

Outstanding Career Continued from page 1

gram Analysis Officer, eventually becoming Deputy Director of HSR&D in 1992. She also served as Acting Director of HSR&D for a total of more than three years during three separate time periods. Dr. Meehan continuously encouraged and supported HSR&D researchers and, thus, the advancement of HSR&D research. She also played a key role in enhancing collaborations between researchers in the field and VA leadership, understanding the importance of leadership's early buy-in to insure the relevance and subsequent uptake and impact of the research.

Dr. Meehan consistently encouraged excellence in HSR&D. Leading by example, she played a key role in establishing, managing, and enhancing HSR&D's:

- Merit review process,
- Career Development Awardee Program,
- Centers of Excellence, and the
- Evidence Synthesis Program.

For many HSR&D Center Directors and researchers in the field, Dr. Meehan was the "go-to" person in Central Office. She was always willing to provide advice and guidance.

During her accomplished tenure, Dr. Meehan has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including Special Contribution Awards for her invaluable support of

HSR&D leadership and for her efforts towards continuously improving the administration and management systems of HSR&D. Most recently, Shirley was honored by Under Secretary for Health Dr. Michael Kussman, who presented her with VA's Exemplary Service Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Office of the Under Secretary. Shirley's dedication and excellence also has been recognized outside VA, where she has been the recipient of the prestigious Elnora M. Rhodes Service Award from the Society of General Internal Medicine, as well as the James A. Stockdill Knowledge Utilization Society Award for Excellence in Government Service.

A Well-Earned Thanks

From her time as a management intern, through her long tenure as Deputy Director, Dr. Meehan has shown unflinching support for HSR&D's mission, staff, researchers, and leadership. Her foundational contributions have helped to put HSR&D on the map, and these contributions have positioned the Service to move forward successfully with ongoing research efforts always aimed at improving the health and healthcare of Veterans. It is hard for many of us to imagine how we will get along without Shirley at the helm, but perhaps we can find some comfort in knowing that we are carrying on her work. On behalf of all of us in HSR&D: **Thank you, Shirley!** Best wishes for a wonderful retirement!

In this issue

A Fond Farewell

This issue highlights the notable career of Shirley Meehan, MBA, PhD, as she heads to a well-earned retirement.

HSR&D National Meeting

Highlights of February's National Meeting and remarks from leadership, on page 2.

Newly Funded

Find out more about recently funded studies on page 3.

For Your Information

Contact information, announcements, and updates on page 3.

An Outstanding Career in Health Services: Dr. Shirley Meehan

This spring, VA's Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) will say a fond farewell to one of its most vigorous and beloved leaders: Shirley Meehan, MBA, PhD, Deputy Director of HSR&D. Shirley will be leaving HSR&D for a very well-deserved retirement after 38 years of service to VA.

Early Years

Dr. Meehan began her work with VA almost 40 years ago as a management intern. She was initially intrigued by the notion of research and development, and the concept of supporting and facilitating those directly responsible for research. After the conclusion of her tour as a management intern, her contributions to HSR&D formally began with her role as a project leader and computer systems analyst in the former Department of Data Management Medical Systems Unit.

When HSR&D was officially formed in 1973, Dr. Meehan



Dr. Shirley Meehan accepts VA's Exemplary Service Award from Under Secretary for Health Michael Kussman, MD, MS, MACP.

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Director's Note

Welcome to the spring issue of *HSR&D Research Briefs*. In this issue, we offer a brief overview of HSR&D's 27th National Meeting, held in February 2009. This year's meeting was attended by more than 650 researchers, clinicians, and policymakers who participated in plenary sessions, workshops, and poster sessions surrounding the theme "Defining Optimal Care."

The National Meeting also celebrated the service of HSR&D Deputy Director Shirley Meehan, MBA, PhD. She has been a driving force behind the establishment and continued success of HSR&D. This issue pays tribute to Dr. Meehan's 38 years with VA, and her unyielding commitment to improving the health and healthcare of Veterans. Dr. Meehan's contributions will be greatly missed!

Sincerely,

Seth A. Eisen, MD, MSc
Director, HSR&D

became a driving force in building the foundation and sustainability of the Service. She helped to establish guidelines for research proposal submissions—a critical contribution given that the area of health services research was so new. At the time, the perception was that health services research was a "soft" science and not subject to rigorous data and controls. In contrast, today many point to the extreme rigor associated with HSR&D research standards.

Encouraging Research, Enhancing Connections

As HSR&D coalesced and strengthened, Dr. Meehan moved through roles as a Program Planning Specialist and Pro-

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HSR&D Holds 2009 National Meeting

“Defining Optimal Care: Balancing Quality, Cost, and Patient Preferences” was the theme of the 27th Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) National Meeting held February 11-13, 2009 in Baltimore, MD. This year’s theme was chosen to reflect the challenges faced by VA leadership and HSR&D researchers when implementing and evaluating healthcare for Veterans. Hosted by HSR&D’s Center for Clinical Management Research, the Meeting was attended by more than 660 policymakers, clinicians, and researchers. Eighty-two papers, 18 workshops, and 125 posters were presented on vital healthcare issues, such as: chronic illness, vulnerable populations, mental health, economic analysis, as well as long-term care, which is of particular importance for many wounded Veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Key HSR&D accomplishments were highlighted in Thursday’s opening plenary session remarks, delivered by HSR&D Director Seth Eisen, MD, MSc. Dr. Eisen noted that HSR&D:

- supports more than 300 projects,
- devotes more than 50% of its portfolio to investigations targeting issues that impact quality of care,
- has mentored more than 50 HSR&D Career Development Awardees during the past year, and
- has seen a 25% increase in funding over the past three years.

Additional meeting highlights included remarks by VA’s Under Secretary for Health Michael Kussman, MD, MS, MACP. Dr. Kussman thanked the attending researchers for contributing to VA’s mission to provide “the best care anywhere,” and asked the audience, “What can we all do to make VA research better?” He also encouraged attendees to consider the new administration’s priorities when planning their research agendas, paying specific attention to post-deployment health and mental health. Dr. Kussman further emphasized that VA’s Central Office, in concert with new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, General Eric Shinseki, stands behind its support of and commitment to improving Veterans’ health through VA’s research efforts.

Dr. Kussman then presented two of VHA’s highest honors: H. Gilbert Welch, MD, MPH received the Under Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research, and Shirley Meehan, MBA, PhD, HSR&D Deputy Director, received VA’s Exemplary Service Award—the highest honor bestowed by the Office of the Under Secretary.

Dr. Joel Kupersmith, VA’s Chief Research and Development Officer, spoke of the impressive quality of research within VA’s HSR&D Service, noting VA’s significant leadership role in the field of health services research.

Dr. Kupersmith also mentioned future directions for HSR&D research, including: interventional healthcare studies, rural health, health disparities, women’s health, and information technology in the form of the secure, clinically-rich databases being developed by the Consortium for Healthcare Informatics Research (CHIR) and the Veterans’ Informatics, Information, and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI). He closed his remarks by emphasizing that HSR&D researchers are well-positioned to contribute to the new administration’s healthcare reform discussions.

Nicole Lurie, MD, MSPH, Director of Population Health and Health Disparities and Co-Director of the Center for Domestic and International Health Security at the RAND Corporation, gave the keynote address. Dr. Lurie’s talk focused on the rapidly changing healthcare environment and the implications for research. Her thoughts on the topic were of particular interest given her recent role as a member of President Obama’s Transition Project’s Agency Review Working Group, for which she assessed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



H. Gilbert Welch, MD, MPH received the 2009 Under Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research. Pictured from left to right: Under Secretary Kussman; Robert Walton, Director, White River Junction VAMC; Dr. H. Gilbert Welch; and HSR&D Director Seth Eisen.

Under Secretary’s Award in Health Services Research

H. Gilbert Welch, MD, MPH is the recipient of the 2009 Under Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research. Dr. Welch’s successful research career includes substantive contributions in the areas of technology assessment, health policy, and understanding the benefits and harms of early diagnosis. His research in all of these areas has helped VA policymakers understand the impact of adopting new technologies or broader disease definitions.

Newly Funded

Only awards/projects with funding start dates that have been confirmed since the last issue of *Research Briefs* in January 2009 are listed here.

Career Awardees

Erin Krebs, MD, MPH	Indianapolis VAMC	Improving the Quality and Safety of Opioid Prescribing in Primary Care
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Projects

Implementation Rapid Response Projects

Prakash Deedwania, MD	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	Optimization of CHF Management in VA: Improve Post-Discharge Care Plan
Lisa Najavits, PhD	VA Boston Health Care System	Telephone Screening of Community Veterans
Tatyana Shteinlukht, MD, PhD	VA Boston Health Care System	Addressing Tobacco Dependence through Organizational Change in CBOCs

Investigator-Initiated Research

David Aron, MD	Cleveland VAMC	Interprofessional Training for Improving Diabetes Care
David Casarett, MD	Philadelphia VAMC	Veterans’ and Families’ Priorities for Palliative Home Care Services
Cathleen Colon-Emeric, MD	Durham VAMC	CONNECT for Better Falls Prevention in VA Community Living Centers
John Fortney, PhD	Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System	Telemedicine Outreach for Post-Traumatic Stress in CBOCs
Michael Gould, MD	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	Evaluation of Computerized Decision Support for Managing Lung Nodules
Mark Ilgen, PhD	VA Ann Arbor Health Care System	Management of Suicidal Veterans during Substance Use Disorder
B. Price Kerfoot, MD, EdM	VA Boston Health Care System	Interactive Spaced Education to Optimize Hypertension Management
Kurt Kroenke, MD	Indianapolis VAMC	Stepped Care to Optimize Pain Care Effectiveness (SCOPE)
Kathryn Magruder, PhD, MPH	Charleston VAMC	Patient and Provider Outcomes of E-Learning Training in Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality
Kathleen Schutte, PhD	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	Predictors and Outcomes of Treating Bipolar Depression as MDD
Carol VanDeusen Lukas, EdD	VA Boston Health Care System	Training and Coaching to Promote High Performance in VA Nursing Home Care
Kevin Volpp, MD, PhD	VA Pittsburgh Health Care System	Interventions to Improve Fatigue Management among Physician Trainees
Saul Weiner, MD	Hines VAMC	Intervening to Prevent Contextual Errors in Medical Decision-Making

Nursing Research Initiative

Teresita Corvera, RN, PhD	VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System	Prevalence and Clinical Course of Depression among Patients with Heart Failure
Michelle Prisco, MSN, BC-ANP	Washington DC VAMC	The Effect of Acupuncture on PTSD-Related Insomnia

Service-Directed Projects

JoAnn Kirchner, MD	Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System	Blended Facilitation to Enhance PCMH Program Implementation
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Service-Directed Research

Judi Babcock-Parziale, PhD	Southern Arizona VA Health Care System	Evaluation of VA’s TBI Clinical Reminder and Secondary-Level Evaluation
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For Your Information

VA HSR&D *Research Briefs* is a semi-annual publication of the Office of Research and Development’s Health Services Research and Development Service. This issue, along with archived issues of *Research Briefs* and other publications, can be found at www.hsr.d.research.va.gov, or vaww.hsr.d.research.va.gov.

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Contact

We welcome your input. If you have questions, comments, or would like more information about VA HSR&D *Research Briefs*, please contact: Geraldine McGlynn, Editor, at geraldine.mcglynn@va.gov or by phone at 857.364.6073.

