

# Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

October 2011



## Objective

To assess the Social Security Administration's (SSA) pilots to exchange health information technology (health IT) records with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) in Massachusetts and MedVirginia in Virginia.

## Background

In August 2008, SSA partnered with BIDMC to pilot the prototype application Medical Evidence Gathering and Analysis Through Health Information Technology (MEGAHIT) and develop standards for the patient-authorized release of health IT records.

In February 2009, SSA partnered with MedVirginia to expand the use of health IT to exchange records through the Nationwide Health Information Network—a secure computer network that connects patients, health care providers, and others involved in supporting health care.

To view the full report, visit <http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-01-11-11117>

## **Health Information Technology Provided by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and MedVirginia (A-01-11-11117)**

### Our Findings

We found SSA's health IT pilots reduced the time it took the Agency to receive health records and make disability determinations.

Our review of 100 sample cases found SSA's health IT pilots reduced the time it took to receive health records. SSA's MEGA HIT system automatically requested health IT records from BIDMC and MedVirginia. As a result of these requests, SSA received health IT records for 78 percent of the sample cases in 1 day. For the remaining cases, SSA received a response indicating health IT records were not available for 16 percent of the cases, and SSA received no reply for 6 percent of the cases. Therefore, based on our sample, we estimated that from our population of 8,776 individuals,

- 6,845 received health IT records within 1 day,
- 1,404 did not have health IT records available, and
- 527 did not receive a reply to SSA's request for health IT records.

From our sample of 100 cases, we identified 45 where the Agency received both health IT and traditional records from BIDMC or MedVirginia. For these cases, SSA received health IT records faster than traditional records—in an average of 1 versus 16 days.

We also found that when the DDS made a disability determination using only health IT records, it made the determination in fewer days than when it used other traditional records (non-health IT)—in an average of 20 versus 80 days.

As steward of its disability programs, SSA plans to expand the use of health IT to streamline the disability process and maximize the advantages of electronic records. We plan to monitor the Agency's efforts and will conduct another review of health IT in the future.