TO: United States Senate

United States Congress

Office of the President

Office of the Vice-President

To all concerned:

This is coming from a group of Cancer Registry professionals that either work as employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs or as contractors doing Cancer Registry work for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

We are aware of the President’s initiative (The Cancer Moonshot) to accelerate the rate of progress against cancer. This new software will ruin any chance of advancing ANY cancer initiatives within the Department Of Veterans Affairs.

We are very concerned regarding this CERNER EHR that the previous administration instituted.

Some of us have a direct knowledge of it’s use as we were part of the rollout at the Spokane VA.

As of today 3/26/22 at Spokane we have been unable to accession any new cancer cases into the cancer registry software as the CERNER record has no utility to find cases in the Pathology, Radiology or Inpatient departments of the hospital.

So many pieces of VISTA/CPRS interface with each other to make record abstraction possible, but CERNER does not have any of these interfaces requiring for double entry of every thing into the Cancer Registry, which is probably the same for the other registries that the VA keeps, such as the Agent Orange Registry.

Apparently part of the reason for changing medical records was so that there would be a seamless transition from military members into the VA system, this is not so. The records do not integrate with each other any better than the current VISTA/CPRS integrates with the DOD.

We feel that this 16 Billion Dollar expense of federal funds is a step backward in the care of our veterans. The system is clumsy and difficult to use, whereas the current VISTA/CPRS system has ease of use and interoperability throughout the home hospital as well as easy access to the records at every other VA hospital and clinic in the country.

We are aware of the President’s initiative (The Cancer Moonshot) to accelerate the rate of progress against cancer. This new software will ruin any chance of advancing ANY cancer initiatives within the Department Of Veterans Affairs.

The CERNER record does not interact with the current Cancer Registry software that the VA has been using and updated for at least the past 20 years. Currently all demographic information from the VISTA/CPRS chart loads automatically into the Cancer Registry Record. The CERNER EHR does not have that utility and all fields need to be entered into the Cancer Registry Abstract manually which will provide all kinds opportunity for errors to be manually typed into the abstract, not only will this be a step back but will also make all the Cancer Registries in all the hospital less productive as all this manual data entry will take longer and longer to enter .

Contracting: Companies may not be able to comply with the contractual obligations due to the impossibility of finding the cancer cases with this software.

The new record does not contain any of the previous information from VISTA/CPRS prior to the GO LIVE date so in order to access the medical records prior to 10/2020 (or the hospital’s GOLIVE DATE) the user will have to have 2 medical records open in order to properly treat patients. And they say the that VISTA/CPRS will be retired after 2 years. So, the clinician will only have the medical records available from the Go Live Date and onward? Everything prior to 2020 or GO LIVE date will be lost??

VISTA/CPRS has been an award winning Electronic record since in inception and has been updated and improved to meet the needs of our veterans’ health care. To throw it all away in favor of an inferior product at the cost of 16 BILLION $$ and rising, rather than to invest that tax-payer money into the current system seems illogical.

VISTA received the Computerworld [Smithsonian Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smithsonian_Award) for best use of Information Technology in Medicine, and continues to the present day to receive the highest physician satisfaction scores in national [Electronic Health Record](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_Health_Record) (EHR) surveys[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]. In 2014 and again in 2016 national surveys of over 15,000 physician users of EHRs rated VISTA with the highest overall satisfaction rating in the U.S.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VistA#cite_note-MedscapeSurvey2016-4) Over 65% of all physicians trained in the U.S. rotate through the VHA and use VISTA, making VISTA the most familiar [EHR](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_health_record) in the U.S.

We sincerely hope that the VA will end this folly with CERNER and return to it’s award winning EHR, (VISTA/CPRS) imagine what the VA’s record could be with that amount of money invested in it, rather than investing it in a private company.

Sincerely,

Margaret Heinikel, CTR (CANCER REGISTAR).