



Charleston

Research Enhancement Award Program

Director: Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011

The HSR&D Center for Disease Prevention and Health Interventions for Diverse Populations is housed at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center (RHJ VAMC) in VISN 7. Its primary academic affiliate is the Medical University of South Carolina. Under the direction of Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS, the center has continued to advance the overall mission of VA HSR&D Research, which is to improve the health of all veterans and most importantly has maintained HSR&D funding in priority areas that focus on veteran health.

In the past year, the center has reevaluated its mission and goals to adapt to the changes in HSR&D. To address the changes in HSR&D, the center modified its goals to focus on veteran priority areas: improving access to care and health disparities. Goal 1 (Research): Develop and test interventions to prevent disease and improve health outcomes for diverse populations of veterans. Goal 2 (Infrastructure): Develop HSR&D research infrastructure to support health disparities, access, and health intervention development research. Goal 3 (Training): Recruit, train, and mentor the next generation of VA health services researchers. Goal 4 (Dissemination): Translate and disseminate research findings to veterans, health providers, and other stakeholders. The Center has continued its primary research to center on developing interventions to address health disparities, improve access to care, and enhance rural health in ethnic minority and rural dwelling veteran populations.

Center Accomplishments (2011):

Center Leadership and Productivity: The Center remains under the leadership of Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS. Dr. Egede has successfully led the Center since its inception as a TREP in 2004. The Center has shown remarkable stability as evidenced by: (1) a multidisciplinary team that consists of 19 Core Investigators and 9 Affiliate Investigators, a strong background of health service researchers; (2) a core team of investigators from various clinical and education backgrounds and consisting of research health scientists, biostatisticians and clinical/professional staff; (3) over 6 abstracts and oral presentations at the HSR&D Annual Meeting in National Harbor, MD in February 2011; (4) participation in the NIH-sponsored Training Institute in Dissemination and Implementation Research (TIDIR) conference, as well as the Enhancing Implementation Science (EIS) in VA conference; and (5) successful collaboration with our center staff to obtain funding for telehealth and E-consult initiatives, as well as ongoing funding for (6) HSR&D Merit or other HSR&D projects and 2 VA HSR&D Career Development Awards; (7) total VA HSR&D funding of \$1,362,207; (8) other VA funding of \$325,101; and (9) other non-VA funding of \$7,009,349.

Center Infrastructure: To facilitate continued growth and productivity, the Center is organized around 6 core groups: (1) Administration, (2) Biostatistics, (3) Health Economics, (4) Qualitative Research, (5) Clinical Interventions, and (6) Implementation Service Delivery Research. The Center is guided by an external Steering Committee and an Internal Advisory Committee. The Center Director reports administratively to the facility ACOS for Research.

Center Grant Review Program: The Center has developed a successful mechanism by which research projects are selected and subsequently nurtured into viable research proposals. The Center grant review

program is a multi-layered and highly interactive process involving all members and guided by the REAP Executive Committee and core research team, which begins approximately 6-9 months prior to VA grant review cycles. Research ideas that emerge to an appropriate level of conceptualization are then presented to the Executive Committee and core research team. Based on these presentations and subsequent discussions, the most highly rated ideas/projects are then chosen to move forward. Early discussions focus on: (a) research scope and relationship to center goals and objectives, (b) choice of appropriate study design, (c) budget considerations, and (d) suitability of investigator based on project goals and objectives and experience. Proposal drafts that are selected to continue through the process are prepared and circulated to the larger research group. As the submission deadline draws near, the group, or designated subgroups, meet more frequently to discuss the proposal draft and revision progress based on prior feedback. A new grant submission process and grant template is currently being used to assist investigators with the development of key components of their VA research proposals and enable new investigators to efficiently present their research ideas in a systematic and organized approach for the REAP research team to evaluate. The template includes sections that require the investigator to clearly define aims/objectives, hypothesis and research questions, and budgetary issues. The templates also include sections on relevance to VA HSR&D priorities, collaboration with patient care services, implementation, and efficient recruitment strategies.