



Department of  
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## News Release

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### **VA Secretary Unveils Data Security Encryption Program** *Agency Awards \$3.7 Million Contract to* *Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Software Firm*

WASHINGTON – Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary R. James Nicholson Monday announced that all VA computers throughout the agency will be upgraded with enhanced data security encryption systems beginning immediately.

“I have promised America’s veterans that I intend to make VA information security a model of data security and this expedited encryption program is a major step in that direction,” said Nicholson. “A system-wide encryption program will be a tremendous step forward in improving the safety and security of sensitive veteran information.”

The computer encryption program follows the award of a \$3.7 million contract August 11 to SMS, Incorporated, a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business located in Syracuse, New York. The encryption solution consists of GuardianEdge and Trust Digital products.

Under the terms of the award to SMS, all laptop computers across the entire VA system will be the first to receive critical data security encryption programs followed by desktop PCs. Portable media, like flash drives and CDs, are also included in the security encryption program.

Final testing of the software is underway, and implementation and training materials are currently being developed with the actual encryption of laptops scheduled to begin August 18. The agency expects to have 100% of its laptop computers fully encrypted within four weeks.

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## **Data Security Encryption 2/2/2/2**

While the laptop and desktop computer encryption program is underway, Nicholson has also directed advanced enterprise encryption solutions to be explored as a follow-on to the laptop and desktop encryption program, including all VA servers and data centers.

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