



US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Office of Healthcare Inspections

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Review of VHA's Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence



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The Office of Inspector General (OIG) has released this issue statement to provide information on matters of concern that the OIG has gathered as part of its oversight mission. The OIG conducted this review in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation except for the standard of reporting.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON, DC 20001



January 7, 2026¹

PRELIMINARY RESULT ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: Under Secretary for Health (10)

FROM: Principal Deputy Assistant Inspector General, in the role of Acting Assistant Inspector General, VA Office of Inspector General, Office of Healthcare Inspections (54)

SUBJECT: Review of VHA's Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

This preliminary result advisory memorandum communicates a potential patient safety risk related to Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) chat tools for clinical care and documentation.² On October 14, 2025, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Office of Healthcare Inspections initiated a national review of VHA's use of generative AI.³

VHA authorizes two general purpose AI chat tools for use with patient health information: VA GPT and Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat.⁴ To use the AI chat tools for clinical care and documentation, VHA users provide the AI chat tool with clinical information and a prompt.⁵ The output from an AI chat tool can be used to support medical decision-making and copied into the

¹ A draft version of this memorandum was sent to VHA on January 5, 2026.

² Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that, based on a user prompt, can create new content, such as text and images, based on existing data. A prompt is an instruction provided to a generative AI system. National Institute of Standards and Technology, "system prompt," accessed December 18, 2025, https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/system_prompt.

³ Due to the government shutdown and furlough, the review team ceased work from October 20 through November 12, 2025. The OIG team completed the last interview for this preliminary result advisory memorandum on December 10, 2025.

⁴ VA GPT is a general use AI chat tool created by VA. Microsoft 365 Copilot chat is a general use AI chat tool that the VA provides to all VA staff. Neither AI chat tool has access to web search; therefore, the chat tools' knowledge base is not current. VHA Digital Health Office, *VA GPT: Appropriate Use in Clinical Settings*, (Draft/Pre-Decisional Guidance).

⁵ A prompt is an instruction provided to a generative AI system. National Institute of Standards and Technology, "system prompt," accessed December 18, 2025, https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/system_prompt; Shrimai Prabhumoye, Kazuma Hashimoto, Yingbo Zhou, Alan W. Black, and Ruslan Salakhutdinov, "Focused Attention Improves Document-Grounded Generation," *Proceedings of the 2021 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies (NAACL-HLT 2021)*, June 2021.

electronic health record. However, generative AI can produce inaccurate outputs, including omissions, which may affect diagnosis and treatment decisions.⁶

VHA Directive 1050.01(1), *VHA Quality and Patient Safety Programs*, sets the overarching policy that the Office of Quality Management and the National Center for Patient Safety “establish and provide operational oversight of VHA quality programs and VHA patient safety programs.”⁷ According to the *Joint Information Bulletin: Current Guidance for Generative AI Models at VA* issued by VA’s National AI Institute (NAII) and Office of Information and Technology’s (OIT) Office of the Chief Technology Officer, generative AI “introduces new risks and unknown consequences that can have a significantly negative impact on the privacy and safety of Veterans.”⁸

The OIG learned from interviews that VHA’s AI efforts for health care are driven by an informal collaboration between the Acting Director of NAII and the Chief AI Officer of OIT.⁹ Based on interviews, the OIG determined that NAII leaders and the Chief AI Officer team did not coordinate with National Center for Patient Safety in the fielding of AI chat tools for clinical use.

Through interviews with leaders from NAII, OIT, and the National Center for Patient Safety, the OIG learned that VHA does not have a formal mechanism to identify, track, or resolve risks associated with generative AI. The OIG is concerned about VHA’s ability to promote and safeguard patient safety without a standardized process for managing AI-related risks. Moreover, not having a process precludes a feedback loop and a means to detect patterns that could improve the safety and quality of AI chat tools used in clinical settings.

Given the critical nature of the issue, the OIG is broadly sharing this preliminary finding so that VHA leaders are aware of this risk to patient safety.

The OIG’s review remains ongoing. A comprehensive analysis of this and any additional findings will be included in the final report, following completion of standard review processes. The OIG will continue to engage with VHA leaders, monitor updates to policies and guidance, and assess the adequacy of the response to this concern in the final report.



JULIE KROVIK, MD
Principal Deputy Assistant Inspector General,
in the role of Acting Assistant Inspector General,
for Healthcare Inspections

⁶ Elham Asgari et al., “A Framework to Assess Clinical Safety and Hallucination Rates of LLMs for Medical Text Summarisation,” *npj Digital Medicine* 8, no. 274 (May 13, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41746-025-01670-7>.

⁷ VHA Directive 1050.01(1), *VHA Quality and Patient Safety Programs*, March 24, 2023, amended March 5, 2024.

⁸ VA NAII and OIT, *Joint Information Bulletin Current Guidance for Generative AI Models at VA*, July 2023.

⁹ The OIG was told the National AI Institute (NAII) is comprised of three staff and functions under VHA’s Digital Health Office. The Chief AI Officer team functions under OIT’s Chief Technology Officer.

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