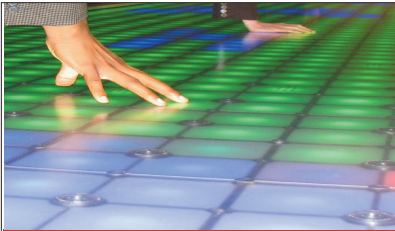




# OI News You Can Use

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“The ‘culture of quality’ depended on the successful implementation of several innovations....”

From “Creating a Culture of Quality: The Remarkable Transformation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System”, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Editorial, August 17, 2004.

## Making Local Innovations National

VHA clinicians have long benefited from locally developed applications, termed Class III software. In fact, doctors and other healthcare professionals working closely with IT professionals have often been credited with VistA’s great success. However, variations in VistA installations from medical center to medical center often make it difficult for others to adopt useful innovations. VHA is putting in place processes that will support the continued development of Class III products and make sure existing Class III high-value solutions are brought forward.

There are both immediate actions and long term plans to position Class III candidates for national release. Existing Class III products are being identified, reviewed, and assessed in large numbers for possible release. At the same time, test accounts are providing developers a platform to collaborate on ideas for development of Class III products.

VHA is planning for long-term Class III development with the Innovation Sandbox. When it becomes fully operational, the Innovation Sandbox will open a virtual environment for developers across the VHA to work on solutions to common problems and deliver those solutions in compliance with VA development standards.

Three Class III products are being piloted now, eight are under technical readiness review prior to release, and a third set has just undergone review by the Informatics & Data Management Committee (IDMC).

The first round of three pilot projects include:

**CAIRO Shift-Change Handoff Tool for Physicians** - Developed in Indianapolis, the purpose of this application is to reduce the variability in physician to physician communication at patient handoff, and to increase readability. It will be released to test sites in early March 2008.

**Surgery Case Manager** - Developed in Portland, this application allows tracking of surgeries, including medical and surgical pre-op evaluations, wait times for evaluations and surgeries, cancellations and other delays. It is projected for national release in late May 2008.

**Medication Reconciliation** - Developed in Hines, this application facilitates the development of a complete list of medications for the patient at discharge. It has been operational at Hines as Class I, since January 29, 2008.

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## Craig’s Corner



This issue of the OI News focuses on Innovation – Past, Present and Future.

In the recent **p**ast, VA and DoD collaborated to make information from each of their services available to healthcare providers in the other’s electronic health record through the Bidirectional Health Information Exchange (BHIE). But we’re not resting on our laurels! We continue to search for ways to make that information even easier to retrieve and richer in content and to that end have formed a BHIE Tiger Team. If you have ideas for the team’s consideration, email your suggestions to me at [craig.luigart@va.gov](mailto:craig.luigart@va.gov). Please put BHIE Tiger Team in the subject line.

**P**resently, through the Class III to Class I (aka ‘321’) process, we’re working to make successful local innovations available on a national scale. Our feature article highlights this.

In the **f**uture, we will be setting up an exciting new collaboration space called the Innovation Sandbox. Anyone with a VA account will be able to “play” in the sandbox. We expect great products to emerge from the ability of our creative employees as they work together more seamlessly.

I hope that you find the highlights of the newsletter exciting and informative. Please visit the web sites on the reverse of this newsletter to stay informed about the future of our innovations program.

Best regards,  
Craig Luigart  
Chief Officer, VHA Office of Information



## Bidirectional Health Information Exchange (BHIE) Tiger Team



Photo courtesy of IEEE

**O**I Chief Officer Craig Luigart directed the formation of a Tiger Team to identify solutions to problems in the transfer of electronic health data between VA and DoD. The team is led by Joe Gardner, Deputy Director, VA/DoD Health IT Sharing

Program and is comprised of experts from diverse disciplines, including medical practitioners, IT specialists, educators, administrators and project managers.

The Tiger Team's initial meeting was held on February 1st. Their first assignment is analysis of electronic data transfer issues in the BHIE Program. The team is collating information from VA Medical Center incidents, reports, staff visits and user inquiries to isolate problems and outline plans for resolution. Joe Gardner described the nature of the team's work, stating, "...this is a rapid response team focused on identifying and resolving immediate concerns of users. Our work will not take the place of existing organizational structures." The team will document system performance issues, associated technical problems and work with program managers to define solutions. Results will be widely disseminated to users in the field and included in plans for future systems training.

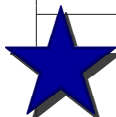
## Making Local Innovations National

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Eight software candidates in the second round are currently under technical review to determine their readiness for release as Class I products. This review will ensure:

- software is compliant with standards, such as 508, privacy and security;
- there is adequate documentation to maintain the software;
- development standards have been met;
- appropriate quality control has been exercised; and
- ongoing maintenance has been planned.

To date, local solutions released at the national level have yielded excellent results, due largely to the coordination of VHA leadership and committed developers who have been willing to actively participate in review processes and necessary revisions. It is this partnership with local developers that makes VA innovation work.

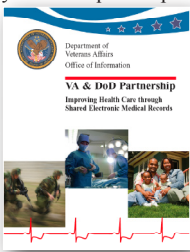


OI has released a new brochure and video that highlight VA/DoD information exchange. To request copies see these products and learn how you can request copies, please visit:

- **VHA OI Intranet:** <http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/vhacio>
- **VHA OI Internet:** [http://www1.va.gov/vha\\_oi](http://www1.va.gov/vha_oi)



Veteran, Michael Welsh is featured in the new VA/DoD video



Screenshot of brochure cover

## A New Way To "Play"

**O**I's Chief Health Informatics Office is hard at work transforming the Innovation Sandbox from concept to reality. When available, the Sandbox will be a virtual space to collaborate, innovate, and develop ideas, requirements, and products that can become software for VistA, VA's award-winning health information system. The Sandbox will offer the ability to collaborate no matter where VHA innovators are geographically located. This will enhance the opportunity for good ideas from the field, which have historically been bound to a local development environment, to have their potential recognized and promoted for national use.

Anyone with interest and ideas for VistA will be able to "play" in the Sandbox. Of course, users must follow the organizational structure that governs their work. The Sandbox welcomes all individuals with VA accounts and holds the principles of collaboration and innovation as keys to successful development and ultimate national release of the high-quality software for which VA is known.

OI staff is currently identifying the software products that will be used to establish the Sandbox environment. After technical testing is complete, OI will request assistance from VA experts in the areas of project management, collaboration, and development to conduct usability testing. Following final acceptance of the Sandbox components, pilot testing of a select number of projects will begin. Be on the look out for more updates on opportunities for innovation in future OI newsletters.

## Information Resources

For more information on the BHIE Tiger Team, contact Fred McLain at [fred.mclain@va.gov](mailto:fred.mclain@va.gov).

**For more information on the status of projects and requests, please visit:**

<http://vaww1.va.gov/esm/page.cfm?pg=99>

**The Class III web site, Application Support: Field Development, can be found at:**  
[http://sds.oit.va.gov/application\\_support/field\\_development/](http://sds.oit.va.gov/application_support/field_development/)

**If you have Class III software to submit for national consideration, please submit a new service request at:**

<http://vista.med.va.gov/pas/ITServiceRequest.htm>