VistA Package/Namespace Setup Guide



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VistA Package/Namespace Setup Guide

1. Purpose

The VistA (Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture) Package/Namespace Setup Guide was created by the VistA Office to provide guidance to product teams who have identified the need for a new unique package name, namespace and file range to define the application boundaries for a new product.

If a new package will be distributed as a VistA Class 1 product, this document also includes setup steps which must be taken so that the package's patches can be created in the National Patch Module in FORUM.

2. Target Audience

The target audience is any product team responsible for developing a new product which interfaces with VistA:

- VA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Class 1 product teams
- VA OIT field offices and field (Class 2 and 3) product teams
- Business-partners external to the VA (Class 3) product teams

Product team includes individuals with roles such as Product Manager, Developer, Analyst, Verifier, Support staff and Stakeholders.

3. Package Class Definitions

Products are categorized as Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 in the PACKAGE File (#9.4) in FORUM which is the authoritative source for defining a package's boundaries and determines how the product is released to the field.

The following Class definitions are from the Draft VA DIRECTIVE 6402: LOCAL MODIFICATION TO NATIONALLY RELEASED VISTA SOFTWARE (with minor modifications to show both 1, 2, 3 and I, II, III as designation used for Class):

<u>National Class 1 (Class I) Software</u> - Nationally released OIT DevSecOps SPM VistA software includes all interfaces installed on or interacting with VA computing environments. National Software has been created by or evaluated and certified by DevSecOps to comply with VA established criteria listed below. (Source: VistA Office)

- 1. Architecture and technology
- 2. Capacity and performance
- 3. Coding standards
- 4. Documentation
- 5. Interagency agreements
- 6. Name spacing and interface control agreements

- 7. Network capacity impacts
- 8. OIT Technical Reference Model (TRM)
- 9. Privacy and confidentiality
- 10. Section 508 accessibility
- 11. Security
- 12. Testing

<u>Class 2 (II) Software</u> - Represents a Class 3 (III) product that has been verified as compliant with established standards. These are products coming out of field development (FD) and are certified and approved for Class 2 (II) deployment and follow-on support by FD. (Source: VistA Office)

<u>Class 3 (III) Software</u> - Products originating from any unrelated OIT DevSecOps SPM source including field developers, non-Information Technology (IT) VA staff (e.g., physicians), vendors, open source, research, or educational organizations located on a VAMC specific VistA instance. These software products generally have a limited and non-standardized distribution across VA systems and are not covered by OIT DevSecOps SPM support commitments. (Source: VistA Office)

The full directive is available at the following <u>link</u> for the DRAFT_VA Directive 6402 Modifications to Nationally Released VistA Software.

4. VistA Products (Packages)

OIT DevSecOps Software Product Management (SPM) uses the word "product" to define the "packages" that SPM is managing, which are primarily Class 1 packages.

The VA System Inventory refers to the VA enterprise software which includes Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 packages and other software products used by the VA.

Nationally released OIT DevSecOps Software Product Management (SPM) VistA software reference information is available by following the links in the References and Related Links Section of this document:

- VistA Monograph
- VA Software Document Library (VDL)
- VA EA VistA Dashboard
- VA System Inventory (VASI)

5. VistA Authorization and Application Boundaries

VistA is a comprehensive, full-featured Health Information System and Electronic Health Record (EHR) owned by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Information Technology (OIT).

The primary coding source for VistA software development is the Massachusetts General Hospital Utility Multi-Programming System (MUMPS) programming language which will be referred to as M code in this document.

The VA requires all product development using M code to respect the VistA Authorization Boundary Data Flow (Figure 1) to secure and defend the authorization boundaries of the VistA system. The VistA Authorization Boundaries box reflects the portion of VistA where the VistA Information System Owner (VistA Office Director) is responsible for maintaining Authority to Operate (ATO) on the VA network.

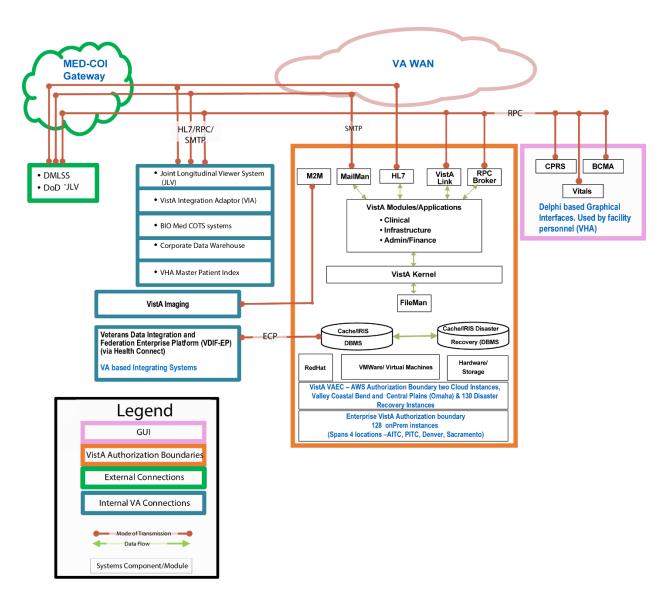


Figure 1: VistA Authorization Boundary Data Flow

The VistA Authorization Boundary Data Flow (Figure 1) is a depiction of VistA authorization boundaries and the flow of data entering and leaving VistA. This figure refers to "VistA Modules/Applications" defined in three categories: Clinical, Administrative/Finance and Infrastructure. These VistA Modules/Applications are referred to as "Products" in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Each product has its own "application boundary" which is defined in a unique Package entry in the PACKAGE FILE (#9.4) in FORUM. The unique Package definition will include the assigned package class, namespace, file range low and high numbers, and other identifying information.

The purpose of the PACKAGE file application boundary is to prevent conflicts between other VistA packages while developing in M code. VistA software has over 150+ unique Class 1 products, where the application boundaries are defined in the PACKAGE file. The assigned package "namespace" is used by M code developers for routine, global, security key, option, template, bulletin, function, screen, help frame, protocol, form, block, list templates, objects, dialogues, remote procedures, Kernel parameters, and other software components created for the Package.

Examples of Package namespace (PREFIX) are "DI" for FileMan and "XM" for MailMan, which are used throughout software components to provide the application boundary.

6. Package Setup Responsibilities

The VistA Package/Namespace Setup Guide details the roles and responsibilities to successfully create a PACKAGE definition entry and then setup the new package in the National Patch Module for patch tracking in FORUM.

Product Team responsibilities for package setup:

- Determine the Package Class that will be used to classify the product (1, 2, or 3).
- Identify the need for a new Package with its own application boundaries.
- Request a new Package/Namespace by contacting the VA OIT VISTA DBA GROUP at oedvistadba@va.gov
- Identify Project Manager or Lead Developer who will establish National Patch Module personnel roles for developer, support, and verifier.

DBA Team responsibilities for package setup:

- Determine the new package boundaries by searching for namespace and file ranges that do not overlap with other Package boundaries.
- Create the new PACKAGE File (#9.4) entry and share the definition with the product development team members that made the request.
- Add the Class 1 Package to the DHCP PATCH/PROBLEM PACKAGE file (#11007)
 and add the Project Manager or Lead Developer. This step automatically sends out a
 bulletin to inform Mail Groups that the new Package will create patch entries in the
 National Patch Module.

Health Systems Platform (HSP) Team responsibilities for package setup:

 Add the Class 1 Package to additional files in the National Patch Module. This setup is required to complete all file setups that allow the National Patch Module and patch tracking to work.

7. Steps

7.1 Product Team: Determine the Class

There are over 150 Class 1 packages that make up VistA. Class 1 packages have historically been created and supported by VA OIT project development and support efforts.

Most Class 1 packages involve M code that is sent out in a Patch that is released from FORUM. There are cases of web-based applications that have requested a Package entry so they can send out an Information Only patch out of FORUM. The Information Only patch serves to inform VA Field software installers of how to access and install the web-based application for VA use.

There are also cases of Class 2 and 3 packages, that have been transitioned to a Class 1 status. These packages are usually distributed throughout the entire VA system, and VA OIT takes over management of new patch distributions and support for the product. In these instances, the Class 3 package will be modified as needed to ensure all Class 1 requirements are met, and then the package can be changed to Class 1.

Class 2 and 3 packages are usually developed because of funding provided by a VA Station or Region or VHA office. Vendor products that have a MUMPS patch are usually Class 3. COTS products with MUMPS patches that need vendor coding are considered Class 3 in the Package file. Class 3 packages may be changed to Class 2 by the Field Enhancement and Sustainment (FES) office, upon successful FES SQA completion that assesses compliance with VistA development requirements.

Class 2, Class 3, or COTS patches that include M code must meet the following requirements:

- 1. Request a unique package definition entry in FORUM to define the Package domain namespace and file range,
- 2. Develop package software within the application boundary defined,
- 3. Follow all VA standards and conventions for developing (such as: M programming and Kernel Security standards),
- 4. Follow the VistA Reference Guide for package development. If the development team develops outside the Authorized Boundaries defined in the VistA Reference Guide, then the development team must coordinate their alternate approach with the VA OIT Infrastructure Dev. & Doc group at infrastructuredevdoc@va.gov.
- 5. Respect interface boundaries of Packages
- 6. Document external interfaces in the routine (following SAC format) to reflect the Integration Control Registration (ICR) that matches what the routine is accessing. The ICRs in FORUM are not currently updated to reflect non-Class 1 packages that are

- subscribing to the ICR. A pilot is underway that could impact the ICR review process for Class 2 and Class 3 developers.
- 7. Successfully complete the SQA patch review provided by the Field Enhancement and Sustainment (FES) Office, instead of the OIT DSO SQA Office.

7.2 Product Team: Identify the need for a new Package

The product team will identify the need for a new unique Package Definition, with a unique namespace and file range, to define the application boundaries for a new product.

The assigned package "namespace" is needed by the M code developers to create routine, global, security key, option, template, bulletin, function, screen, help frame, protocol, form, block, list templates, objects, dialogues, remote procedures, Kernel parameters, and other software components for the new product.

7.3 Product Team: Request a new Package/Namespace

The product team requests a new Package/Namespace by submitting answers to the following questions to the VA OIT VISTA DBA GROUP at oedvistadba@va.gov.

Questionnaire for Product Team needing a new Package/Namespace:

Who is developing the software (DSO SPM, vendor hired by station, VA OIT field developer, COTS vendor, other)?

Is there a planned M code patch for this package?

Is the patch currently developed in a station's namespace?

What site(s) is this product currently at and for how long?

What are the plans for enterprise-wide use?

If COTS product, is it approved by TRM? Name in TRM?

Is there a VA System Inventory (VASI) number associated with the product?

Is this package assigned to OIT Development, Security Operations (DSO) for a Class 3 to Class 1 development conversion?

Have you submitted a VA IT Process Request (VIPR) for review of a patch for this package?

Does your product have external references to VistA package data? Include summary of interfaces.

What is the user interface? Web based, GUI,...

Will the package need new files to distribute with the package? List with purpose of file

Will the package be distributed as a Class 1 package out of FORUM?

Will the product be assigned for future support to a DSO Product Line?

Who is the Project Manager?

Who is the Lead Developer?

Who will be the Support Contact?

Provide a summary of the product to include in the package description. Include history of development, use in the field by the VA, and what function it fulfills for the VA.

7.4 DBA Team: Determine the Application Boundaries

The DBA Team will review the answers to the "Questionnaire for Product Team needing a new Package/Namespace" to determine the package class, recommended package description, and files needed by the product that define the application boundary. The existing PACKAGE file (#9.4) definitions must be considered when defining the new namespace and file ranges, to ensure the application boundaries do not overlap.

A DBA Team member will mock-up a proposal of the new PACKAGE file entry, naming recommended package name, namespace, file number range, and description, along with why recommended values are being selected. The proposal will be shared with the DBA Team to get feedback to refine the PACKAGE entry definition and gain concurrence.

Once agreement is made for the proposed Package Definition, then the new PACKAGE file entry will be entered into the PACKAGE FILE (#9.4)

7.5 DBA Team: Create the new PACKAGE FILE (#9.4) entry

The DBA Team will use the option ENTER/EDIT PACKAGES [DBA PACKAGE EDIT] to add the PACKAGE FILE (#9.4) entry in FORUM. The fields added will include the following: Name, Short Description, Description, Prefix (Namespace), Class, File low and high number range assignment, Synonyms, and VASI number.

If the new package will be interfacing with other VistA packages, then the PACKAGE file (#9.4) field called PRIMARY PACKAGE must be set to YES. If the value is not YES, then the Package entry cannot be selected at the Custodial Package or Subscribing Package prompts in the INTEGRATION CONTROL REGISTRATION options in FORUM.

Once the new Package entry is defined in FORUM, the definition will be shared with the development team for a final review. Corrections will be made before the next step.

At any time in FORUM, a FORUM user has read only access to inquire about a PACKAGE file entry. The FORUM user should select the DBA MENU [DBA] option, then PACKAGE FILE INFORMATION [DBA PACKAGE FILE INFO] option, and then the 'Package file inquire' [DBA PACKAGE INQUIRE] option.

The following is an example of a Package file inquiry output for a PACKAGE file entry definition:

NAME: MRSA INITIATIVE REPORTS PREFIX: MMRS

SHORT DESCRIPTION: MRSA PREVENTION INITIATIVE

DESCRIPTION: VHA Directive 2007-002, MRSA Prevention Initiative, requires

facilities

to screen patients on Admission, subsequent Transfer(s), and Discharge. Facilities are required to report compliance rates with Nares Screening on Admission to the Facility

and Unit(s) and on Discharge. This information also determines the Prevalence and Transmission rates of MRSA. Data is reported monthly to the Inpatient Evaluation Center (IPEC). The purpose of the software will allow facilities to extract MRS A data for reporting purposes.

DEVELOPMENT ISC: HPS PEO CLASS: VISN

EDITOR: DBA, TEAM

EDITOR: DEVELOPER, LEAD TECHNICAL LEAD: YES

SUPPORT CONTACT: SUPPORT, ONE DEVELOPER: PROJECT, MANAGER DEVELOPER: DEVELOPER, LEAD

LOW FILE NUMBER: 104 HIGH FILE NUMBER: 104.99
CURRENT STATUS: ASSIGNED PRIMARY PACKAGE: YES

CUSTODIANTYPE: PRODUCT DOMAIN

DEVELOPER (PERSON/SITE): DEVELOPER, LEAD/MIAMI

EXCLUDED NAME SPACE:

7.6 DBA Team: Class 1 Package Setup in Patch Module

A new Class 1 Package entered in the PACKAGE file (#9.4) must also have a new PATCH/PROBLEM Package file (#11007) entry created by the DBA Team to enable the package to create patches in the National Patch Module (NPM).

The PATCH MODULE package, A1AE namespace, contains the software referred to as "National Patch Module in FORUM. The National Patch Module keeps track of patches for any package which is in the PATCH/PROBLEM PACKAGE file (#11007- officially named DHCP PATCH/PROBLEM PACKAGE) in FORUM. Authorized package developers enter the patches, and patch users may select which packages they want to view patches for. When patches reach various development statuses bulletins are sent notifying selected users. The patches are stored in the PATCHES file (#11005 - officially named DHCP PATCHES) in FORUM.

A1AE namespaced Options are provided for systematic:

- entry and review of patches by developers
- review and release of patches by verifiers, and
- display and distribution of the released verified patches to the users.

The DBA Team will use the ADD PACKAGE TO PATCH MODULE [A1AE MGRADD] option to add the new package entry into the PATCH/PROBLEM Package file (#11007). The creation of this entry results in sending a BULLETIN to inform a pre-defined list of Mail Groups advising of the new package creation.

The USER SELECTION PERMITTED field in the DHCP PATCH/PROBLEM entry is what triggers the bulletin, but it won't trigger until it is edited to be YES.

Special instruction: The ADD PACKAGE TO PATCH MODULE option must be entered twice for a new package entry.

- 1) The first time entering the option, enter NO at the USER SELECTION PERMITTED prompt, and complete entering the fields.
- 2) The second time entering the option, select the same entry and enter YES at the USER SELECTION PERMITTED prompt, and return through all the fields.

The DBA Team will enter the Project Manager and/or Developer Lead assigned to the package development project in the DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL field. Once a person is identified in the DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL field, that person can add additional personnel entries to identify support, verify, and development personal roles for use in the PATCH MODULE.

Example of DHCP PATCH/PROBLEM PACKAGE file entry for same package:

NUMBER: 822 PACKAGE: MRSA INITIATIVE REPORTS
USER SELECTION PERMITTED: YES * PERMIT DEVELOPER TO COMPLETE: YES

FOR TEST SITE ONLY?: NO ASK PATCH DESCRIPTION COPY: YES

DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL: PROJECT, MANAGER DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL: DEVELOPER, LEAD

VERSION: 1 DATE VERIFIED: JUL 17, 2009

NEXT PROBLEM NUMBER: 1 NEXT PATCH NUMBER: 1

Note: If the DBA Team wants to receive the bulletin notices, they need to add themselves to one of the mail groups listed in the bulletin example below.

Once the USER SELECTION PERMITTED prompt is answered "YES" the NEW DHCP PACKAGE/PATCH Bulletin is fired off to notify end users of the newly created package and is used by members of the Health Systems Platform Team, Mailgroup CSINFRAST, so they can finish defining the files needed for National Patch Tracking to function for the new package.

The following is a capture of the BULLETIN file entry for the A1AE PKG definition. This includes the list of Mail Groups that will be notified about the new package entry.

```
OUTPUT FROM WHAT FILE: BULLETIN//

Select BULLETIN NAME: A1AE PKG
Another one:
Standard Captioned Output? Yes// (Yes)
Include COMPUTED fields: (N/Y/R/B): NO// - No record number (IEN), no Computed
Fields

NAME: A1AE PKG
SUBJECT: New DHCP Problem/Patch
Package
```

MESSAGE: The |1| package is available for user selection as part of the patch module. The package prefix is |2| and the short description of the package is as follows:

|3|

If you choose to select this package you will receive automatic notification of new |1| patches, and automatic printing of these patches when using the 'New Patch Report' option.

To add |1| as a selected package use the 'Select Packages for Notification' option on the 'Patch User Menu'.

MAIL GROUP: APN VISN6

MAIL GROUP: SITEMANAGERSNATIONAL MAIL GROUP: CHIEF PROJECT MANAGERS MAIL GROUP: SOFTWARE SERVICES ALL

MAIL GROUP: CS STAFF MAIL GROUP: CSINFRAST MAIL GROUP: TRAN BA

DESCRIPTION: This bulletin notifies users when a package is available for

user selection in the patch module.

PARAMETER: 1

DESCRIPTION: Package

PARAMETER: 2

DESCRIPTION: Prefix

PARAMETER: 3

DESCRIPTION: Short Description

The following is an actual bulletin sent out:

Subj: New DHCP Problem/Patch Package [#106071832] 08/17/21@14:23 12 lines

From: DBA,TEAM

The VistA Audit Solution package is available for user selection as part of the patch module. The package prefix is 'WEBS' and the short description of the package is as follows:

VAS - VistA Audit Solution

If you choose to select this package you will receive automatic notification of new VistA Audit Solution patches, and automatic printing of these patches when using the 'New Patch Report' option.

To add VistA Audit Solution as a selected package use the 'Select Packages for Notification' option on the 'Patch User Menu'.

7.7 HSP Team: Class 1 Package Additional Setup

The Health Systems Platform (HSP), CSINFRAST Mail Group members, will receive the "NEW DHCP Problem/Patch Package" bulletin and use it to finish defining the files needed for National Patch Tracking to function for the new package entry.

7.8 Product Team: Class 1 Setup Personnel for Patch Module

The Project Manager or the Lead Developer, that requested the new Package, must setup the personnel that will be performing specific support, verify, and development roles in the Patch Module. The person entered by the DBA Team in the DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL field must enter the remaining personnel.

The person entered by the DBA must go to the Package Management [A1AE PKGMGT] menu, then select the Enter/Edit Authorized Users [A1AE PKGEDIT] option. This option allows authorized developers of a package to add development personnel, support personnel, and verifiers. *The personnel for Developer and Verifier roles must be different individuals*.

The following three keys are automatically allocated to the user when entered as a developer, support person or verifier: A1AE DEVELOPER, A1AE SUPPORT, and A1AE PHVER.

Select OPTION NAME: A1AE USER Patch User Menu				
Select Patch User Menu <test account=""> Option: Developer's Menu</test>				
Select Developer's Menu <test account=""> Option: Package Management</test>				
Select Package Management <test account=""> Option: ENTER/Edit Authorized Users</test>				
Select PACKAGE: PACKAGE TEST PT CLASS 3/FIELD				
Adding Authorized Users to: PACKAGE TEST				
USER SELECTION PERMITTED: NO//				
* PERMIT DEVELOPER TO COMPLETE: YES//				
FOR TEST SITE ONLY?: NO//				
PERFORMANCE MEASURE FLAG:				
ASK PATCH DESCRIPTION COPY:				
Select SUPPORT PERSONNEL: SUPPORT, ONE//				

SUPPORT PERSONNEL: SUPPORT, ONE/		
VERIFY PERSONNEL: VERIFIER//		
VERIFIER'S DOMAIN:		
Select SUPPORT PERSONNEL:		
Select DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL: DEVELOPMENT, TEN//		
allocating A1AE SUPPORT, A1AE PHVER, and A1AE DEVELOPER keys		

8. References and Related Links

The following documents are available from links related to the VistA Reference Guide Sharepoint page <u>VistA Reference Guide (sharepoint.com)</u>:

- VistA Reference Guide link:https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OITEPMOVistAOffice/SitePages/VistA%20Guide.a spx
- Health Services Portfolio Verifier Account Maintenance Guide, dated September 2021, is available at the following link:
 https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OITEPMOVistAOffice/Shared%20Documents/Forms/Al
 IItems.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=xKZ2mh&cid=0ef3a519%2Dce3a%2D4db9%2D9f6d%2D2e
 783526d2ac&FolderCTID=0x012000A78B13F55919A445A6B2436281DF8EA8&id=%2Fs
 ites%2FOITEPMOVistAOffice%2FShared%20Documents%2FVistA%20Guide%2FVistA%20Package%20Namespace%20Setup&viewid=e5d92ad3%2D7a0d%2D4e38%2Db4e2%2De
 9bade307dff

The following are authoritative source links related to product/package information, standards, and patch processes:

- <u>VistA Monograph –</u>
 <u>https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OITEPMOVistAOffice/SitePages/VistA%20Monograph.</u>
- VA Software Document Library (VDL) https://www.va.gov/vdl/
- <u>VA System Inventory (VASI) –</u> https://vac21appvem200.va.gov/VASI/ (The VEAR Systems Home site requires access.
- VA EA VistA Dashboard –
 https://app.powerbigov.us/groups/me/apps/5303d5ca-e063-4a4c-bc46-43392328111d/reports/adbbf65e-f668-440f-a627-

 $\underline{b2081f985b19/ReportSection0fc99f2070328484b554?bookmarkGuid=Bookmark263faf9d51}\\edce 61945d$

- M Programming Standards and Conventions SAC https://trm.oit.va.gov/RequestFiles/64102/M_Programming_SAC.docx
- M Standards and Conventions Work Group SharePoint Site https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OITEPMODevelopment/sac/default.aspx
- National Patch Module Guide dated September 2021
 https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OITProcessAssetLibrary/Library/vista-national_patch_m
 odule_guide.docx
- VistA Primary Developer Review
 Checklisthttps://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/OITProcessAssetLibrary/_layouts/15/Doc.
 aspx?sourcedoc=%7BF7BF7860-545B-431A-9C31 49294AA95E29%7D&file=vista_primary_developer_review_checklist.docx&wdLOR=c438
 F7544-44B1-480C-95A4-A7214EBD7B28&action=default&mobileredirect=true
- <u>VistA Secondary Developer Review Checklist</u>
 https://vaww.oed.wss.va.gov/process/Library/vista_secondary_developer_review_checklist.d
 ocx
- <u>VistA SQA Checklist</u>
 https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/OITEPMOSoftwareTesting508/Ea95V9VHvNpIqXT1Q
 <u>MEemW0Bontu7quG0bpZEmNfBcVzCA?e=rf6idq&wdLOR=c929C135B-5433-49B2-BB7F-608FA3833BB9</u>
- <u>VistA Verifier Checklist</u>
 https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/OITProcessAssetLibrary/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BA7D39720-42E3-4AC3-B2F6-DE2CD6BF6519%7D&file=vista_verifier_checklist.docx&wdLOR=c0C00AABD-F478-4477-A1C7-57F0E768D515&action=default&mobileredirect=true

9. Contact

For more information on VistA Package/Namespace and Patch Module Setups, please contact the VA OIT VISTA DBA GROUP at oedvistadba@va.gov