

# Research Communications Introduction and Overview

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CHERP  
CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY  
RESEARCH AND PROMOTION

The logo for the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) is displayed in a white box. It features the acronym 'CHERP' in a large, blue, serif font. Below the acronym, the full name 'CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH AND PROMOTION' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font, separated by a thin horizontal line.

# Purpose

- ❖ This cyberseminar is for investigators, research staff, and those who coordinate communications for their Research Center and/or Medical Center
- ❖ An overview of how to inform colleagues, potential collaborators, key stakeholders and funders about your research portfolio
- ❖ Keep it simple and manageable



# Today's Agenda

- ❖ Ground rules for communications about VA research
- ❖ Construct a simple plan: ID key stakeholders, collaborate with established communicators, define topics, track results
- ❖ Overview of social media channels
- ❖ Upcoming in this HSR&D series
- ❖ Your questions/discussion



# Poll Question #1

- ❖ What is your primary role in VA?
  - » Student, Trainee, or Fellow
  - » Clinician
  - » Researcher
  - » Administrator, Manager or Policy-maker
  - » Not affiliated with VA
  - » Other



## Poll Question #2

- ❖ How would you describe your knowledge of communications and dissemination?
  - » It's all new
  - » For personal use but not professional
  - » Know enough to get around
  - » Use professionally frequently (at least daily)
  - » Other



# VA Research Publications Requirements

- ❖ [https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for\\_researchers/pub\\_notice.cfm#a](https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/pub_notice.cfm#a)
- ❖ Acknowledge VA Support
- ❖ List your VA title first
- ❖ Include VA disclaimer
- ❖ Notify VHA Research Communications via PubTracker



# Your Work, Your Words

- ❖ This communication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the US government.
- ❖ All views mine (in Twitter speak)



# Do what you know

- ❖ Specific aims
- ❖ Significance of research and relevance to Veterans' health
- ❖ Innovations, features
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Expected results
- ❖ How results will affect other areas



# Plan your top 5 aims

## Start your plan

(on making lists of goals)

“Everything you didn’t circle just became your Avoid-At-All-Cost list. No matter what, these things get no attention from you until you’ve succeeded with your top five.”

-- Warren Buffett



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## **Ride the wave**

It's a noisy world. Choose the best wave and ride it.



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# Define your audiences

## Internal

- ❖ Communications staff at HSR&D, ORD, medical center and university
- ❖ Your center administrators
- ❖ Colleagues and potential collaborators across VA
- ❖ VA operations leaders and policy makers

## External

- ❖ Like-minded organizations with active communications vehicles
- ❖ Current and former colleagues
- ❖ Editorial staff at journals
- ❖ Professional organizations
- ❖ Veterans



# For Official Use Only

## Officials only

- ❖ Public Affairs Officers and designated officials are authorized to represent the VA to the media, lawmakers, and VSOs
- ❖ Report any requests, do not participate in outreach until approved by PAO

## Do not approach directly

- ❖ General media, including inbound requests for interviews
- ❖ State and national lawmakers
- ❖ Veterans Service Organizations



# What do you want them to know?

- ❖ Newly-funded work
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Impact
- ❖ Publications, presentations, awards
- ❖ New collaborations
- ❖ Mentions of your work in other media



# What do they want to know?

- ❖ Impact on Veteran health and healthcare
- ❖ Include Veteran human interest story if possible
- ❖ Consider your research findings in terms of implications for:
  - » Clinical care
  - » Operations
  - » Policy



## Example: publication

- ❖ On acceptance, post to ORD PubTracker
- ❖ Adapt your conclusion, introduction, abstract, other details as appropriate, to 2 – 4 sentences
- ❖ Select 2 – 3 visuals: head shot, chart or graph, photo of research staff or Veteran participant
- ❖ Alert your local Public Affairs Officer and, if appropriate, communications staff of your academic affiliate and VISN



# Distribute

- ❖ Stick to your plan and focus on key audiences, but expect them to change
- ❖ Remember to ride the wave: send to people who will send to others. The local VA employee newsletter may be a valuable mechanism for reaching your intended audiences.
- ❖ Tailor your message to THEIR needs



# How will we know we succeeded?

- ❖ Effectiveness of communications is measured by how your target audiences respond, and what actions they take because you reached them



# Track

- ❖ Maintain a simple record of each outbound communication
- ❖ Note responses and re-communications



# Example from CHERP: new funding

- ❖ CHERP investigator receives new funding
- ❖ Feature story posted to home page:  
<https://www.cherp.research.va.gov/>
- ❖ The full story is now a page on the site:  
[https://www.cherp.research.va.gov/CHERP/features/High value care for high risk Veterans.asp](https://www.cherp.research.va.gov/CHERP/features/High%20value%20care%20for%20high%20risk%20Veterans.asp)
- ❖ Share w communicators, tweet about it, tagging all of the collaborators



# Veteran Engagement

- ❖ CHERP Veteran Community Advisory Board at both sites. They contribute across the continuum – from study conception to dissemination to their communities.
- ❖ Seek opportunities to hear Veterans' views of potential research and to align with their real-world priorities.



# VA Research Day 2018



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Just the basics

# REACHING OUT ON-LINE



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# VA Web Sites

- ❖ If your center has a web site, news is always welcome. If not available, find other VA sites.
- ❖ Templates define the design, but clear visuals give your message prominence
- ❖ Report impact. Provide analytics to your center and other investigators



# Social Media

- ❖ Be selective
- ❖ Assign time to activity and limit it
- ❖ Frequency and freshness
- ❖ Follow the golden rule



# Facebook

- ❖ Not recommended
- ❖ Monitoring is time-intensive
- ❖ Provide content to medical center, VISN communications, university affiliate instead



# Linked In

- ❖ Lower priority unless you are seeking new position
- ❖ Disclaimer, disclaimer, disclaimer
- ❖ Re-post posts about your work and collaborators
- ❖ Limit your time to once or twice monthly
- ❖ Same as VA Pulse



# Twitter

- ❖ YOUR VIEWS ARE YOUR OWN
- ❖ Easy to create and monitor
- ❖ You can limit/block/add followers
- ❖ Support colleagues, like-minded orgs
- ❖ Track Twitter analytics
- ❖ Spread your reach
- ❖ YOUR VIEWS ARE YOUR OWN



# Poll Question #3

- ❖ How do you now rate your knowledge of this topic?
  - » Poor
  - » Fair
  - » Good



# Coming up in this series

- ❖ 7/16/2018 Utilizing Stakeholders as Communication Partners
- ❖ 9/17/2018 Identifying Your Audience and Tailoring Your Outreach
- ❖ 10/15/2018 Writing for a Lay Audience
- ❖ 11/19/2018 Dissemination Strategies
- ❖ 12/17/2018 Using Social Media Effectively



# Your questions

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