



CeMHOR  Arkansas  
*Center for Mental Healthcare  
& Outcomes Research*  
VA HSR&D Center of Excellence

## Little Rock

Center of Excellence

Director: Richard R. Owen, MD

### **Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011**

The Center for Mental Healthcare and Outcomes Research (CeMHOR) is the only HSR&D Center of Excellence (COE) with a research mission devoted solely to improving mental health (MH) and substance abuse (SA) care for Veterans. This focus is essential given that almost 40% of enrolled OEF/OIF/OND Veterans have a MH diagnosis. The mean age of this cohort is relatively young (approximately 45 years) so the risk of long-term disability is high. CeMHOR investigators and staff are well positioned to design and test cutting edge interventions to optimize provision of evidence-based MH/SA care at the system and provider level and to enhance access to and engagement in evidence-based care at the patient level.

CeMHOR investigators target high-priority populations - Veterans in rural areas, OEF/OIF/OND Veterans, and Veterans with co-morbid MH/SA and physical health disorders. CeMHOR's location within VISN 16 provides a natural laboratory for this work. VISN 16 is geographically large and cares for the largest cohort of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans in the United States. More than 40% of Veterans within VISN 16 live in rural or highly rural areas and the prevalence rate of MH and SA is high among this cohort. Focusing on improving access to and engagement in MH and SA care as well as optimizing quality and outcomes of this care, CeMHOR addresses three of Secretary Shinseki's Transformational Initiatives for the 21st Century including: 1) improving Veteran mental health, 2) improving access to care, and 3) improving patient-centered care, two of the three focus areas of the Office of Research and Development (access and deployment health), and two HSR&D priorities (access/rural health and mental/behavioral health).

CeMHOR's FY11 goals are to: 1) improve quality of specialty care for Veterans with serious and persistent MH and SA disorders; 2) improve quality of MH and SA care provided in primary care (PC) settings; 3) improve access to and engagement in care for Veterans with untreated MH and SA disorders in the community; 4) provide a highly productive scientific environment that is founded on a safe, secure, and participatory research process and state-of-the-art research methods; and 5) increase capacity in the MH services research field by training, mentoring, recruiting, and collaboration. Three workgroups (Specialty MH Care, Primary Care, and Community Engagement) correspond to CeMHOR's research goals, and two cores (Methods and Education/Training) together with an infrastructure of experienced research and support staff, provide a highly efficient structure for relevant and innovative research.

CeMHOR was revitalized in FY10 after the restoration of COE status and funding, evidenced by an increase in Core Investigators and the renewed HSR&D Advanced Fellowship Program. CeMHOR has continued to grow in FY11, adding 3 new Core Investigators and 2 new Fellows, strengthening existing and developing new collaborations with local, regional and national partners. CeMHOR investigators recently submitted a CREATE concept paper in close collaboration with multiple national and regional partners. CeMHOR is working with its partners to resubmit the CREATE concept paper in 2012. Our investigators remain steadfastly focused on our research mission, developing innovative research that responds to current needs and has great potential for improving care for Veterans. CeMHOR investigators leverage funds from non-VA funding agencies to conduct research relevant to Veterans.