

# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH SHORT-TERM PROJECT REVIEW OPPORTUNITY

January 31, 2008

1. Background: Veterans are facing many new healthcare challenges. The Veterans Healthcare System must encourage more rapid innovation, productivity, and continuous improvement to address those challenges effectively and efficiently.
2. Purpose: This message announces the opportunity for VA health services researchers to address identified needs to contribute toward providing the best possible care for today's new veterans and veterans of previous eras. **Projects envisioned must be completed before September 30, 2008; the maximum total budget is \$150,000; brief 3-5 page proposals are due for review February 25, 2008 by 1:00 pm Eastern Time** (earlier if possible; see application instructions, Appendix B).
3. Eligibility: All VA health services researchers are eligible to apply as principal investigators (PI). The definition of "VA health services researcher" is: (a) have been the PI or Co-PI on an application submitted to the HSR&D Service within the past three years, (b) have been the PI on a VA research project supported by HSR&D, or (c) have current affiliation with or letter of endorsement from an HSR&D Center or Excellence, Research Enhancement Award Program, or Targeted Research Enhancement Program. Investigators who hold a paid VA appointment of at least 5/8ths at the time of funding are eligible to apply. Proposed investigators must have completed a final report for any previous HSR&D-funded project and have met all publication reporting requirements. No requests for waivers of eligibility will be considered. A short-term project may have a PI (the point of contact/corresponding PI) and up to one additional Co-PI. The same requirements and responsibilities apply equally to the PI and any Co-PI. Each investigator may apply as PI or Co-PI for no more than TWO short-term projects by February 25, 2008.
4. Anticipated Awards: The Health Services Research and Development Service expects to award up to \$3 million for these short-term projects.
5. Types of Projects: Pilot, developmental, or other short-term projects envisioned might be:
  - a. pilot or feasibility projects designed to test protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, or gather other information needed to improve a larger study proposal;
  - b. short-term projects that can make specific contributions to the health services research evidence base or potential future research, such as (but not limited to):
    - 1) assessment of variations in efficiency and quality toward identifying "best practices"
    - 2) development of new performance measures
    - 3) evaluation or validation of new care tools or instruments
    - 4) intermediate projects, for example, building on preliminary analyses toward identifying new veteran needs and/or barriers to care
    - 5) development, validity and/or reliability testing of data sets (e.g., nursing outcomes)
    - 6) enhancements to decision support systems
    - 7) exploratory methods or measurement research
    - 8) innovative approaches to exploring links between education and patient outcomes, including measurement, methods, supervision questions;

- interdisciplinary learning and practice, and practices as a source of and site for learning
- 9) exploratory or developmental approaches for assessing/measuring professional competency/education and relationship to patient outcomes
  - 10) feasibility studies for collaborating across disciplinary and/or other organizational groups to further understanding of links between health provider education and health care outcomes
  - 11) development of ontologies for data extraction and indexing
  - 12) systematic reviews designed to inform VA research strategies
  - 13) testing of new health care management or delivery programs
  - 14) assessment of screening instruments
  - 15) cost effectiveness analyses
- c. short-term research projects that address questions identified by Operations and/or policy leaders in VA Central Office and/or a Network.

**Note:** Any proposed short-term projects **are not** to be of a nature that requires oversight by Central Office (i.e., clinical trial registration with *ClinicalTrials.gov*, data and safety monitoring (DSMB) or OMB survey review). IRB issues for short-term projects must be managed locally according to VA guidelines.

6. Priority Topics: HSR&D is interested in research that can inform current and emerging priorities for health services research in the Veterans Health Administration, identified in Appendix A (in alphabetical order).

7. Application Process: Applications are to be submitted for review electronically directly to HSR&D, by February 25 (1:00 pm Eastern Time), with formal submissions to go simultaneously to the PI's ACOS/R&D and R&D Committee, as described in Appendix B.

8. Review and Notification Process: Applications will be reviewed administratively for appropriateness for health services research and adherence to guidelines; applications not considered responsive or appropriate for short-term project funding also may be triaged by reviewers. Applications will undergo peer review by the Scientific Merit Review Board meeting during the week of March 3, 2008. The research team will be notified of review results by electronic mail within two weeks following review (by March 21, 2008). Every effort will be made to initiate funding by April 15, 2008. Applicants will be notified via e-mail if projects are not reviewed. Otherwise, feedback beyond funding expectations will be provided only for projects expected to receive funding, as determined by VACO HSR&D staff.

9. Review Criteria: Reviewers are expected to consider the innovativeness, scientific quality, and potential contribution of each application, including as applicable to each short-term project:

- a. Importance of the project objectives to VHA and VHA research.
- b. Methods are appropriate to the stated objectives.
- c. Perceived value based on innovation and potential to expand knowledge (including negative or unanticipated findings).
- d. Project organization and management, including appropriateness of budget, timeline (concluding no later than September 30, 2008) and investigator qualifications.

10. Further Information/Questions: Questions about specific topics should be directed to the individual HSR&D Scientific Program Managers (SPM) listed by topics in Appendix A. If the proposed issue is NOT pertinent to a priority topic listed, rationale for importance to VA HSR should be articulated AND CONFIRMED by an HSR&D Scientific Program Manager (e.g., via copy of e-mail from an SPM). More general questions about this solicitation or the planned review process may be directed to Andrew Guccione, PT, PhD, DPT, FAPTA at [andrew.guccione@va.gov](mailto:andrew.guccione@va.gov).

## APPENDIX A: PRIORITY HSR&D TOPICS

Short-term projects might contribute directly or to future efforts toward addressing priority areas listed here (in alphabetical order).

### **Access/Rural Health**

#### Research on Access to Care for Rural and Vulnerable Populations

For inquires regarding this priority area, please contact Linda Lipson, MA at [linda.lipson@va.gov](mailto:linda.lipson@va.gov) or (202) 254-0231.

### **Complex, Chronic Condition Care**

#### Health and Health Care for Veterans with Complex, Chronic Conditions

For inquires regarding this priority area, please contact Kate Bent, RN, PhD, CNS at [katherine.bent@va.gov](mailto:katherine.bent@va.gov) or (202) 254-0248.

### **Equity and Health Disparities**

#### Interventional Studies to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Minority Health Care Disparities

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Linda Lipson, MA at [linda.lipson@va.gov](mailto:linda.lipson@va.gov) or (202) 254-0231.

### **Health Profession Education and Outcomes**

#### Development of Approaches for Addressing Links between Health Profession Education and Care Outcomes

For inquires regarding this priority area, please contact Kate Bent, RN, PhD, CNS at [katherine.bent@va.gov](mailto:katherine.bent@va.gov) or (202) 254-0248.

### **Health Services Genomics**

#### Innovative Research for Evidence-based Planning in the Delivery of Genomics Services to Veterans

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Pauline Sieverding, MPA, JD, PhD at [pauline.sieverding@va.gov](mailto:pauline.sieverding@va.gov) or (202) 254-0249.

### **Healthcare Informatics**

#### Healthcare Informatics to Improve Veteran Care

For inquiries regarding this area, please contact Merry Ward, PhD at [merry.ward@va.gov](mailto:merry.ward@va.gov) or 202-254-0232.

### **Implementation and Management Research**

#### Implementation and Management Research Projects

For inquiries regarding this area, please contact Patricia Rowell, PhD, RN, APRN, BC at [patricia.rowell2@va.gov](mailto:patricia.rowell2@va.gov) or 202-254-0218.

### **Long-Term Care & Caregiving**

#### Improving Quality of Life for Veterans and their Caregivers

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Pauline Sieverding, MPA, JD, PhD at [pauline.sieverding@va.gov](mailto:pauline.sieverding@va.gov) or (202) 254-0249.

**Mental Health**Effectiveness of Mental Health Strategic Plan Initiatives on Improving Care

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Martha Bryan, EdD at [martha.bryan@va.gov](mailto:martha.bryan@va.gov) or (202) 254-0251.

**Post-Deployment Health**Innovative Research to Address Health Care Needs of Returning OIF/OEF Veterans

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Patrice Robinson, ScD, FACHE, CAAMA at [patrice.robinson@va.gov](mailto:patrice.robinson@va.gov) or (202) 254-0494.

**Research Methodology**Research Methodology to Improve VA Healthcare Research

For inquiries regarding this area, please contact Merry Ward, PhD at [merry.ward@va.gov](mailto:merry.ward@va.gov) or 202-254-0232.

**Suicide Prevention**Approaches for Assessing Suicidality and Best Practices for Suicide Prevention

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Martha Bryan, EdD at [martha.bryan@va.gov](mailto:martha.bryan@va.gov) or (202) 254-0251.

**Women's Health**Research on Women Veterans' Health Care Delivery Models

For inquires regarding this area, please contact Linda Lipson, MA at [linda.lipson@va.gov](mailto:linda.lipson@va.gov) or (202) 254-0231.

## APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTIONS FOR HSR&D SHORT-TERM PROJECT SUBMISSIONS

1. The Principal Investigator must be at least a 5/8 VA employee and eligible to conduct research in VA.
2. Applicants should submit a plan **no longer than 5 pages (minimum 11 point Arial font) single-spaced with margins of at least 1 inch on all sides** describing:
  - a. The objectives of the proposed work.
  - b. The anticipated contributions to health care, VHA research, or next steps in planned research (and ultimate anticipated contributions); pertinence to HSR&D priority topic area (see Appendix A).
  - c. How the project team will complete the work (conceptual framework/rationale; design of the project; data sources; methods; approach).
  - d. Timeline (maximum April 1-September 30, 2008, with shorter timelines preferred)
  - e. Capacity to complete the work in a timely and high quality manner, as determined by availability of key personnel.
  - f. Any references.
3. IN ADDITION to the maximum 5-page summary, each submission must include a face page and an abstract page on forms 10-1313-1 and 10-1313-2, respectively.
4. Each submission may include one biographical sketch for each key personnel. Each biographical sketch is limited to 4 pages per person using forms 10-1313-5 and 10-1313-6 or 10-1313-5/6.
5. Budgets should be submitted on VA forms 10-1313-3 and 10-1313-4. **Total funding cannot exceed \$150,000.** Separate 10-1313-3/4 forms are required for any anticipated information technology (IT) expenses according to HSR&D proposal submission instructions. Each set of 10-1313-4 forms (for research and for IT funds) is limited to two pages. The combined total of research and IT funding may not be more than \$150,000.
6. ORD research forms can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.research.va.gov/funding/process/forms.cfm>.
7. No additional attachments or appendices will be accepted.
8. **All applications must be submitted via electronic mail by 1:00 pm February 25 (Eastern Time), in one single MS WORD or PDF file to: [andrew.guccione@va.gov](mailto:andrew.guccione@va.gov) with a copy to [carmen.corsetti@va.gov](mailto:carmen.corsetti@va.gov). Paper submissions, or submissions sent in multiple files will not be accepted.**
9. A FORMAL submission should be provided to the ACOS/R&D at the PI's local facility at the same time the proposed short-term project proposal is submitted for review. No project will be funded without approval of the R&D Committee at the VA facility; however, in view of the time constraints in this short-term project review process, a just-in-time process will be employed, consistent with the requirement that Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of each site involved in a study is required before funds will be distributed to that site. Similarly, documentation of required PI training (human subjects and privacy) will be required prior to project funding.