Healthcare Management Solutions, LLC (HMS) Supports Cloud Transition for Veterans Affairs Time and Attendance System

Healthcare Management Solutions, LLC (HMS) uses its expertise and solutioning to help the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Services Center migrate and implement its Veterans Affairs Time and Attendance System (VATAS) from a legacy system to the VA Enterprise Cloud (VAEC) GovCloud.

Background

VATAS serves approximately 453,000 users and is part of the overall VA enterprise resource planning (ERP) suite of products that support the VA's financial mission and obligations. Every facet of VATAS is currently cloud native (FedRAMP High & AWS VAEC GovCloud environment) and is designed for maximum reliability and scalability from cloud infrastructure creation to application development, continuous integration, and deployment and monitoring in accordance with VAEC policies and standards, resiliency, and offsite replication.

What We Do

HMS' five-year subcontract involves a complex combination of tasks, including web application development, deployment, administration, operations, maintenance and sustainment, training, helpdesk, capability enhancements, documentation, planning, and testing. With the successful migration of the VATAS application to the cloud, HMS played a pivotal role in supporting the following migration efforts and activities:

- Review of the VAEC GovCloud architecture to ensure adequate infrastructure was implemented and tested so the primary VATAS production environment could failover to the alternate environment, if required.
- Simultaneous support for the VATAS legacy system and GovCloud environments until offboarding could occur.
- VATAS Cloud failback capabilities and testing until the offboarding date.
- Management of purging and destruction of VATAS data on the legacy system and obtained the required certifications.
- Full-system quality assurance and testing.
- Incident Response management notification and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) reporting within service-level agreement (SLA) requirements.

What We Do (Cont.)

- Tabletop exercises for Information System Contingency Planning, Incident Response Planning, and Disaster Recovery Planning to ensure that VATAS could be restored within the required VA's SLAs.
- Revisit of the VATAS Business Impact Analysis (BIA) to ensure the VATAS restoration and reporting capabilities were in compliance with VA Senior Management's expectations and requirements.
- Confirmation that the BIA examined the VATAS alternate production center architecture to ensure sufficient capacity to support VATAS production requirements in the event a failover was required.

HMS also supports VATAS interfaces with the ERP systems listed below, which transact text analytics data both within the VA and with external federal agencies.

- **Inpatient Prospective Payment System** is a customized payment processing platform and leverages Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation, and Resource Description & Access technologies.

- **HRSmart** is an automated Human Resources application that processes personnel actions, benefits, entitlements, timesheet profile data, and training data. The VATAS/HRSmart interface utilizes a one-way Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) from HRSmart to VATAS.

- **Defense Civilian Payroll System (DCPS)** is the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) payroll system used by the Department of Defense and other government agencies.

- **The VATAS/DCPS** interface utilizes a one-way SFTP to transfer System Data Automation flat files from VATAS to DCPS via a standard file format.

- **The VATAS Systems Dashboard** is monitored to ensure all VATAS systems are functioning efficiently.

HMS' ongoing VATAS work includes Business Requirements Document (BRD) elaboration support, Functional Requirements Document (FRD) review, test script writing, incremental and ad hoc testing, BIA, and providing operations and helpdesk support. Elements of our work include:

- **BRD Elaboration Support:** The VA has the responsibility to provide a BRD for every new feature enhancement, which normally takes several weeks to complete. The Test Team is heavily involved in this process and helps with articulating the VA's need for the change, the expected functionality, systemic layout, and affected user or user role(s).

- **FRD Review Process:** Once the Ultimate Kronos Group (UKG) fully accepts the submitted BRDs, then a FRD is created for each accepted enhancement. A design content validation review for each FRD is completed with the VA, UKG, and the Test Team. HMS ensures the design layout and use cases in the FRD matches with customer's expectations as indicated on the BRD. The review process allows for detection of any impacts due to the new feature enhancement.

- **Writing Test Script:** For every new planned and unplanned upgrade to the VATAS application, the Test Team is required to write a test script for each change that is introduced into the system. The test scripts are used by the Test Team for functional testing and are provided to the VA for their user acceptance testing (UAT). Test scripts are also created continuously for regression testing.

- **Incremental and Ad Hoc Testing:** HMS' Test Team performs monthly regression testing conducted for every OS, DB, Linux, and Tomcat upgrade patch. Due to COVID-19 protocols and changes to the VA's Family Medical Leave Act policy, the VA made five different systemic ad hoc changes to accommodate all federal policy changes related to leave. Each change required test scripts to be created.

- **O&M, Helpdesk Support:** Due to HMS' familiarity with the VATAS application, we provide backup support for the operations and helpdesk teams as needed.

HMS Demonstrated Value

As a subject matter leader in disaster recovery planning and quality assurance management, HMS provides:

- Migration activities and project management.
- Expertise in disaster recovery, information contingency and incident response planning including BIA, RCA, and after-action reports.
- Contingency planning, disaster recovery and incident response plans that are up to date and tested on a regular basis to ensure that the plans follow VA Handbook and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and requirements.
- Strong, comprehensive, and detailed support of testing methodologies, and quality assurance.
- Business analysis services and operations and maintenance-related support.
- Monitoring of the VATAS Dashboard and incident response.

Agency Involved

Veterans Administration: The Veterans Administration (VA) exists to serve and honor all American veterans. This commitment is carried out through four specific missions: 1) veterans' health care, 2) veterans' benefits, 3) national cemeteries, and 4) improving America's preparedness for response to war, terrorism, national emergencies, and natural disasters.