

Durham VA Health Services Research & Development
Center of Innovation
Veteran Research Engagement Panel (VetREP) Charter

I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Veteran Research Engagement Panel is to promote patient-centered research and the translation of VHA research into practice and community settings.

II. Purpose and Scope

To collaborate with VA researchers to improve research related to Veterans' health and health care by:

- 1) Providing feedback on new and ongoing research and evaluation of projects involving Veterans;
- 2) Providing advice on the use of study results; and
- 3) Supporting the role of health services research at the VA and in the community

The VetREP is tasked to provide guidance and feedback to researchers through collaborations in the following areas:

- 1) Setting research priorities and developing research questions
- 2) Designing research studies (e.g., recruitment approach, perceived feasibility of intervention, selection of outcomes that are important to Veterans)
- 3) Creating, reviewing, and providing feedback on research materials (e.g., focus group guides, print materials, surveys)
- 4) Interpreting and disseminating research findings

III. Membership

VetREP membership will consist of 10 - 17 Veterans and care partners varying by:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Service Branch
- War/conflict

Veteran Representatives will serve a 3-year term, with a commitment to serving on the VetREP for at least 1 year. Upon completion of the 3-year service term, Veteran

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Representatives will have the ability to extend their service with the option of rolling off for 1 year. Veteran Representatives may also choose to end their service permanently for any reason.

Duties and Responsibilities. To serve as a Veteran Representative, individuals must be willing and able to:

- Attend regular meetings;
- Provide input on the details of newly funded and ongoing research projects;
- Help researchers identify strategies to improve the dissemination and use of health information;
- Help evaluate products and informational materials to ensure they are relevant and useful to Veterans and their families;
- Help identify ways to determine the impact of research efforts on Veterans' health;
- Present ideas to improve VA research processes as consumers; and
- Act as a sounding board for new VA research ideas.

Recruitment and Application Process. Veterans and care partners will be identified for recruitment through referrals from existing Veteran Representatives, HSR&D faculty and providers, Durham VA Medical Center staff, and others in the broader community. Information about VetREP membership will also be shared during special events at the Medical Center (e.g. Town Hall) as well as during other community events devoted to Veterans.

Interested individuals will be invited to complete an application and be interviewed. Upon approval, new members will participate in an orientation and research training session. New member orientation and research training will occur once a year. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis and interviews will be conducted during new member recruitment.

IV. VetREP Procedures

Meeting schedule and agenda. Meetings of the VetREP will last no more than 2 hours and will occur monthly. The VetREP coordinator will email and call members to remind them about upcoming meetings, scheduled research presentations and educational talks. The VetREP coordinator will also generate and distribute meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting material.

In addition to presentations on new or current research (see below), meetings will include continuing education opportunities related to health research, as feasible and desired by Veteran Representatives. Announcements and updates on Veteran community events and resources will also be welcomed by Panel members during meetings.

Researcher Presentations. Researchers interested in receiving guidance and feedback from the VetREP for particular studies will submit a request form to the VetREP project coordinator for review and approval. Presentations will be scheduled to

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take place during VetREP meetings. All meeting materials will be sent to Veteran Representatives for review at least 1 week prior to the scheduled meeting. Instructions and guidelines for researchers utilizing the VetREP have been detailed in a separate document.

In order to obtain continuous feedback about meetings, a brief evaluation will be provided at the end of each meeting. The evaluation will allow for input and feedback on meeting satisfaction and improvements. An annual partnership assessment will also be administered to evaluate members' experiences and perceptions with respect to VA research and their interactions with researchers.

To ensure mutually beneficial interactions between researchers and Veteran Representatives, researchers will be invited to provide annual updates on studies presented to the VetREP. The purpose of the annual update will be to report back on accomplishments and provide feedback on how the input of VetREP modified the research. A commitment will be obtained from all researchers to stay engaged with VetREP during the course of their study.

HSR&D Grant Cycle. In preparation for the review of newly funded studies, grants funded by HSR&D are based on a Summer/Winter cycle through which proposals are submitted, reviewed, and funded with an anticipated start date. Below is an example schedule. Grant cycles can vary depending on the agency/organization sponsoring the grant.

Example HSR&D Grant Cycle for Investigator-Initiated Grants:

	Summer	Winter
Proposal Submission Deadline	3 business days before June 15	3 business days before December 15
Review	August	March
Earliest Anticipated Start Date	January	July

V. Rules of Engagement

The following rules will be adhered to during the conduct of meetings:

1. Everyone is responsible for enforcing ground rules.
2. All meetings will begin and end on time.
3. Please turn off or silent your cell phones and avoid texting during discussions.
4. Treat everyone and their ideas with respect.
5. It is important that only one person talks at a time.
6. Let everyone have a chance to talk. If you have been talking a lot, consider giving others a chance.
7. Minimize or eliminate side conversations.
8. While generating ideas, withhold debate and criticism.

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9. While disagreeing or debating, focus comments on the facts and not on the person.
10. Avoid using acronyms unless known by everyone.
11. New terms and/or acronyms used during meetings will be written down for the group's viewing (on a flip chart or dry erase board).
12. Try to reach consensus on key decisions, but don't rush.

VI. Training

Veteran Representatives will complete training in basic research concepts and processes including principles of research ethics among other topics. The training will provide a foundation from which members will review and provide feedback on VA research studies. Furthermore, the training will increase members' knowledge and understanding of health research.

The training will consist of the following topics in the following order:

- Module 1: Research: What, Why and Who
- Module 2: Research Ethics: History and Application
- Module 3: Understanding the Research Process

Training will be provided for all inaugural members and subsequent new members at the start of their service on the VetREP. The timeframe and duration in which the modules are delivered will be based on the preference and availability of the group.

VII. Operational Support

The Durham HSR&D COIN will provide personnel support, meeting space, and all meeting materials for VetREP meetings.

VIII. Compensation

Veteran Representatives will receive an honorarium of \$50 for their time. Honorariums will be provided during each meeting members attend. Under circumstances whereby members have to join meetings via conference call, payment will be provided for 1 conference call each year. Ongoing compensation will be contingent upon the availability of funding.

IX. Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)

Veteran Representatives provide individual viewpoints only. Their work does not implicate the Federal Advisory Committee Act.