What is the Veteran Outpatient Survey?
The Veteran Outpatient Survey is sent to randomly selected Veterans about their recent encounter with outpatient services administered by the Veteran Health Administration (VHA). Any Veteran who received outpatient services within the previous week (1-2 million Veterans on average) is eligible to receive a survey. Surveys remain open for two weeks after the invitation is sent. The feedback Veterans submit is to help inform opportunities for service recovery and performance improvement.

Survey Question Design
Veterans helped design the Outpatient Survey so VHA can identify and measure the services they received about their recent Outpatient encounter. The exact questions vary by Survey Type and were designed and finalized after extensive interviews with Veterans. Veterans provide a response using two methods: (1) Answer Likert-scale (a scale of 1-5 from strongly disagree to strongly agree) questions and (2) Identify a concern, compliment, or recommendation using free-text response about their experience.

What is the Target Population?
The target population consists of Veterans that had one of the following interactions with VHA Outpatient services within the prior week: (1) Appointment Scheduling, (2) Healthcare Provider Visit, (3) Imaging and Laboratory Work, (4) Pharmacy via Mail (receiving prescription in the mail), or (5) In-Person Pharmacy (picking up prescription in person). These service categories make up the five Survey Types.

What is the Sample Size?
The Outpatient survey reaches approximately 125,000 to 150,000 patients a week. The response rate is about 20%. In addition, approximately 15,000 comments are received per week.

How frequently is the data collected? When is data available for review?
Data is extracted directly from the VHA corporate data warehouse (CDW) on a semi-weekly basis. Veterans providing email addresses to VHA may receive invitations up to a maximum of 3 days after they received outpatient services. Veterans have two weeks to complete the survey; a reminder email is sent after one week to non-respondents. As soon as the Veterans complete the survey, their response is available immediately in Medallia.

What is the Sample Design?
The outpatient service encounter is the primary sampling unit. The sampling process is a stratified design with allocation proportional to the email population. A stratified design divides the target population into smaller groups, called strata. The strata consist of the VA Medical Center (VAMC), the Survey Type, and the clinic type (defined only for Healthcare Provider Visits). To ensure demographic representation, the sampling within each stratum is systematic with regard to Age Group, Gender, and State of Residence. Patients with multiple outpatient services present in the initial sample are de-duplicated to a unique list of Veterans.

Quarantine Rules
The Veteran Experience Office monitors the number of contacts and general participation of Veterans across all of its survey operations. Quarantining is the process of removing certain Veterans from the target population in order to limit the contact with Veterans. This reduces burden and prevents survey fatigue. The quarantine protocol ensures that Veterans who complete a survey will not be eligible for another survey for at least 30 days. Additionally, Veterans can opt-out which ensures they never receive a survey in the future.

Veterans Oriented Interactive Customer Evaluation (VOICE) is one component to creating a seamless touch-point between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the veteran, caregivers of veterans, families, and survivors of veterans. The objective is to collect near real-time customer feedback to improve the Veterans experience provided by the VA. VOICE is powered by Medallia, which is a CEM (Customer Experience Management) solution obtained by the VA as a SaaS (Software-as-a-Service).