

Work Group: Population Health

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Group Membership

- Stephen Blumberg, PhD (CDC)
- *Barbara Bokhour, PhD (VHA)*
- Timothy Brindle, PhD (VHA)
- Ryan Britch, MPA (VHA)
- Reena Duseja, MD, MS (VHA)
- Timothy Goliver (VBA)
- Maria Carolina González-Prats, PhD (VBA)
- Deborah Gurewich, PhD (VHA)
- Shari Ling, MD (CMS)
- Justin List, MD, MAR, MSc, FACP (VHA)
- Tara McMullen, PhD, MPH (VHA)
- Kaitlin Richards (VBA)
- Aaron Schneiderman, PhD, MPH, RN (VHA)
- Hill Wolfe, PhD, MPA (VHA)
- Steven Zeliadt, PhD, MPH (VHA)
- Rani Elwy, PhD (VHA)
- *Mark Meterko, PhD (VHA)*

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

The logo for the VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference. It features the text "Measuring What Matters Most" in a blue, sans-serif font, with a red arrow pointing upwards from the "M" in "Measuring". To the right of the text is a red icon of a person with a magnifying glass over their chest, symbolizing research or measurement. Below the text, it says "VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023".

Measuring What Matters Most
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #1

- Key issue: Incorporating veteran voice into the development of measures for well-being and whole health outcomes
- Barriers/Strategies to Overcome Barriers:
 - Barrier: Trust / Strategy: “Closing the Loop”
 - Barrier: Tokenizing / Strategy: Diverse representation of voices through out process of what measures are considered meaningful

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #1

- Research ideas:
 - What groups of Veterans should be represented?
 - Intersectional representation and awareness of intersections that are important for stratification
- Policy recommendations:
 - Center the Veteran voice in measure design – they should be in alpha and beta testing of measures for wording and comprehension
 - Veterans should know why this data is being collected and how it will be used to help them and this should be explained by parties collecting the data

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #1

- Dissemination strategies:
 - Reaching diverse Veteran channels to encourage inclusive participation
- Responsible program/office(s):
 - VBA
 - Veteran Experience Office
 - Veteran Insight Panel (SHEP)
 - Veteran focus groups
 - Office of LGBTQ+ Health, Center for Minority Veterans, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Office of Health Equity

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #2

- Key issue: Determining a framework and/or logic model that underpins measures for well-being.
- Barrier/Strategies to Overcome Barriers:
 - Barrier: Understanding VA's diverse datascape
 - Strategy: Environmental scan to create a proof of concept
 - Barrier: Determining what domains are meaningful to Veterans/VA
 - Strategy: Qualitative interviews (cognitive interviewing) and framework consensus development
 - Barrier: Determining what parsimonious set of measures would add value and be meaningful.
 - Strategy: CDC Healthy Days Measure, Well-Being Signals, PROMIS, Veteran Engagement DEs
 - Assess risk adjustment/strata, item reliability, time horizon for assessment (entry points)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #2

- Research ideas:
 - Creating a composite well-being measure from current VHA/VBA measures and possibly creating a summary star rating to incentivize the performance of the measure.
 - Grounding of measure with populations outside the VA to test and align to benchmark against other groups.
 - Tracking measures that are sensitive to change and function equally for everyone. Rolling these up into new VA DEs.
- Policy recommendations:
 - Uniform data collected across VHA/VBA (e.g., such as sex assigned at birth AND how people identify their gender).
 - Moving away from the target-driven medical approach of data collection to a more holistic measurement approach.
 - Taking into consideration the lifecycle of measure development and implementation. The sense is that action is needed now but testing and proof are also needed-take time.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

 **Measuring What Matters Most**
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #2

- Dissemination strategies:
 - Utilize current data sources such as SHEP, V-signals, and VBA data sources.
 - Ensuring underrepresented communities are stakeholders in measure testing and rollout.
- Responsible program/office(s):
 - Veteran Service Organization (VSO)
 - Veteran Insight Panel (SHEP)
 - Health Service Research and Development Service (HSR&D)
 - Office of Analytics and Performance Integration (API)
 - Office of Health Equity (OHE)
 - Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #3

- Key issue: How are SDOH accounted for within a well-being measure?
- Research ideas to address barriers:
 - Is the social determinant an outcome, an intermediate process, or could it be used to adjust (stratify)?
 - Which social needs are an important part of Whole Health outcomes?
 - Maslow's hierarchy of SDOH and well-being: some things are more foundation and need to be addressed first.
 - Logic model- understanding of what are the inputs of Whole Health and what is the logic of the model to understand the logic for improvement.
 - What percent does SDOH play into population health and well-being outcomes?
 - Exploring engagement strategies such as the *#Bethere* campaign.
 - Social Prescribing (UK; Puget Sound) and Social Health Strategy (Canada).
 - Are services bringing value- VERA funding at the VISN-level.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Health Services Research & Development Service

 **Measuring What Matters Most**
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Key Priority/Issue #3

- Policy recommendations:

- Focus on the five SDOH DEs collected by Federal partners: housing, transportation, food insecurity, utility difficulty, and intimate partner violence.
- Should the VA purchase and gather data to attach to records to assess well-being?
- Procuring incentives to support data collection and reporting.

- Dissemination strategies:

- Ensuring data completeness and quality- and sound implementation.
- Moving beyond screenings and offering support across the Veteran's journey.

- *Responsible* program/office(s):

- ACORN, Veteran Service Organization (VSO), Veteran Insight Panel (SHEP), Health Service Research and Development Service (HSR&D), Office of Analytics and Performance Integration (API), Office of Health Equity (OHE), VBA, Office of Minority Veterans, Veterans Experience Office (VEO)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Issues/priorities that came up

- Importance of addressing/assessing social connection, social purpose, sense of belonging for well-being
- Need crosswalk for clinical-population health measures to avoid duplication and lead to harmonization
- Methodologic issues – e.g., using geospatial data for demographic differences between veterans and non-veterans
- How to look at financial well-being and who is responsible for it in VA
- VA is positioned to think innovatively about value-based payment and incentives for well-being in a way different from non-VA payors

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023



Issues/priorities that came up

- Community characteristics and partnerships are critical to inform what's happening outside of VA for the Veteran
- Whether or not to use individual measures versus portfolio approach – consider ease for use by clinician and focus on adding only measures that have high value
- We need to know why we are collecting selected measures – authority and intent of measure selection are crucial
- Sense of institutional pride versus betrayal based on identity (e.g., LGBTQ+ veteran experience)
- Be mindful of potential unintended consequences of generalizations extrapolated from a measure

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

 **Measuring What Matters Most**
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Issues/priorities that came up

- Veteran perception that their responses may affect the services they may be eligible for – “Will I lose access to services if my answer changes over time?”
- Trust in federal government may impact access and utilization of services
- Veterans might be afraid to speak up for their own needs (related to military culture of not complaining or voicing needs)
- Equity issues in communities that impact measure sensitivity – e.g., redlining
- Understanding population health vis-a-vis diverse reasons for joining military (e.g., access to benefits/social mobility vs. draft vs. sense of duty, etc.)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023

Issues/priorities that came up

- Collecting data on family structures and period of service as constituent elements of overall well-being
- Measuring navigation processes that take a Veteran from problem identified to connected to service to address outcome
- Measuring well-being should be tied to knowing what we'll do with the data and how it will inform resource allocation and efficiency
- Measures needs to serve everyone, especially mindful of minoritized populations
- Research on benefits and services and how they come together

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Health Services Research & Development Service

Measuring What Matters Most 
VA HSR&D State of the Art Conference March 29-30, 2023