

MODULE 1: RESEARCH: WHAT, WHY, AND WHO



**Veterans Health
Administration**

Durham VA Health Care System

VA | HONORING SERVICE
HEALTH CARE | **EMPOWERING
HEALTH**

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Objectives

- Discuss what research is, and why we do it
- Explain how research fits within VA's structure and mission
- Define the “players” in research
- Describe the role of Veteran and Care Partner representatives in research

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

Research is a way to answer questions using an organized and systematic approach.

RESEARCH IN THE VA

Why Research is Important to VA

- VA's mission: To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.
- VA research is focused on improving the health of Veterans and improving health care for Veterans.

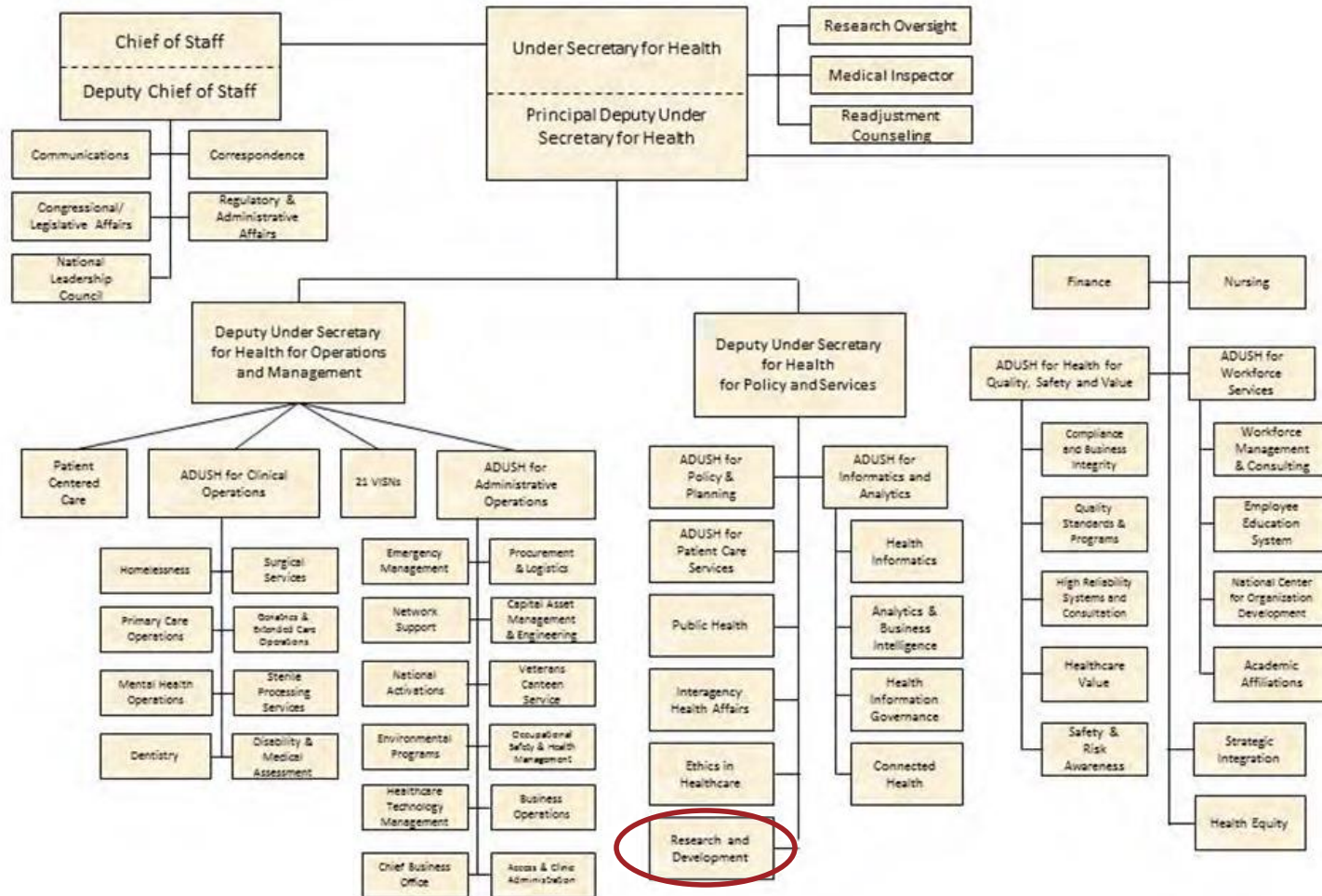


Evidence-based Medicine

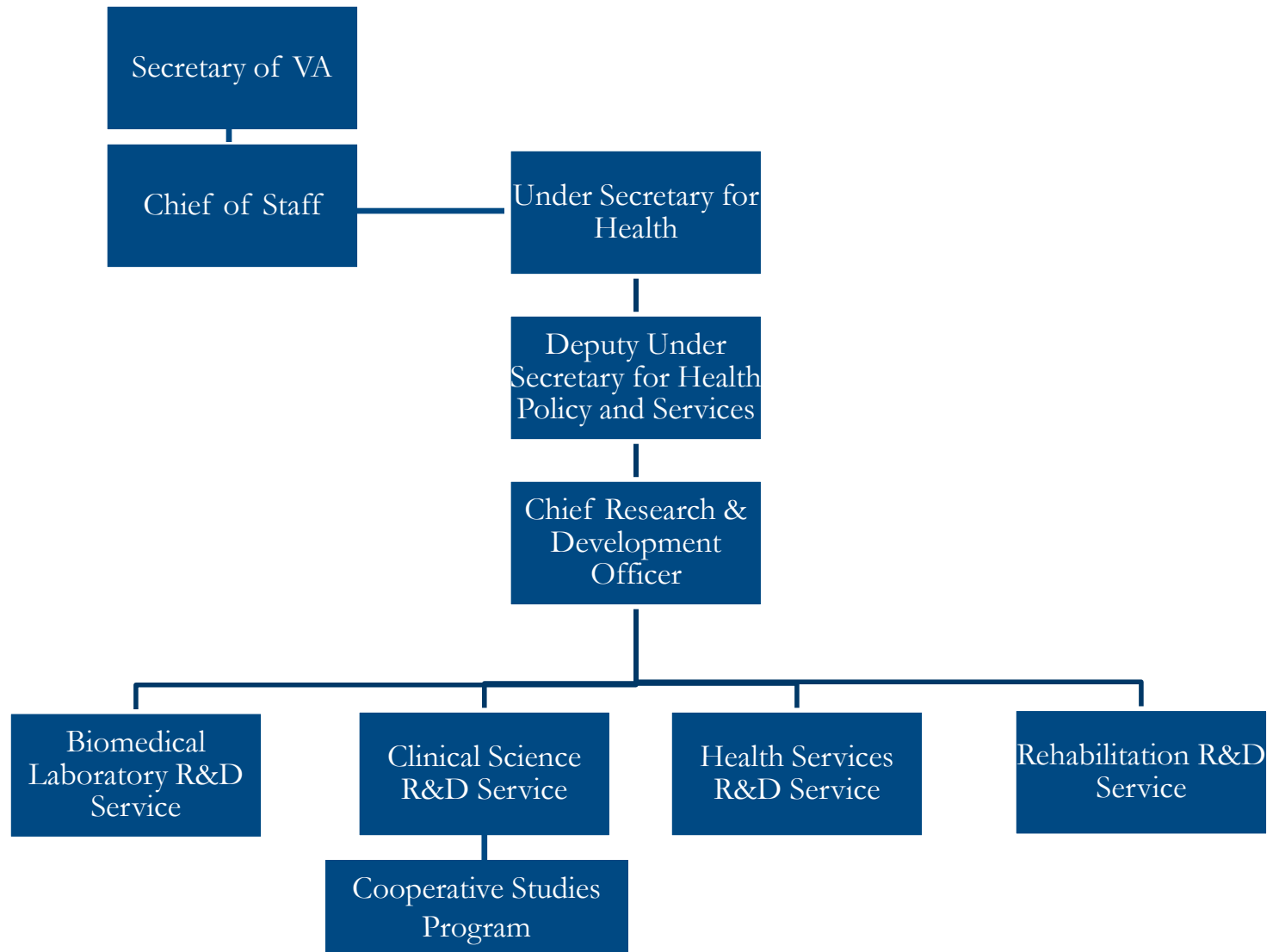
- At the VA, it's important to us that the treatments we provide are based on **evidence** about what is best for Veterans.
- This evidence comes from research.



Where does Research fit into the VA?



Where does Research fit into the VA?



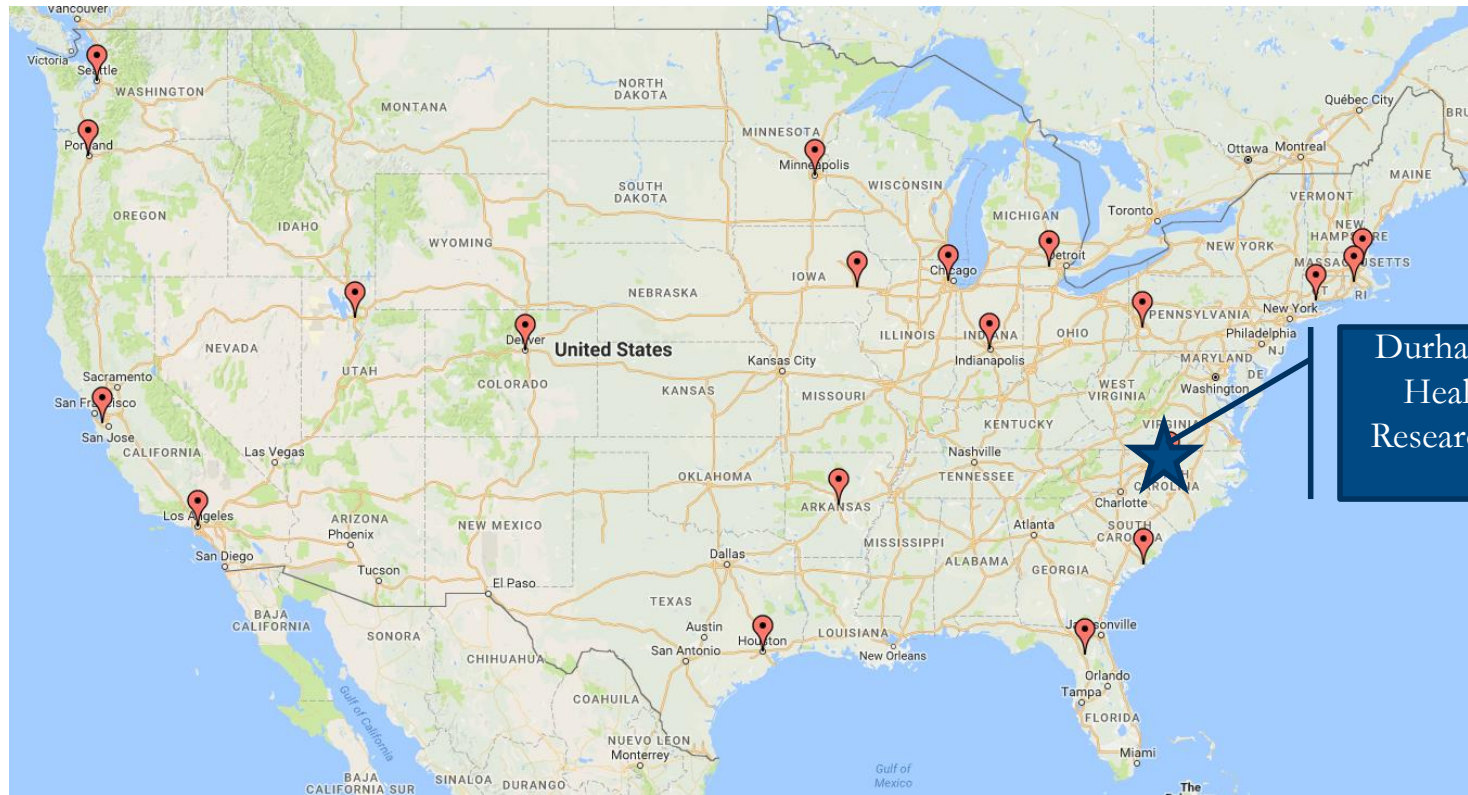
Durham VA Research Centers

- The VA has several research programs which have different focuses.



- In Durham:
 - Durham Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care
 - The Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Center (CSPEC) - Durham

Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D) Centers of Innovation (COINs)



HSR&D focuses on **finding and testing strategies** for patient care, care delivery, improving Veteran health outcomes, improving healthcare costs, and improving healthcare quality within VA.

Durham HSR&D Research Topics

- ✓ Physical activity & diet to help with weight loss
- ✓ Counseling to quit smoking
- ✓ Improving access to cancer screenings
- ✓ Support programs for caregivers
- ✓ Peer support for women Veterans at risk for heart disease
- ✓ Telemedicine to deliver diabetes care
- ✓ ...And many more!



Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) Centers



Durham is one of the CSP Epidemiology Centers, which means CSPEC Durham researchers study the **health trends and causes of health conditions** of Veterans across the country.

CSPEC-Durham Research Topics

- ✓ Risk factors related to illnesses such as ALS, colorectal cancer, and Gulf War Illness
- ✓ How to carry out large, national research projects involving Veterans
- ✓ Gulf War Era Veterans' thoughts and preferences about research
- ✓ ...And many more!



WHY RESEARCH?

What do these have in common?



Shingles vaccine

is now available for people age 50 and over.

Get yours today!



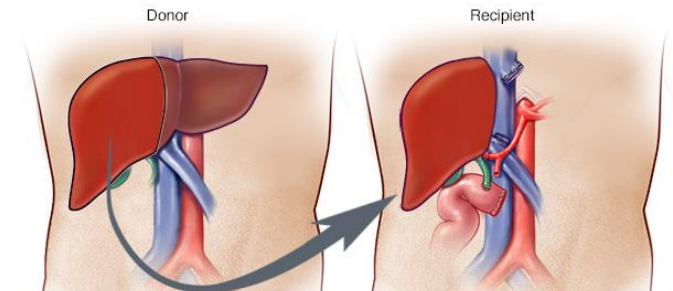
CAT Scan



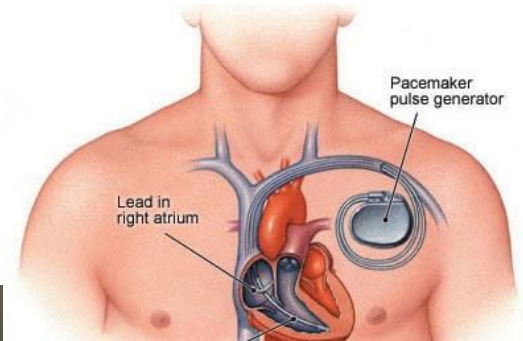
Nicotine Patch



Powered ankle-foot prosthesis



Successful liver transplant



Implantable Cardiac Pacemaker

VA Research Accomplishments!



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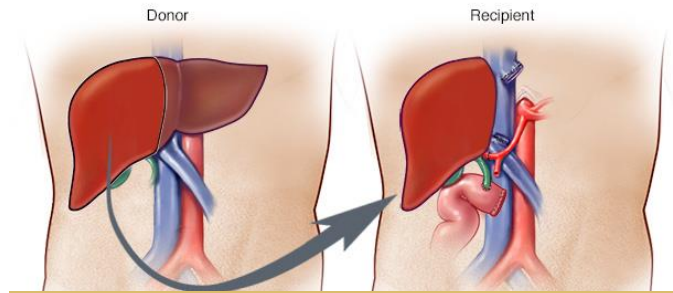
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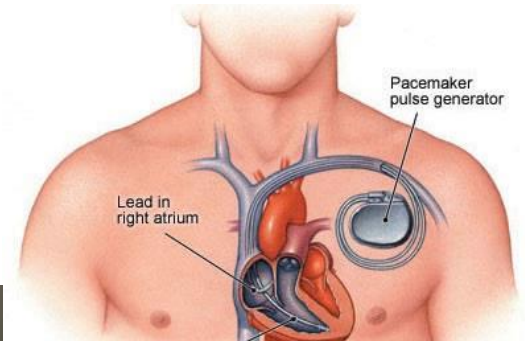
Nicotine Patch



Powered ankle-foot prosthesis



Successful liver transplant



Implantable Cardiac Pacemaker

Why research?

Example: Your friend at the gym says that drinking green tea helped him lose weight. Should VA recommend that everyone who wants to lose weight should drink green tea?



Why or Why not?

Why research?

- There are often conflicting ideas about the best way to address a particular problem
- What works for one set of conditions might be ineffective or even dangerous in a different set of conditions

WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

Who are the players?

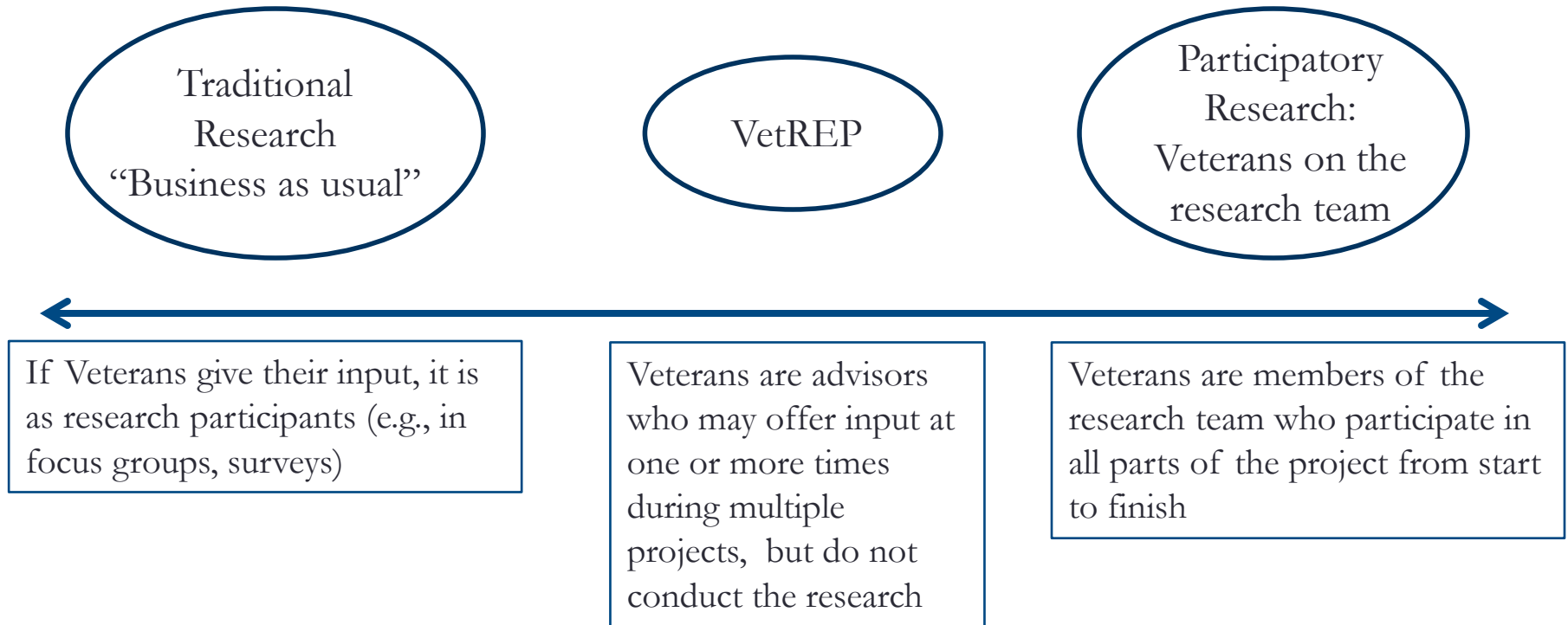
- Researchers
 - Principal investigator
 - Co-investigators
 - Special consultants
- Research staff
 - Project managers
 - Interventionists (e.g., nurses, dietitians)
- Participants/patients
- Review boards
 - Grant – reviews and scores grants based on importance and quality
 - IRB – decides whether research adequately protects research subjects
- Other oversight agencies (e.g., FDA)
- Funders (e.g., VHA, NIH, Non-profit foundations)
- Others?

YOU!

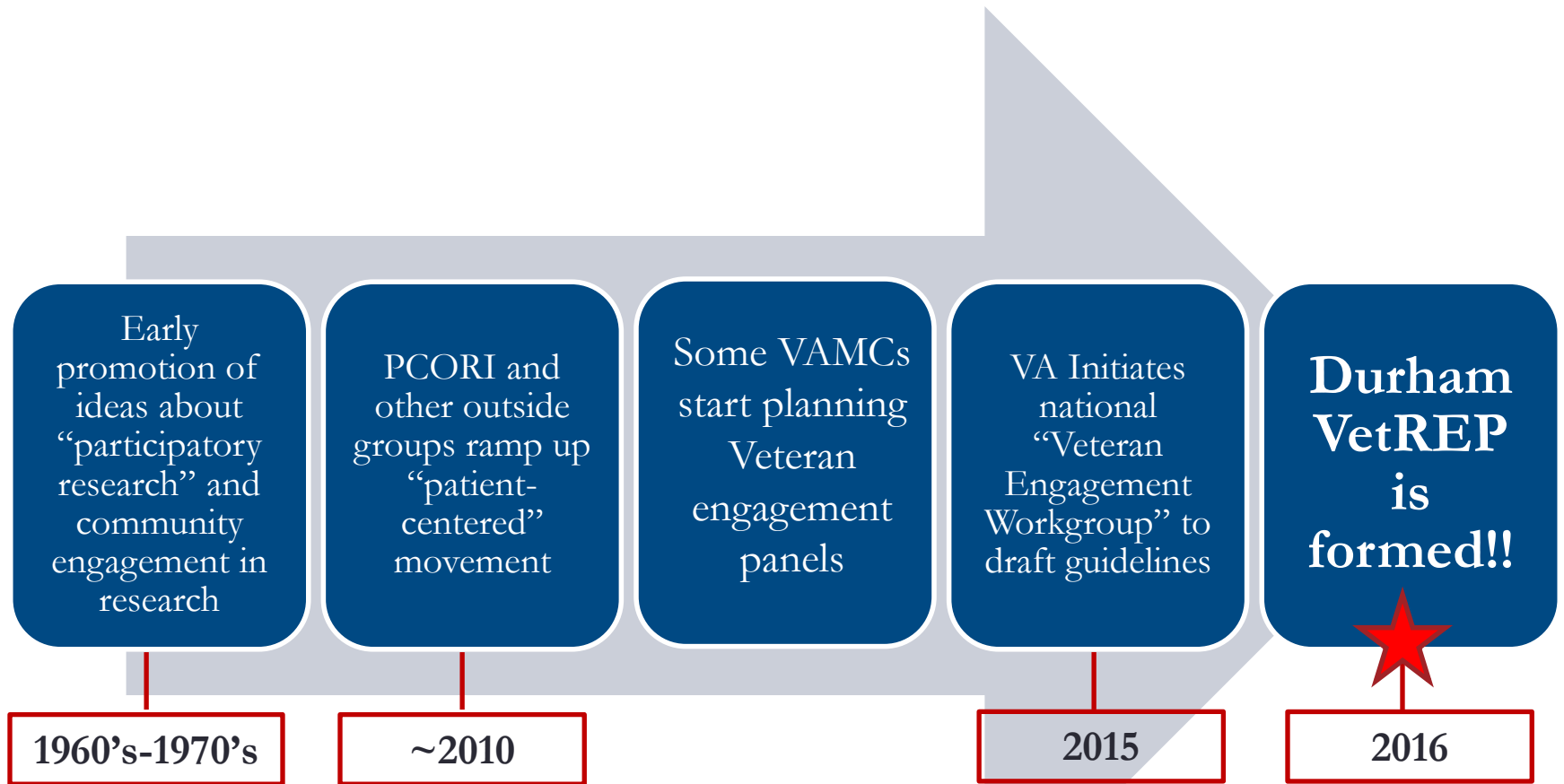
You bring the perspective of Veterans

**Why might it be helpful to have
the voice of Veterans and their
care partners in research?**

The Spectrum of Veteran Involvement in Research



History of Veteran Engagement in Research



Veteran Research Engagement Panel (VetREP)

Roles and Responsibilities

By attending regular meetings of the group, Veteran and Care Partner Representatives:

- ✓ Provide input on new and current VA research projects
- ✓ Review research project materials created for Veterans and their families
- ✓ Help make sure the research speaks to Veterans' concerns
- ✓ Help find ways to improve the spread and use of health information

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

1. What do you hope to get out of participating in this panel?
2. What are you interested in learning more about?
3. What do you want VetREP to accomplish?

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