

Veteran Engagement Three Ways:

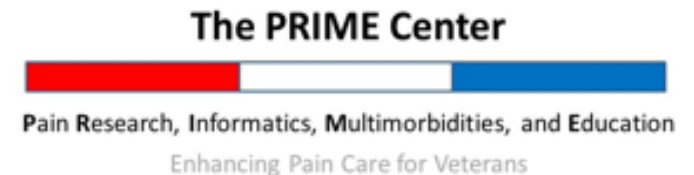
Insights and lessons learned from engaging veterans at three VA research centers

Leah Wendleton, MPH, MSW, Rocky Mountain MIRECC & Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care, Denver, CO

Lindsey A. Martin, PhD, IQuEST, Houston, TX

Kenda R. Stewart, PhD, CADRE, Iowa City, IA

Kathryn LaChappelle, MPH, The PRIME Center, West Haven, CT



Today's Speakers



Leah Wendleton
Moderator
Denver



Lindsey Martin
Panelist
Houston



Kenda Stewart
Panelist
Iowa City



Katie LaChappelle
Panelist
West Haven

Disclosures

- No disclosures
- The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- All Veterans provided written consent for the video/audio recordings and use of their images



Acknowledgements

Houston	Iowa City	West Haven	Denver
Ricardo Adame, Marines	John Bentler, Army Stephen Drop, Army	Tom Anastasio, Navy	David Carnevale, Army Patrick Oliver, Army
Erika Bowen, Army	Sonya Justus, Air Force Ken Krizan, Army	Michael Borges, Air Force	William (Wes) Westmoreland, Army
Brandie McKinley, Army	Erin Madsen, Air Force Rick Martin, Navy	Kellie Harris, Army	Donald (Don) Smith, Navy
Christian Valenzuela, Navy	Bessy Ortiz, Air Force Allen Roberts, Air Force	Hector Hernandez, Jr., Navy & Army	Eric Christeson, Army Jillian (Jill) Murphy, Army
Eugene Vecera, Army	Edward Shreeves, Navy Jacob Stone, Marines	Elysia Dahl, Army	Vincent (Vince) Mosley, Army Kee Johnson, Army
Donald Wagner, Air Force	Phil Ross, Army April Schmidt, Air Force Bill Wirth, Air Force		Krystal Conrad, Air Force

Overview of Panel Discussion

- Veteran Engagement in VA & Local Context
- Adapting a Veteran Engagement Group (VEG)
- Fostering bi-directional relationships
- Measurement & Evaluation

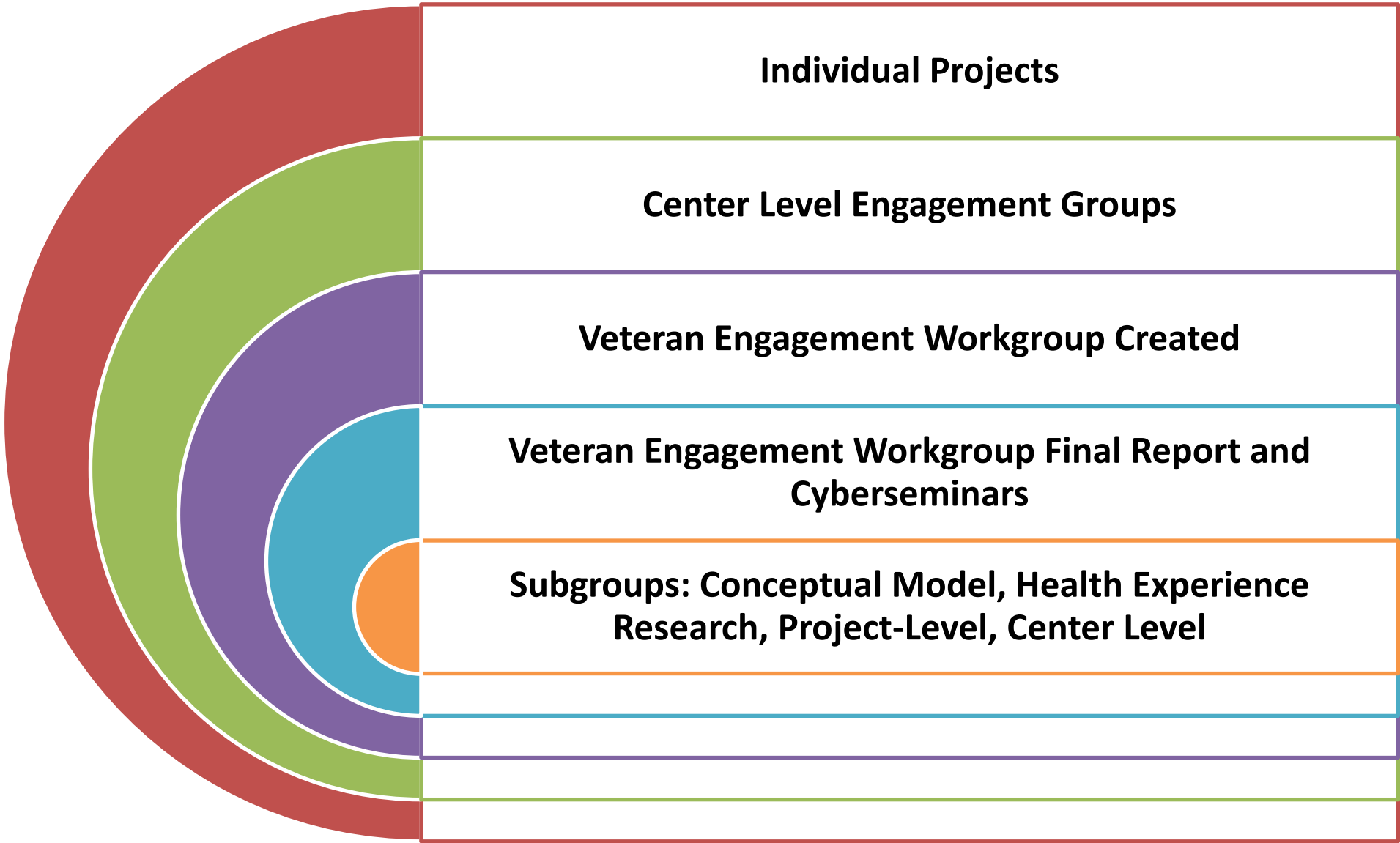
Poll Question

1. Does your center/you currently have a mechanism for Veterans to provide input on research, evaluation, or quality improvement activities? (revised)
 - a) No
 - b) In-process
 - c) Yes

Houston, Iowa City & West Haven

I. VETERAN ENGAGEMENT IN VA & LOCAL CONTEXT

Engaging Veterans in VA Research



2017 Task Order

Strengthening
Excellence in
Research through
Veteran
Engagement

Perspectives on Veteran Engagement

“...creating a more collaborative approach to research that can help make research more accessible and meaningful to those involved.”

Investigator, Denver

“It’s changed my opinion of what goes on behind the scenes at the VA.”

VEG member, Denver

Veterans' Perspectives



**Mike Borges, Air Force
West Haven, CT**

“Over the years I have had several problems, personal problems with... back conditions, foot conditions, and I haven’t been getting much satisfaction with the VA itself... so I get to have a hands on type approach to this and be able to give my own personal opinion.”

Houston

Population: 2.1 million



- **4th largest city** in the U.S.—ethnically diverse—90+ languages spoken
- “Houston has more than **500 cultural, visual and performing arts organizations**, 90 of which are devoted to multicultural and minority arts”—City of Houston

- Texas Medical Center (TMC) is **largest medical center in the world** and home to the **Michael E. DeBakey VAMC (MEDVAMC)**
- The MEDVAMC serves approximately **130,000 Veterans** at its main campus and network of CBOCs



- **Mission:** Improving health and well-being through innovations in health care delivery
- **Goals:** Innovation, Implementation and Mentorship

Iowa City

Population: 74,398



- The only **UNESCO City of Literature** in North America
- Home of the **Iowa Writer's Workshop**. Famous alumni and faculty include, Marilynne Robinson, Kurt Vonnegut, Philip Roth, Jane Smiley, John Irving.

- ▶ University of Iowa and UI Hospitals and Clinics employ **~24,000 people**.
- ▶ The Iowa City VAHCS is **largely rural** and serves approximately **51,400 Veterans**.



- ▶ **Mission:** to develop, implement, and test innovative strategies that expand access to high-quality primary and specialty care, while ensuring that the care delivered is safe and free of preventable infections.

Population: 55,189

West Haven

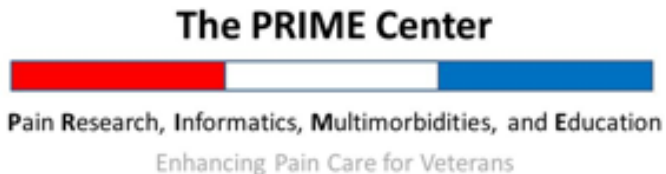


- ▶ West Haven, CT is an eastern shoreline community, located adjacent to the larger New Haven, CT.
- ▶ VA Connecticut Healthcare System (VACHS) serves approximately 68,000 male Veterans and 4,200 women Veterans

- ▶ VACHS encompasses an inpatient facility and Ambulatory Care Center in West Haven; an Ambulatory Care Center in Newington; and 6 primary care CBOCs.
- ▶ VACHS is affiliated with Yale University School of Medicine and UCONN School of Medicine & Dentistry



Pain Research, Informatics, Multimorbidities and Education (PRIME) Center of Innovation (COIN)



Mission: To study interactions between pain and other health conditions and develop and implement effective interventions to reduce pain and improve health.

Meeting the unique needs of VA research and research centers

II. ADAPTING A VEG

Logistics & Regulatory Issues

Key Issues to Consider:

- Mission statement
- Regulatory issues
- Planning VEG meetings

Houston: Logistics & Regulatory Issues

- **Internal Steering Committee developed VEG Mission & Goals**
 - Public affairs, FACA compliant (Veteran individual viewpoints/experiences)
 - Veteran Community Engagement Committee (CEC) Mission: engaging its membership in research activities and priority areas, and to provide feedback to leadership and investigators on their research



Lindsey Martin, PhD
CEC Faculty Advisor



Ashley Gendrett, MPH
CEC Coordinator



Jessica Davila, PhD
IQuEST Leadership

- **CEC Meetings are Veteran-Driven with minimal facilitation**
 - One-year commitment; 5 meetings/year, including orientation; 90 minutes long-includes short investigator presentation and Veteran/investigator Q&A
 - Members provided \$25 compensation, lunch and free parking at IQuEST

Iowa City: Logistics & Regulatory Issues

- **CADRE Leadership enlisted medical anthropologist to develop Veteran Engagement Panel (VEP)**
 - IRB, AO for Research, Public Affairs, Privacy & Security Officers, FACA compliant
 - Mission: to inform CADRE leadership and investigators of Veteran preferences regarding research priority areas, research processes and procedures, and research results.



Kenda Stewart,
PhD
VEP Liaison



Heather Schacht
Reisinger, PhD
Assoc. Dir. Research



Bonnie BootsMiller,
PhD
Assoc. Dir.
Operations



Eli Perencevich,
MD, MPH
Director

- **VEP Meetings resemble “works-in-progress” seminars.**
 - Investigators present short synopsis of study. Veterans and Investigators brainstorm methodologies, research questions, etc.

West Haven: Logistics & Regulatory Issues

- **PRIME Center Executive Steering Committee member invited Veteran outreach specialist to join national Veteran Engagement Workgroup.**
 - Veteran Engagement Group (VEG) adapted from Denver model
 - ACOS for Research, FACA compliant, MOU with hospital director
 - Mission: to promote patient-centered research and translation of findings by engaging a group of Veteran stakeholders in discussion about the activities of the PRIME Center; involvement spans from strategic planning and research topic generation to dissemination and implementation of results.
 - One year commitment, \$50 per meeting, 4 meetings per year.

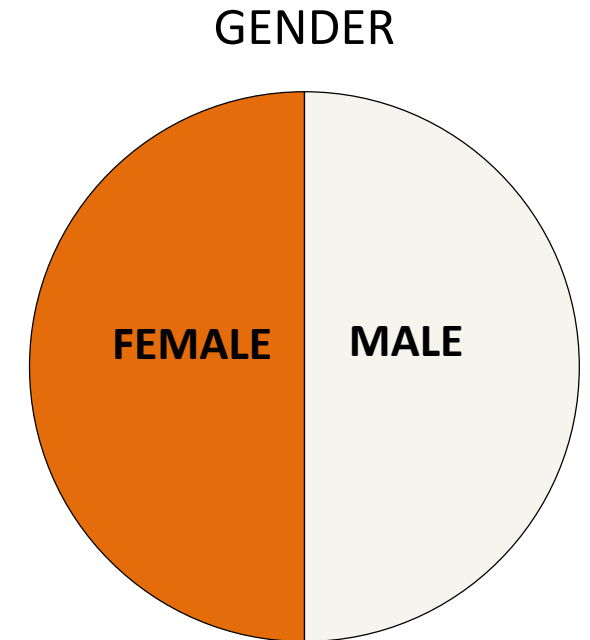
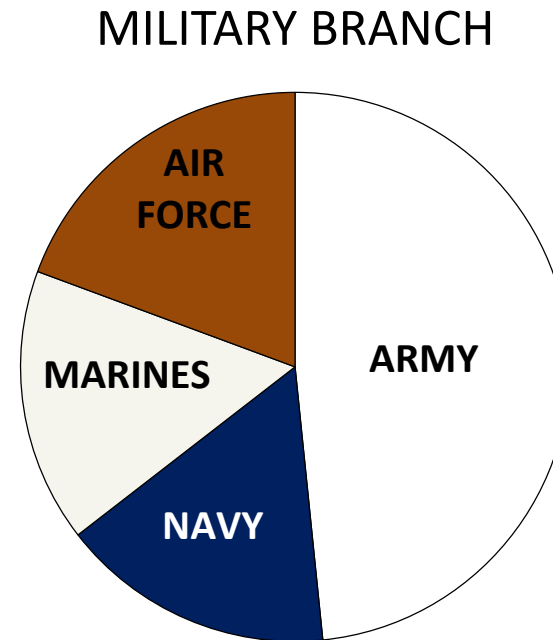


Lori Bastian, MD,
Director



Kathryn LaChappelle,
MPH,
VEG liaison

Houston: Membership & Recruitment



- **Recruitment:** word-of-mouth; recommendations; VA Research Week; flyers
- **Diverse membership:** ages (38-86); war generation; military branch; race/ethnicity; male/female

We are currently seeking Veterans to serve on the **Community Engagement Committee**

The CEC helps VA researchers design and implement studies to improve the delivery of VA healthcare

Are you or do you know a Veteran who has:
A desire to help other Veterans?
An interest in research?
Good communication skills?
A willingness to share healthcare experiences?

Committee service includes:

- Committing to a one-year term
- Attending six in-person meetings at the Michael E. DeBakey VAMC
- Compensation for attendance
- Lunch will be provided

For more info, contact

Ashley Gendrett

713-440-4461

Ashley.Gendrett@va.gov

<http://www.houston.hsrd.research.va.gov/>

Baylor
College of
Medicine



Baylor
College of
Medicine

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Gender: _____ Age: _____ Race/ethnicity (optional): _____

Are you a Veteran: Yes ☐ No ☐ Branch of Service: _____

Are you a Caregiver: Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you ever received health care through the VA healthcare system: Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, where: _____ Approximate date of last visit: _____

Preferred method of contact:

☐ Email: _____

☐ Phone: _____ Best time(s) to reach me: _____

Experience:

Current employment: _____

Job title: _____ #Years at Job: _____ Highest level of education: _____

Have you participated in research? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please explain: _____

Volunteer work/committee memberships: _____

Do you have reliable transportation to and from the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center: Yes ☐ No ☐

Days/Times Available for Committee Meetings:

Monday:	Before 11:30am	11:30am-1:30pm	After 1:30pm	After 5pm only
Tuesday:	Before 11:30am	11:30am-1:30pm	After 1:30pm	After 5pm only
Wednesday:	Before 11:30am	11:30am-1:30pm	After 1:30pm	After 5pm only
Thursday:	Before 11:30am	11:30am-1:30pm	After 1:30pm	After 5pm only
Friday:	Before 11:30am	11:30am-1:30pm	After 1:30pm	After 5pm only

If selected as a member of this committee, I will be making a one-year commitment to attend six, 90 minute in-person meetings (September, October, November, February, April & May) at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center campus, actively participating in discussions to help VA investigators with their research to improve VA healthcare.

Are you able to make this commitment? Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature: _____ Date: _____

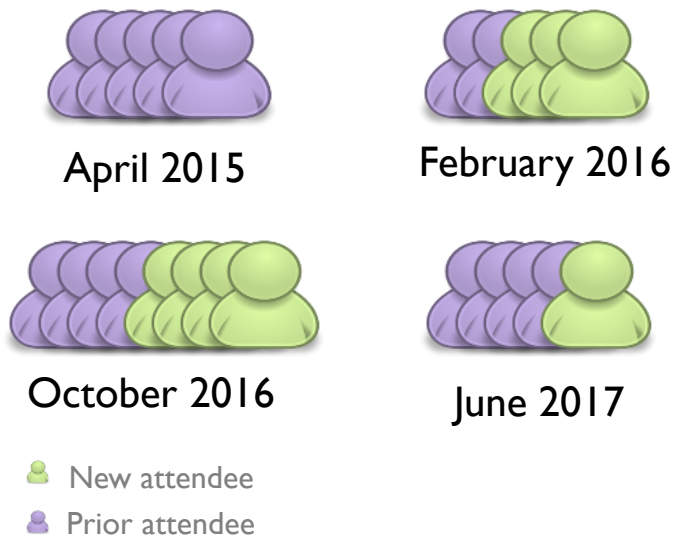
Applications should be returned to:
 Ashley Gendrett
 2002 Holcombe Blvd (152), Houston, TX 77030
 713-440-4461 (phone) 713-748-7359 (fax)
 Ashley.Gendrett@va.gov



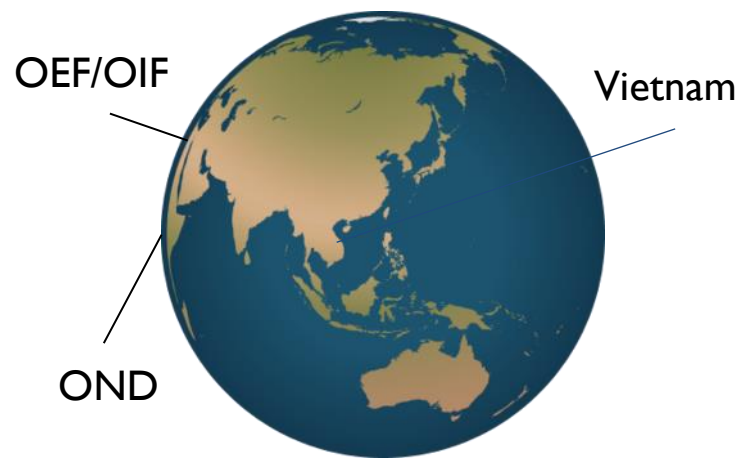
Iowa City: Membership & Recruitment

- ▶ **Recruitment:** word-of-mouth; recommendations; VA Volunteer Services; ICVA Breast Cancer Awareness Fair; Iowa City LGBT Pride
- ▶ **Membership:** 13 Veterans; male and female

ATTENDANCE



SERVICE ERA



MILITARY BRANCH



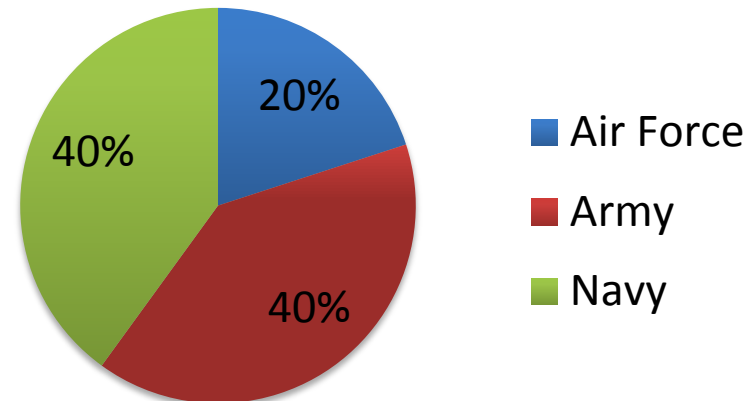
West Haven: Membership & Recruitment



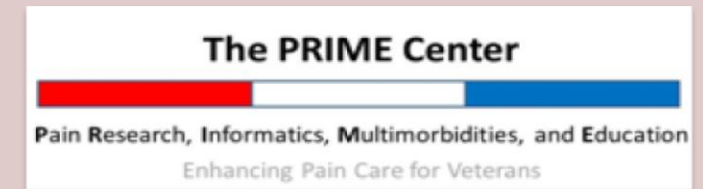
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- ▶ **Recruitment:** word-of-mouth; recommendations; VA Research Week; VA Veteran and Family Advisory Council
- ▶ **Membership:** 5 Veterans; 3 male and 2 female, age range 35-73 years

MILITARY BRANCH



Summary – Membership & Recruitment



Houston

- 5 mtgs/yr
- 1-yr term
- \$25 comp
- Application & Interview

Iowa City

- 4 mtgs/yr
- No term limit
- Volunteer
- All comers

West Haven

- 4 mtgs/yr
- 1-yr term
- \$50 comp
- Interview

Veterans' Perspectives

"I'd like more Veterans to show up... I know that's hard for you, to try and wrangle so many people. ... But, yeah, just having that larger pool of people to pull ideas from gives you a different perspective and fresh ideas."



**Stephen Drop, Army
Iowa City, IA**

Veterans' Perspectives

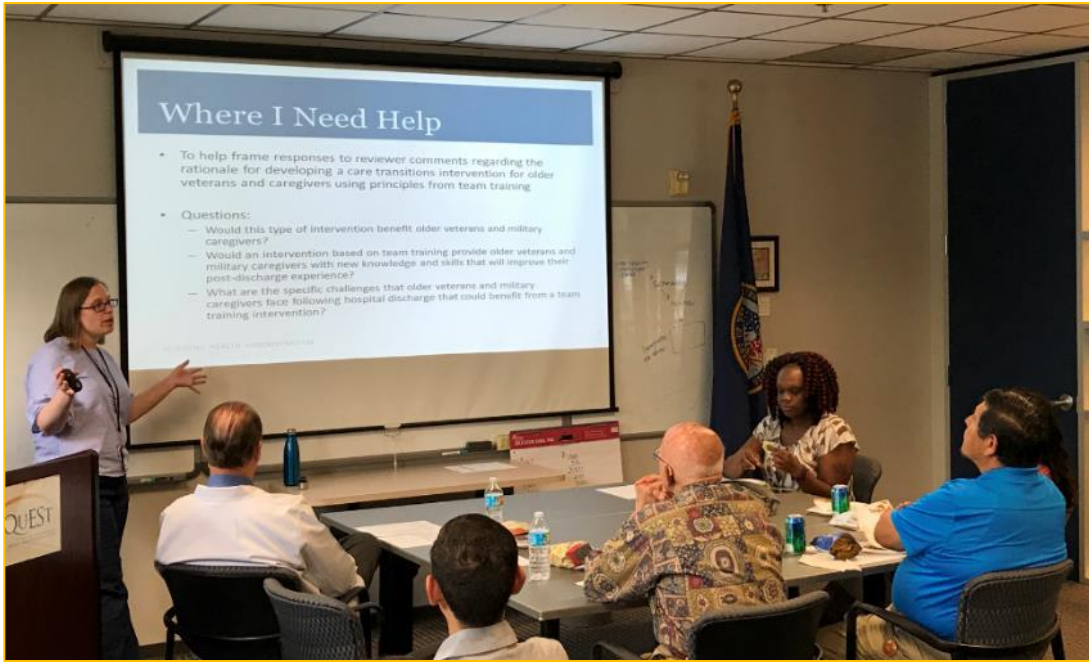


**Tom Anastasio, Navy
West Haven, CT**

“Anytime there is a program or service that is going to impact a specific group, in this case the Veterans, I think it is very important to have an inclusionary process. I think the more inclusionary the process is I think it enhances the probability of it being successful, pertinent, and the bottom line really helping out Veterans.”

Fostering lasting relationships between researchers, research centers & Veterans

III. BI-DIRECTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Engagement Meetings
Clockwise from top: Houston, Iowa City, Denver



Military Promotion Board

Veterans' Perspectives



**Brandie McKinley, Army
Houston, TX**

“The collaboration with our panel members adds not only a holistic, but also a cohesive freshness—a fresh approach to the improvement of Veteran care. I also feel that our experiences and input are held in high regard. The investigators here...they care about our opinions. They care about our input.”

Researchers' Perspectives on Veteran Engagement

“CEC members challenged me to better frame the scope of my work and provided feedback that will guide my intervention design and shape future directions for my research agenda.”

-Molly Horstman, MD, MS, IQuEST

“The Veteran engagement group provided us insight on how this group of Veterans would like to view research materials, allowing us to better tailor our materials in order to improve their benefits from the research.”

-Eric DeRycke, MPH, PRIME

Approaching Role Differences

- Presenting research to Veterans
 - Avoiding “research speak”—how to speak in non-research language
 - Interpersonal skills and maintaining eye contact
- Veteran’s role as research peer instead of research subject
- Recognizing own expertise
 - Veterans unsure about research knowledge base
- Confidentiality
 - “Rules of Engagement” and the “Right to Pass”
- Creating a feedback loop



Grant
Submission

Pragmatic Trial of Initial Medication Effectiveness for Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Pilot Study,

Checklist to Prevent MRSA Surgical Site Infections

Data
Collection

HIV Improving Access and Outcomes for Rural Veterans with

Data
Analysis

Empowering Veterans with their Health Information—My HealtheVet and the Blue Button,

Writing

REPORT
FINDINGS!

IV. MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION (M&E)

The potential value of veteran-engaged research

M&E

- The engagement continuum
- Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
 - Surveys
 - De-briefings with Veterans and investigators post-meeting
 - Interviews/testimonials
- Future Directions
 - IRB
 - Demographics & sustainability
 - Inclusion of Veterans on external conference panels, papers
 - Group resiliency
 - Paradigm shifts in health services research


Engagement Continuum

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

M&E Tools



VETERAN ENGAGEMENT PANEL
JUNE 13, 2017

Meeting Evaluation & Feedback

Please take the time to answer the following questions about tonight's meeting.

1.

How many CADRE Veteran Engagement Panel meetings have you attended?

2.

Thinking back to your first Veteran Engagement Panel meeting, how would you compare your comfort or discomfort level in discussing research then and now? *If this is your first meeting, please skip to [Question 3](#).*

3.

What was the most interesting information you heard from tonight's presentations?

4.

What did you think about the process of reviewing a data collection instrument, such as Dr. [Hadlandsmayth's](#) focus group outline? Do you think this is something the panel should continue doing?

5.

What contribution do you this panel can make to CADRE's research program or individual studies? What contribution would you **like** it to make?

6.

What stages of research (e.g. grant writing, data collection, analysis, manuscripts) are you most interested in?

7.

After hearing tonight's presentations, how would you rank your interest in continuing your engagement in VA research? Please circle (1=Not at all interested, 5=Very interested)

1

2

3

4


5


8.

Would you be interested in being contacted between meetings if investigators would like your input as they write grants and design their research?

RE: Your feedback on the Veteran Panel - Message (HTML)

File Message McAfee E-mail Scan Adobe PDF Tell me what you want to do



BootsMiller, Bonnie J |  Stewart, Kenda R

2/22/2016

RE: Your feedback on the Veteran Panel

Thank you for participating in the Panel on Friday night. If you have time, I'd like to hear your feedback regarding the usefulness/enjoyment/satisfaction of participating the panel from a researcher's perspective. Your candor is appreciated. I'll aggregate your response or look at overarching themes as opposed to point out individual comments.

For instance,

1.

Why did you agree to present? What were your goals? Were your goals met?

2.

How would you characterize the amount of time you spent preparing for the Panel?

3.

Is there information about the Panel that you wished you had prior to the meeting?

4.

Were there any comments that changed the way you think about your study or added to your understanding?

5.

Of the people there, did you feel like the variety of perspectives met your needs?

6.

What is your opinion on this format for center-level Veteran engagement? What would you recommend?

Thanks for taking the time to participate and respond to these questions. I thought the evening went really well. I particularly enjoyed the discussion.

Kenda

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT REPRESENTS YOUR AGREEMENT/OR LACK OF AGREEMENT WITH EACH STATEMENT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel comfortable sharing my opinions honestly.	1	2	3	4	5
2. People involved in this group always trust one another.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in the group.	1	2	3	4	5
4. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.	1	2	3	4	5
5. People communicate openly with one another.	1	2	3	4	5

*Adapted from Denver COIN-MIRECC Veteran Research Engagement Board, further adapted from the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (2001).

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Veterans' Perspectives



**Erin Madsen, Air Force
Iowa City, IA**

“I would like to see greater, distribution of some of the things we've talked about. I feel like there's a lot of fascinating research that's being done by the VA, and sometimes I doubt whether my representatives, or leadership can really see all the interesting stuff that's being done. And I'd like to be part of whatever effort can make that happen.”

Veterans' Perspectives

"My expectations are high, and I can't say that the VA has met my expectations...in a lot of ways. But I see so much promise in the CEC, and in the research that is being done here that I can't say that I'm anything but...inspired that it's finally coming to pass. ...not that hard work hasn't been done in the past, but that this really is a cutting edge understanding about opening the door to the VA future."



**Christina Valenzuela, Navy
Houston, TX**

Poll Question

2. Are you aware of the other ways you can learn more about Veteran engagement (e.g. Jam Sessions)?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Research Center Veteran Engagement Jam Sessions

These sessions will provide a time and space for those involved in or interested in Veteran Engagement systematically to Research Centers to converse with colleagues working on Veteran engagement at other sites. During this call, you will hear about challenges and solutions that others faced during formation of Veteran Engagement Groups for Research. You will be able to ask questions and participate in discussion with your peers in the field and network with others.

For more information on these calls or to bring up questions or comments please reach out to coordinators:

Kenda Stewart (Kenda.Stewart@va.gov); Leah Wendleton (Leah.Wendleton@va.gov)
Kathryn LaChappelle (Kathryn.LaChappelle@va.gov); Lindsey Martin (Lindsey.Martin3@va.gov)

Please call into VANTS at the time of the call at 1-800-767-1750 using code 77466#

DATE	TIME	TOPIC
October 5 th 2017	ET: 1 pm CT: 12 pm MT: 11 am PT: 10 am	“Striking the right chord” - experiences around the very early stages of planning a veteran engagement group for research.
November 2 nd 2017		“I’ll be watching you” - navigating ethical, federal, and VA policies
February 1 st 2018		“Getting the band together” - recruiting veterans and investigators to participate.
March 1 st 2018		“Opening night” - how the first meeting went, what to expect, the unexpected.
April 5 th 2018		“Reading the reviews” - conversation about evaluating “engagement” or success.
May 3 rd 2018		“Tuning up” - evolution of your engagement group, lessons learned over time.

**THANK YOU FOR
JOINING!**

Questions?

Contact Information



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Join the Conversation: #VeteranEngagement #VAResearch

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PERSPECTIVES ON VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

Veterans' Perspectives

“If we think about every decision as a better decision when we invite the wisdom of the crowd. And our crowd is Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, and caregivers! It’s very critical that we take the wisdom of all these individual groups, blend them together, because we get a better decision in the end.”



**Eugene Vecera, Army
Houston, TX**

Veterans' Perspectives

“One of the projects we talked about recently was how to increase utilization of, um, antibacterial devices, like lotions. And my contribution was to look at the packing, to make the packaging seem something that the recipient would value instead of something that was discardable and trivial.”



**Erin Madsen, Air Force
Iowa City, IA**

Perspectives on Veteran Engagement



"I would also like to see...more feedback from what comes out of our discussion. Where alterations have been made in the design of the research, or what findings have been made."

**-Don Wagner, Air Force
Houston, TX**

"While I don't know that I changed anything specifically, the panel discussion definitely confirmed for me that the TAPPS program was going in the right direction. That was personally motivating and gave me a tremendous amount of confidence in moving forward with the intervention phase of the grant."

**-Brian Lund, PharmD
CADRE, Iowa City**

Veterans' Perspectives

“When you can have a discussion to lay people and they understand what you're saying by the end of the meeting? That's a good thing. I think that you've been very successful with your speakers... They've all be able to do that it, make it understandable and then ask for directions...our participation.”



**Bill Wirth, Army
Iowa City, IA**