

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service (P&LMS)**

**Report to the
Intersociety Pathology Council (IPC)
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The VA Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service continues to provide high quality services to support patient care in the nations largest integrated healthcare system. All of the laboratories in the VA continue to be fully accredited by external inspection agencies. VA laboratories continue to provide valuable training experiences for both resident physicians and non-physician laboratorians through affiliation agreements. VA pathologists continue to provide high quality diagnostic, educational, and research services. Highlighted below are but a few of the issues initiatives, and projects in which VA P&LMS was involved.

- 1.) The Vista Blood Establishment Computer Software (VBECS) has received continuing updates. Positive patient identification has been added for transfusions via the VA Barcode Extension project. VA has completed installation at four sites and is now in the process of national deployment. An adaptation of the software for use in tracking human tissues is in the planning stages.
- 2.) The VA has completed a tele-pathology module to be deployed as part of its VISTA software system. This new system builds on our existing tele-radiology functionality and will allow for tele-consultations between the VA hospitals using static, video, and whole slide imaging. We are currently conducting alpha tests of the system and hope to begin deployment next year.
- 3.) VA tele-medicine continues to develop mobile applications for creating laboratory orders and viewing results. Latest module is a mobile app for viewing genetic test results, which aggregates the patients testing across VA and referral laboratories providing a single portal for all of a patients molecular tests..
- 4.) The VA has begun development of a system to track multi-drug resistant microorganisms system for deployment by 2017. This system is currently entering beta testing phase.
- 5.) VA P&LMS has developed staffing model for its facilities to use in determining the number of pathologists needed for a facility based on clinical work load. This system uses the VA's internal work relative value unit rather than the medicare/medicaid RVU and includes consideration of the clinical non-RVU generating activities in the final calculation. The goal is to provide facility management with a better understanding of their staffing needs and provide for

representation of the large amount of non-RVU generating clinical activity performed by pathologists. This is in the final phases of the Federal concurrence process and is estimated to be released this year. VA has completed a staffing model for technical level staff which it is testing. Our intent is to release this for comment once our initial evaluation is complete.

- 6.) VA P&LMS has created workgroups for the evaluation of molecular and genetic testing for veterans. Workgroups were formed for the major testing modalities including representation of the VA genetic medicine service, have creating national guidelines for laboratory test selection and are preparing for release.
- 7.) VA P&LMS has released it latest version of the P&LMS Laboratory Handbook on Jan 26th. 2016.