

GROWING A VEG (VETERAN ENGAGEMENT GROUP): EXAMPLES FROM COINS

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VETERAN ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP: CYBERSEMINAR #2

- First cyberseminar gave an overview of the VE Workgroup structure and an overview of reported findings
- Workgroup subgroup on Center-level engagement Michael Ho, JoAnn Kirchner, Jennifer Gierisch, Bryan Gibson, Carmen Corsetti, Sarah Ono, Kelty Fehling, Ian Smith, Carolyn Ray and all Workgroup members
- VA HSR&D Centers of Innovation (COINs) are one space in VA where Veteran engagement is being targeted
- Presenting experience and approaches used at Denver's Center of Innovation for Veteran Centered and Value Driven Care and Portland's Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC)
- Not alone...Durham, Ann Arbor, Houston, Bedford/Boston, Iowa City and others

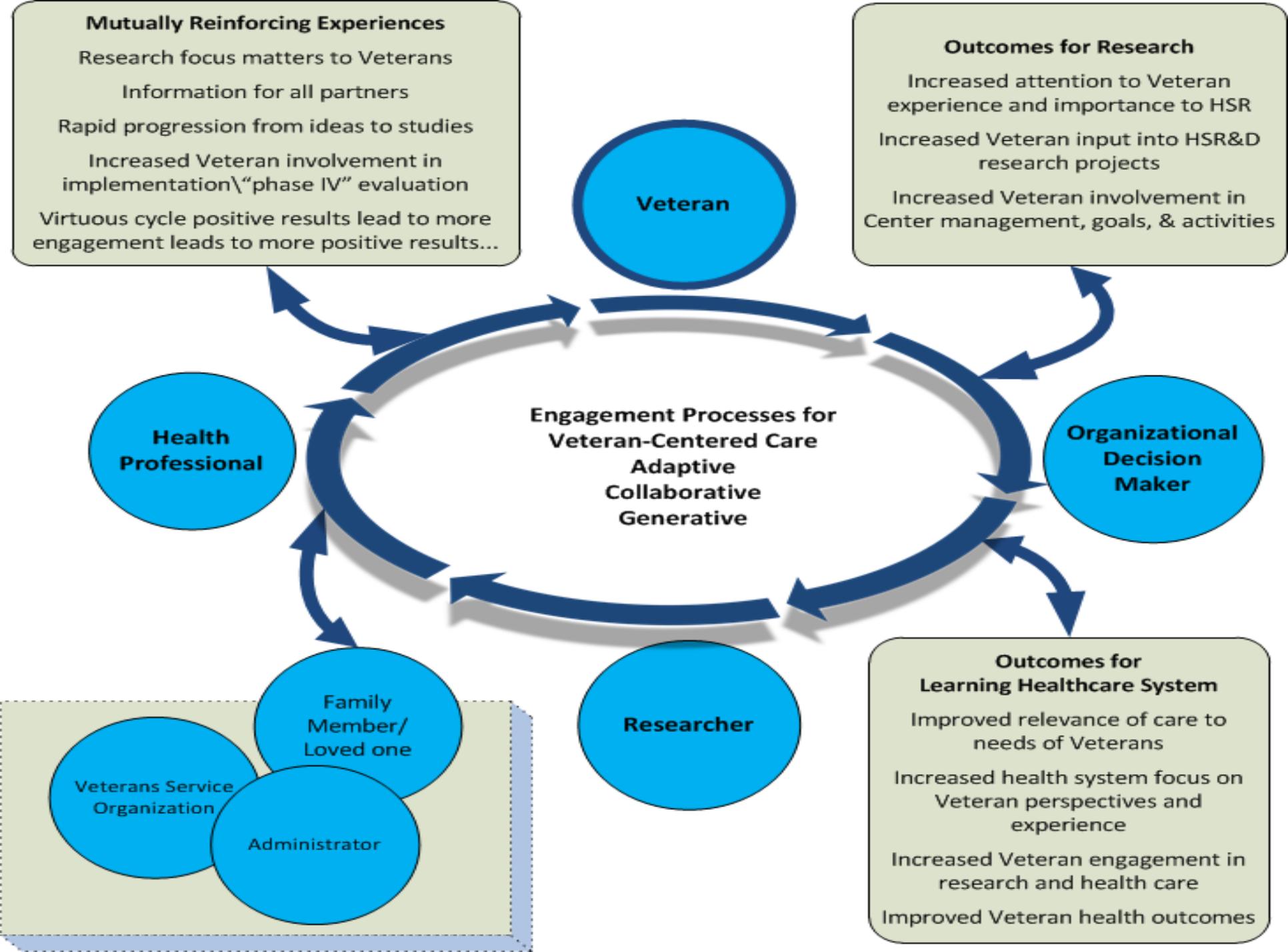
“CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION”

- Rocky Mountain MIRECC in Denver will be live tweeting this cyberseminar and facilitating a Twitter forum following the end of the talk today.
- @RMIRECC
- #VeteranEngagement

- We want to open up conversation to a broad audience

- This is an experiment, so all parties involved welcome feedback

- HSRD Veteran Engagement Workgroup Report



A CONVERSATION BETWEEN DENVER, CO AND PORTLAND, OR

- These two sites started implementing VEGs around the same time (~FY14 or 2013-2014)
- Both have had a group in place for at least a year
- Groups are similar in composition, however used different processes to set up and manage ongoing activities
- These are not the only ways to implement or use a VEG; engagement can be modified, adapted, and is a flexible process
- The language of Veteran Engagement Group grew out of concerns related FACA

THE VEG VETERAN EXPERIENCE: 3 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- What was your experience being recruited and joining a VEG?
- Why you wanted to join a VEG?
- What you get out of your VEG?



Cassandra Krawec-Paul
Portland VEG



William "Wes" Westmoreland
Denver VEG

**VEG PLANNING AND
IMPLEMENTATION:
DENVER AND PORTLAND
CASE STUDIES**

**STEP 1:
CONCEPTUALIZATION,
PURPOSE, AND
FORMATION**

STEP 1: CONCEPTUALIZATION, PURPOSE, AND FORMATION

Portland

- Portland's Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC) made multi-dimensional Veteran engagement part of its mission when redesigning the HSR&D center as a COIN
- A committee of investigators (Ono, Ganzini, Barton and Saha) spent 6 months researching other efforts and models for patient engagement
- Committee prioritized regular updates on progress and collection of input from the larger CIVIC community

STEP 1: CONCEPTUALIZATION, PURPOSE, AND FORMATION

Denver

- Lack of Veteran voice in research processes and veteran centered research mission drove Denver COIN and Rocky Mountain MIRECC to form collaborative partnership to engage Veterans in research in an ongoing manner
- 6 months researching engagement and stakeholder models to determine board structure and functioning
- Proposed specific goal and objectives to guide process

STEP 2: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

STEP 2: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Portland

- Met with head of local IRB (institutional review board) to brainstorm options and identify concerns related to group development; used model for community members on the IRB
- Decided to pursue WOC (without compensation) status for Veteran participants – this was an experiment to test feasibility and acceptability
 - Advantages of WOC

STEP 2: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Denver

- Presented plan to local R&D committee and Voices for Veterans Council for endorsement and Veteran input
- Completed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Denver's COIN and Rocky Mountain MIRECC and Denver VAMC Director and Chief of Staff (COS)
- Ensured Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) compliance

STEP 3: RECRUITMENT

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Portland

- Implemented a “seed committee” approach – used existing networks to grow the network of engaged Veterans in the local area
- Involved Veterans at an early stage
- Modeled recruitment materials (e.g., recruitment letter and email) after ones developed by OCHIN (Oregon Community Health Information Network) for patient advisory group

STEP 3: RECRUITMENT

Denver

- Created member description outlining purpose of board, ideal member characteristics, time commitment
- Call put out through email and meetings to researchers, providers, hospital staff for help identifying Veterans that fit member description
- 3 month process

STEP 4: INTERVIEWING AND SELECTION

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Portland

- Less formal selection process because the Seed Committee functioned as a pre-screener and drew on existing networks
- Individual interviews were more focused on answering Veterans' questions and making sure that the task and the person were a good fit
- Not all candidates decided to stay involved in the VEG

STEP 4: INTERVIEWING AND SELECTION

Denver

- Interviewed 12 candidates who provided written statements of interest
- Candidates rated by two interviewers on accessibility, interest and knowledge in research, interest or personal experience with Center's missions, history of participation in groups, boards or councils
- COIN and MIRECC investigators convened formal selection meeting and selected nine Veterans

**STEP 5: CONDUCT A
CENTER INVESTIGATOR
ORIENTATION**

STEP 5: CONDUCT A CENTER INVESTIGATOR ORIENTATION

Portland

- CIVIC investigators already supportive of exploring engagement potential
- Series of presentations at local research conference and 1:1 conversations about implementation
- Encouraged open discussion of hopes and reservations about Veteran engagement

ONE MODEL FOR ENGAGEMENT

Increasing Level of Community Involvement, Impact, Trust, and Communication Flow



OUTREACH	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	SHARED LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some community involvement • Communication flows from one to the other, to inform • Provides community with information • Entities coexist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community involvement • Communication flows to the community and then back; answer seeking • Gets information or feedback from the community • Entities share information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better community involvement • Communication flows both ways, participatory form of communication • Involves more participation with community on issues • Entities cooperate with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement • Communication flow is bidirectional • Forms partnerships with community on each aspect of project from development to solution • Entities form bidirectional communication channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong bidirectional relationship • Final decision making is at community level • Entities have formed strong partnership structures • Broader health outcomes affecting broader community; bidirectional trust

Reference: Modified by the authors from the international Association for Public Participation

STEP 5: CONDUCT A CENTER INVESTIGATOR ORIENTATION

Denver

- Community engagement and CBPR
- Board demographics and
- Cultural sensitivity, and
- Formal research review and board engagement processes

STEP 6: CONDUCT A VEG MEMBER ORIENTATION

STEP 6: CONDUCT A VEG MEMBER ORIENTATION

Portland

- VA TMS trainings on HIPAA and Privacy – part of WOC credentialing for research
- Using a learn-as-you-go approach driven by both researchers and the Veterans
- Ongoing:
 - Pace of research
 - Limitations of research
 - Complexity of the VA system

STEP 6: CONDUCT A VEG MEMBER ORIENTATION

Denver

- Board cohesion
- Research 101
- Community engagement
- Confidentiality and intellectual property
- Media interactions
- Research review and investigator engagement processes

**STEP 7: VEG
COMPOSITION AND
OPERATION**

STEP 7: VEG COMPOSITION AND OPERATION

Portland

- Sex: 4 men; 3 women
 - Branch: 2 Army, 2 Navy, 3 National Guard/Reserves
 - Era: 2 Vietnam; 1 Post Vietnam; 4 OEF/OIF/OND
 - 6 retired, 1 active duty reserve
 - All use the VA for health care
 - 3 VA employees (1 current, 2 former); 1 VA volunteer
- No Veteran family members...yet

STEP 7: VEG COMPOSITION AND OPERATION

Portland

- Monthly meeting (90 minutes)
- An investigator shares what they are working on and identifies 1-2 questions they'd like feedback on
- Materials and target questions are shared with VEG a week in advance of meeting
- Presentation style flexible (handouts, PowerPoint slides, etc.)

STEP 7: VEG COMPOSITION AND OPERATION

Denver

- Sex: 7 males, 1 female
 - Branch: 6 Army, 1 Air Force, 1 Navy
 - Era: 3 Vietnam, 2 Post Vietnam, 3 OEF/OIF/OND
 - 7 retired, 1 active duty reserve
 - 5 VHA consumers, 3 non VHA consumer
-
- No Veteran family members
 - No VA employees

STEP 7: VEG COMPOSITION AND OPERATION

Denver

- Monthly 2 hour meetings with investigators
- Investigators submit abstract in plain English, 5-7 slide presentation, relevant protocol or grant 1 month prior to meeting
- Majority of meeting spent in discussion
- End with summary of recommendations

**STEP 8: CREATE A
VETERAN-INVESTIGATOR
FEEDBACK LOOP**

STEP 8: CREATE A VETERAN- INVESTIGATOR FEEDBACK LOOP

Portland

- VEG invested in longitudinal conversation with investigators; relationship building
- Veterans feel strongly about hearing what happens with research – in general and in the VEG capacity
- Working to align with Denver on measures of engagement & impact

STEP 8: CREATE A VETERAN- INVESTIGATOR FEEDBACK LOOP

Denver

- Feedback loops acts as evaluation to assess engagement and impact of Veteran's input on research studies
 - Pre-post assessment utilizing Community Engagement Continuum
 - Monthly Veteran and Investigator survey assessing collaboration
 - One week, six month, 12 month investigator follow up

**STEP 9: CREATE AN
EVIDENCE BASE FOR
IMPACT**

STEP 9: CREATE AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR IMPACT

Portland

- Quantitative data comes slowly
- Qualitative data shows early promise
- Developing a tool kit for Veteran group implementation
- Working to establish a VE Learning Collaborative – multi-site effort growing out of the VE Workgroup

STEP 9: CREATE AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR IMPACT

Denver

- Veterans consistently rate projects as increasing levels of community involvement, impact, trust, and communication flow
- Majority of investigators rate interaction as “very helpful”
- Themes in changes made to projects:
 - Clarifying recruitment and enrollment procedures
 - Personalizing and simplifying intervention materials
 - Continued partnership development

QUESTIONS?

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Twitter “Continuing the Conversation” with Rocky Mountain

MIRECC

@RMIRECC

#VeteranEngagement