

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

May 27, 2016

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U. S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

On October 27, 2015, the Information Technology Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the interoperability of health care records between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). The VA is responsible for providing Veterans with, as Secretary McDonald put it, “the high quality service that they’ve earned.”<sup>1</sup> In carrying out this responsibility, the VA relies on its electronic health information system—the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA)—which consists of more than 100 separate computer applications.

Over the past 15 years, VA has undertaken various initiatives to modernize or replace VistA, starting in 2001 with a program referred to as HealtheVet. This initiative was followed by a 2011 joint effort with DoD to develop the interoperable electronic health record (iEHR), followed by a 2013 effort with VistA Evolution. However, these efforts, just to name a few, have not produced the kinds of modern systems and capabilities that Congress mandated. Moreover, VA has recently indicated that it may be pursuing yet another modernization initiative.

Given the significance of VA’s electronic health record information system to the performance of its health care mission, and in light of VA’s repeated attempts to modernize VistA, the Subcommittee is requesting information on the efforts to modernize VistA. We request that the Government Accountability Office conduct a study of the VistA modernization project. In particular, we would like to receive information on the history of VA’s efforts to modernize VistA, including the costs and results of the efforts, the key contractors that have been involved, and the work that these contractors performed. In addition, we ask that the study determine VA’s current plans and estimated costs for modernizing VistA.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert McDonald, Sec’y, U.S. Dep’t of Veterans Affairs, statement before H. Comm. on Veterans’ Affairs (Jul. 22, 2015), available at <http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/docs/HVAC-BUDGET-TESTIMONY-7-23-2015.pdf>.

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We look forward to hearing from you regarding this request. Please contact Sean Brebbia of the Subcommittee staff at (202) 225-5074 with any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Will Hurd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being clearly legible.

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Will Hurd  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Information Technology

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin L. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being clearly legible.

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Robin L. Kelly  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Information Technology