OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Transformation in Action

Midyear Review – July 2016
“I served in the U.S. Army. So as a Veteran myself, who uses and interacts with VA services and customer representatives often, I understand how critical our transformation is to improving the Veteran experience. I am committed, as is the rest of the OI&T team, to leaving this organization better than we found it, by transforming how we operate, improving the services we offer, and to earning our Veterans’ trust every day.”

– Ron Thompson

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology
OI&T’s transformation is rooted in technology, but it is really about the people: the people who are working hard to deliver it, and the Veterans whose care is supported by it.
# Table of Contents

Welcome Letter  
Introduction  
Who Is OI&T?  
What Is OI&T?  
Key Accomplishments: Turning Strategy Into Success  
Data Management: Harnessing the Power of Information  
Strategic Sourcing: Securing Cutting-Edge Solutions  
EPMO: OI&T’s Control Tower  
Account Management: Becoming a Proactive Partner  
Quality and Compliance: Environment of Accountability  
Audit Approach: Compliance as a Core Competency  
Closing

LaVerne Council  
Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer
Welcome

We have a truly inspiring mission: caring for those who have “borne the battle,” as well as their families and their survivors. Though that mission is what initially brought me to VA, I knew VA was at a critical point in its story. We needed to do better on behalf of our Veterans. We needed a lasting approach to improvement. Our Veterans deserve it. In July 2015, the Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) embarked on a sweeping transformation. Our goal was to be less complex, to make it easier to do business with us, and to look at what the Veteran really needs from technology. We started by articulating our core principles of transparency, accountability, innovation, and teamwork. These principles drive everything we do at OI&T, and these principles are key to building a new organization that vastly improves the Veteran experience.

In just one year, we have hit our stride, and Veterans are already reaping the benefits of our transformation. We aligned our strategy to Secretary McDonald’s MyVA Breakthrough Priority of “Transforming OI&T.” We reinvested in our staff. We formed the Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy Team and sent our cybersecurity strategy to Congress ahead of schedule. We established five critical functions that underpin our vision for the Organization of Tomorrow. We slashed numerous processes, steps, and artifacts to streamline time-to-market. And most important, we refocused our efforts on those programs and projects that deliver direct value to the Veteran.

This transformation has touched every corner of the enterprise, enhanced every aspect of our work, and shifted the very foundation of how OI&T does business.

With nearly 8,000 employees and an additional 8,000 contractors on our team, OI&T enables so much of what VA does to serve our nation’s Veterans, including increasing access to benefits, enhancing care with mobile technology, and protecting Veterans’ privacy and data. At VA, we have one of the most solemn missions in government and — in this technology-driven age — perhaps one of the most demanding. Recognizing the enormity of the scale and scope of this transformation, we have committed to collaborating with our partners in VA and to finding new partners across the industry.

This Midyear Transformation Review tells the story of OI&T’s achievements to date — including investment in healthcare IT, cybersecurity, infrastructure, and our workforce — and shares the trajectory of our enterprise’s flight path for the remainder of 2016.

I am pleased to report that we have met our early benchmarks and have even exceeded some of our initial goals. This could not have been accomplished without the hard work of our dedicated team members, 58 percent of whom are Veterans themselves. Even as we celebrate our collective success, we are looking to the future. True transformation takes time that is measured in years, not months. As we relentlessly pursue excellence here at OI&T, our motivation is to serve those who have served us. Our utmost priority is to deliver the highest quality of care and services for Veterans and their families.

Thank you,

LaVerne H. Council
Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer
Introduction

VA’s Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) was at a tipping point.

It was July 2015, and an audit of our current state — which included employee interviews, external reviews, and meetings with oversight bodies — uncovered complex, systemic internal challenges. The changing demands of today’s Veterans and of the technology landscape required OI&T to adapt.

**It was a very real look at the challenges this office faced.** But it was also a moment to grow. Modeling its approach in tandem with Secretary Robert McDonald’s MyVA initiative and the strategic insight of Chief Information Officer LaVerne Council, OI&T began a transformation.

**Our Goals:**

- Stabilize and streamline core processes and platforms;
- Eliminate material weaknesses;
- Institutionalize a new set of capabilities to drive improved outcomes.

To accomplish our goals, OI&T created five new critical functions:

- **Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO).** OI&T’s new control tower for IT development, EPMO, provides an enterprise-wide view of all ongoing projects, actively manages cyber risks associated with those projects, and ties project performance to outcomes that *directly improve the Veteran experience*;

- **IT Account Management.** Three Account Managers partner with National Cemetery Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and Veterans Health Administration to build technology aligned to our business partners’ needs;

- **Strategic Sourcing.** To make the most of IT spending, OI&T now focuses on *buying* existing cutting-edge solutions before *building* expensive, customized solutions;

- **Quality and Compliance.** OI&T measures what matters, partners with oversight bodies, and links input to outcomes;

- **Data Management Organization.** Launching later this year, the Data Management Organization focuses on the collection, protection, and analysis of VA’s wealth of data to predict patient needs, deliver specific outcomes, and share information across VA to improve the Veteran experience.

*Employee Spotlight*

**Mary Lou Mendez**

*Management Analyst, Software Testing and Section 508*

“My work may seem like just one more set of requirements. But meeting those requirements can make it possible for a large group of Veterans, as well as employees, to access the services and information they need.”
In addition to these five functions, we organized specialized teams:

- The **Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy Team** focuses on eliminating security weaknesses by the end of 2017;
- **IT Strategic Communications** centralizes OI&T communications for clear, consistent messaging for all stakeholders;
- The **Employee Engagement Task Force** fosters a culture of excitement for the mission and leverages the diverse background and experiences of employees to realize our vision.

OI&T also restructured essential parts of IT services at VA — specifically our largest division, Service Delivery and Engineering (SDE). We realigned our field operations to the MyVA divisions, and streamlined coordination with business partners within VA. SDE created a catalog of available services that matches partner needs with OI&T solutions.

While government organizations are not often associated with cutting-edge, disruptive technologies, we will be. OI&T is transforming into an industry leader for IT services, ultimately accountable to our most important stakeholder, the Veteran. **This is OI&T’s story.**
WHO IS OI&T?
Who Is OI&T?

Investing in Our People

OI&T thrives on diversity. We recruit, develop, and sustain a 16,000+ team of employees and contractors who use their talents and backgrounds to deliver technologies and services that improve the Veteran experience. With Fortune 500 executives, lifelong public servants, government leaders, and service members transitioning out of the military — we have built a team whose primary motivation is to serve. That motivation drives each of us to identify areas for improvement, to become change agents, and to transform OI&T into a lean, agile, Veteran-focused enterprise.

Employee Engagement Task Force (EETF): In March 2016, we formed a team whose members are on the ground, tapping the pulse of the VA employee and measuring progress in implementing organizational change. The EETF strives to improve the employee experience and enhance employee engagement throughout the enterprise.

Leaders Developing Leaders (LDL): Our transformation can only be realized with strong leadership at every level. Our LDL program fosters an environment of servant leadership, continuous engagement, strategic thinking, and change management.

OI&T Percent Positive Scores: Employee Feedback*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metrics</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Feedback</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Input/Empowerment</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: FY16 Q3 VA Pulse Survey, VHA National Center for Organization Development
OI&T Organizational Structure

Staffing Strategy: Putting People First

To ensure we have the long-term support to make our transformation permanent, we have increased leadership positions by 35 percent. Specifically, we have added 13 new positions to our organization and now have a total of 37 Senior Executive Service (SES) or Senior Leader (SL) positions. These executives, recruited from both inside the Federal Government and the private sector, bring decades of experience, fresh perspective, and critical insights to the table.
SDE’s Transformation

Service Delivery and Engineering (SDE) is OI&T’s largest division with more than 5,000 IT professionals across the country, connecting VA with the solutions, software, and support that enable care for our Veterans.

SDE represents a key pillar of the OI&T transformation.

National Service Desk Redesign

The National Service Desk (NSD) is a critical, go-to source for all of VA, providing 24/7 customer IT support. As part of our transformation, SDE is revamping the NSD to provide the best possible service — including new capabilities such as customer call-back and enhanced metrics tracking to identify and swiftly respond to incidents.

Field Operations Reorganization

SDE is realigning field operations with the MyVA districts. The realignment creates a unified VA, keeping OI&T in lockstep with all VA administrations and businesses. The reorganization breaks down cross-organizational barriers and creates consistent, efficient service for our customers.

Service Catalog

VA business partners and customers can now browse available IT services and select what works for them — in a centralized, easy-to-use portal.

Command Center

At the new command center in Austin, Texas, specialized IT staff members monitor incidents in real time, facilitating rapid response and delivery of solutions and customer service.
WHAT IS OI&T?

- $4.133B BUDGET
- 300+ DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
- 8 FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS OF CYBERSECURITY
- 400 INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICERS
- 43 TOTAL SWAT INCIDENTS SINCE DECEMBER 2015
- 365 DATA CENTERS
- 834 APPLICATIONS
- 56% VETERANS
  - 8,000 EMPLOYEES
  - 8,000 CONTRACTORS
- 2.6 MILLION MALWARE ATTEMPTS BLOCKED SINCE DECEMBER 2015
- 6,000+ APPROVED TOOLS IN TECHNICAL REFERENCE MODEL
- 3,000 ACTIVE CONTRACTS TO DATE
- 130+ INSTANCES OF VISTA
Key Accomplishments: Turning Strategy Into Success

Our achievements tell a story — of an organization committed to protecting valuable information, streamlining service delivery, and making strides to improve the way Veterans interact with VA.
Cybersecurity

The Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy, introduced in September 2015, committed people, tools, and technology to actively safeguard Veterans’ information.

OI&T is on track to close every one of the Inspector General’s recommendations by the end of 2017. IT will no longer be a material weakness for VA.
10% of the 2016 audit findings thus far are new, and we are triaging any repeat findings to **swiftly eliminate those potential vulnerabilities.**

Balancing business needs with security concerns, OI&T **reduced** privileged accounts with access to VA systems **by 95%**.

**OI&T mitigated 21 million critical and high-security vulnerabilities.**

We identified and reduced use of prohibited software by **90%.**

**OI&T is strictly enforcing** industry best-practice, **two-factor authentication** for users across VA.
VA has met initial interoperability requirements outlined in Section 713(b) (1) of the *Fiscal 2014 National Defense Authorization Act* through **delivery of the Joint Legacy Viewer (JLV)**.
Over the next two years, OI&T is rolling out the enterprise Health Management Platform (eHMP), which builds on the foundation of JLV.

eHMP will enable VA, DoD, and specialty care clinicians to access clinically actionable, patient-centric data.

The latest phase of VA’s EHR platform, VistA 4, will deliver even more functionality in 2018. However, our aggressive timeline for upgrading VistA cannot match the accelerating trends of both technology and Veterans’ needs. The Digital Health Platform will support the next generation VA — and Veteran — into the future.
Centers of Excellence

OI&T created an Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO) to align project portfolios with long-term strategy.

OI&T created the Account Management Office to align priorities and enhance partnerships with the National Cemetery Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and Veterans Health Administration.
OI&T replaced the Program Management Accountability System with the **Veteran-focused Integration Process (VIP)** to streamline IT management, resulting in an estimated **85% cost avoidance** in overhead across the organization.

**Media Snapshot**

**VA Achieves Interoperability through Joint Legacy Viewer**
– Health IT Interoperability, May 19, 2016

**VA sets goal of eliminating cyber material weaknesses by 2017**

**New VA CIO forms cybersecurity strategy team**
– FedScoop, August 3, 2015

**myVA**

**Putting Veterans First**

OI&T **reorganized field operations** to reflect MyVA districts.

OI&T created a National Command Center in Austin, Texas. This **situation room** monitors IT service delivery nationwide and responds to challenges faster than ever before.
Data Management: Harnessing the Power of Information

Technology that collects, connects, and analyzes data points can deliver solutions that fundamentally change the way Veterans access healthcare.
Consider blood sugar results. Pain scores. Prescribed medications. VA gathers thousands of data points like these over a Veteran’s lifetime. And for years, OI&T has focused on protecting that data, including information as diverse as health figures, home loans, and disability benefits. But with the new Data Management function, that focus will expand to proactively analyze those data points to predict and prescribe courses of action.

Data Management addresses several prior weaknesses:

- Vast data silos, with redundant information across VA;
- Multiple untapped sources for organizational knowledge;
- Poor central accountability, organization, and protection of data collection and storage;
- Lack of subject matter experts and tools to interpret and analyze the data.

The proper collection, protection, and analysis of Veteran data leads to analytics-driven innovation that improves the Veteran experience. Our vision for the future: VA will reach out to a Veteran, letting her know — based on an ongoing population health analysis — that she may be at an elevated risk for a particular illness.

Another key role of Data Management: working with the Department of Defense (DoD) to tightly integrate VA-DoD data. When a Veteran sees her clinician, that clinician will view the Veteran’s medical records from active service, post-service, and community providers, all on the same screen. In April, Assistant Secretary LaVerne Council co-signed with DoD letters to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees certifying that VA and DoD had successfully met federally mandated requirements for that first step of interoperability.

VA is developing and rolling out the eHMP, which builds on the foundation of the current JLV to expand the data we capture and display on that single, clinician dashboard.

Ultimately, Data Management establishes a single source of information. Consider something as simple as contact information for a Veteran. Previously, the Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration may have had different addresses or different phone numbers on file for a single Veteran. Now, a single source of data will mean VA has the most recent contact information — updated across all of VA.

Employee Spotlight

Cary Summers
IT Specialist/SharePoint Engineer, Enterprise Web Infrastructure Support

“My favorite part of working for OI&T is working with my fellow team members to create solutions that allow everyday processes at VA to run smoothly and efficiently for everyone. This in turn helps us all in our mission to reach out to and serve our nation’s Veterans in the most effective ways we can.”
Picture This:

Picture a Veteran, walking in the door after a day at work.

The phone rings. On the other end of the line is a clinician who explains that VA’s ongoing population health analysis of Army Veterans who served in the same region, at the same time, identified the Veteran’s susceptibility to a minor respiratory condition. The clinician suggests scheduling an appointment with a physician to assess her health and gives the Veteran the name of an inhaler that has proven to be very effective in treating other Veterans with this condition.

Replicating this experience is our vision for Data Management.

Every time a Veteran visits a clinician, VA collects data points, everything from height and weight, to blood pressure and blood sugar results. Data Management will collect, organize, and analyze those data points across the population to fuel innovation in predictive care — improving Veteran health and the overall Veteran experience.
Digital Health Platform

More Veterans are seeking care in the community, the number of women Veterans is rapidly growing, and Veterans are requiring increased access to specialty care. In an age where people track their health on a smartwatch and where scheduling appointments is as simple as saying, “Hey, Siri,” we are looking beyond what VistA 4 will deliver in 2018 — to a new Digital Health Platform that can better support Veterans throughout the health continuum.

We are looking toward a modern, integrated healthcare system that incorporates best-in-class technologies and standards to give it the look, feel, and capabilities users have come to expect in the private sector.

We are leveraging open-source standards such as the Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) framework and Health Level 7 International (HL7) models to integrate the 130+ instances of VistA we have today into a cloud-based, Digital Health Platform.
Strategic Sourcing: Securing Cutting-Edge Solutions

Technology innovation moves fast. OI&T’s transformation capitalizes on that velocity to deliver the most efficient services available industry-wide.
Previously, OI&T’s complex multisourcing environment presented challenges with vendors and contracts, governance, and industry collaboration. This resulted in a vague delineation of responsibilities among suppliers, contracting bodies, and OI&T leadership.

The *Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act* (FITARA) delivered a call to action for federal agency CIOs. This created an opportunity for our CIO to take ownership and integrate accountability into every acquisition decision OI&T makes. As a result, we are implementing an approach that makes awards to vendors that can deliver the **best solutions** at the **best value** for the taxpayer and for the Veteran.

This new function, Strategic Sourcing, harnesses marketplace innovation and best practices to obtain services that directly improve the Veteran experience. It benefits OI&T by:

- **Connecting the organization to top-tier technology.** Best-in-class technologies already exist — and evolve every day. Strategic Sourcing ensures OI&T’s finger remains on the pulse of the latest market innovations. If a solution exists in the marketplace, OI&T will find it, instead of building new, expensive customized solutions from scratch. This will lower long-term total cost of ownership, enhance our speed to market, and provide VA with sustainable, off-the-shelf platforms.

- **Delivering value.** As a steward of taxpayer dollars, we look for opportunities to optimize IT spending. Strategic Sourcing will leverage VA’s marketplace buying power to negotiate the best price, for the best quality, at the best value.

- **Enhancing outcomes.** Strategic Sourcing will drive improved quality of supplier deliverables and cost outcomes for programs and projects. It aligns VA to the best-in-class approach for supplier management including contract management, performance management, financial management and relationship management. We will closely monitor performance and hold our suppliers accountable, as well as strengthen partnerships with those high-performing suppliers that continue to deliver results.

**What is FITARA?**

- FITARA is bipartisan legislation that enhances the role of the agency CIO in IT acquisitions, investments, and resources.
- FITARA is not just about compliance; it is a call to action from Congress to federal IT organizations to deliver the latest technological services, for the best value, to the American taxpayer.
- By enhancing the CIO’s authority at VA, the legislation gives OI&T the power to collaborate with our business partners in providing the best IT capabilities to Veterans.
- We will be the premier government agency in FITARA. The launch of EPMO, strategic sourcing, and governance will take us to 100 percent FITARA compliance by the end of 2016.
- OI&T’s new Data Management Organization will enable analytics-driven innovation and reduce costly, aging infrastructure — improving service delivery and the Veteran experience.
- By empowering OI&T with workforce flexibility, FITARA enables us to attract, hire, and retain the world-class talent we need to provide 21st century solutions.
EPMO: OI&T’s Control Tower

The EPMO establishes a portfolio-centric approach where projects are consolidated into programs.
“EPMO is central to transforming OI&T into a world class IT organization. EPMO is the control tower that manages the entire IT Portfolio, balancing risk and outcomes. EPMO prioritizes doing over documenting, so that we can get IT products and services to Veterans and employees as quickly and securely as possible. We are streamlining and improving OI&T’s core processes and oversight to deliver Veterans and employees the technology they need.”

– Rob C. Thomas II
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Enterprise Program Management

In November 2015, Deputy Assistant Secretary Rob C. Thomas II assembled a group of experts from across OI&T with the goal of streamlining and revolutionizing processes across the enterprise. That group would become known as the Wichita Team — and together, they developed four key initiatives:

- A Lean-Agile project management process called the Veteran-focused Integration Process (VIP) to replace the Project Management Accountability System (PMAS);
- A unified, authoritative development calendar leveraging POLARIS;
- A streamlined release process;
- A new tools suite, including the VIP Request (VIPR) tool.

The Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO), established on April 4, 2016, institutionalizes these initiatives.

EPMO maintains clear lines of accountability and authority, and establishes a new portfolio-centric approach, in which projects are consolidated into programs, aligning with VA’s four business line portfolios: Clinical Health; Non-Clinical, Benefits and Veteran Experience; and Corporate, Appeals, and Cemetery.

Historically, OI&T operated from a project-centric standpoint, the IT product development process was document-driven, and the ad hoc hierarchy of programs and projects resulted in waste and inefficiencies across OI&T.

EPMO now features portfolio, program, and project tracking, enabled by the VIP dashboard, to facilitate continuous improvement and constant collaboration. EPMO delivers technology capabilities to VA’s business partners more efficiently, leveraging the CIO’s new authority associated with FITARA.

Did You Know?

In March 2016, Secretary McDonald recognized the EPMO team with one of VA’s highest honors — the Secretary’s Honor Award for I CARE. The award recognizes determination to live by principles of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence.
VIP employs a Lean-Agile framework to streamline IT management and improve outcomes at OI&T. OI&T piloted VIP on January 4, 2016, involving 13 projects across the enterprise. We are transitioning all remaining projects to VIP by the end of Fiscal Year 2016. An audit comparing PMAS to VIP found that VIP will reduce overhead across the enterprise by 85 percent.

“I’ve served in government for a while, and in my experience, interpreting, analyzing, and leveraging data points to improve processes delivers real solutions for stakeholders. At VA, that means streamlining core processes to improve the Veteran experience. And I’m honored and excited to accept that mission.”

– Nicole Mayerhauser
Executive Director, Enterprise Program Management Division

Leadership Profile

Rob C. Thomas II
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Enterprise Program Management

Mr. Thomas directs all aspects of the portfolio and project management process. He provides strategic leadership to manage national-level IT project prioritization, portfolio balancing, and resource allocation to maximize value to the Veteran through the optimization of IT resources.

Nicole Mayerhauser
Executive Director, Enterprise Program Management Division

Nicole Mayerhauser joined the team on January 11, 2016, and leads our program and project managers in enterprise-wide scheduling, resource allocation, testing, design, engineering, and implementation. Nicole’s past work with the U.S. Department of Commerce included redevelopment of the Bureau of Economic Analysis’ 25-year-old central processing systems, business operations, and processes. She established a new branch for customer coordination and quality assurance of national-level economic accounts, focusing on continuous, data-driven solutions for both internal and external customers.

Employee Spotlight

Sylvia Griffith
Release Officer, Enterprise Program Management Organization

“Oh&T will soon see higher quality products that are delivered more quickly, and that have the necessary support to sustain them. Yes, it can be done. And yes, we are going to do it.”
Account Management:
Becoming a Proactive Partner

Prior to transformation, OI&T lacked a critical interface with our business partners within VA and developers outside VA. We delivered software that fell short of specific business partners’ needs, lacked the capability to scale across the enterprise, and failed to flex with the growth of their portfolios.

To establish this interface, OI&T founded the Account Management Office.
This office fundamentally changes the way OI&T works with its business partners. Account Managers serve as strategic partners, rather than as customers and service providers. Assigning a representative to each of VA’s business lines allows OI&T to better gauge and prioritize their IT needs and facilitate top-notch IT solutions.

Our Account Managers are the linchpin between OI&T and business partners. They identify opportunities for improvement and subsequently work directly with the CIO and EPMO to implement corresponding solutions. Account Managers provide strategic leadership to maximize value by managing IT project prioritization, balancing portfolios, and allocating resources. One Account Manager is assigned to each portfolio: Clinical Health; Non-Clinical, Benefits and Veteran Experience; and Corporate, Appeals, and Cemetery. Account Managers are supported by five Customer Relationship Managers (CRMs), who will transform the way OI&T interacts with partners in the field. CRMs work at the regional level to gather feedback and monitor outcomes from the region.

Working alongside CRMs, Account Managers can now collect OI&T performance data nationwide. This information enables a comprehensive approach to OI&T issue resolution, change management, and innovation. Together, Account Managers and CRMs continuously identify and refine solutions to meet customer and stakeholder needs.

OI&T appointed three Account Managers who oversee OI&T’s relationship with its major business partners.

Jackie Patillo  
Deputy CIO, Account Manager for Corporate Information Technology  
(Corporate, Appeals and Cemetery Portfolios)

Alan Constantian, Ph.D.  
Deputy CIO, VHA Account Manager for Clinical Functions  
(Clinical Health Portfolio)

Sean Kelley  
Account Manager for Veterans Benefits Administration and Veteran Experience  
(Benefits and Veteran Experience Portfolio)
“My highest priority is making OI&T a strategic partner to our business offices and ensuring that the Veteran has proactive tools at their disposal. To do that, we are evaluating the significant amount of data at VA’s fingertips to improve the services our business partners offer: predictive care, streamlined benefits delivery, and smarter interfaces for the Veteran.

Data is one of the keys to unlocking VA’s true potential.”

– Sean Kelley
Account Manager for Veterans Benefits Administration and Veteran Experience
Quality and Compliance: Environment of Accountability

“Our theme of eliminating the material weaknesses focuses on addressing material weaknesses identified by the Federal Information Security Modernization Act and Federal Information System Controls Audit Manual, implementing our enterprise cybersecurity plan, and establishing a quality and compliance organization.”

– LaVerne H. Council
Joint Subcommittee Hearing on Electronic Health Records
Prior to OI&T’s transformation, we suffered from disconnected governance, cybersecurity weaknesses, and inconsistent accountability. Assurance efforts needed maturity and integration across the enterprise. So we adopted a new approach, institutionalizing oversight at every level of the organization. Instead of checking off boxes to comply with a massive volume of compliance regulation, we are partnering with oversight bodies to create a culture of accountability.

Under Privacy and Risk (P&R), the new Quality and Compliance (Q&C) organization comprises OI&T’s forward-leaning posture for addressing our audit approach, oversight bodies, and material weaknesses. Q&C unites OI&T into a customer-focused, responsive, efficient, and accountable structure. It guides policy by:

- Stabilizing and streamlining core processes and platforms;
- Eliminating material weaknesses and institutionalizing the capabilities to drive improved outcomes;
- Overseeing all aspects of quality and compliance within OI&T and its integration with other quality-focused activities across VA.

Q&C leadership formed a core team to advance efforts in the standup of the Q&C office. That core team identified four key focus areas and established Q&C on June 30, 2016:

- **Organization standup** targeted structure, key positions, and assets;
- **Strategic foundation** drafted a road map for governance needs and structure;
- **Quality review and improvement** developed methods to assess and track material weaknesses;
- **Oversight commitments** established tracking and reporting, and implemented audit recommendations for material weaknesses.

Quality is embodied in every aspect of OI&T, and the Q&C organization establishes a framework to sustain gains in continuous assurance and accountability.

### Leadership Profile

**Martha Orr**  
*Executive Director, Quality and Compliance*

The new Q&C function is being implemented under the leadership of Ms. Orr. She serves as Executive Director for Quality and Compliance in OI&T, where she is responsible for performance reporting, correspondence, congressional and action management, risk management oversight and compliance, and human resource activities for the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology. She also facilitates activities associated with the Government Accountability Office and the Office of Management and Budget to identify and swiftly resolve issues at the appropriate levels.

Ms. Orr has been a VA employee for 22 years, holding positions in IT, financial management, and program and project management, with increasing levels of management responsibility. She has served on numerous community committees and boards.
Audit Approach: Compliance as a Core Competency

At OI&T, security is the No. 1 priority, and it is everyone’s job. Our transformation strengthens this resolve every day.
As VA works to eliminate current IT material weakness by the end of 2017, the 2016 annual audits are a critical milestone to gauge OI&T progress in remediating known weaknesses and strengthening internal controls, not just at audit sites, but across all our facilities throughout the nation.

The annual Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) and the Federal Information System Controls Audit Manual audits offer VA an opportunity to take a step back and examine VA's progress and identify room for improvement.

In advance of the audit season, the Enterprise Cybersecurity Tactical Team works closely with VA audit facilities to address every key FISMA finding and partner with the OIG on the year's audit cycles.

While we expect repeat observations during the early stage of the audit cycle, it is precisely those issues that impact the entire Department, and our Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy represents our aggressive posture to rooting out those weaknesses. Fewer than 10 percent of the 2016 audit findings to date are new, and as OI&T continues to close the gap for material weaknesses, that number will shrink even more.

In conjunction with the Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy, OI&T implemented a new approach for the 2016 audit season. We deployed remediation teams to each of the 2016 audit sites to examine vulnerabilities, remEDIATE vulnerabilities on the spot, and validate our fix actions. Those teams also worked with OIG auditors to provide immediate support and remediation. Rather than being added to a static report for leadership at the end of the audit cycle, the lessons learned from each site are almost immediately incorporated into the plan for each upcoming site. This allows VA to continually improve throughout audit season.

The 2016 audit season is not the only opportunity for OI&T to examine the VA security posture and make additional improvements. VA is also implementing an enterprise-level audit capability, which will provide insight into all VA networks to ensure that Veteran and VA information is protected, and that field sites are operating in the most secure and efficient manner possible.

**Leadership Profile**

**Ron Thompson**
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Acting Chief Information Security Officer

Mr. Thompson provides the day-to-day operational leadership that OI&T needs to accomplish its IT strategic initiatives. He has more than 25 years of progressive experience in leadership roles spanning the public and private sectors, where he was responsible for the design, engineering, operational management, and governance of complex IT solutions. Mr. Thompson's breadth of hands-on experience in organizational design and transformation brings new perspectives in partnership and creative problem-solving, and his service in the U.S. Army drives his focus on ensuring the Veteran remains the focal point of everything OI&T does.
Leadership Profile

Susan McHugh-Polley

*Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Service Delivery and Engineering*

Ms. McHugh-Polley was selected to serve as Deputy Chief Information Officer for SDE in April 2016. Prior to that, she served as Executive Director for Field Operations, where she directed the operations of information systems, technology, and telecommunications at all VA field locations, including VHA medical centers, VBA regional offices, and VHA field-based program offices. Ms. McHugh-Polley leads a team of thousands of employees throughout the nation and also led creation of the Department’s Enterprise Cybersecurity Strategy.
Did You Know?
OIT is on schedule to close 100 percent of the IG’s recommendations by the end of 2017. Results from our ongoing 2016 audit cycle show that our efforts to eliminate IT material weaknesses are paying off.
Closing

In just one year after we began our transformation, OI&T has changed in many ways. We have refocused on the principles that drive us and the people who work with us. We transformed service delivery, streamlined processes, and built new partnerships with our stakeholders. Over the coming months, OI&T will continue to eliminate material weaknesses, streamline its core processes, and develop capabilities that drive improved outcomes.

None of these changes occurred in a vacuum. In a world where technology is fundamentally changing the way we approach healthcare, where innovation rapidly accelerates, and where the Veteran population grows daily, OI&T fully understands the urgency of maturing into a lean, agile enterprise.

A year from now, the effects of our transformation will compound. Veterans will access even more innovative technologies, suited to their needs, quickly delivered through EPMO. When Veterans interact with VA, their information will be consolidated and accessible, thanks to Data Management. And with more resources devoted to implementing cutting-edge, existing platforms versus maintaining legacy and customized platforms, VA’s pace of innovation will rapidly accelerate, thanks to FITARA.

“I served on active duty in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps for 25 years, leading IT operations at Navy hospitals, clinics, and fleet operations. I know how critical it is for VA to keep pace with changes in health technology, and in Architecture, Strategy, and Design (ASD), we are doing exactly that. I’m honored to be a part of our transformation efforts to reinvent the way our Veterans interact, through technology, with VA.

We are delivering an entirely new Veteran experience.”

— Dr. Paul Tibbits
Deputy Chief Information Officer for Architecture, Strategy, and Design
As we build on our early success, we are excited to see how our transformation delivers the cutting-edge solutions and services our Veterans have earned.

*Our story has only just begun.*