

Department of Veterans Affairs selects SoKat to pilot an Artificial Intelligence-powered suicide ideation engine

Washington DC, April, 2022: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Research and Development, National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) has awarded SoKat a sole source contract to pilot an Artificial Intelligence-based engine to identify suicidal ideations within the veteran community, which reflects the VA's growing focus on using AI to foster improvements in health care for veterans.

SoKat's journey in working with the VA began in November 2020, as SoKat prepared to compete in the VA NAII's 2021 Artificial Intelligence Tech Sprint Challenge. Through this innovative competition, which is an ideal model of public-private partnerships, all competing teams were able to engage with the VA to learn about the areas in which Artificial Intelligence can be applied to best support the VA's mission. The Tech Sprint, which enables the VA to remain on the forefront of AI and develop faster mechanisms for procuring the industry's most cutting-edge AI technology, is spearheaded by Gil Alterovitz, PhD, Director of the VA, NAII and Rafael Fricks, PhD, AI Tech Sprint Lead. The visionary way in which Dr. Alterovitz and Dr. Fricks developed the Tech Sprint, in order to drive change and innovation to better serve our veterans, led to the largest cohort of competing teams in 2021: 40 in total accepted, out of 60 that applied. By way of mentorship and guidance from VA SMEs, SoKat effectively leveraged its award-winning AI technology, Human-Centered Design expertise, and, most importantly, our passion to serve our veterans, in furtherance of the VA's mission. Janet Chrosniak, a thought-leader in innovation at the VA, impassioned supporter of our veteran community, and one of the generous Tech Sprint SMEs, shared that "It was rewarding to witness first-hand the 'Art of Possibilities' with AI and how [efforts] through the VA NAII can bring to bear technologies to support the Veteran and provider healthcare experience...". In June 2021, the results of the AI Tech Sprint were announced: SoKat placed 1st in Patient Experience and 2nd in the overall competition. Additional information can be found on the VA's [website](#).

"The rate of veteran suicide is one of the most urgent public health crises in our nation." Susan An, CEO's SoKat stated. "This is not merely an all-hands-on-deck situation, but an all-innovative-technologies-and-creative-solutions on deck situation. Due to SoKat's deep roots in academic research, unparalleled industry experience in data analysis and AI engineering, and most importantly, our team's profound empathy for and unwavering commitment to saving veteran lives, there is massive potential for the positive impact of this suicide ideation engine and in all of our future support of the VA's mission."

SoKat, as a minority, woman-owned small business, is honored to be part of the VA's mission to care for those "who shall have borne the battle" and stands ready and eager to fully deploy our best and brightest team of AI talent to fully serve our veterans.

For more information, please reach out to: Susan An at Susan@SoKat.com or visit www.SoKat.com.