In less than three years—between 1996 and 1999—the VA health care system completed the largest ever deployment of electronic health records. Priority also was placed on ensuring that a primary care provider was identified for all patients using the system. In fiscal year (FY) 1999, more than 700,000 more patients were treated than in FY 1995 (a 24% increase). Subsequently, national surveys showed that veterans treated at VA medical centers were substantially more likely to receive recommended care services for cardiovascular risk reduction than veterans and insured adults treated at non-VA hospitals and private health care facilities (Ross JS, et al. Arch Intern Med. 2008;168:950–58).

In addition, comparisons with patients in private managed care organizations showed that 86% of patients in the VA system had levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) under control, compared to only 72% of patients in managed care. VA health care for cardiovascular risk reduction is now considered among the best in the United States, and the VA transformation is viewed as a model for health care reform.