



Charleston

Research Enhancement Award Program

Director: Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2009

The vision of the Center for Disease Prevention and Health Interventions for Diverse Populations is to develop into a nationally and internationally recognized collaborative center of research excellence in disease prevention and health interventions for diverse populations. The Center's mission is to develop and test interventions to improve the health of all veterans, with particular emphasis on ethnic minority and rural dwelling veterans. The Center's research focus includes the: 1) development of interventions for primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of diseases and their complications in veterans; 2) development of interventions to eliminate racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender disparities in quality of care and health outcomes for veterans; and 3) development of interventions to improve the health of rural dwelling veterans.

Center Leadership and Productivity: The Center for Disease Prevention and Health Interventions for Diverse Populations is under the leadership of Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS. Dr. Egede, who now is his fifth year of Center leadership, also led the previously HSR&D-funded Charleston TREP. The Charleston Center for Disease Prevention and Health Interventions for Diverse Populations is on a similar trajectory of exponential growth as evidenced by: 1) a multidisciplinary team that consists of 17 core investigators and eight affiliate investigators; (2) a core team of investigators consisting of biostatisticians and clinical/professional staff; (3) procurement of funding for nine merit or other HSR&D projects and 2 VA HSR&D career development awards; and (4) a 2.2-fold increase in VA HSR&D funding and leveraging of \$17 of extramural funding for each \$1 of VA HSR&D core support in one year of REAP funding (October 2008-September 2009).

Center Infrastructure: To facilitate continued growth and productivity, the Center is organized around six core groups: (1) Administration, (2) Biostatistics, (3) Health Economics, (4) Qualitative Research, (5) Clinical Interventions, and (6) Implementation Research and Service Delivery. Dr. Egede co-leads the administrative core while the five remaining cores are led by HSR&D-funded core investigators. The Center is guided by an external Steering Center and an Internal Advisory Committee. The Center Director reports administratively to the facility ACOS for Research.

Center Grant Review Program: The mechanism by which research projects are selected and subsequently nurtured into viable research proposals is a multi-layered and highly interactive process involving all members of the REAP research team. Approximately six to nine months prior to VA grant review cycles, REAP members, as well as others who are not yet formally affiliated, are asked to begin formulating research teams. At the next stage, those whose research ideas have matured to an appropriate level of conceptualization present to the research group. Based on the presentation and subsequent extensive group discussions, the most highly rated projects are chosen to move forward. These early discussions focus on: (a) research scope (b) choice of appropriate study design and (c) budget considerations. Proposal drafts that reflect research group discussions are prepared and circulated to the group. As the submission deadline draws near, the group, or designated subgroups, meet more frequently to discuss iterations of the proposal drafts.

Strategic Goals

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 disease prevention and health intervention 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.