

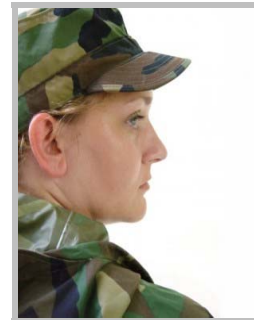


Capabilities Overview:

**CONTACT CENTER SUPPORT SERVICES**

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**Closing the Hiring Gap for Veteran Hospital Care**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Department of Veterans Affairs' goal with regard to meeting veterans' medical needs is to provide excellence in patient care, administration of veterans' benefits, and customer satisfaction. A key ingredient in attaining that goal is to consistently maintain fully-staffed facilities with highly qualified medical personnel at each VA medical location. In order to accomplish this, doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals must be hired and regularly evaluated to ensure that our veterans are receiving the best care possible. The Veteran Health Administration's (VHA) ability to engage the best, and therefore the most sought-after job candidates, is limited due to the complexity of the hiring process, and applicants often accept other positions by the time the VHA is ready to hire. The lengthy hiring timeframe and lack of a standardized system of communication to candidates and selecting officials throughout the process are problems contributing to a serious situation that hospitals are starting to recognize and which must be addressed in order to provide adequate staffing and ultimately high-quality care for our veterans.

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## 2. BUSINESS CHALLENGE

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Upon initial selection for employment, a medical professional job candidate is

provided with information on using VetPro, VHA's pre-appointment software. VetPro was first implemented in July 2005 and requires an applicant to manually submit detailed job information – professional education, experience, additional training, and licensure and certifications. Only when the VetPro form is complete will VHA staff begin validation of all information provided, and this can take up to eight weeks. Scheduling of interview appointments is allowed only after the validation process is complete and all requirements for employment are satisfied. As a result, a hospital's selecting officials, who realize that with the delay the probability of losing a great candidate increases, become frustrated with the inability to hire; and the candidate, who continues to consider other job opportunities, becomes further disgruntled over the lack of communication from the VHA staff that leaves everyone wondering about the candidate's status. Should a candidate accept a position outside the VHA in the interim, the process starts again with a different applicant, further lengthening the time before a new staff person can become an active member of the facility staff.

The current VetPro system can negatively impact veterans, hospital and facility staff, selecting officials, and prospective caregiver candidates in the following ways:

**For the veteran:**

- Delays in filling a caregiver position may cause delays in scheduling appointments, not

only negatively impacting veterans' quality of care but diminishing their perception of VHA.

**For the work unit:**

- Delays in hiring a replacement employee creates staffing shortages and work delays.
- Work delays create backlogs in providing care, especially in outpatient settings where the need to meet timeliness standards is a high-priority issue.
- Backlogs generate the need for overtime and increase direct costs.
- If mandated overtime extends beyond the time that employees believe reasonable, burnout occurs and employees tend to withdraw from organizational engagement (e.g. sick leave abuse, emotional exhaustion, job opportunity exploration).
- Staff shortages require that remaining employees work additional hours, and there is evidence that workers active for two consecutive eight-hour shifts are more prone to making mistakes than employees who work only one shift or one shift and a few hours overtime.

**For selecting officials:**

- Delays and the absence of communication cause anxiety as to when the position will be filled.
- Questions may arise whether the supervisor and work group will meet VHA's Clinical Performance Indicators.

- Frustration with the hiring process causes resentment for those who perform VetPro reviews.
- When a candidate accepts another offer outside VHA, all of the hospital staff's limited selection time is lost and the recruitment process must recommence.
- The delayed process negatively impacts the perception of the support organization's ability to manage the hiring process.

**For prospective caregiver candidates:**

- Delays and the lack of communication cause uncertainty over the organizations' commitment to hire them.
- If candidates consider delays unnecessarily lengthy, they accept alternate employment opportunities.
- Lack of communication and feedback in the hiring and VetPro processes negatively impacts candidates' perceptions of VHA as an employer and health care provider.

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**3. Solution**

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FPMI has a proven track record to reduce these types of delays and improve communications. FPMI's contact center provides trained professionals who can quickly validate candidate pre-appointment information and communicate with both the candidate and selecting officials, ensuring that the final steps in the hiring process proceed smoothly and

rapidly. As a result, the VHA will realize the following benefits:

- Improved VetPro information accuracy and timely completion which results in quicker information validation
  - **Benefit:** Shorter hire time and more expeditious job placement
- Minimal time for government review for accuracy and completeness of forms
  - **Benefit:** Rapidly proceed directly to the on-boarding process without rejection for information corrections
- Elimination of necessity for VHA to assist each candidate and/or selecting official regarding the use of the VetPro system and system for handling incomplete information
  - **Benefit:** More time to work on core business and mission
- Partnership approach to supporting the VA's mission through partnership with a highly knowledgeable, experienced, flexible and innovative hiring support services provider
  - **Benefit:** Candidate customer satisfaction improves due to streamlined and efficient hiring process
- Consistent and available staff to answer questions and inquiries from candidates and selecting officials
  - **Benefit:** Candidates remain engaged in the hiring process and selecting officials know

where their candidates are in the hiring process

FPMI Solutions, Inc., (FPMI) has a proven solution which is ideal for achieving these benefits. FPMI's experience and success in providing these types of services to the government include the following accomplishments:

- Maintained a first-time acceptance rate of 98.7% for forms delivered to OPM through our security forms process
- Handled over 104,000 calls to FPMI's Forms Help Desk from candidates needing assistance
- Processed over 326,000 electronic and/or "hard copy" SF-86 and "single sheet" forms (e.g., OF-306, release for credit investigation, authorization for release of information) for approximately 55,000 candidates
- Placed over 42,000 outgoing calls to candidates to assist with completion of required forms
- Sent approximately 145,000 correspondences (e-mail and/or regular U.S. Mail) to candidates describing forms deficiencies and providing instructions for corrective action
- Released for pre-hire adjudication approximately 35,000 candidates and over 9,700 employee electronic SF-86 forms for post-EOD adjudication
- Initiated in the e-QIP system approximately 62,000 electronic SF-86 forms for candidates and mailed over 3,700 "paper" SF-86 forms for candidates with no Internet access.

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#### 4. SUMMARY

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The management and operations of the candidate pre-appointment and on-boarding process is very unique and dynamic by nature. FPMI has successfully supported the government in developing, implementing, and managing information intake, processing, review, validation, assistance and on-boarding activities which specifically meet the government's requirements. With experienced FPMI staff available seven days a week via a toll-free number, candidates and selecting officials have the ability to access "live" assistance to quickly and correctly complete the process. "Our goal is to get a candidate through the process as quickly, professionally, and painlessly as we can so that our veterans have the level of service that they deserve as soon as possible," indicated Ms. Cathy Christa, FPMI's Contact Center Manager. The timely delivery of complete and accurate candidate pre-appointment information allows the government to focus on its primary mission of delivering quality health care to veterans. Our partnership approach in addressing customer requirements ensures a cost-effective solution that is streamlined to improve the timeliness and quality of the hiring process to enable VHA to better address medical services.

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#### 5. ABOUT FPMI

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For more than two decades, FPMI has worked with Federal government leaders to overcome human capital challenges and address transformational goals and objectives. Over the years, we have worked with many Federal government agencies to ensure they have the talent they need to achieve their missions - economically, efficiently, and effectively.

FPMI Solutions, with principal offices in Alexandria, Virginia and Huntsville, Alabama is a leading provider of Human Capital Solutions to the Federal government.

FPMI's Contact Center Services, built on a framework that ensures sustainable results, can be rapidly implemented and deployed to provide immediate customer service. We manage complex tasks in time-sensitive, geographically dispersed environments and deliver contact and service center operations with superior service, extensive flexibility, accurate information, and secure data.

FPMI meets your contact and/or service center needs by:

- Using strong customer relationship management methodologies and processes to meet your changing requirements
- Managing complex information through a process that involves both inbound and outbound communication
- Utilizing multiple communication modes – voice, email, fax, and walk-in services, collecting and integrating information from multiple sources into a single

reporting system, allowing decision-makers to align critical resources and attain performance metrics

**Author Biography – BARRY PROKOP:**

Mr. Prokop joined FPMI as a director in May 2006. He has 25 years of experience in managing business development, human capital, training, and technology initiatives in the Federal and State government marketplaces as well as in the commercial sector. At FPMI, he assesses market opportunities, partnership arrangements, and contract acquisition/expansion activities and leverages the company's diverse capabilities into new client relationships and performance engagements. He previously served as assistant vice president and director of the Federal Government Practice Accounts of Aon Consulting. He also served as director for several workforce management and human capital software companies and spent 13 years in progressively responsible human capital/technology positions within the Fairfax County School System. He is a published author and training seminar specialist and holds a B.S. in Business Administration from West Virginia University. He can be reached at 703-426-8510 or at [bprokop@fpmi.com](mailto:bprokop@fpmi.com).

A special thank you to Mr. Dan Kowalski for providing insight and guidance in the creation of this white paper. Mr. Kowalski is a former VHA employee with 32 years of experience in human resource management. His current projects include development of recruitment strategies, HR program

evaluation, design and support of action learning projects, small group facilitation, HR leadership coaching, organization design, performance-based interview design, and employee

relations support in many areas including performance and conduct cases.

