of Connected Care about developing a HIPAA compliant way to have store and forward images, sent in by patients.
Doctor Helen Hoenig	And they agreed, uses a photo and video in addition to its initial rehabilitation focus have expanded greatly to include use by podiatry, post-op bariatric surgery, amputation, dental, creative arts therapy, methadone maintenance, wound care, and primary care. It's so exciting.
Doctor Maia Carter	Well, it's just wonderful to see how well My VA Images can be spread across so many different disciplines across the enterprise. So, Doctor Oliveros you're a virtual care champion for primary care. Can you discuss with us what that is and what that means?
Doctor Desiree Oliveros	Sure. As a virtual care champion, I can engage early with new tech. So, this is exciting, especially if it has the potential to make our jobs easier. I get to participate in testing this, and most importantly, I get to be a voice for my colleagues in the development of my primary care workflow for My VA Images.
Doctor Maia Carter	We're so excited that you're working on the front line here with my VA images, and helping to make this, an experience for the end user that's favorable. Fantastic. Doctor Oh, can you please explain, tele dermatology workflow and how that works with My VA Images?

Doctor Dennis Oh	Yes. So, my VA images has been used by dermatologists to follow up with their existing patients in the past. But recently, we've also made it possible for the app to be integrated as part of VA standard consultative asynchronous tele dermatology process. So, patients with skin problems referred by primary care and not previously evaluated by dermatology can now be cared for at home as well.
Doctor Dennis Oh	This process leverages VA tele dermatology images to identify eligible patients and convert a standard in-person tele dermatology imaging consult into a My VA Images request.
Doctor Maia Carter	A fantastic. So, Doctor Hoenig, can you share some more details about the workflow for My VA Images and some of its features?
Doctor Helen Hoenig	Absolutely. Other providers can be specified on the request and they too will get all the image notifications. Images can be reviewed by any provider in CPRS Vista imaging on joint legacy viewer or in Virtual Care Manager. So, you can alert providers of images via consult teams or secure email images saved to CPRS are linked to a related progress note.
Doctor Helen Hoenig	It can be identified in that way as well by adding someone as a cosigner, for example. We can ask about using my VA VA Images versus My healthe vet for photos. My healthe Vet is very convenient, and anyone that has sent you a My healthe Vet message can use My VA Images. but My healthe Vet is more limited than my VA images, which has a guided workflow to help the patient and provider to get good images, to do documentation, and to get workload.
Doctor Helen Hoenig	Most importantly, My VA Images allows images to be saved to the medical record and in VCM where images can be sorted in viewed by any provider in the facility. You can use My VA Images collaboratively with your treatment team. Your packed R.N. can enter requests. It can be useful for obtaining information from outside providers. for example, events outside a scheduled visit, like when the home health nurses there.
Doctor Maia Carter	Wow. That's great. I love how the images can be integrated into electronic medical record and where so many different, disciplines can view the image. That's fantastic. And it sounds like this is an upgrade from our existing, resources. Fantastic. So, Doctor Oliveros, as a virtual care champion for primary care, what do you see as the benefit of My VA Images for the primary care teams?

Doctor Desiree Oliveros	So, a picture is worth a thousand words, and the PCP can use this to manage a myriad of common images like rashes, wounds, abnormal gait, sleep patterns, even our PACT nurses can engage in this and use this tool. They can request from the veteran photos of, pillbox models they have at home, or videos of themselves using a glucometer or a caregiver giving them insulin.
Doctor Desiree Oliveros	So, this allows us to care for our veterans regardless of where they are. I've used this for a veteran who, cannot come to the clinics because they could not get out of work, and another one who was out of town.
Doctor Maia Carter	Well, I love those case scenarios. So, Doctor Oliveros, what do you think are the key elements for this product to be successful? As far as, receiving optimal adoption across the primary care services in the VA?
Doctor Desiree Oliveros	Well, efficiency and ease are key to the success of any primary care tool, and there are continuous efforts to customize this for primary care. I am happy to say that from my experience, not a lot of training is needed to use this, so we can start using this immediately. Requirements are not much at all. The PCP just needs a virtual care manager access and a store and forward telehealth clinic location.
Doctor Desiree Oliveros	For the veteran, they just need a smart device and a premium My health Vet account. That's it.
Doctor Maia Carter	Oh, great. Fantastic. It just sounds like a very value-added tool for both the end users of, clinicians as well as the veterans, and is really providing so much data and information. And I'm going to close with a topic that's really important to me and that's joy. I believe that when we do things that bring us joy, we're better for ourselves and those around us.
Doctor Maia Carter	So, what brings me joy is anything to do with music and movement. I love exercising, I love African dance class and really is my happy space. So, I'm going to start with you, Doctor Oh. What brings you joy?
Doctor Dennis Oh	Well, I love designing and building things. Everything from home improvement projects, big and small, to the collaborative and creative process that, we've had, in designing My VA Images.
Doctor Maia Carter	Awesome. Love that. Doctor Hoenig, what about you?

Doctor Helen Hoenig	I love cooking and gardening. And honestly, it's part of reason I'm so passionate about my images. Health occurs in the home, and the better we can understand the patients functioning in the home, the better we can help them to achieve, their optimum health.
Doctor Maia Carter	Doctor Oliveros what brings you joy?
Doctor Desiree Oliveros	Oh, walking and adventures. So regular treadmill time and experiencing places I've never been to before. Give me joy. So, experiencing new things.
Doctor Maia Carter	New adventures and exciting. Awesome. Well, thank you for this delightful conversation. I think this is going to be value added for the field and let's stay connected. Joining us now is a dynamic conversation with network 22 Clinical Resource Hub Primary Care Team. We are joined by VISN 22 Primary Care Clinical Resource Hub team that services the Stafford Primary Care Outpatient Clinic.
Doctor Maia Carter	This clinic is located in a very rural area. Today joining us is primary care physicians Doctor Farrukh Merchant and doctor Kathleen Holst. Also, clinical pharmacies doctor Adeola Oke, R.N., care managers Karen Lines, and Margaret Leas, LPN. Jennifer Davis, DDS and administrative associate Brenda Ashley. I am elated to have this conversation today with all of you regarding Clinical Resource Hub.
Doctor Maia Carter	So, let's jump in. Doctor Merchant, let's start with you. Help us understand clinical resource Hub. What is it exactly?
Doctor Farrukh Merchant	Thank you, Doctor Carter. Clinical Resource Hubs are VA regional repositories of clinical staff who provide virtual care to veterans. We support VA sites that are experiencing delays in care, staff shortages or lack services. Sites that need us are call spoke sites. These sites may experience staff challenges due to retirement or extended leave. Some of our spoke sites need us because they're in rural, hard to recruit areas.
Doctor Farrukh Merchant	Our hubs vision is to optimize health care delivery through efficient use of resources and innovative technologies. Our mission is to enhance VA experience and wellness by providing access to high quality, team-based care. Our teams include physicians, nurses, clinical pharmacists,

	psychologists, social workers, and medical front office staff. And because we are virtual, we can recruit the best staff in the country.
Doctor Farrukh Merchant	Our local hub is currently caring for over 8000 veterans across California, Arizona and New Mexico. If we weren't there, our veterans would either get delayed care, suboptimal care, or worst of all, no care. There used to be a day when our teams had to convince our patients to accept virtual care. But nowadays, veterans have found it so easy.
Doctor Farrukh Merchant	They prefer it. At the VA, Virtual care helps provide care to our nation's most vulnerable veterans, and we believe there's no limits to the care we can provide through virtual medicine.
Doctor Maia Carter	It sounds like a real game changer for answering staffing gaps with great, optimal staff. Fantastic. So, Doctor Holst, can you share with us how you can impact a Veteran's health when you're physically miles away? What does that look like?
Doctor Kathleen Holst	Thank you, Doctor Carter. I covered the clinic out of state. Seeing patients over clinical video telehealth. I utilize equipment such as a digital stethoscope, otoscope, and high-definition camera, along with the nursing staff to perform physical exams. Recently, we were able to care for an elderly veteran who presented with worsening fatigue. I examined and EKG over secured email, contacted on call cardiology and arranged transport for the patient to go to the Tucson, VA.
Doctor Kathleen Holst	He had a pacemaker placed later that same day. The technology used
Doctor Maia Carter	by the CRH enabled me to
Doctor Kathleen Holst	make an accurate, comprehensive assessment and efficiently get care for this veteran. And today he is doing great.
Doctor Maia Carter	Oh, my goodness. Fantastic. Leveraging the technology and the operational flow of Clinical Resource Hub to provide that patient the most efficient care possible and get him the resources he needed in a timely manner is just exceptional. Thank you for sharing that story with us. Margaret, tell us a little bit about the team dynamics. What does the communication look like amongst the CRH team?

Margaret Leas	Well, Doctor Carter, I just have to tell you, there is such a strong rapport between this primary care provider and the staff on site. And it has resulted in a holistic and unified approach to patient care, even though they're thousands of miles apart, the psychological safety, that level of trust. It has allowed these nurses to be proactive and work to the top of their license.
Margaret Leas	This open communication has extended to other disciplines as well. Pharmacy, social work, mental health and together they have done an amazing job of reinforcing that PACT model with the use of technology such as Microsoft Teams. The physical distance between the staff has not been a barrier to communication.
Doctor Maia Carter	It sounds like the CRH maybe a strong practice of how teams can effectively communicate. You don't have to physically be located in the same space in order to have effective communication and get the job done. Providing the best care to our veterans. Thank you for sharing that with us. This exciting. So, Karen, as an offering at the spokes side, realistically, how connected do you feel with Doctor Holst who's at the hub?
Karen Lines	Well, even though Doctor holst maybe many, many miles away,
Karen Lines	like it's been said, I feel like she's here in the clinic with us. We feel very supported and able to receive directions from her in anything we need for patient care. I know it's very difficult to find a provider that's willing to come to such a rural area, and through the VA telehealth resources, we've been able to keep our clinic open and functioning for the nearly thousand patients that we serve.
Doctor Maia Carter	Excellent. Maintaining access for those patients and being able to connect with a clinician that gives you guidance, and doesn't have to physically be in that face space. Game changer.
Karen Lines	Yes.
Doctor Maia Carter	So, Doctor Oke, help us understand the role of the clinical pharmacist for Clinical Resource Hub, particularly as it relates to getting our patients to go for chronic diseases.
Doctor Adeola Oke	Thank you, Doctor Carter. So, we provide support to rural sites like the Stafford Clinic for Chronic disease Management. We also review

	dashboards for population management to prevent adverse effects such as hypoglycemia, and to optimize medications to get patients to go. Bottom line CRH pharmacists provide a safety net for patients. Veterans are never left without coverage.
Doctor Maia Carter	So grateful for pharmacists being able to really get in there and help our patients manage their chronic diseases, reach their goals, and really complement the path of true PACT extender. So, Jennifer, as the LPN, walk us through what it's like when you're preparing a patient to see Doctor Holst in the doc knowing that doctor host is on video, what is that like?
Jennifer Davis-Diaz	Although there hesitant at first, once the patient sees how well it works and that their concerns are being heard, the physical exams are being done. The issues are addressed and giving the reassurance that the CVT is easy to use.
Jennifer Davis-Diaz	With effective communication, the patient then becomes more open to the visit.
Doctor Maia Carter	It sounds like, you have a very valuable role in giving that patient reassurance, walking them through, what they can anticipate with their interaction with Doctor Holst and really celebrating a successful visit and helping them to continue in this connection, providing great care. So, Brenda, I really would like to hear from you from your experience and having the scheduled clinical resource for patients with the clinical resource provider. What is that like?
Brenda Ashley	I take the time to explain to the veteran how the clinical resource hub work, and that they will be receiving the same quality of care that they otherwise would have received in person. And as I speak with the veterans, and I hear the joy in their voices when they realize that they don't have to travel great distance, nor be, referred out to the community to see a provider. So that's how I know that the CRH team is making a great accomplishment.
Doctor Maia Carter	Oh, that's great. I can't imagine, you know, a veteran not having to travel several miles, saving gas, trying to find a ride, and being able to, connect locally and also with a phenomenal health care team. Thank you for sharing that. So, this has been an extraordinary conversation with each of you.

Doctor Maia Carter	Just learning about Clinical Resource Hub and the advantages really a game changer. And answering those staffing gaps, providing great team multidisciplinary care to our Veterans and getting the right resources to them at the right time. So, we want to close this, conversation with a topic that's really important to me and that's joy. And I believe that when we do things in our life that brings us joy for better for ourselves and those around us.
Doctor Maia Carter	And what brings me joy is anything to do with music and movement. So, I love to dance. I love African dance. I love exercising with music and really gives me that charge I need to, be my best self. So, Jennifer, let's start with you. What brings you joy?
Jennifer Davis-Diaz	Mine's family, camping, nature and taking care of my patients.
Doctor Maia Carter	Fantastic. Love all of those. Brenda, how about you?
Brenda Ashley	It's my family, and I love shopping and dining out.
Doctor Maia Carter	Yeah. Sounds like fun. Doctor Oke.
Doctor Adeola Oke	So, mine is mindfulness and meditation. Being mindful in whatever I'm doing. And then just the act of meditation and being in the Zen zone.
Doctor Maia Carter	I love that, you know, just working on being present in what we're doing and being in the now. Fantastic. Doctor Merchant, what brings you joy?
Doctor Farrukh Merchant	Oh. Thank you. I love working with this team. I like I love working with the Veterans, but I'm a family doctor by training, and I'm a family man at home. So being with my two, teenage sons brings me ultimate joy.
Doctor Maia Carter	Right, Karen what brings you joy?
Karen Lines	Well, my family, my faith, and the great outdoors.
Doctor Maia Carter	Nothing like being outside with nature. Yes. Margaret, how about you?
Margaret Leas	Well, like most everybody else, definitely spending time with my family, but also serving Veterans. There is nothing that gives me more joy and

	gratitude than connecting veterans with services that they've earned and deserve.
Doctor Maia Carter	I love that. Yes. And Doctor Holst, what brings you joy?
Doctor Kathleen Holst	Oh faith, family and being in the Desert Southwest, It being outside. Like Karen said in nature.
Doctor Maia Carter	All those are wonderful things. So, thank you for joining me and having this value added conversation. I believe this conversation will, be fruitful for the field and let's stay connected. Thank you for joining us on this episode of Let's Talk Virtual Care. I hope that you found it inspiring and value added as you work to integrate virtual tools into your workspace.
Doctor Maia Carter	We welcome your ideas, your thoughts, and your suggestions for future episodes. You can view this episode or look at prior episodes by looking at our MS Streams channel. Just search. Let's talk virtual care. Please share this blog with your friends and your colleagues. We look forward to seeing you on the next episode of Let's Talk Virtual Care. I'm Doctor Maia Carter and remember dare to be innovative.