

The Honorable Mike Coffman

Operations Center (NSOC) conducted continuous monitoring and scanning to validate the completion of remediation procedures. VA OIT began several initiatives to increase visibility to VA assets across the enterprise to include an upgrade of the Active Directory infrastructure and two-factor authentication implementation enterprise-wide for all accounts. You also asked about the OIG report titled, "Review of Alleged Transmission of Sensitive VA Data Over Internet Connections." VA determined that the allegation made in the report was (1) inaccurate for the specific network links cited for Veterans Integrated Service Network 23, and (2) inaccurate for the network as a whole. In its final report, OIG acknowledged that VA's wide area network (WAN) does not employ unencrypted public Internet links to transmit sensitive material.

VA did not agree with OIG's characterization of the risk of exposing sensitive data to non-VA personnel over its private network. Nonetheless, VA concurred with OIG's two recommendations and has taken action on both.

The first recommendation remains open. Though VA believes the risk of carrier misconfiguration or malicious behavior internal to the carrier (such that sensitive VA traffic would be exposed to non-VA individuals) is small, it agrees there is some risk. To mitigate this risk, the Chief Information Officer directed—well in advance of OIG's investigation—that VA's WAN circuits be encrypted.

The approval, design, planning, testing, and early stages of the deployment were all completed prior to the OIG's recommendation. To date, under this original initiative, approximately two-thirds of VA's WAN transport between major facilities (medical centers, regional offices, and data centers) is encrypted. The balance of the transport between those major facilities is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of fiscal year 2014. This will prevent a misconfiguration by the carrier or malicious behavior by an employee from exposing VA data. OIG has closed the second recommendation based on information provided by VA.

We appreciate your commitment to keeping our Nation's Veterans data safe and secure and look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee on this matter.

Sincerely,



Stephen W. Warren
Executive in Charge and
Chief Information Officer
Office of Information and Technology