

Virtual Chronic Pain Care: Current State & Future Directions

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Conflicts of Interest

We have no financial disclosures.

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The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the United States government, any university, or organization.

Polling Question #1

Which of the following best describes your current role?

1. Clinician
2. Researcher
3. Educator
4. Administrator
5. Trainee / Student

Objectives

1. Present a framework for assessing impact & potential of technology-based virtual care
2. Describe 2 pilot studies of bundled virtual care interventions for Veterans with chronic pain
3. Discuss future projects & future needs for virtual chronic pain care

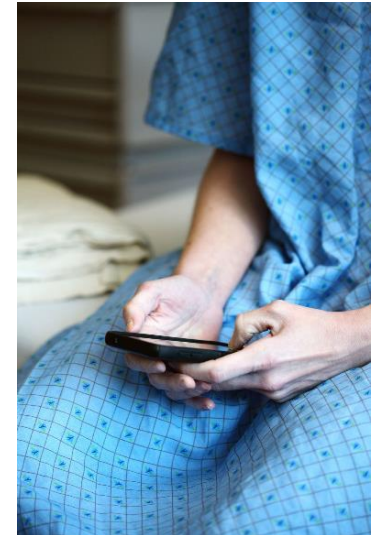
Brief Background

- Chronic pain is **common** & can substantially limit **quality of life**
- Chronic pain care can be **risky** and is often **costly**
- For many, use of **technology** is growing (esp. during COVID-19) and has an important role to play in improving chronic pain care



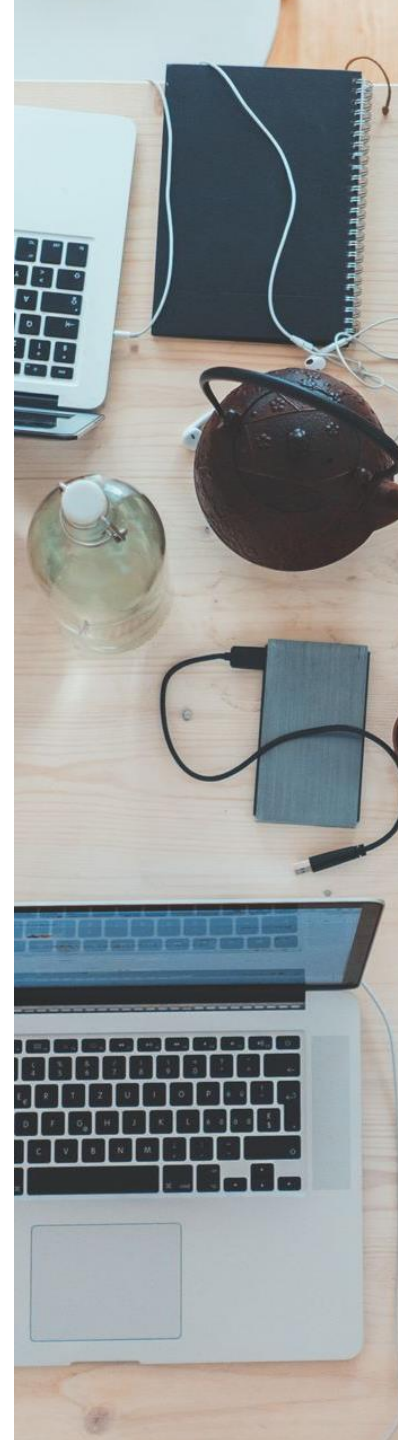
“Virtual” means virtually everything

- Telephone
- Video
- Text
- Apps
- Patient portals
- Secure messaging
- Other web-based resources
- Interactive voice response
- Wearables
- Other at-home monitoring
- Virtual reality



SIX TYPES OF VIRTUAL CARE IMPACT

- 1 **Communication**
Phone, video, secure messaging
- 2 **Connection**
Improved access (distance, frequency)
- 3 **Collaboration**
Self-management, education, engagement
- 4 **(Data) Collection**
PROs, PGHD
- 5 **Community**
Forums, mutual aid
- 6 **Combination**



Systematic Review: Pain Management Apps

Review

Evaluation of Self-Management Support Functions in Apps for People With Persistent Pain: Systematic Review

Hemakumar Devan¹, BPT, MPhty, PhD; Devin Farmery²; Lucy Peebles³, BSc; Rebecca Grainger², BMedSci, MBChB, FRACP, PhD

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³University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

Aim:

Evaluate the contents of Smartphone Apps providing information on Pain Management Strategies for people with persistent pain

Methods:

App contents - Evaluated using the 14-item self-management support (SMS-14) checklist

App quality - Assessed using the 23-item Mobile Apps Rating Scale

Systematic Review: Pain Management Apps

Results:

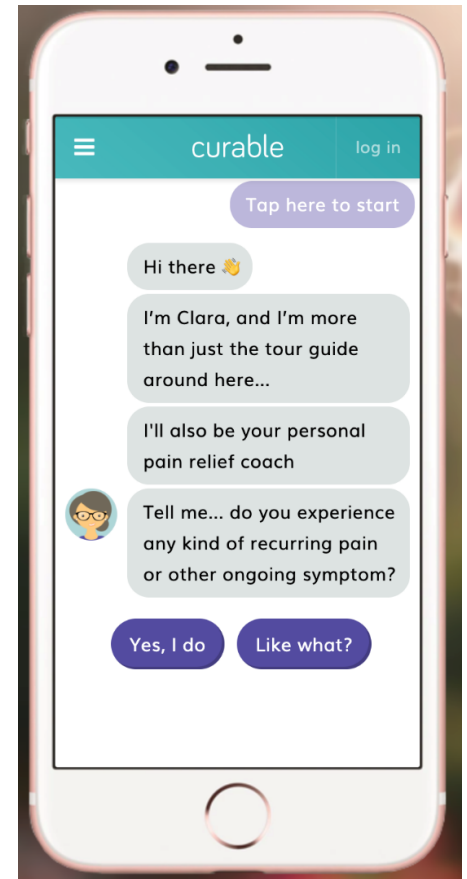
- **Meditation & Guided Relaxation** – Most frequently included self-management strategies
- **Self-monitoring of Symptoms** – Frequently featured function
- **Few apps** had features facilitating social connection & communication with clinicians
- **No apps** provided **culturally tailored information**
- **None were tested** in people with chronic pain

Curable App

Curable – Back Pain, Migraine and Other Chronic Pain

Large number of items to foster self-management

(8 out of 14)



<https://www.curablehealth.com/clara>

SuperBetter App



SuperBetter – uses Gamefully® method, a framework that brings the psychological strengths and mindset of gameplay to real life

Large number of items to foster self-management

(8 out of 14)



<https://www.superbetter.com>

VA Apps for Health



Mindfulness Coach ● ▲

Learn mindfulness to reduce stress and improve emotional balance.

mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach



Live Whole Health ● ▲

Learn skills to help you reach your whole health goals.

mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health



Pain Coach ■

Receive helpful tools for tracking and managing chronic pain.

mobile.va.gov/app/pain-coach-app-veterans



Annie App for Veterans ■

Receive text reminders to help you manage your care.

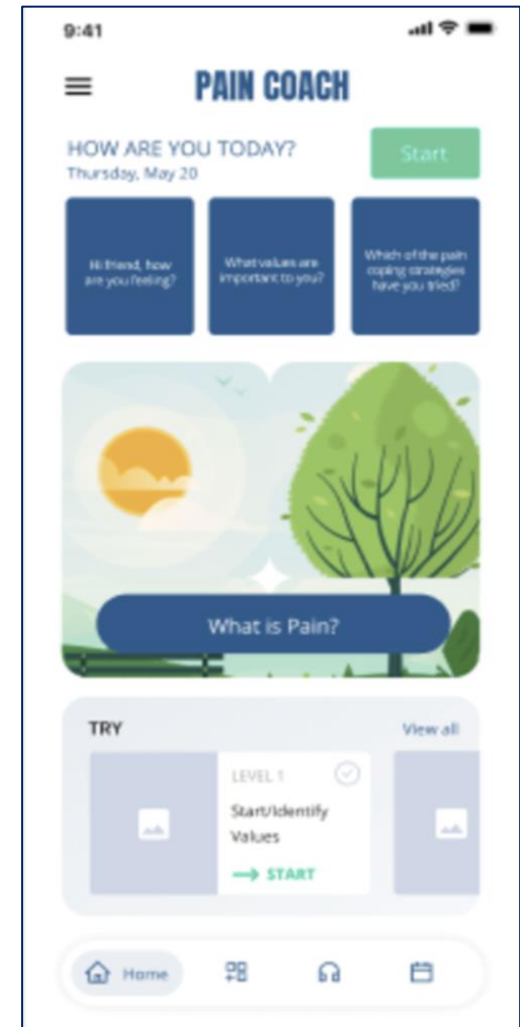
mobile.va.gov/annie



COVID Coach ● ▲

Receive tools to support self-care and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

mobile.va.gov/app/covid-coach



Video Collaborative Pain Management



Veteran-Centered Mailing



Proactive Outreach



Clinical Pharmacist
Evaluation



Self-Management Support

- HSR&D COVID Rapid Response Funding (Oct. 2020 – July 2021)
- Two VA sites
 - VA Connecticut
 - VA Eastern Colorado
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Veterans prescribed long-term opioid medication (≥ 50 mg MED)
 - Rural residence (CO site only)

Video Collaborative Pain Management



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Clinical Pharmacist Evaluation



Self-Management Support

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Eastern Colorado Healthcare System

I felt stuck and my pain just got worse.

Living with chronic pain can be hard. For many Veterans, it has gotten harder during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System has a new program designed to deliver expert pain management support to your home.

Video Telehealth
Meet by video with a pain medication expert.

Collaborative Pain Team
Our team supports the whole health of our veterans, including physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness. Our journey together starts with a comprehensive medical exam.

Evidence-based Medication
We welcome you to come learn about our therapeutic approach to providing safe, effective, pain care in clinic and in your home.

“I felt stuck and my pain just got worse.”

VA Eastern Colorado Healthcare System
Video-Telecare Collaborative Pain Management Program

ABOUT VIDEO-TELE CARE
Living with chronic pain can be hard. For many Veterans, it has gotten harder during the COVID-19 pandemic. The VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System has a new program designed to deliver expert pain management support to your home.

OUR BEST SERVICES

Video Telehealth
Meet by video with a pain medication expert.

Collaborative Pain Team
Receive a comprehensive medication evaluation.

New Medication Options
Discuss new medication options that may be right for you. Connect with other VA resources for safe, effective pain care at home.

Someone from our team will be reaching out to you soon.

Video Collaborative Pain Management



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**Clinical Pharmacist
Evaluation**



Self-Management Support

- VA Video Connect evaluation
- Pragmatic assessment included:
 1. Individualized assessment of benefits and harms of LTOT
 2. Dose reduction, discontinuation or switch to buprenorphine (if indicated)
 3. Optimization of non-pharmacologic and non-opioid pain treatment

Video Collaborative Pain Management



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Self-Management Support

Your VA Virtual Pain Care Guide

Expanding Veteran Access to Care Through Virtual Technologies

● iOS
 ▲ Android
 ■ Web
 Ⓞ Requires login

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Connected Care

Connect With Your Care Team:

- My HealtheVet** ■
Gain greater control of your VA personal health records with online access from anywhere, at anytime.
myhealth.va.gov
- VA Video Connect** ● ▲ ■
Secure video visits with your VA care team from anywhere.
mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect

Achieve Your Health Goals, Improve Your Mental Health, and Manage Your Care:

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- Live Whole Health** ● ▲
Learn skills to help you reach your whole health goals.
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Office of Connected Care Help Desk:
866-651-3180 | 24/7

My HealtheVet Help Desk:
877-327-0022 | Monday to Friday: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. CT.

Version 1.0

Video Collaborative Pain Management



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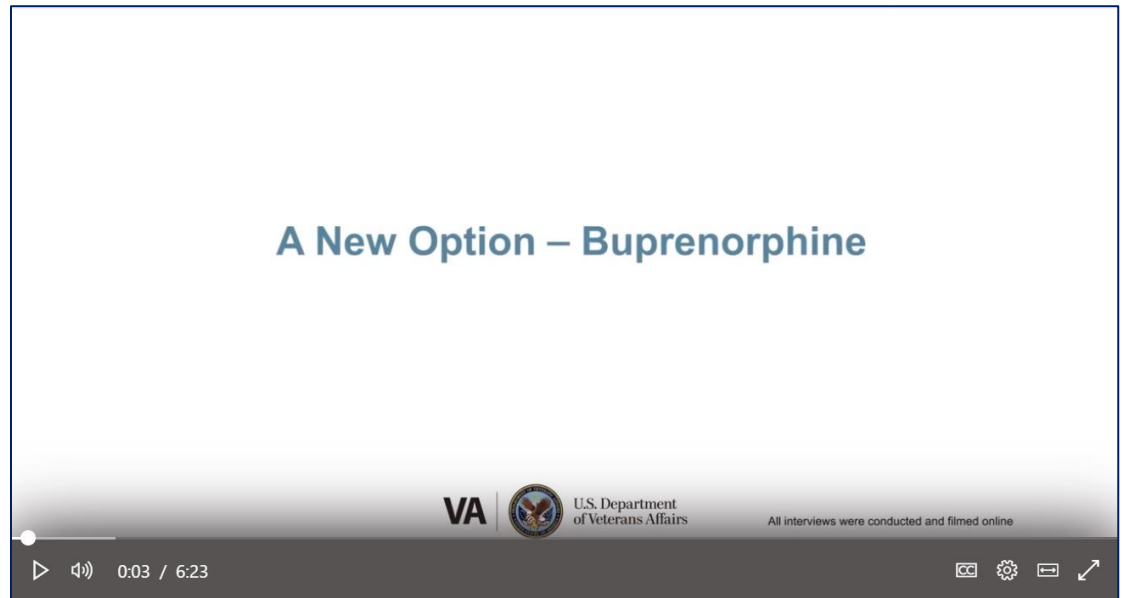
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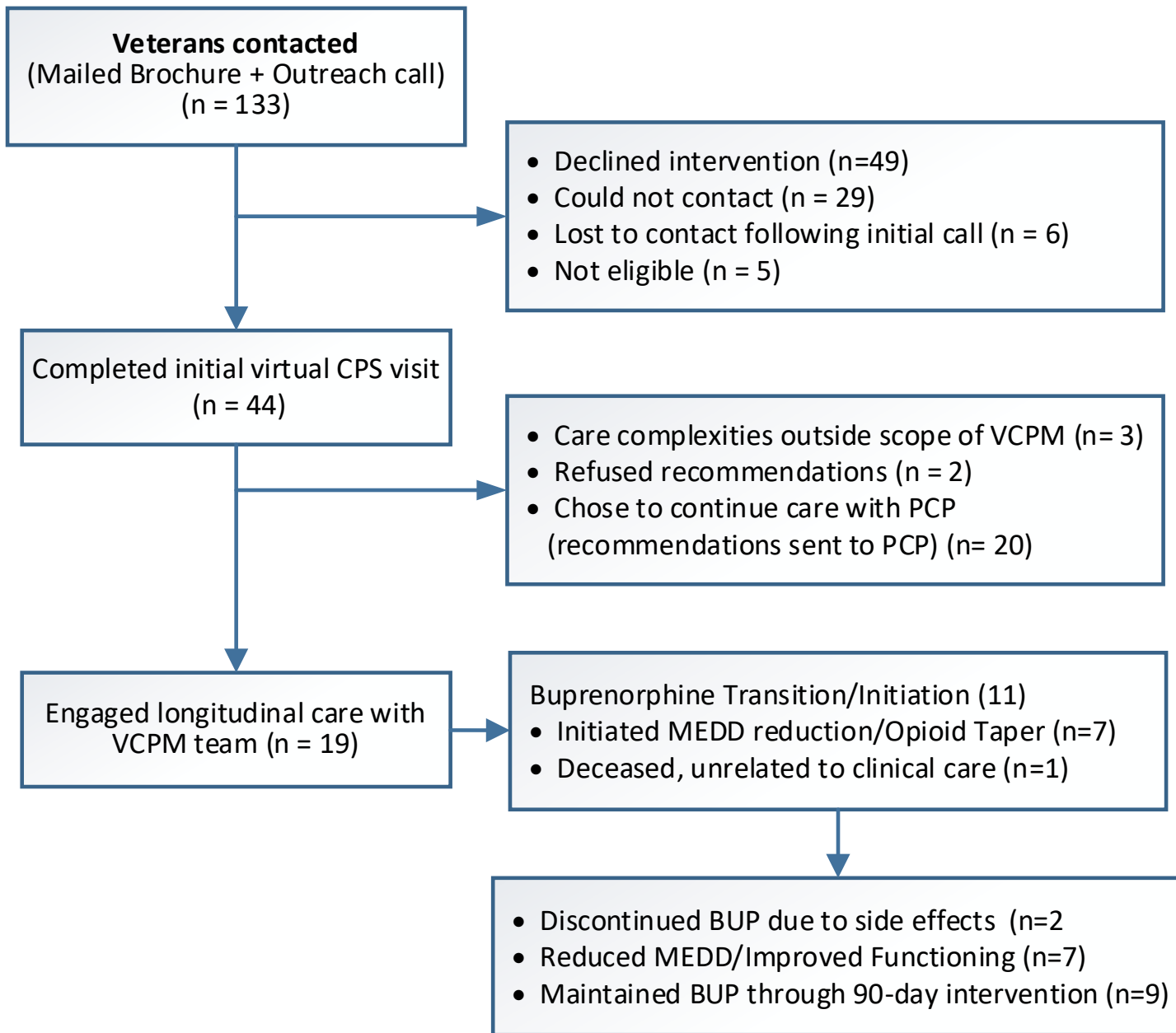


Self-Management Support



33%

14%



Results

- Structured telephone survey at 3-month follow-up
- Veterans reported mixed impact of COVID on access to care
 - **53%** reported reduced access
- Among 16 Veterans who received longitudinal virtual chronic pain care:
 - Majority reported success (mean **7.0** / 10)
 - Majority would recommend (mean **7.6** / 10)
 - Good satisfaction with virtual care (mean **4.3** / 5)



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Evaluation



Self-Management Support

Lessons Learned

- **Communication** – Limited reach of mail-based resources; Positive response to Vet-to-Vet outreach
- **Connection** – Low uptake of longitudinal care
- **Collaboration** – Limited integration of self-management resources
- **Community** – Focus of follow-up project

Future Directions



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Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



Automated Symptom
Monitoring



Interactive Voice
Response



Text Messaging

Future Directions



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Response



Text Messaging



VETERAN-TO-VETERAN GROUP SUPPORT FOR RURAL VETERANS WITH CHRONIC PAIN

Are you a rural Veteran experiencing chronic pain?

Join our chronic pain support group!

Participate in our weekly 1-hour virtual group meetings

Want to take on a leading role?

Train with us as a facilitator

Contact us:

Anne.hale@va.gov

Project funded by the VA Office of Rural Health

Future Directions



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Clinical Pharmacist Evaluation



Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



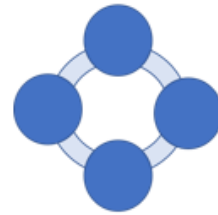
Automated Symptom Monitoring



Interactive Voice Response



Text Messaging



Quadruple Aim QUERI

Value-Based Care to Improve the Quadruple Aim for Veterans and Stakeholders

- QUERI-funded Center based at VA Eastern Colorado
- Implementation will compare:
 1. Veteran-to-Veteran peer coaching & groups **vs.**
 2. Peer coaching + VCPM
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Veterans receiving Community Care pain management
- Recruitment starting in 2022

Future Directions



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Self-Management
Support



Virtual Groups



***Automated Symptom
Monitoring***



Interactive Voice
Response



Text Messaging

Integrative Management of chronic Pain and OUD for Whole Recovery (IMPOWR)

- NIH-funded Center based at Yale University & VA Connecticut (2021–2026)
- Trial will compare:
 1. VCPM **vs.**
 2. VCPM+ IVR-delivered CBT-based self-management
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Veterans with chronic pain and OUD/opioid misuse
- Site recruitment underway with trial launch in 2022

VA HSR&D

Pain/Opioid



- Reduce opioid-related harms
- Interventions that foster self-management of pain
- Inclusion of rural Veteran populations

2021 Rapid Start Funding

1-year Pilot Study (2021-2022)

Assess feasibility & acceptability of bundled virtual care intervention

Support self-management of symptoms, and provide health-related motivational messages



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Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



**Automated Symptom
Monitoring**



Interactive Voice
Response



Text Messaging





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Clinical Pharmacist
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Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



**Automated Symptom
Monitoring**



Interactive Voice
Response



Text Messaging

- **Weekly survey** (pain intensity, pain interference, life satisfaction)
- **Weekly motivational messages** with links to VA resources



Veteran-Centered Mailing



Proactive Outreach



Clinical Pharmacist Evaluation



Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



Automated Symptom Monitoring



Interactive Voice Response



Text Messaging

Saturday 12:01 PM

Hi! It's Annie. Self-management is the best way to manage chronic pain. Click this link to learn more <https://tinyurl.com/23xf8wx4>

Today 8:00 AM

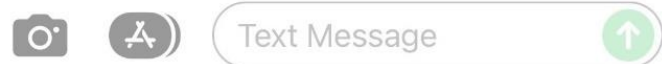
Hi, it's Annie. Time for a quick pain assessment. What was your average pain the past week? (0=None, 10=Worst imaginable). Reply PAIN then number (ex. PAIN 2)

Today 2:53 PM

PAIN 2

Thank you

How much has pain interfered with your enjoyment of life the past week? (0=None, 10= Completely interferes). Reply with ENJOY and the number (ex. ENJOY 3)





Veteran-Centered Mailing



Proactive Outreach



Clinical Pharmacist
Evaluation



Self-Management Support



Virtual Groups



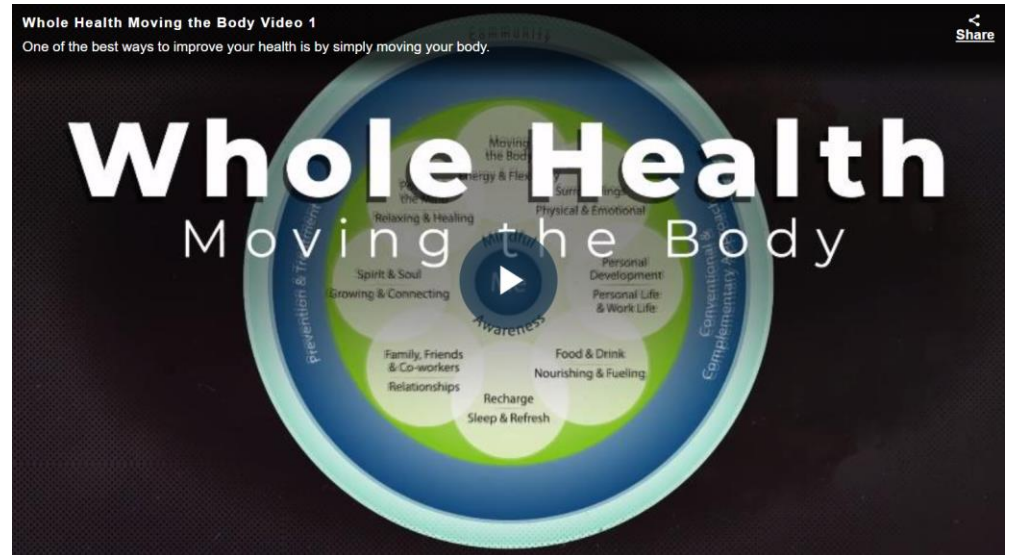
**Automated Symptom
Monitoring**



Interactive Voice
Response



Text Messaging

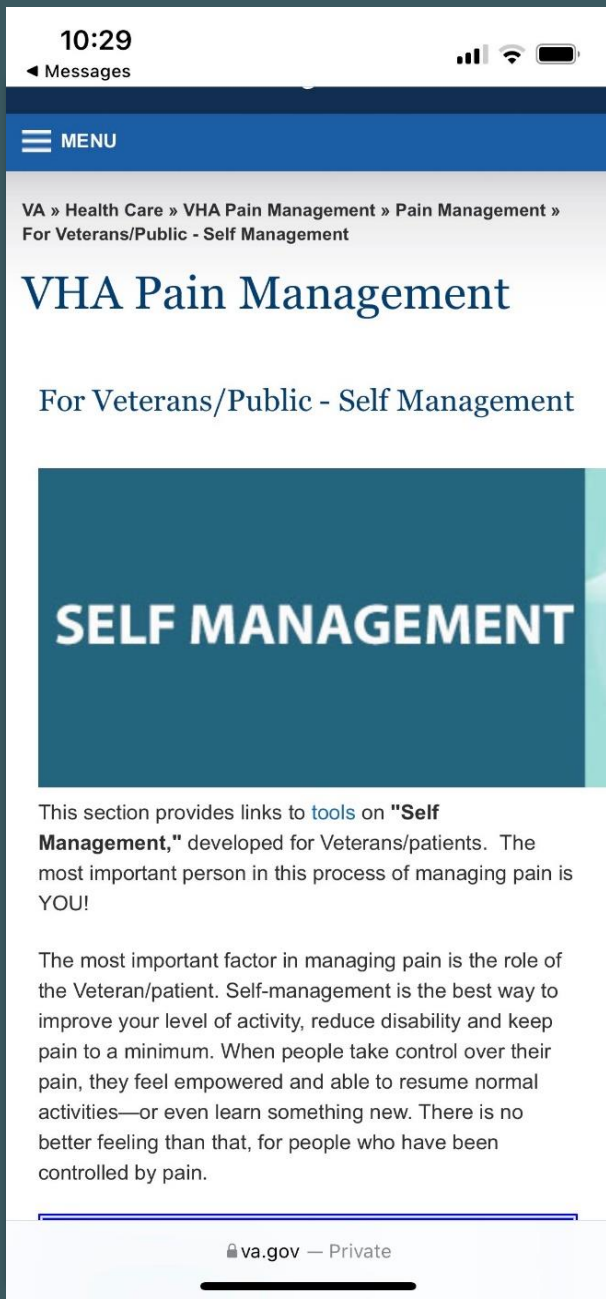


Project Design/Methods

- **Annie Chronic Pain Protocol Development**
- **Qualitative interviews**
- **Veteran Engagement & Partnership**
 - Two Veteran collaborators are part of the study team

**Veteran
Engagement in
Research**



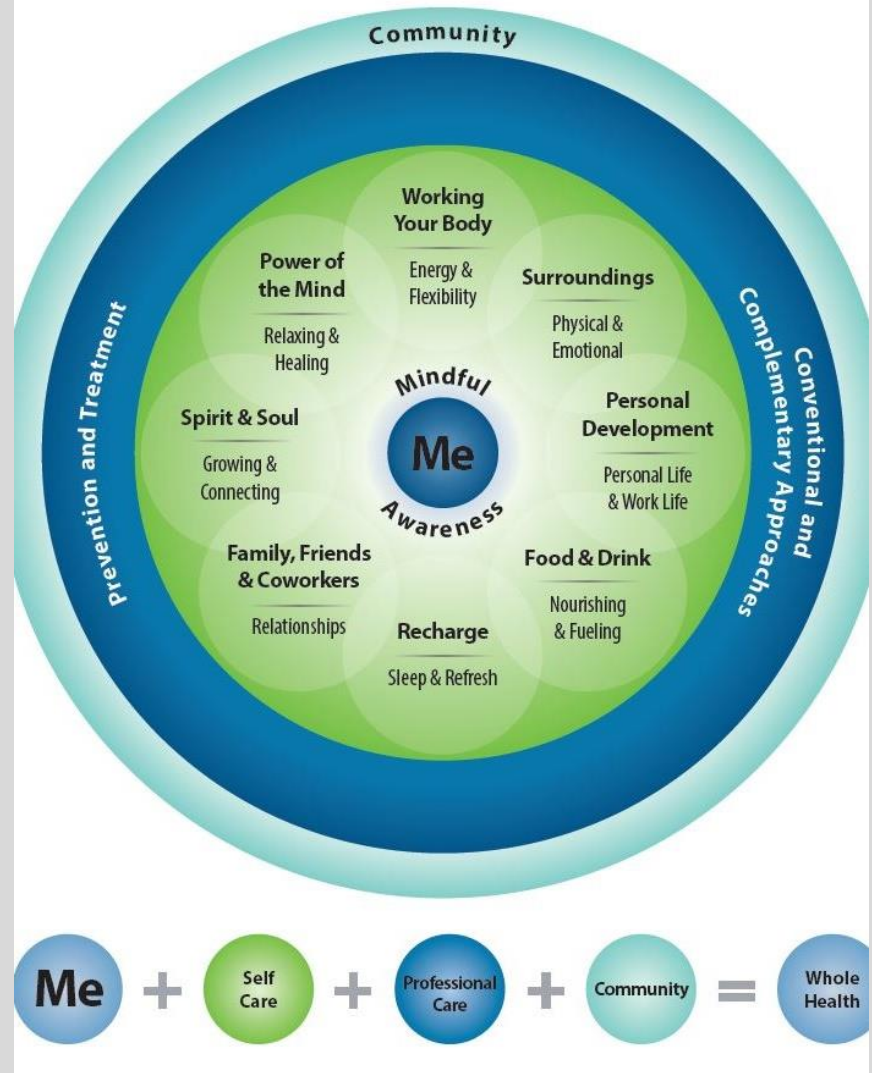


Lessons Learned (so far)

- **Communication** – Secure text messaging
- **Collaboration** – Self-management
- **(Data) Collection** – Self-reported, pragmatic
- **Connection** – One-way messaging, does not link to provider

Future Directions

- Broader dissemination of ANNIE protocol for pain self-management
- Adapt protocol to support self-management of related conditions
- Advance clinical integration with pain management teams



Conclusions

- To consider the impact of virtual care technologies, remember the six Cs – Combination is key!
- Multiple VA clinical trials and quality improvement initiatives underway to examine implementation of bundled virtual care interventions
- Reach out to us directly for questions or collaboration!

Thank you!

Denver/Seattle Center of Innovation

- John Evans
- Annie Hale
- Karen Jones
- Rachael Kenney
- Ebony Miller
- Charlotte Nolan
- Mary Nunnery
- Brian Schaaf

VCPM Connecticut

- Audrey Abelliera
- Beth DeRonne
- Caroline Falker
- Brent Moore
- Allie Schroeder
- Samara Zuniga

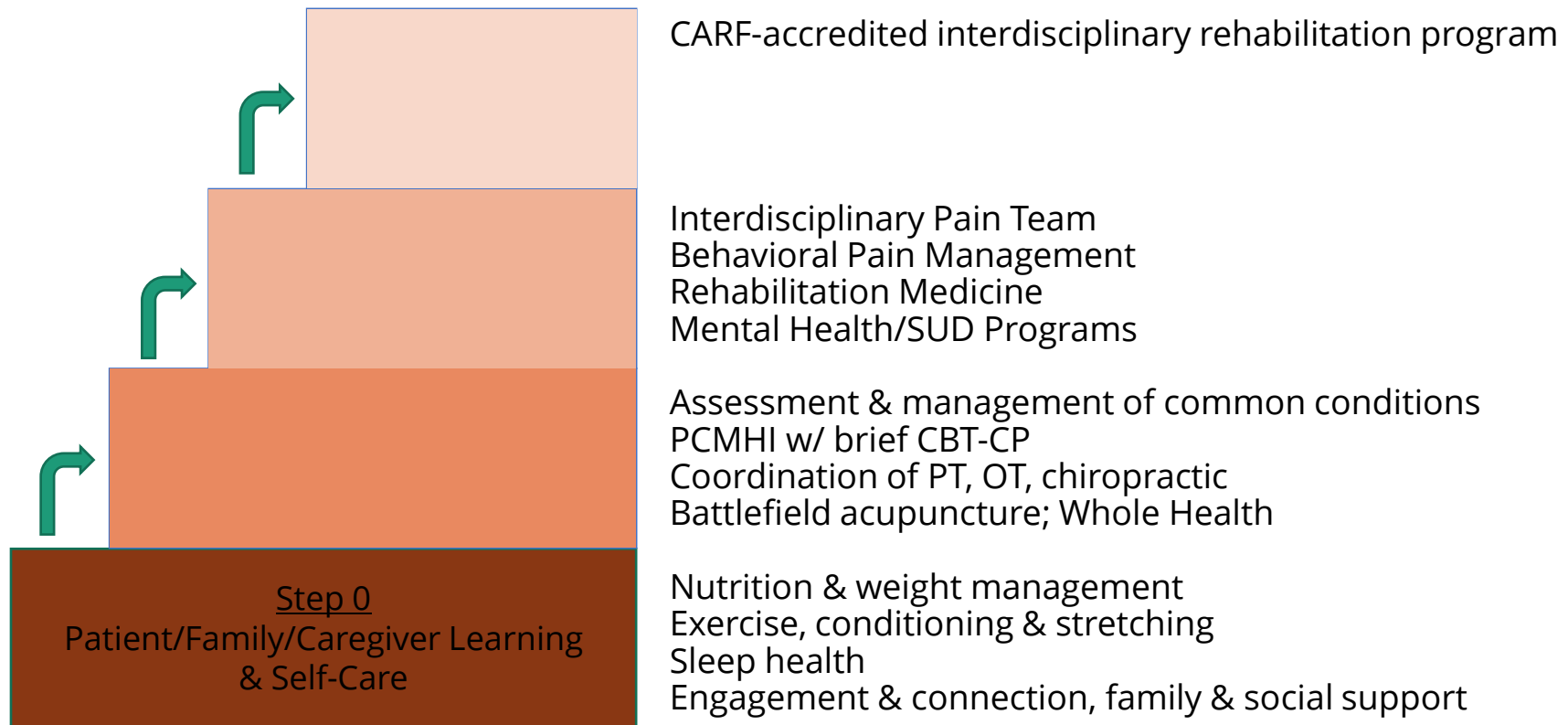
Collaborators

- Pain/Opioid CORE Veteran Engagement Panel
- VISN19 Academic Detailing
- Moving Pictures
- VA Office of Connected Care

Questions?

EXTRA SLIDES

VA's Stepped Care Model



Your VA Virtual Pain Care Guide

Expanding Veteran Access to Care Through Virtual Technologies



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Connected Care

iOS Android Web Requires login

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VA Mobile

VA Telehealth



Annie Motivational Text Messages

- “Hi! It’s Annie. Self-management is the best way to manage chronic pain.
https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public/Self_Management.asp”
- “Hi, Annie here. To improve health, try moving the body
<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=2851863979001&playerId=rJR8SfOyf&videoId=6071990029001>
- “Hi! It’s Annie. Our surroundings have an impact on who we are and how we feel
<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=2851863979001&playerId=rJR8SfOyf&videoId=607198536200>
- “Hi! It’s Annie. Reduce stress in your life. Stress intensifies chronic pain. Be willing to try yoga to help you relax <https://www.comebackyoga.org/online-yoga-practice/>
- “Hi, Annie here. Did you know that sleep can impact your health?
<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=2851863979001&playerId=rJR8SfOyf&videoId=6071986838001>
- “Hi! It’s Annie. Eat a healthy diet if you're living with chronic pain.
<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=2851863979001&playerId=rJR8SfOyf&videoId=6071988567001>”
- “Hi! It’s Annie. Self-management is the best way to improve your level of activity and keep pain to a minimum
<https://players.brightcove.net/pages/v1/index.html?accountId=2851863979001&playerId=rJR8SfOyf&videoId=6071988351001>

14-item self-management support (SMS-14) checklist

Skills	Examples (if one or more present, scored yes)
Self-efficacy building	1. Pain education
	2. Activity pacing
	3. Thought and behavioral management
	4. Exercises
	5. Relaxation and breathing
	6. Meditation and mindfulness
	7. Distraction techniques
8. Self-tailoring	
9. Self-monitoring of symptoms	
10. Goal setting and planning	
11. Problem solving	
12. Partnership between views of patient and clinicians	
13. Social support	
14. Cultural relevance	