

2023 ANNUAL REPORT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS | NATIONAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INSTITUTE



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نن: COLLABORATION



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Our team is dedicated to evolving the exploration of new opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to support the *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)* in providing impactful health care services, in terms of the patient experience, delivery, and quality of care. As we strive to overcome challenges, we continue to build relationships, fostering collaboration across VA and with our federal and community partners, pursuing the greatest good for Veterans.

AI is changing the health care landscape nationally and internationally. From the use of chatbots improving access to care through scheduling and communications, to AI-assisted cancer screening tools, robotic surgery, and applications that remotely monitor patient health, AI can be applied in a multitude of fashions to support patients and health care providers. There are limitless opportunities to explore in the field of smart technology.

Since its establishment in 2019, the VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) has been at the forefront of building and applying trustworthy AI innovations and policy, increasing robust AI research and development capacity at VA to create useful AI solutions that improve Veteran

health care. When working to develop and scale powerful technologies such as AI, we must remember that we cannot do it alone—that is why we continuously engage in collaborations to accomplish our goals.

It is through collaboration within VA, and across government, private industry, non-profit groups, research institutions, and academia, that we have been able to advance our mission of establishing VA as the preeminent organization for research, development, and training of AI that promotes a global impact, ensuring the health and well-being of Veterans.

Beyond improving our ability to identify new technologies and pilot AI use cases,

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our collaborations have spurred many accomplishments this year. Throughout this report, we cover the commendable progress made during fiscal year 2023 (FY23) in policy development, research, innovation, thought leadership, and organizational improvement.

This year, VA became the first federal agency to release its own Trustworthy AI Framework that integrated all current AI policies and standards established by the White House into a single framework tailored to the VA mission. This framework lays the integral foundation for how VA designs, develops, acquires, and uses AI to increase Veteran trust and confidence, while adhering to the highest ethical standards and privacy protections.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has prioritized our ability to hire faster and more competitively, connect Veterans to the soonest and best care, accelerate VA's journey as a thought leader, and most importantly, prevent Veteran suicide. We have also continued our AI Summit Series by hosting the International Summit for AI in Health Care, which was a success in promoting and fostering high-value collaboration on the

latest developments in advancing Veteran care through AI solutions around the globe.

Over the past year, we have made progress on the strategic priorities of VA in regard to AI, and expanded the NAII's activities both internally and externally at VA. In FY24, we aim to continue to break down barriers in translating AI advances into real-world capabilities.

Remember, you too can be a part of our mission. I invite you to join our AI@VA Community to stay engaged with all our latest work. While we are still early in our journey, we are excited to leverage the very best AI has to offer in providing world-class care and services to Veterans.



DR. GIL ALTEROVITZ
VA NAII Director
VHA Chief AI Officer



*AI Tech Sprints result
in innovations that
address real-world
health care challenges
faced by Veterans.*

— DR. GIL ALTEROVITZ

TRUSTWORTHY AI



As the first federal agency to approve and adopt an official *Trustworthy AI Framework* that integrates current AI guidance from the White House, VA NAII has developed a *Trustworthy AI Framework* tailored to its Veteran-centric mission.

Its adoption as VA's guiding document for harmonizing agency and federal AI requirements was approved by the VA Data Governance Council (DGC). With aims of guiding AI implementation in a safe, secure, ethical, and transparent way, VA NAII spearheaded the development of its new Trustworthy AI Framework to build a strong foundation that encourages user understanding and adoption of new AI technologies used in day-to-day practices.

The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shared the exciting news of VA's new Trustworthy AI Framework at the AI Summit this year, adding, "We have to pair AI with our age-old commitment of serving the needs of Veterans... The tools we are building at VA are a part of our obligation to keep that critical promise."

Officially approved for agency-wide use in July 2023, the new framework allows VA NAII to achieve its goals of satisfying stakeholder interests, while unifying other relevant standards or frameworks, such as: VA Data Ethics Framework; Organisation for Economic, Co-operation, and Development (OECD) AI principles; the White House Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights; National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework; and Government Accountability Office (GAO) Accountability Framework; among others.

The VA Trustworthy AI Framework serves to streamline VA AI governance activities, promote Veteran trust in AI-delivered health care and benefits services, and provide a foundation for developing actionable and measurable implementation guidance for AI system owners in the field. Moving forward, the framework will provide the foundation for governance and risk management at VA.



DEFINING TRUSTWORTHY AI

The VA NAII Trustworthy AI Framework supports VA’s overall mission by advancing the growth and security of responsible AI usage throughout VA. Under six ethical principles, the VA NAII Trustworthy AI Framework defines trustworthy AI as:

PURPOSEFUL

AI technologies should provide clear benefits to Veterans and pose as minimal risk as possible.

EFFECTIVE AND SAFE

AI systems must be designed and monitored to ensure accuracy and safety. Risks must be proactively assessed and mitigated to protect Veteran data.

SECURE AND PRIVATE

Resilient against vulnerabilities, AI systems maintain data stewardship and prohibit any potential malicious exploitation of Veteran data.



FAIR AND EQUITABLE

AI systems are designed, monitored and managed to avoid bias/algorithmic discrimination.

TRANSPARENT AND EXPLAINABLE

Informs Veterans when, what and how their data is being used.

ACCOUNTABLE AND MONITORED

VA uses responsible analytics and automation to limit uncertainty, while ensuring AI systems are continuously monitored.





DID YOU KNOW?

The VA Trustworthy AI Framework uses the definition of AI from Section 238(g) of the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act, which defines AI as:

1. Any artificial system that performs tasks under varying and unpredictable circumstances without significant human oversight, or that can learn from experience and improve performance when exposed to data sets.
2. An artificial system developed in computer software, physical hardware, or other context that solves tasks requiring human-like perception, cognition, planning, learning, communication, or physical action.
3. An artificial system designed to think or act like a human, including cognitive architectures and neural networks.
4. A set of techniques, including machine learning (ML), that is designed to approximate a cognitive task.
5. An artificial system designed to act rationally, including an intelligent software agent or embodied robot that achieves goals using perception, planning, reasoning, learning, communicating, decision-making, and acting.

NOTE: This definition does not include traditional (deductive) statistical methods used for analytical purposes. Thus, there is a clear distinction between AI and analytics. This definition does include systems that are fully, partially, or non-autonomous.

INFLUENTIAL POLICIES

The VA NAII *Trustworthy AI Framework* integrates aspects of aforementioned frameworks and executive orders.

Executive Order (EO) 14091, *Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, was issued as a follow-up to EO 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, which was the preliminary policy issued by the White House to support underserved communities, expose disparities, and mitigate biases that have exacerbated inequities across economic and health systems. EO 14091 places further emphasis on the significance of incorporating protections across all AI activity. EO 13960, *Promoting the Use of Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence in the Federal Government*, is another influential policy that contributed to the foundation of AI regulation and oversight in September 2020.



VA NAII leadership contributed to drafting the initial language of EO 13960 in coordination with the White House, Chief Information Officers Council, and other agencies to ensure AI is designed, developed, acquired, and used with safety and integrity to foster public trust under nine principles:

- ▶ Lawful and respectful of national values
- ▶ Purposeful and performance-driven
- ▶ Accurate, effective and dependable
- ▶ Safe, secure and resilient
- ▶ Understandable
- ▶ Responsible and traceable
- ▶ Regularly monitored

MEASURING TRUSTWORTHY AI COMPLIANCE

Aligning with trustworthy AI federal requirements is of the utmost importance to VA, as it ensures the security and protection of Veteran data, while practicing fair and ethical use of AI. The agency takes successful trustworthy AI compliance to the next level by having a working system in place that thoroughly tracks and monitors its AI inventory by evaluating data on how well its AI use cases comply with EO 13960.

VA AI USE CASE INVENTORY

Under EO 13960, VA is required to compile an agency-wide inventory of its AI systems on an annual basis. This inventory provides visibility across VA and the federal government to ensure that all AI systems provide benefits to Veterans as intended while minimizing risks. The NAII has developed a standardized intake process for documenting a project's trustworthy AI elements that will serve as the foundation for the VHA AI Governance and Management System.

After use cases have been identified, they are assessed for consistency with the trustworthy AI principles in EO 13960, Section 3. Assessment of consistency with its principles (contained within the VA Trustworthy AI Framework) is carried out by VA NAII and the AI Work Group. Use cases found to be inconsistent are provided with plans to achieve consistency or are retired.



VA AI QUICK START GUIDE

The NAII produced a Quick Start Guide to inform potential AI system owners about VA's trustworthy AI principles. The guide provides a set of questions to help AI system owners build trustworthiness into their systems during the early stages of a project.

VA GENERATIVE AI BULLETIN

In collaboration with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, NAII produced an informational bulletin about generative AI to explain the technology, its potential benefits, and the risks associated with the technology to ensure individuals at VA who plan to use the technology are well-informed.

TRUSTWORTHY PROCUREMENT OF AI

The NAII developed documentation for AI Tech Sprints, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), requests for information (RFIs), and requests for proposal (RFPs) to ensure that VA trustworthy AI requirements are built into its AI procurement processes from the beginning and that vendors are held accountable to trustworthy AI standards.

AI INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) SUPPLEMENTAL MODULE

VA published a [research paper](#) on the benefits of an AI IRB Supplemental Module at VA NAII Centers. This supplemental module provides a series of questions to help IRBs identify potential risks in proposed AI research projects. In particular, this module provides risk mitigation in a way that is accessible to non-AI subject matter experts, who may often be responsible for reviewing new proposals.

Since the use of AI may pose risks, such as the potential for data breaches and biases, the set of risk-based questions is designed to protect human subjects involved in AI research and reject any unethical AI studies that may put Veterans' privacy at risk. Additionally, VA NAII plans to share its AI IRB Supplemental Module with other organizations and integrate its questions into research applications, informed consent, a review checklist, and other informational materials.

TRUSTWORTHY AI COMMUNICATIONS

The NAII has disseminated information about trustworthy AI efforts and resources via various high-profile channels, including the agency's AI website, the AI@VA Community, the events at the annual VA NAII AI Summit, and through media and academic engagements.

VA AI LEADERSHIP



As the nation's leader in developing, promoting, implementing, and advising on the maintenance of trustworthy AI, the VA NAII has continued to press forward with its strategic agenda of advancing AI efforts and operations across VA. VA was one of the first five federal agencies to both develop and adopt an official AI strategy, which guides and informs its Veteran-centric activities.

VA's AI Strategy promotes its mission of serving Veterans and leveraging the benefits of VA's renowned infrastructure, while delivering on four objectives:

- ▶ Use AI to improve Veteran experiences and outcomes
- ▶ Increase the capacity and capabilities of AI at VA
- ▶ Increase Veteran and stakeholder trust in AI
- ▶ Expand VA's existing partnerships with agencies and industry

To adequately address the need to *promote AI education, disseminate useful AI information, and fill in AI skill gaps in the federal workforce,* **VA NAII leadership has undertaken a number of new efforts. They have quickly gained traction in solving key issues that impact VA operations to *improve Veteran health care and services.***

FY23 LEADERSHIP EFFORTS

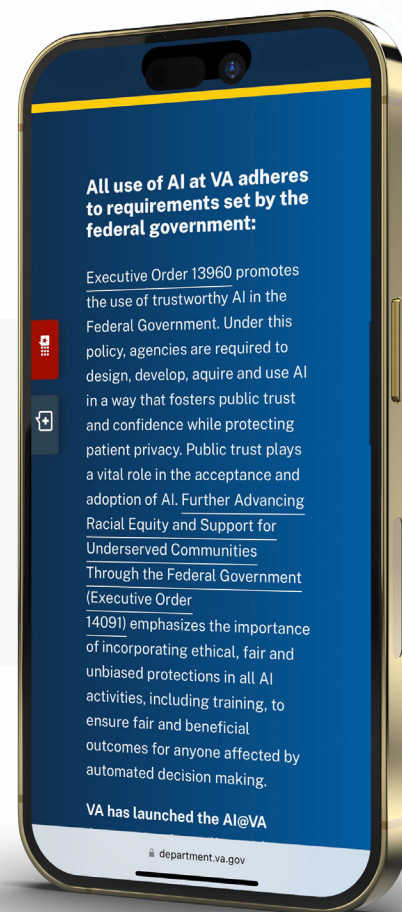
This year the VA NAII has embarked on monumental leadership efforts, including:

- ▶ *The launch of a new VA AI website*
- ▶ *A data use agreement with LinkedIn*
- ▶ *Engagement opportunities*

VA AI WEBSITE

This year, the VA NAII launched the agency's first [AI website](#) that showcases enterprise-wide leadership on cutting-edge AI initiatives impacting Veterans. The website offers a platform to support communication efforts of key AI research and development information to the public, while building stakeholder and Veteran understanding, as well as trust in AI technologies.

This new platform provides information on VA's AI mission and strategy, the VA AI Strategy, access to the AI@VA Community, and more. To fulfill an ongoing need to highlight VA efforts and successes, the website also serves to recognize AI pilots, programs, and new research happening at VA.



DATA USE AGREEMENT WITH LINKEDIN

As a learning health care organization, VA, and VHA in particular, has benefitted from the skills and expertise of data scientists who help increase AI capacity at VA. Working to oversee the collection, storage, management, and protection of data, data scientists perform crucial analyses that accelerate the growth and development of AI. Data scientists also detect data security vulnerabilities while testing and improving network functionality.

Above all, data scientists play an essential role in AI, as they primarily focus on creating algorithms designed to learn patterns and relationships from large amounts of data, which can be leveraged to develop predictive models that drive useful insights to support an organization's decision-making process. With their data-driven insights, data scientists assist leadership in not only understanding data, but also to help inform and advise stakeholders.

Across government sectors and agencies, there has been an ongoing need to hire more data scientists. However, agencies have faced overwhelming challenges in hiring and attracting enough data science professionals to fulfill essential roles. To solve this challenge, VA NAII leadership has signed a data use agreement with LinkedIn to receive automated recruitment data, which holds great potential to improve and advance VA's ability to recruit skilled data scientists that will continue to benefit its mission and commitment to serving the needs of Veterans.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In FY23 alone, VA NAII has demonstrated high-level engagement across over 60 government, industry, and media events. These span from keynote addresses, to interviews, to panels. VA NAII has continued to exercise leadership in:

- ▶ Increasing interagency partnerships
- ▶ Plans related to the VA AI Strategy and NAII Strategy
- ▶ Expanding AI initiatives and projects across VA, industry, and academia
- ▶ Coordinating with DGC bodies to improve AI governance by supporting AI Work Groups, aiding in the creation of an implementation roadmap

AI NETWORK



To build on the strategic work required to pilot and scale AI use cases, one person or one VA NAI center simply cannot accomplish this alone. Collaboration is essential to the mission of the VA NAI as it takes the dedication and expertise of many individuals, such as AI researchers, practitioners across VA medical centers (VAMCs), academic affiliates, and external partners to plan, develop, implement, scale, and maintain AI systems.

Establishing VA as a system and making that system into a network requires consensus and hard work to be successful, and that is why VA NAI has established an AI Network. The AI Network serves as an interconnected web of VA NAI hubs scattered throughout the nation to streamline operations, enhance data accessibility, and synergistically troubleshoot issues—all to advance AI capacity and most importantly, maximize the benefits of useful AI innovations for Veterans.



To date, VA NAI has established four AI Network sites that provide strategic cohesion for local implementation of AI projects and policies:

- ▶ Kansas City, Missouri
- ▶ Long Beach, California
- ▶ Tampa, Florida
- ▶ Washington, DC

VA NAI continues to lead its AI Network to *foster collaboration, partnerships, and leverage outside of its stakeholders, such as vendors, non-profits, and academic institutions* **through its AI Tech Sprints and annual AI Summit.** **This year, VA NAI has expanded its AI Network by growing connections between VAMCs, industry affiliates, and partners, and continued to** *develop governance structures for specialties* **such as precision oncology and AI ethics.**

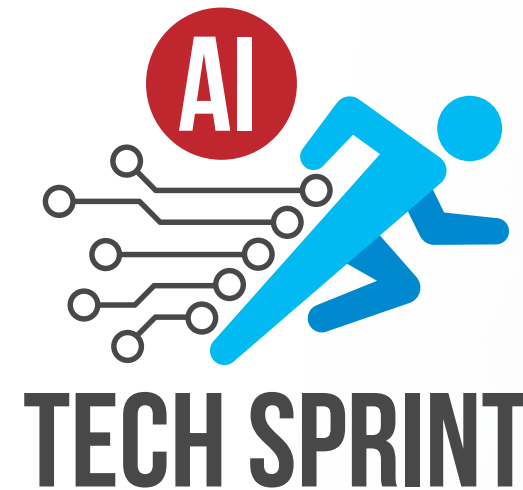


AI TECH SPRINTS



Among the outstanding 2022–2023 AI Tech Sprint competition, finalists were announced at the Golden Envelope Ceremony in February 2023. Groundswell won first place. Scaled Entelechy and QuantHub won second and third, respectively. Other leading finalists included Booz–Allen Hamilton, Coursera, and Rixel. Each year, the Golden Envelope Ceremony recognizes VA AI Tech Sprint finalists.

This year’s event brought together academia, non–profit organizations, interagency partners, industry, and other government entities to witness the competitive prototypes of the All Services Personnel and Institutional Readiness Engine (ASPIRE) competition, which required participants to create or refine a computer–adaptive skill assessment platform, which could be used across the government to train and assess the federal workforce of the future.



Working with emerging technologies, such as AI, requires digital competency and continuous modernization efforts, particularly when it comes to staying up–to–date with skill sets needed to support workforce development. At every level, the U.S. government is facing data science skill gaps. The advancement of an agile federal workforce skilled in AI has been a top priority in ensuring agencies offer uniform training opportunities through a scalable network that allows them to continue to meet their missions. To accomplish this priority, VA has created ASPIRE, which incorporates training on trustworthy and ethical use of AI to build an interoperable platform that assesses, educates, and streamlines information technology (IT) talent within government.



To incentivize collaboration and innovation through the Government Innovation Framework (i.e., Challenge.gov), the NAIH leads AI Tech Sprints to develop technological solutions for Veteran health care challenges. AI Tech Sprints provide participants with access to federal and private data, expert perspectives, and technical AI/ML support from VA clinicians and researchers, while encouraging collaborative efforts across multidisciplinary groups. Participants receive feedback on demonstrations and promising opportunities to build long-term partnerships and/or secure funding.

Recognized prototypes may even be invited to pilot their product within VA or be connected with other agencies seeking to proceed with further product development engagements. Throughout the three-month competitive engagement, participants can leverage synthetic data from VA—the nation’s largest health care system, while competing to create AI-enabled tools designed with a novel approach of addressing specific real-world health care challenges, whether it be regarding the patient experience, delivery process, or on the provider front.

While VA NAIH has conducted a number of successful AI Tech Sprints, upcoming sprints are focused on overcoming administrative challenges so that health care providers can spend less time on paperwork and more time with their patients. The new [AI Tech Sprint](#) will address two areas to reduce health care worker burnout:

- ▶ Speech-to-text solutions to use in medical appointments
- ▶ Document processing to reduce the time needed to integrate non-VA medical records into VA medical records

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

For the 2022–2023 AI Tech Sprint, NAIH saw engagement from large and small companies, including major competitors in the technology space. The AI Tech Sprint operated with subject matter expertise support from dozens of VA staff and several partner agencies. Over 100 people and organizations have contributed to the AI Tech Sprint, including students, government agencies, universities, and companies.

The success of the AI Tech Sprints has earned features across several media outlets, articles, and podcasts, including the [GovFuture Forum](#), [GovCIO](#), and [CDAO podcast](#).



AI EDUCATION & TRAINING

With aims of advancing ongoing collaboration across VA and all federal agencies, the VA NAII works to ensure Veteran care is a top priority. To this end, VA recognizes that high-quality Veteran care starts with having the right staff to support Veterans, the right staff skilled in AI knowledge and training, which has led to the development of the ASPIRE program and other educational efforts outlined in this section.



ASPIRE

With the government experiencing data science skill gaps at every level, federal agencies are seeking opportunities to strengthen their workforce's digital competency. As a collaborative interagency project among the Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Department of Labor, and VA, ASPIRE aims to develop a scalable, interoperable platform that can assess and educate talent, and enable an agile federal workforce skilled in AI, data science, and cybersecurity.

Using computer adaptive assessments to determine an individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, and training (KSAT) needed, ASPIRE analyzes an individual's KSATs against standards to identify gaps. The platform maps personalized learning pathways by creating a customized trajectory of materials needed to close those gaps. The assessment, identification, and process of curating a customized curriculum achieves the end goal of advancing federal government talent to increase adoption and use of trustworthy AI that improves Veteran care. ASPIRE identifies skills and training needed for existing government employees as well as job applicants.





BENEFITS OF ASPIRE

- ▶ Risk mitigation and cost reduction
- ▶ Infuses equity into hiring decisions
- ▶ Improves recruitment and talent retention
- ▶ Offers strategic guidance and valuable insights
- ▶ Improves operational agility and transfer response time
- ▶ Supports legal and regulatory requirements of AI compliance

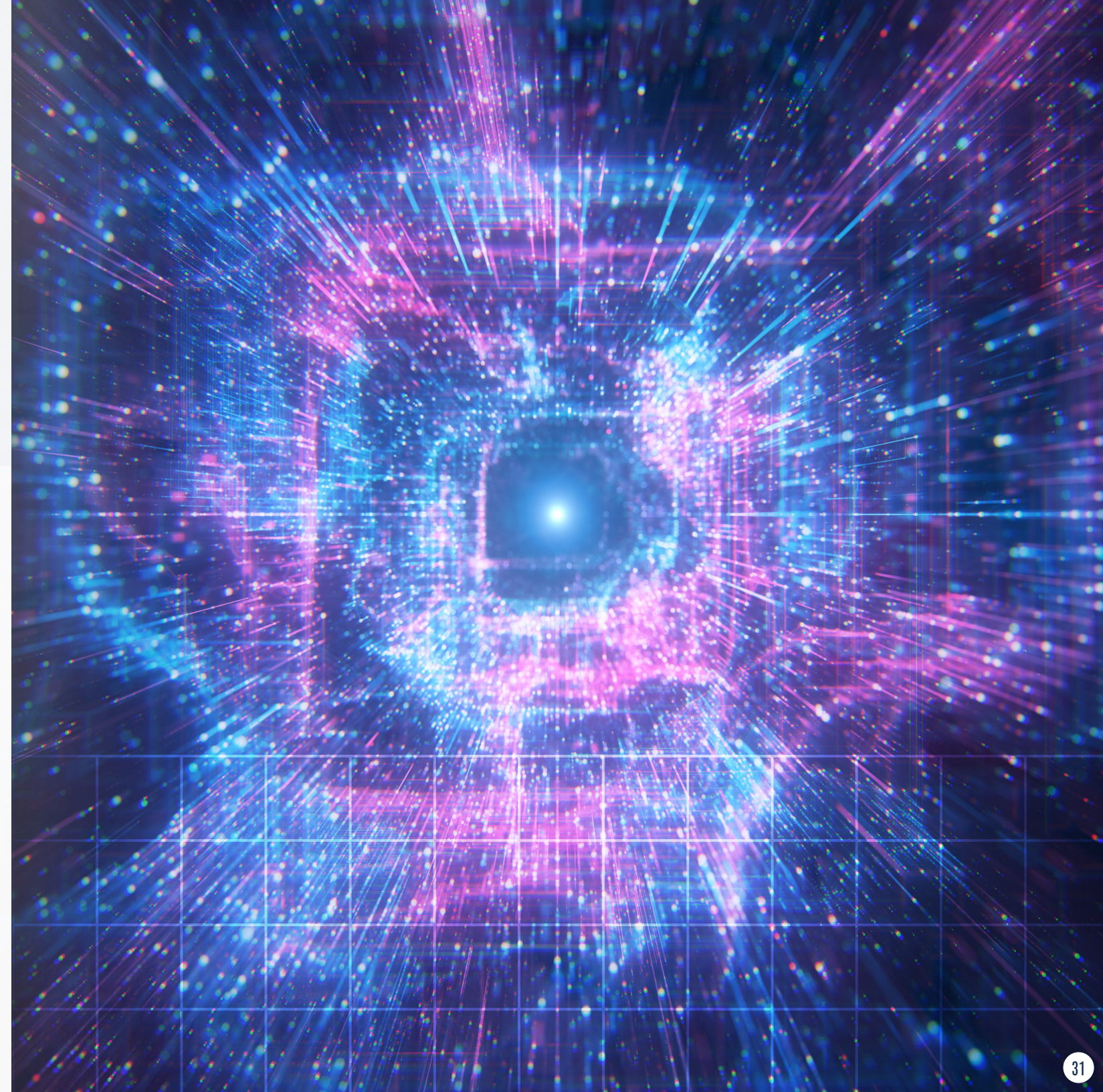
AI EDUCATION: AI 101

With the potential to substantially impact health care delivery in the very near future, it is increasingly clear that AI has been a function of media exposure and general excitement. Although, regardless of how well designed or secured an AI system is, ill-prepared users present a liability to an organization. Since AI education is crucial to the adoption and deployment of AI, VA has launched an AI 101 educational course in the VA Talent Management System (TMS) this year.

The AI 101 initiative is a workforce development program that seeks to provide VA staff with awareness, education, and skills in this new context, as it offers:

- ▶ An introduction to AI
- ▶ Additional resources to help staff gain a fundamental understanding of what AI is and how it can be responsibly deployed at VA

AI 101 has been validated by the ASPIRE project, which was designed and developed to be a multilateral effort supported by many stakeholders.



VA NAII AI SUMMIT SERIES

This year, VA NAII brought together global leaders in AI and health care to explore how AI and ML are shaping the future of Veterans' health care.

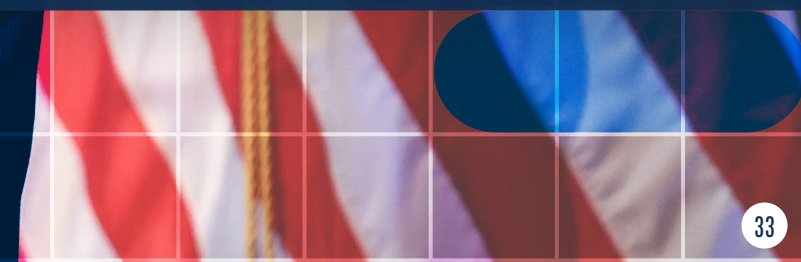
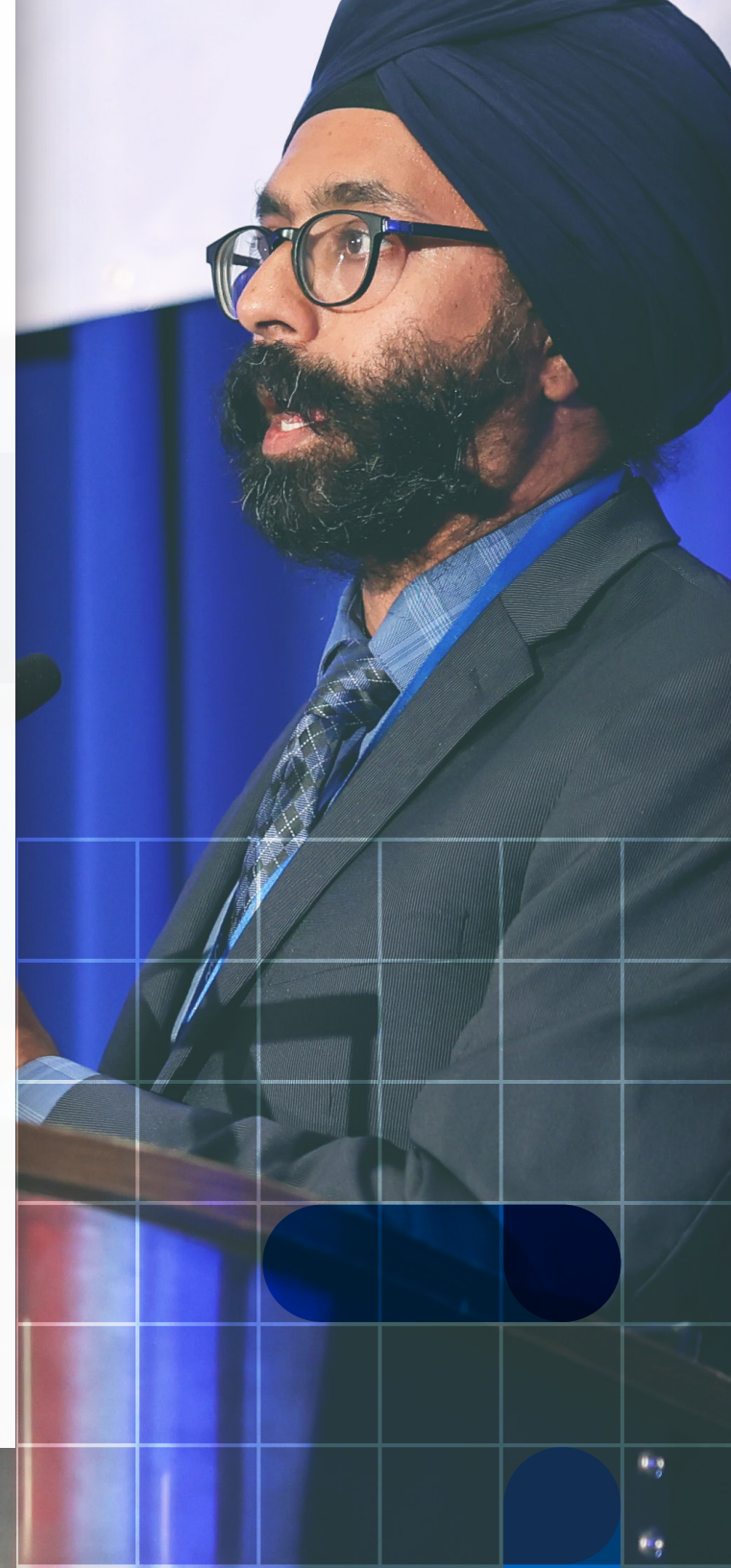
The annual VA NAII AI Summit Series provides a unique platform to showcase the latest research and development advancements of applications of trustworthy AI solutions in health care that support VA's mission and bridge the gap in translational AI—from bench to bedside care.

To build on the success of last year's **Brain Health and Rehabilitation through Artificial Intelligence Network (BRAIN) Summit**, the [International Summit for AI in Health Care](#) hosted over 1,200 registrants. Attendees gathered in Washington, DC, and additional attendees joined virtually, on September 6–8, 2023.

Representatives from international governments, academia, and industry addressed how trustworthy AI—AI that is ethical, secure, and mitigates bias—can bring innovations and real-world solutions to pressing health issues prevalent among Veterans as well as challenges within the health care delivery system. The event featured renowned speakers, informative announcements, and proved to be an overall success in increasing confidence in the development of trustworthy AI solutions at VA and building AI-related partnerships with organizations to benefit Veterans.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

- ▶ **THE HONORABLE DENIS RICHARD MCDONOUGH**
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- ▶ **SHEREEF ELNAHAL, M.D.**, *Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- ▶ **CAROLYN CLANCY, M.D., MACP**, *Assistant Under Secretary for Health, Office of Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (DEAN), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- ▶ **GIL ALTEROVITZ, Ph.D., FACMI, FAMIA**,
National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Director, and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Chief AI Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- ▶ **CHARLES WORTHINGTON**, *Chief Technology Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- ▶ **DEWAINE BEARD**, *Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- ▶ **GREG SINGLETON**, *Chief AI Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
- ▶ **SIDDHARTHA MUKHERJEE, M.D.**, *Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Columbia University*
- ▶ **ANTONIJA BURCUL**, *Founder and CEO, FOUR*
- ▶ **DAVID RHEW, M.D.**, *Global Chief Medical Officer and VP of Healthcare, Microsoft*



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

This year’s highlights included the announcement of VA’s Trustworthy AI Framework, which is designed to support VA in AI excellence across the agency and upholds VA’s commitment to serving Veterans with world-class health care and services. Another major announcement was the launch of the new VA AI website, which provides useful information on VA’s efforts to lead the development of AI solutions that benefit Veterans, their caregivers, and survivors. The event also highlighted VA’s new data use agreement with LinkedIn that holds promising potential to advance VA’s data scientist recruitment efforts. Lastly, a new VA AI Tech Sprint was announced, which will host a competitive engagement seeking solutions to support frontline clinical staff through AI.



In addition, this year, DataX shared data and analytics work happening at VA and showed how their work is impacting Veterans’ clinical care by hosting a supplementary speaker track at the AI Summit consisting of six sessions:

- ▶ *AI in mental health*
- ▶ *AI for operational efficiency*
- ▶ *AI for surveillance*
- ▶ *Technical architectures and infrastructures*
- ▶ *Open innovation for AI evaluation*
- ▶ *AI in processes and resources to support AI testing and validation*

SUMMIT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The International Summit for AI in Health Care demonstrated exceptional progress compared to last year’s BRAIN Summit. With over 1,200 attendees, including 80 VA attendees, 136 presenters, and 43 sessions, this year’s AI Summit witnessed over:

- ▶ **103%** increase in attendees
- ▶ **100%** increase in speakers
- ▶ **33%** increase in exhibitors
- ▶ **20%** more breakout sessions

The summit also showcased a strong interagency presence, with representatives attending or speaking from across the Defense Health Agency (DHA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), HHS, National Institutes of Health (NIH), NIST, U.S. Army, and U.S. Navy. Furthermore, this year’s summit expanded VA’s international involvement, as it was attended by distinguished representatives from all over the world, including the Dutch government.

TOP 2023 AI SUMMIT SURVEY RESULTS
After attending the 2023 AI Summit

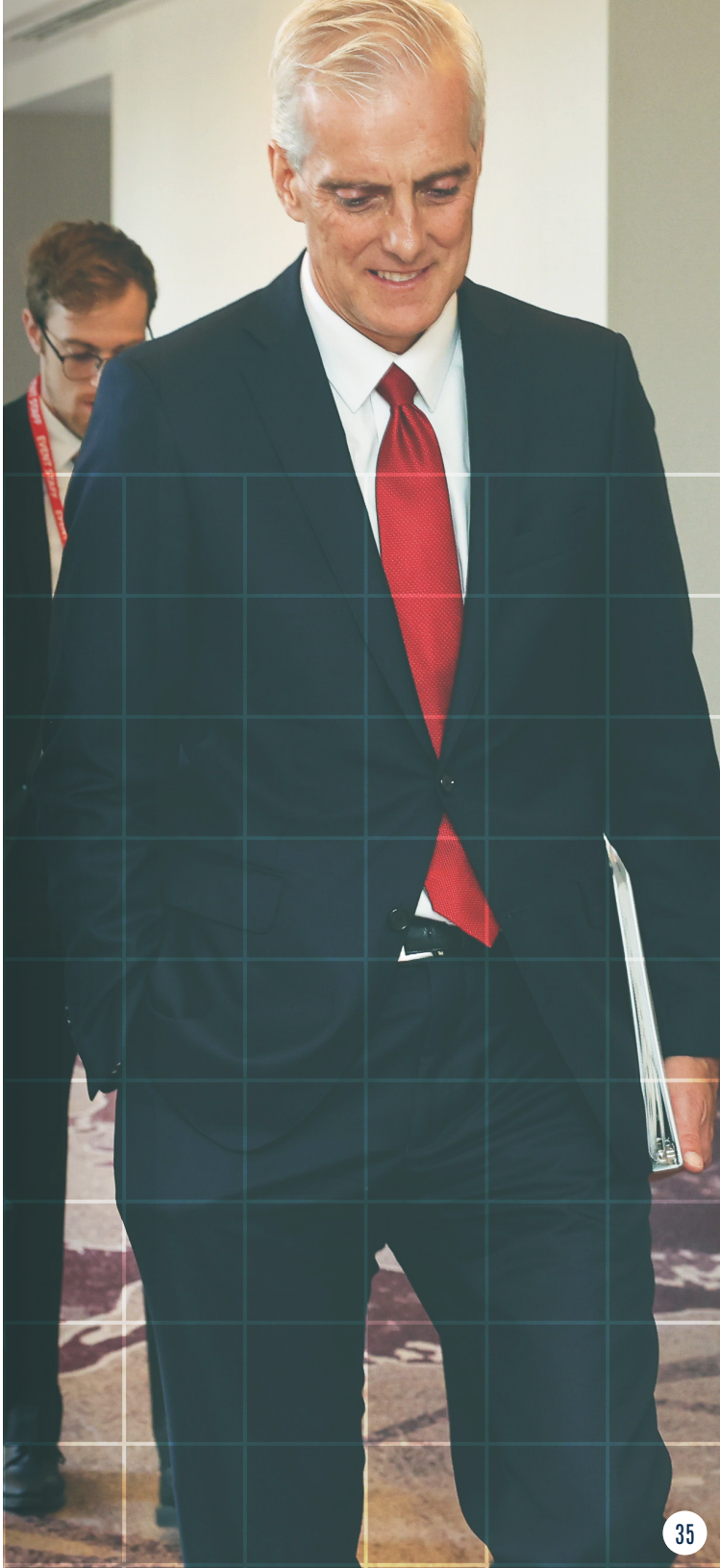
- ▶ Most attendees **(90%)** had increased confidence in the development of trustworthy AI at VA
- ▶ Most attendees **(88.4%)** had an increased opinion of the quality of AI research and development work at VA
- ▶ Most attendees **(91.7%)** also had increased confidence that VA’s AI research and development work can positively impact Veteran health care
- ▶ Nearly all attendees **(93.3%)** felt that they had an increased understanding of how AI is used in health care
- ▶ And nearly all attendees **(93.4%)** were more interested in working with VA on AI

ACCREDITATION

Importantly, what set this year’s summit apart from last year’s summit was that it was accredited. This year’s summit offered VA attendees the chance to earn 17.75 Continuing Education Units or Continuing Medical Education (CEU/CME) credits in the following areas:

- ▶ *American Psychological Association (APA)*
- ▶ *Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)*
- ▶ *New York State Education Department State Board for Psychology (NYSED P)*
- ▶ *New York State Education Department Social Work Board (NYSED SW)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit our *AI Summit Series* [website](#) for the latest updates.





Beyond the development of the new VA Trustworthy AI Framework, VA has had a hand in supporting other impactful policy efforts and engagements this year.

Within the capacity of VHA, VA NAII has been involved in collaborating with health care, government, and academia to discuss strategies to accelerate the implementation of trustworthy AI, such as hosting roundtable meetings, which have served as an effective discussion forum to facilitate ongoing conversations of applying trustworthy AI in health care, while addressing challenges (e.g., strategies to mitigate bias, building staff and patient trust in AI, etc.). Strategies or policies that NAII has supported in FY23 include the National AI Strategy and the National AI Research and Development Strategic Plan 2023 Update, among others.

NATIONAL AI RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 UPDATE

VA NAII was a contributor to the [National AI Research and Development Strategic Plan 2023 Update](#), an updated version that includes relevant text from the previous versions (2016 and 2019), with new updates based on administration and interagency evaluation of the last iteration in addition to community responses obtained from an RFI for updating the plan. The 2023 update defines major challenges in AI research when coordinating federal research and development investments, and ensures continued federal leadership in the development and use of trustworthy AI. Furthermore, the plan prepares the current and future workforce for AI integration, while coordinating AI activities across all sectors and federal agencies.

VA NAII has also contributed to the prior versions of the National AI Research and Development Strategic Plan. The eight strategies established in the 2019 update were reinforced in the 2023 update, which included but were not limited to: making long-term investments in responsible AI research; developing effective methods for human-AI collaboration; understanding and addressing the ethical, legal, and societal implications of AI; and more. **The latest version added a new ninth strategy, as mentioned on the following page.**



STRATEGY 9: *Establish a principled and coordinated approach to international collaboration in AI research. Prioritize international collaborations in AI R&D to address global challenges, such as environmental sustainability, healthcare, and manufacturing. Strategic international partnerships will help power responsible progress in AI R&D and the development and implementation of international guidelines and standards for AI.*

KEY COLLABORATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The VA NAII has also exercised its involvement in promoting trustworthy AI in other ways related to policy. There have been a number of remarkable accomplishments VA NAII has championed this year, such as in providing FY23 updates on thought leadership opportunities around trustworthy AI principles embodied in EO 13960, supporting the development of new analyses or checklists to enhance the security of AI systems, serving as co-chair on the Responsible AI Official (RAIO) Council, promoting VA AI equity activities, and enhancing stakeholder engagement through the AI@VA Community.

TO NAME A FEW OTHER NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS OF FY23, THE VA NAII

- ▶ Stood up an AI data governance structure and process with the DGC
- ▶ Stood up and led the AI for Operations Work Group
- ▶ Supported the development of the White House—Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) AI National Strategy
- ▶ Led the ASPIRE AI Tech Sprint and Golden Envelope Ceremony to foster cross-agency and industry collaboration to enhance AI workforce upskilling
- ▶ Built coalitions by engaging with outside stakeholders
- ▶ Developed AI innovations that improved Veterans' outcomes and experiences

- ▶ Developed an employee handbook, training and development program, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ▶ Was honored as the 2023 Disruptive Tech Change Agent Award Winner (VHA Chief AI Officer and VA NAII Director, Dr. Gil Alterovitz)
- ▶ Led the VA Under Secretary for Health Executive Roundtable, with over 20 VHA senior leaders and representatives from 9 external health care partners, to identify priority areas to make AI successful in health care

At the International Summit for AI in Health Care, VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Shereef Elnahal, announced the upcoming AI Tech Sprint, which will support frontline clinical staff by reducing the administrative burden through the use of AI. This competition is expected to yield promising outcomes that improve the quality of health care for Veterans and lessen the burden on frontline workers. VA NAII is confident that the benefits of AI are limitless—and as we continue to grow, our collaborative efforts will take us to new heights. With increased exposure, global networking opportunities, and shared experiences, progress will be made more quickly, paving the way for AI efforts to make a real-world impact on the lives of Veterans.



RESOURCES



QUICK LINKS

[Join the AI@VA Communities](#)
[VA AI Tech Sprints](#)
[National AI Policies](#)
[VA AI Website](#)
[National AI R&D Strategic Plan](#)
[VA Guidance Documents](#)
[VA AI Inventory](#)
[VA NAII AI Summit Series](#)
[VA AI Strategy](#)
[VA Trustworthy AI Framework](#)

CONNECT WITH THE NAII

To learn more about AI in Veterans' health care and hear about the latest news in AI work happening at VA, [subscribe to the AI@VA Community](#).

The **AI@VA Community** newsletter shares information regarding AI Tech Sprints, AI Summit Series events, available educational trainings, updates on AI work happening at VA, as well as other exciting opportunities to collaborate.

For all questions and comments, please email the NAII at NAII@va.gov.



APPENDIX



AI: Artificial Intelligence	NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration
APA: American Psychological Association	NIH: National Institutes of Health
ASPIRE: All Services Personnel and Institutional Readiness Engine	NIST: National Institute of Standards and Technology
ASWB: Association of Social Work Boards	NYSED P: New York State Education Department State Board for Psychology
BRAIN: Brain Health and Rehabilitation through Artificial Intelligence Network	NYSED SW: New York State Education Department Social Work Board
CAIO: Chief AI Officer	OECD: Organisation for Economic, Co-operation, and Development
CEU: Continuing Education Units	ORD: Office of Research and Development
CME: Continuing Medical Education	OSTP: Office of Science and Technology Policy
CRADA: Cooperative Research and Development Agreement	RAIO: Responsible AI Official
DEAN: Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks	RFI: Request for Information
DGC: Data Governance Council	RFP: Request for Proposal
DHA: Defense Health Agency	SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
DOD: U.S. Department of Defense	TMS: Talent Management System
EO: Executive Order	VA: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
FDA: Food and Drug Administration	VAMC: Veterans Affairs Medical Center
FY: Fiscal Year	VHA: Veterans Health Administration
GAO: Government Accountability Office	VISN: Veterans Integrated Services Network
HHS: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	
HR: Human Resources	
IRB: Institutional Review Board	
IT: Information Technology	
KSAT: Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Training	
ML: Machine Learning	
NAII: National Artificial Intelligence Institute	



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