

# Virtual Medical Concierge Prototype Application Achieves Initial Operating Capability at WRNMMC

As previously reported in the March 2017 edition of the “TATRC Times,” Heron Systems, Inc., a small company in Lexington Park, MD, was actively developing the Virtual Medical Concierge Application to provide indoor navigation to the complex Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). The project was conceived by CAPT Kevin Dorrance, MC, USN (Retired), who was the Director of Medical Services. Mr. Robert Connors, Health IT Research Administrator, with TATRC’s Health Technology Innovation Center Lab (HTIC), developed the concept into a Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Proposal, which was approved by the Defense Health Program for funding. Initial SBIR Phase I awards were made to three vendors, and based on its SBIR Phase I performance; Heron Systems, Inc. was down-selected to create a prototype working application. Approximately \$1M has been spent to date to achieve initial operating capability.

On 17 August, Heron Systems released the application into the Apple and Android stores for download to mobile devices. Interested patients, staff and visitors may download the application for evaluation through the following stores:

Apple App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/wrn-mmc-virtual-medical-concierge/id1172258020?ls=1&mt=8>

Google Play Store: <https://play.google.com/store/search?q=Heron%20Medical%20Concierge&c=apps>

Heron Systems worked closely with WRNMMC Facilities, Information Management, Public Affairs, Construction Management and Security Management personnel to develop the application and install ~300 Low Energy Bluetooth Beacons throughout the America and Arrowhead patient care and ancillary service areas. The application is designed to guide users using an indoor map of WRNMMC, and has the option for voice turn-by-turn di-

rections. Users simply pick their destination from a comprehensive list of locations built into the application’s location directory. As a security precaution, the WRNMMC indoor maps are only visible when the user is within range of a beacon, so there is no possibility that if a user loses his or her phone, that someone could map out the facility in advance of an ill-intended act. Maps are easily updated on the fly, which is a useful feature given the ongoing WRNMMC construction. Furthermore, WRNMMC staff can push important announcements, messages, and alerts to users via an Administrative console. The Administrative console also provides a view of Beacon status, including power status. Batteries should last a minimum of two years prior to need for replacement.

Ms. Staci R. Harrison, WRNMMC Office of the Chief of Staff, stated, “I look forward to working with TATRC and Heron

Systems to determine the next steps regarding this project.” Based on the response from application users, TATRC will be determining if an SBIR Phase II enhancement project is feasible and how it might be funded. The SBIR Phase II Enhancement would likely focus on integrating the Virtual Medical Concierge application with the patient’s schedule and health profile, to be able to provide location-based, context sensitive information within WRNMMC. SBIR Phase II Enhancement projects are funded in part by the SBIR Program Office, but also require a match in funds from another source, which could be internal or external to DoD. According to Dr. Terry Newton, Army IM/IT Capabilities Manager, another likely transition mechanism for this research may be through the Defense Health Agency Patient Experience Working Group. San Antonio Military Medical Center and Madigan Army Medical Center have also expressed interest in learning more about the application. ▄▄▄



**A screen shot from the app showing the navigation function within the facility.**



**Walter Reed National Military Medical Center located in Bethesda, MD serves as a test site for Heron Systems Navigation Beacons.**