

VistA (Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture)

VistA, (Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture) which was originally developed in the 1970's by the Veterans Administration, is an open-source (meaning that the code is available for others to collaborate upon and improve) clinical documentation system that is used by all the 160-plus VA hospitals in the United States, plus all of their outpatient ambulatory clinics. Providing care to over 4 million veterans, employing 180,000 medical personnel and operating 163 hospitals, over 800 clinics and 135 nursing homes , about a quarter of the nation's population is potentially eligible for VA benefits and services because they are veterans, family members or survivors of veterans. The VistA system has been in use by the Veterans Administration for more than 20 years, and as such is one of the most mature electronic medical records in existence.

As the Veterans Administration does not bill third-party payers, VistA is not a billing system. VistA was released to the public through the Freedom of Information Act by the Veterans Administration and today is publicly available on CDs for a nominal fee. Although the software is free, there is a cost to install, implement and maintain it.

WorldVistA was formed to extend and collaboratively improve the VistA electronic health record and health information system for use outside of its original setting. The system was originally developed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for use in its veterans hospitals, outpatient clinics, and nursing homes. WorldVistA has a number of development efforts aimed at adding new software modules such as pediatrics, obstetrics, and other functions not used in the

veterans' healthcare setting. WorldVistA seeks to help those who choose to adopt the VistA system to successfully master, install, and maintain the software for their own use. WorldVistA will strive to guide VistA adopters and programmers towards developing a community based on principles of open, collaborative, peer review software development and dissemination.