

Cabana Phase I Feasibility Evaluation, VA Suicide Prevention BAA — Executive Summary

I. Overview

In May 2025, the Penn State Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness conducted a feasibility evaluation of Cabana’s anonymized, subclinical mental health support platform for Veterans. Guided by the VA-selected **RE-AIM** framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance), the Phase I study examined Cabana’s ability to engage Veterans, integrate into Veteran-serving organization (VSO) workflows, and deliver rapid, privacy-forward emotional support.

II. Key Findings

- **Reach:** Cabana demonstrates strong early reach relative to comparable digital mental health models. As of October 10, 2025, **140 Veterans enrolled** following trusted VSO referrals, with activation patterns that exceeded typical benchmarks for digital mental health engagement. (*Reach, Figure 1, p.10*)
- **Effectiveness:** Veterans who have engaged with Cabana have spent an average of **24 minutes** (SD = 30 minutes) with Cabana content since their registration date, with more than half of that time spent in live, moderated peer-support groups — a potential signal of acceptability and perceived value. Satisfaction scores were consistently high across groups, and qualitative stories show Cabana helping Veterans take steps toward additional supports when needed. (*Effectiveness, Table 3, pp.12–13*)
- **Adoption:** Partner VSOs — Veterans Bridge Home and Upstate Warrior Solutions — successfully integrated Cabana into their intake and outreach workflows. While approximately one quarter of registered Veterans re-engaged after sign-up, Phase II will use VSO-linked attributes to identify barriers and optimize early-stage engagement. (*Adoption Analysis, p.14*)
- **Implementation:** Cabana provided **rapid access to support**, with median time-to-first-live-session ranging from 26 minutes to 14.5 hours across VSO partners. Platform enhancements released during Phase I — including the AI-supported Guided Journal, mood tracking, and Lofi radio — performed reliably and demonstrated safe, consistent behavior aligned with motivational interviewing principles. (*Implementation & Guided Journal Safety, pp.18–28*)
- **Maintenance:** Both VSO partners have begun integrating Cabana into routine operations. Phase II scalability across five hubs will enable a richer understanding of long-term use, subgroup outcomes, and the platform’s role in navigation and care engagement over time. (*Maintenance, pp.31-32*)

III. Conclusion

Phase I confirms Cabana’s promise as a **scalable, privacy-forward, veteran-centered support model** that offers timely connection, high-quality peer moderation, and evidence-informed tools. Clearly, the pilot demonstrates that veterans are willing to register and engage with the platform, VSOs trust the platform as part of their support workflows, and Cabana appears to fill a critical service gap for those hesitant to engage in traditional clinical care.

Phase II will deepen this analysis through larger samples, longitudinal outcome measurement, matched comparison groups, and early indicators relevant to future cost-avoidance and ROI.