

Strengthen Veterans Choice

By Improving Access, Continuity and Coordination of Care - Locally

Introduction

Mental health, substance abuse, general health issues and illnesses are frequently intertwined. Coordination of various types of health care is essential to improved health outcomes, especially for patients with multiple chronic conditions. The challenges of fragmented care that financially-distressed patients are faced with further complicate matters. Nowhere are these needs more evident than in the lives of veterans who deserve the best of care, as they adjust to their new normal and strive to live up to their potential.

The Veterans Choice Act gives veterans the option of using private doctors outside of the VA system. Although this is an important step forward, these private doctors do not collaborate with the community-based social programs that struggling veterans often rely on. Many times this results in fragmented and uncoordinated care which jeopardizes patient safety and progress, increases costs by 400 – 700%, according to the IOM. In contrast, coordinating care for patients with multiple chronic conditions can reduce costs by 50 – 75%, which is an opportunity that PHIERS.org wishes to help the VA capitalize on.

Pilot Overview

[Patriot Medical Transport Systems and PHIERS.org](#) have joined forces to improve access to coordinated and wrap around support for our veterans. By working together, we will improve the cost-benefit and reach of the Veterans Choice program.

- In 2009, the Maryland Veterans Administration and Patriot Medical Transport Systems launched “Maryland’s Commitment to Veterans” to address the needs of veterans with mental health and substance abuse issues. Though initially scheduled for 6 months, the pilot is now the longest running program of its kind in the nation.
- In 2014, Patriot and PHIERS.org combined secure health information services with actionable decision aides, transportation and technical assistance into a simple pilot. This will address the needs of the whole veteran (mind body and spirit) in a coordinated manner. We enable case managers to connect high risk veterans to the primary care, mental health and support services they need, in a timely and sustainable fashion. According to the Institute of Medicine, patients with the greatest savings and quality improvement opportunities are those receiving fragmented care, and those who are accessing the system in a very inefficient and uncoordinated manner. We can help!

A Sustainable Way Forward

Our spring 2015 veterans-focused pilot will:

- Close gaps in data and services offered to veterans through the use of Health/IT, actionable decision aides, social support networks and medical transportation.
- Create low cost, patient-centered medical and health homes when one does not exist.
- Improve the quality of care transitions, in a reliable, evidence-based and flexible enough way to work for patients, caregivers and people aging in home, with dignity and grace.
- Encourage and reward patients, caregivers, providers and nonprofits for their impact on the veterans’ experience and outcomes.

Thousands of nonprofits in the local region share a common mission and are already serving veterans, wounded soldiers and their dependents. What is needed are tools, training, technical support and transportation to guarantee continuity of care and support across settings, through the use of a shared case management and referral service to connect veterans to the safety net services.



About PHIERS

The Public Health Information Exchange and Referral Service (PHIERS, pronounced “fires”) combines best practices with a HIPAA-compliant Personal Health Record, innovative decision aids and referral services. Our goal is to improve quality, continuity and coordination of care by leveraging the strengths of the local community.

What we do...

- Help patients, caregivers and case managers form useful partnerships needed to improve patient adherence with their care plans.
- Improve the quality of care transitions by combining health education, decision aides, triage support and mobile health technology in ways that improve the quality and continuity of care.
- Reduce health care cost without harming care, by reducing the likelihood of complications, ER visits and Readmissions

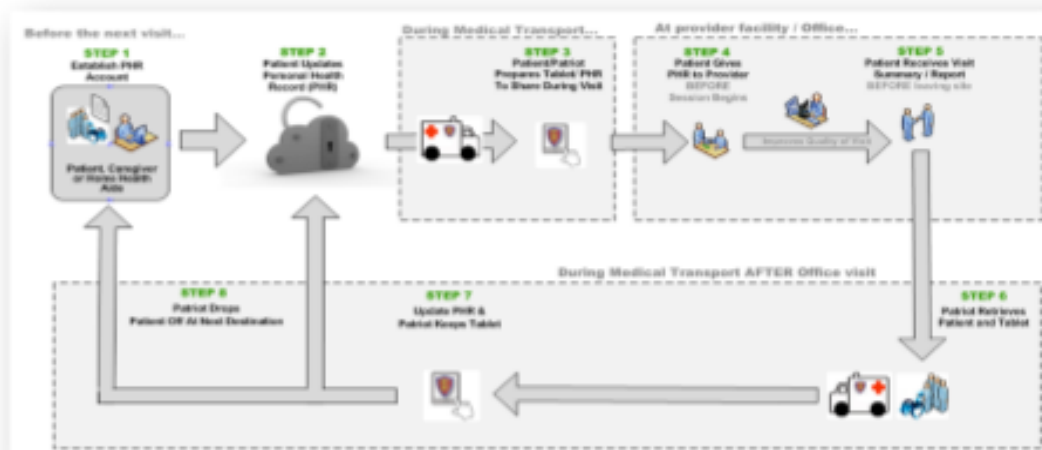
Our Team

- **Patriot Medical Transport Systems** is a pioneer in veteran support services and provides medical transport, triage and dispatch services. Soon, they will provide home health care.
- **PHIERS.org** is a nonprofit coop that provides tools, training, supportive services and promotes collaboration between patients; public health and social safety net organizations while building healthier communities.
- **Daedalus Systems**, a veteran-owned, veteran-physician led consultancy that provides subject matter expertise in the areas of emergency care, discharge planning and transitional care.
- **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from leading health systems** provide guidance in the areas of transitional and emergency care, post-acute care coordination, home health services and health information solutions that serve providers across the nation.



Pilot Highlights

- **Patriot and PHIERS.org** will tailor the mobile health platform and resource-matching and referral service to address the needs of the Southern Maryland Community
- **Daedalus and MedStar SMEs** will provide guidance, field tests, and provide feedback regarding the tools and technologies to assist patients, case managers and discharge planners.
- **Once proper consent has been granted**, Patriot will help veterans use the PHIERPlace to achieve continuous care across all settings, and help patients keep their health information updated, as shown below:
- **Sponsors and providers will benefit** from ongoing cost benefit analysis that will help us identify opportunities to improve performance, while reducing costs in ways directly attributed to our program as it spreads across the US.



Beneficiaries

- **Patients and Caregivers:** Decision aides, secure health/IT and tools to promote collaboration will help provide the benefits of an expanded care team, while connecting patients to the supportive services they need to improve outcomes and experience.
- **Case Managers and Home Health Agencies:** Tools to improve the quality of assessments and referrals, view patient records, develop care plans, schedule transportation, prepare for medical appointments, etc.
- **Outpatient Clinics and Local Hospitals:** Patients will have improves access to the resources and supportive services needed to improve the likelihood of adherence to care plans, reducing the likelihood of complications, ER visits and readmissions.

Conclusion

Maximum benefits will be derived from the use of tailored tools and support services that leverage the strengths of the local community and collaboration across multi-disciplinary care teams. Over time, as the benefits of the program accrue, performance-based grants will be provided for all participating nonprofits. This is an effective way to reduce healthcare costs without harming care. We are ready!



Patriot Medical Transport Systems



Daedalus Systems



PHIERS.org