



Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research

Veterans Engagement Stakeholders Council Charter

This document provides information on the purpose, function, and processes of the Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) Veterans Engagement Stakeholders Council (henceforth the Stakeholders Council). As needed this document will be reviewed and revised by the Stakeholders Council in consultation with the Veteran Engagement Research Group leadership and CHOIR Leadership to incorporate the changing needs and strategic intent of the group.

A. Purpose and Function of the Stakeholders Council

Background: There is a movement by major funding agencies, such as Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), to incorporate the patient/consumer perspective into the different steps of research, including study topic relevance, methodology, and communication of results. Engaging consumers in these processes increases significance, uptake, and dissemination of research discoveries to the public.

As part of a national Veterans Affairs Health Services Research & Development effort, CHOIR convened a Veteran Engagement Research Group (VERG) that is tasked with increasing Veteran engagement with CHOIR research.

CHOIR's three main focal areas of research are: (1) Recovery in behaviorally vulnerable populations, (2) Medication optimization, and (3) Health communication. There are additional CHOIR research interests that are outside of these focal areas.

Purpose: The mission of the Stakeholder Council is to inform the CHOIR research agenda as a whole and to provide input into the direction of both focal and non-focal CHOIR research areas to ensure they are consistent with the Veteran community's and Veteran Health Administration (VHA)'s ongoing needs and interests. This work will help inform CHOIR's strategic priorities, map new directions for CHOIR research, and ensure that CHOIR research is both relevant and timely. When requested, it may also provide input and feedback on new projects and proposals under consideration. The Stakeholder Council will meet at least semi-annually and will be comprised of Veterans and other appropriate stakeholders, such as Veteran Service Organization representatives, VHA providers, and Veterans' family members and caregivers.

Function/Scope of Work: The Stakeholders Council will review the CHOIR research agenda, both within the three focus areas and from the breadth of research interests at CHOIR. Members will meet to provide targeted feedback on the proposed research agenda, giving special attention to those components that specifically include Veterans and their concerns. Dissemination of CHOIR research activities to Veterans is crucial in building transparency and trust. Therefore, the Stakeholders Council will advise on potential avenues for dissemination, as well as format (e.g., newsletter) and content for specific audiences. Meetings will be held on a semi-annual basis for the first year of the Stakeholders Council. The Stakeholders Council will periodically reassess the frequency of its meetings.

Benefits: The Stakeholders Council is an avenue for Veteran stakeholders to voice their unique perspectives, interests, needs, and concerns. Whenever possible those viewpoints will be incorporated into CHOIR's research agenda so that it may help shape VHA's research endeavors and ultimately improve the care provided to Veterans.

Stakeholder Council members who are not employed by the VHA should refer to the Guidelines Document and Section D of this document for further information on compensation for their involvement.

B. Stakeholders Council Membership Roles and Responsibilities

All who attend will receive guidance on working collaboratively.

CHOIR Co-Chair: The CHOIR Co-Chair will be an Investigator level, non-Executive Leadership Team (ELT) staff member of CHOIR. The CHOIR Co-Chair will be responsible for ensuring that Stakeholders Council meetings are scheduled in a timely manner and conducted to ensure maximal use of the time and talents of the members of the Stakeholders Council. The CHOIR Co-Chair will attend every meeting and provide oversight of the meeting process. Responsibilities of the CHOIR Co-Chair include but are not limited to facilitating the meeting with the Veteran Co-Chair, and generally ensuring that the meeting agenda is followed.

Veteran Co-Chair: The Veteran Co-Chair will co-facilitate meetings with the CHOIR Co-Chair, and be responsible for reviewing and offering feedback on materials prior to each meeting, and attend all meetings.

Veteran Members: Prior to each meeting, Veteran members will be responsible for reviewing meeting materials and completing review notes on each topic to be presented. These notes will be used to foster discussion for each agenda topic. If a Veteran Member is unable to attend a meeting he or she will notify the CHOIR Administrative member.

CHOIR Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Member(s): At least one member of the ELT will attend each Stakeholders Council meeting as a representative of CHOIR Leadership.

CHOIR Executive Advisory Group (EAG) Members and/or designated Focal Area Heads: When topics that are specific to an EAG member's focal area are on the meeting agenda, at least one member from the EAG, or a designated representative, will attend. When individual grants are reviewed, at least one member of the appropriate focal area will be invited to attend.

Presenting PI/Staff: The presenting PI/Staff member will attend the meeting as needed to present his or her topic area and to contribute to other discussion topics. This member will ensure that any materials to be reviewed (*TBD*) have been sent to the CHOIR Administrative Member no later than 2 weeks prior to the semi-annual Stakeholders Council meeting. PI/Staff materials will follow a standard format (*Format TBD*) and the presentation of the materials will last no longer than 10 minutes to ensure all materials are reviewed in a timely fashion during the Stakeholders Council Meeting.

All materials will be standardized into a brief slide show (approximately 5 slides) that will last no longer than 10-15 minutes for all presenters.

CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator: The CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator will be a CHOIR Project Manager who will serve as Coordinator for a designated period of time. The CHOIR Stakeholders

Council Coordinator will be responsible for the overall project management of the Stakeholders Council. This includes but is not limited to providing oversight for the CHOIR Administrative Support and/or Member(s) to ensure that timelines are met and meeting logistics are fulfilled. The Coordinator will coordinate initial sets of reminders to Focal Area Heads and Presenting PI/Staff one month before the Stakeholders Council Meeting. A second reminder for materials will be sent 2 weeks before the submission deadline. A final reminder will be sent 2 days before the deadline. It is the responsibility of the CHOIR PI/Staff to submit materials to the CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator in a timely fashion. Once materials have been acquired the CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator will coordinate sending Stakeholders Council meeting materials to Stakeholders Council members. Members will have the option of receiving the materials by email, postal mail, or in-person at CHOIR. The Coordinator will also be responsible for notetaking and distribution of meeting minutes and update briefs. Notes will be completed and disseminated, according to VA policy, within a week of the meeting. Update briefs will be created twice a year to notify stakeholders how their input has influenced CHOIR activities.

CHOIR Administrative Support and/or Member(s): The CHOIR Administrative Support and/or Member(s) will assist the CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator in arranging necessary logistics for the Stakeholders Council Meeting. This includes but is not limited to sending calendar invites, scheduling a location, and coordinating and obtaining necessary IT equipment.

Recruitment: Members will be recruited based on their ability to represent individual and/or group Veteran, family, caregiver, and provider perspectives. Ideally there will be 8-10 non-CHOIR members of the Stakeholders Council. The following table outlines the type of members we hope to recruit.

Primary Perspective	Name	Title/Background
<i>Macro-level Perspectives:</i> Leadership from such organizations as Vet Centers, Veteran state and local government or advocacy services, Veteran Service Organizations, New England Center and Home for Veterans, Supportive Services for Veterans Families, Soldier On, Got Your Six, etc.		
<i>Veteran (uses VA services, consider family members)</i>		
<i>Veteran (doesn't use VA services, consider family members)</i>		
<i>Provider: Clinical (e.g., MD, PhD, RN, LICSW)</i>		
<i>Provider: Non-Clinical (e.g., Chaplain, Vocational Rehabilitation, Clinical Managers)</i>		

A scientific background is not essential; however, some firsthand exposure to the VA Health Care System is preferred to ensure full participation in the Stakeholders Council. Additional stakeholders may be invited depending on the topics being discussed.

C. Stakeholders Council Meetings

Meeting Location: Meetings will be held at a location in the community that is accessible to all members. A Non-VA site is preferred and strongly encouraged if possible. The location of meetings will be assessed periodically to determine if it meets the needs of all involved.

Meeting Schedule and Process: The initial Stakeholders Council will be assembled in January 2017. Meetings will be held in or around March and September. These are times when CHOIR Investigators are in the early phases of proposal development and when input is most critically needed on the strategic direction of research at CHOIR. Meetings will last no longer than 2 hours. The first part of the meeting will focus on administrative items and the second part of the meeting will focus on research-related items.

Meeting Agendas: Meetings will follow a standardized agenda. A sample of a potential standardized agenda can be found below.

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review of Meeting Guidelines
- Old Business (Administrative)
- New Business (Administrative)
- Discussion of Focal Areas (Research)
- Discussion of Non-Focal Areas (Research)
- Dissemination Discussion (Research)
- Optional: CHOIR PI/Staff Presentations and Discussions (Research)
- Closing and Action Items/Next Steps

All focal and non-focal areas will give a brief update at each meeting. However, it is likely that substantial discussion in any one area will rotate from meeting to meeting. These discussion areas will be determined well in advance of the actual meeting to prepare the appropriate materials for discussion.

Meeting Minutes: Minutes will be taken at each meeting by the CHOIR Secretary. These minutes will be distributed to Stakeholders Council members and to interested CHOIR staff.

Recommendations and Dissemination: Stakeholders Council verbal and written feedback will be compiled by the CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator and sent to the meeting attendees and appropriate parties within one week of the meeting. The recommendations will be a separate document from the meeting minutes for clarity.

Twice a year (e.g., July and January) CHOIR will create and disseminate a Stakeholders Brief (Format TBD) to provide feedback to Stakeholders on how their input influenced CHOIR research activities.

D. Stakeholders Council Budget and Compensation

The Veteran Co-chair will receive an honorarium of up to \$1000 per year (\$500/meeting) for his or her participation in the Stakeholders Council (unless that person is employed by the VA; see below). This includes compensation for meeting preparation, co-leading the meeting, as well as reimbursement for travel costs associated with the meeting.

The non-VA employee Veteran Members will receive an honorarium of up to \$500 per year (\$250/meeting) for their participation in the Stakeholders Council. This includes compensation for review prior to the meeting, participation in the meeting, as well as reimbursement for travel costs associated with the meeting.

CHOIR faculty and ELT members and other VA employees will not receive compensation for participation in the Stakeholders Council outside of their already existing VA salary. However, 5% of the CHOIR Stakeholders Council Coordinator's salary and 2% of the CHOIR Administrative Support/Member's salary will be covered by CHOIR center funding. See estimated budget and VERG guidelines for funding VERG activities. As the CHOIR Administrative Support/Member and CHOIR Coordinator are funded positions, they will have dedicated time to complete the outlined tasks before, during, and after Stakeholders Council meetings.