



East Orange

Research Enhancement Award Program

Director: Leonard M. Pogach, MD, MBA

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011

The VANJHCS Center for Healthcare Knowledge Management (CHEKOM) for Chronic Complex Illness is based at the East Orange VAMC. It was initially funded in July 2003, and refunded beginning October 1, 2008. The major collaborating academic institutions include the Rutgers University Institute for Health (Division of Health Behaviors), and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ)-New Jersey Medical School (Department of Preventive Medicine) and School of Public Health (Departments of Biostatistics and Epidemiology). The three research strategic goals that frame our work during the current funding period are:

- (1) Evaluation of Effectiveness of Care by assessing how care for one condition (or clusters of conditions) affects the care for other comorbid conditions, thus impacting overall morbidity, mortality, and expenditures.
- (2) Evaluation of Quality, Costs and Efficiency of Care by developing composite quality measures linked with costs (efficiency).
- (3) Development and evaluation of Care Coordination Strategies that will improve veteran adherence to and outcomes of care.

Although our strategic goals are broadly framed, specific research in Aims 1 and 2 have largely been in the topic area of diabetes (and its complications) in the context of population health and diabetes performance measurement. Our publications have informed policy decisions in these topics within the VHA, in the US, and the Organization of Collaborative Economic Development. The methodological and policy importance of our comparative effectiveness research has been recognized by VACO ORD (Health Affairs, 2007; 26,w156; Health Affairs 2010; 29:1906). We increased our research capacity for Aims 1 and 2 through strengthening our partnerships with the Department of Preventive Medicine-New Jersey Medical School and the UMDNJ-School of Public Health.

With respect to Aim 3 the VA New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Center (one of three such centers in the VHA) has as its major focus OIF/OEF veterans, especially those with medically unexplained symptoms, while the Mental Health Service has focused upon homelessness among the seriously mental ill. Our research capacity for aim 3 has been increased through the recruitment of two PhD Clinical Psychologists. On September 30, 2010 SAMHSA re-funded the MISSION program (Anna Kline PhD PI) for an additional 5 years. MISSION provides community-based case management and peer support to homeless, dually-diagnosed veterans after they leave domiciliary care. Program evaluations from the first MISSION Program have shown the program to significantly enhance outcomes for homeless veterans making the critical transition to community living. The results have informed and will continue to inform VISN and National (SAMHSA) implementation.

CHEKOM has established long standing and productive collaborations with other programs. Our REAP works collaboratively with other VA sites: viz., Ann Arbor-DM QUERI; the Cleveland VAMC; and the Bedford VAMC COE to enhance cross cutting VAMC research. Additionally, our REAP leadership works closely with VACO leadership in multiple offices, including Patient Care Services (Office of Subspecialty Care, Primary Care, Pharmacy Benefits Management Program), Primary Care Operations, and previously with the Office of Quality and Performance.