

To address the need for greater innovation in solving healthcare problems, VA's Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D) Service launched the Innovation Initiative to support and promote innovative, high-risk, high-impact research that contributes to meaningful, real-world transformations in VA healthcare and health outcomes for Veterans.

The Innovation Initiative research projects target five areas that are a priority for Veterans and the VA healthcare system: suicide prevention, opioid misuse/pain management, access to quality care, PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury), and long-term care services and supports. These projects are funded for an initial planning phase of up to 18 months. Following the planning phase, investigators will submit a full application for a four- to five-year implementation phase. Through strong partnerships with various programs, the Innovation Initiative will:

- Transform practices rather than incrementally improve them,
- Lead to larger impacts in clinical or population health outcomes, and
- Move health services research in new directions.

Innovation Initiative Program Awardees

The 10 inaugural Innovation Initiative awardees are:

- **Building a Model VA–State Partnership to Support Non-Institutional Long-Term Care for Veterans**
This project will create a shared data infrastructure between VA, Area Agencies on Aging, managed care, and Medicaid long-term services and supports programs to identify opportunities to better support aging in place for high-risk Veterans. Project investigators also will assess barriers and facilitators to aging in place.
Principal Investigator: Robert Burke, MD
HSR&D Center for Health Equity Research & Promotion, Philadelphia, PA
- **Developing an Evaluation of a Veteran-Informed Means Restriction Intervention for Suicide Prevention**
This project will evaluate peer involvement—at the individual and community levels—in a Veteran-informed suicide prevention intervention designed to improve gun safety messaging.
Principal Investigator: Joseph Constans, PhD
Associate Chief of Staff for Research, Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System
- **Improving Medication Use for Older Adults: VIONE Program**
This project seeks to improve medication safety by deprescribing unnecessary and potentially harmful medications through a pharmacist-led program targeting older Veterans in difficult-to-reach rural areas.
Principal Investigator: William Hung, PhD
James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, NY
- **Is Protection of Disability Benefits Associated with Employment in Veterans with TBI and PTSD?**
This project will examine whether protection of disability benefits is associated with changes in employment patterns—such as returning to work or increases in work hours—among Veterans with TBI and PTSD.
Principal Investigator: Terri Pogoda, PhD
HSR&D Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research, Boston, MA

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Innovation Initiative Award Projects *(cont'd)*

- **Mobile App for the Prevention of Suicide**

This project will finalize and implement the Mobile App for the Prevention of Suicide (MAPS) within VA standards of care. Via Smartphone, MAPS will determine acute suicide risk, provide coping strategies when risk is detected, and refer patients to the suicide hotline or ED when any intent to die is confirmed.

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Primack, PhD

HSR&D Center for Innovation in Long-Term Services and Supports for Vulnerable Veterans, Providence, RI

- **Patient Incentives for Reducing No-Shows, Accommodating Walk-in Visits, and Improving Primary Care Work Flow**

This project will create a predictive model that identifies individuals likely to be “no-shows” at VA primary care visits in order to implement targeted, patient-behavior incentives that reduce no-shows, thereby improving Veterans’ health and primary care workflow.

Principal Investigator: Paul Hebert, PhD

HSR&D Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care, Seattle, WA

- **Reduction of Post-Operative Opioids Dispensed in Surgical Patients**

This project will gather data on post-operative prescriptions following surgical procedures, then will develop and implement a rapid-taper approach to VA’s post-operative opioid prescribing protocol that can be used system-wide.

Principal Investigator: Nicholas Giori, MD, PhD

VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA

- **Remote and Automated Evaluation of Skin Disease**

This project focuses on assessing the readiness of VA and Veterans for direct-to-patient and computer-assisted care via tele dermatology. Investigators also will look at the impact of patient self-referral via tele dermatology on access to care.

Principal Investigator: Dennis Oh, MD, PhD

San Francisco VA Health Care System, San Francisco, CA

- **Targeting and Improving Long-Term Care Services and Support for High-Need Veterans Using Veteran Peer Community Health Workers**

This project seeks to improve targeting of VA’s Home-Based Primary Care Program by using trained Veteran community-health workers to conduct home visits in order to assess the needs of Veterans that may be in high-need of HBPC services.

Principal Investigator: Stuti Dang, MD

Miami Veterans Healthcare System, Geriatrics Research Education and Clinical Center, and the HSR&D Elizabeth Dole Center of Excellence for Veterans and Caregiver Research.

- **The Missing RxLink: Veteran Prescription Use in Private Sector Community Pharmacies**

This project will create a “real-time” link between community pharmacies and VA pharmacy data to help close the gap in knowledge of Veterans’ medication use in the private sector, thus addressing two priority areas: opioid misuse/pain management and access to quality care.

Principal Investigator: Katie Suda, PharmD

Edward Hines, Jr., VA Hospital, Hines, IL