

Health Services Scientific Merit Summer 2021 Request for Applications

Naomi Tomoyasu, PhD, HSR&D Deputy Director

Liza Catucci, MPH, HSR&D Administrative Officer

Cathie Plouzek, PhD, HSR&D Scientific Program Manager

Stephanie Guerra, PhD, AAAS Fellow

April 1, 2021

2:00 - 3:00 pm ET





Poll Question

Have you ever applied or contributed to an application for HSR&D funding?

- a) Yes**
- b) No**



Poll Question

What is your role in VA?

- a) Investigator
- b) Coordinator, Project Manager, Analyst
- c) ACOS, AO, or other research leadership
- d) Operations leadership/staff
- e) Grant and Award administrator
- f) Other



HSR&D Research Priorities

HSR&D Research Priorities at a Glance

*ORD Clinical Priorities

Suicide Prevention*	Substance Use Disorders Including opioid misuse and stimulant use disorders, and pain management
Access to Care	Long-term Care and Aging
Mental Health including PTSD*	Health Care Informatics and EHR Modernization (Cerner Migration) including measurement/information science
Women's Health	Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health
Health Care Value	Quality and Safety of Health Care
Primary Care Practice and Complex Chronic Disease Management	Population Health and Whole Health
Disabilities including spinal cord injury (SCI) and traumatic brain Injury (TBI) focused on health systems issues	Virtual Care/Telehealth

Cross-cutting HSR Methods

Implementation Science

- Complexity Science/Health Systems Engineering
- Data/Measurement Science

Legislative Priorities

- MISSION Act
- Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act
- CARES Act (Long term COVID-19 impact; deferred care)
- Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act

ORD-wide Research Priorities

Expand Veterans' access to high quality clinical trials

Increase substantial real-world impact of VA research

Putting VA data to work for Veterans

Actively promote equity & inclusion within our sphere of influence

Optimize VA research enterprise



Update on Cerner

If you have questions about potential impact of the Cerner implementation on your research plans, please email the **ORD EHRM workgroup** ResearchEHRM@va.gov.

Resource links, current updates, and FAQs can be found on the EHRM and Research page of the Research Resource Guide (RRG). Regarding **EHRM-related research methods**, please contact **VA Coordinating Hub to Promote Research Optimizing Veteran-Centric EHR Networks (PROVEN)** at PROVENHub@va.gov.

For administrative purposes, your proposal should discuss possible ways you could mitigate the effects of any data disruption. Note: this section will not be factored into scoring during scientific review.



What is New?

New RFA:

- **Pandemic-Related Disrupted Care RFA**

New Mechanism:

- **Suicide Prevention RFA**
New high-risk area added
Pilots now solicited



HSR&D Request for Applications

1. **HSR&D Merit Review Award (Parent)**
 - Budget cap \$1.2M and duration of 4 years
2. **HSR&D Merit Review Award Pilot Project**
 - Budget cap \$200,000 and duration 18 months
3. **HSR&D Targeted Suicide Prevention-UPDATED**
 - Merit and **Pilot options**
4. **HSR&D Social Determinants of Health**
 - Merit and Pilot options
5. **Opioids Safety and Opioid Use Disorder**
 - Merit and Pilot options
6. **Pandemic-Related Disrupted and Deferred Care-NEW**
 - Merit and Pilot options
7. **HSR&D Career Development Award**
 - Research Plan has 14-page limit
8. **HSR&D HBCU Research Scientist Training Program Award (IK2)**
 - Follows CDA-2 application format



Eligibility

- **MD, PhD, or equivalent doctoral degree in a medical, biological, or behavioral science field**
- **VA paid appointment of at least 25 hours per week (5/8th FTE)**
 - **Investigators with less than a 5/8th VA paid appointment must obtain approval of a waiver of the 5/8th FTE eligibility requirement for inclusion with their application for funding. See next slide for additional information.**
- **All VA medical centers with an active research program are eligible.**
- **Each VA medical center must be registered as an applicant organization in Grants.gov and eRA Commons before any proposals can be submitted.**



Waivers

- **NEW: Enrollment of non-Veterans in ORD funded research**
 - **REQUIRED FOR ALL PROJECTS WITH NON-VETERANS**
- Non-Veteran Enrollment Waiver: see VHA Directive 1200.01
- Eligibility Waiver see: Program Guide 1200.15
- Off Site Waiver see: Program Guide 1200.16
- **Waiver Categories:** Offsite Research, Exceeding Duration or Budget Cap, Inclusion of Videos, PI Eligibility, Enrollment of non-Veterans, Resubmissions, and Exceeding IPA Percentage of Budget– **Deadline: May 14, 2021**

Copy of waiver approval letters from HSR&D must be included in the “Letters of Support” section of the application. Missing letters are considered fatal.



Intent to Submit (ITS)

HSR&D requires Intent to Submit (ITS) notification through HSR&D's ART website.

<http://art.puget-sound.med.va.gov/IntentSubmitIntro.cfm>

The ITS window:

April 23, 2021 to May 7, 2021

Applications submitted to Grants.gov without a completed ITS will not be accepted or reviewed.

Mentored awards (CDA & HBCU) must have an approved Letter of Intent (LOI) or an LOI that is under review to submit an ITS. LOIs are emailed to robert.small@va.gov.

ITS are used to determine panels, so an abstract that describes the project will assist in the assignment. Please include all the sites and personnel in the ITS.

Please note: QUERI application ITS window is **April 1st to May 17th**



Abstract Format

Project Summary/Abstract is **REQUIRED** to comply with the format prescribed by the RFA.

Background:

Significance:

Innovation and Impact:

Specific Aims:

Methodology:

Next Steps/Implementation:



Notable Sections in RFA

Patient Experience and Veteran Engagement

HSRD position:

- Most of our research would benefit from ensuring we had considered the patients perspective – on clinical care, health outcomes, implementation, and research.
- Encourage efforts to obtain Veteran input into health outcomes, interventions, study recruitment, and design. Options for obtaining input include prior research, focus groups, Veteran engagement panels.

Clinical Trial Recruitment

- A large proportion of HSRD trials fail to meet recruitment goals.
- Trials will need to more explicitly justify data used to estimate recruitment -- e.g., pilot data, prior studies, etc. -- and comment on mitigation strategies in recruitment lags.
- We want to see the PLAN B for recruiting.



Notable Sections in RFA

Implementation and Dissemination Plan

- Context: “The tree falling in the woods phenomenon” -- If an HSRD-derived intervention doesn’t get implemented, does it make any noise?
- Dissemination in manuscripts and to partners is insufficient.
- **Proposals will need to explicitly discuss what the next steps are after project is completed. What is the path to making a difference in VA care?**
- **Need to consider who “owns” the problem the study is attempting to solve; what are the potential barriers to implementation, and how to overcome them. Who will be the partner to implement the project?**
- **Studies of interventions should consider how they can collect information relevant to implementation during the efficacy/effectiveness study (e.g., use of hybrid designs).**
- **Need to compress cycle of understanding problem, testing interventions, scaling solutions.**



Parent Merit Review Award

Parent: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years

- **HSR&D has identified priority areas that should be considered in developing research proposals. For details on updated HSR&D research priorities, please visit**

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/funding/PriorityDomains2019.pdf>



Pilot Project Award

PILOT: \$200,000 (max) and up to 18 months

Only one resubmission allowed.



Pilot Project Award

Pilot Goals and Next Steps should be very clear.

- Establish components of interventions, measurement characteristics of key outcome variables, and/or predictors for primary outcome measures.
- Seek non-statistical information about the optimal sources of subjects, recruitment techniques, estimates of yields and varying interpretation of questions by respondents, establishing the interest level of particular groups of potential subjects in proposed interventions, or the feasibility of completing the measurements that are proposed.
- Establish cross-disciplinary collaborations or test novel methods to support cross-disciplinary research
- Support a small innovative study that does not necessarily lead to an IIR.
- Conduct preliminary analysis of existing data to refine target populations, inform intervention development, and/or establish feasibility of a potential IIR project.

Methods should align with goals, be appropriate for pilot work



Targeted Suicide Prevention

**Merit: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years;
Pilot \$200,000 (max) for 18 Months**

Focus on observational studies, effectiveness studies, implementation studies (including hybrid studies), or population-based and community-level studies that advance the prevention of suicide among Veterans.



Targeted Suicide Prevention

Emphasis on Veteran groups that are at high risk for suicide and other risky behaviors.

- Veterans recently experiencing issues related to the social, economic and psychological impact of COVID 19; **NEW**
- Veterans in transition from military to Veteran status;
- Veterans recently discharged from in-patient hospital stays;
- Veterans with a previous suicide attempt;
- Veterans who are part of sexual and gender minorities, including women;
- Older Veterans (> age 50);
- OEF/OIF/OND Veterans;
- Veterans experiencing financial difficulties;
- Veterans struggling with chronic pain;
- Veterans who are homeless and/or at risk for becoming homeless;
- Veterans with access to lethal means (e.g., firearms, illicit drugs, engagement in risky behaviors, etc.);
- Veterans who are not currently receiving VHA care; and
- Veterans with a less than honorable discharge



Social Determinants of Health

Merit: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years;

Pilot \$200,000 (max) for 18 Months



Social Determinants of Health

- **Expanded Focus Includes Racial/Ethnic Equity**
 - o Areas of emphasis include interventions to reduce disparities and under-studied populations of racial/ethnic minority Veterans
- **Equity Evaluation Plan**
 - o Required for all proposals planning to test interventions or evaluate existing programs
 - o Goal is to guard against unintended consequences (introduction of new or exacerbation of existing disparities)
- **Guidance Regarding Community-Based Participatory Research**
 - o Studies may propose local strategies to address unmet social needs
 - o Implementation/Dissemination Plans must discuss generalizability



Opioid Safety and Opioid Use Disorder

Merit: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years;

Pilot \$200,000 (max) for 18 Months

Produce evidence that will prove useful to development and evaluation of new and existing evidence-based practices for various Veteran populations



Opioid Safety and Opioid Use Disorder

Overarching Themes:

- Study of opioids safety and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) management for **older Veterans**
- Development and deployment of more effective strategies for **reducing racial and ethnic disparities** in the treatment and management of pain and OUD
- Examination and development of interventions and models of care that can be **scaled within the VA**

Priorities:

- Improve **implementation of evidence-based medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD)** by examining barriers and facilitators of MOUD in the VA setting
- Identification and development of appropriate and successful strategies for **opioid tapering**
- Examination of the **potential role of buprenorphine/naloxone** in managing pain in patients with a history of OUD
- Studies of **behavioral health and exercise/movement** interventions for chronic pain, and for patients with OUD
- Development of more effective approaches to **monitor patient outcomes** for guiding treatment



Pandemic-Related Disrupted and Deferred Care

Provide evidence-based information to better serve Veterans during the ongoing pandemic response and recovery, as well as possible future public health emergencies where care may be reduced or disrupted.

Study Areas:

- Contribution of deferred or disrupted care to specific increases in mortality and adverse health outcomes.
- Quality of care among patients who receive care during the pandemic
- How changes in non-COVID health outcomes are influenced by the local severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, state-level and facility-level responses to COVID-19, and patient-level factors
- Assess if efforts to mitigate effects of the pandemic were effective in reducing adverse health impacts
- Understand behavior changes during the pandemic, impact on access or quality of care, and barriers or facilitators to initiating new practices to mitigate interrupted care.



Pandemic-Related Disrupted and Deferred Care

Disrupted Care Merit Applications

- Up to 2 years
- Budget may not exceed \$700K

Goals

- Examination of health outcomes, care delivery, and other impacts across patient populations and geographic regions
- Projects developed and conducted in collaboration with partners
- Ideal projects will focus on a suite of related health outcomes, rather than one specific outcome

Link to CyberSeminars:

https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/video_archive.cfm?SessionID=3957&Seriesid=60

https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/video_archive.cfm?SessionID=3956&Seriesid=60



Career Development Award Mentored Research

The narrative page limit is 14 pages.

**Letter of Intent – Deadline April 15, 2021: reviewed for acceptance
ITS required (ART) Window: April 23 to May 7, 2021**

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cdp/default.cfm>

- **5 years of Salary Support**
- **Supplement support funds \$40,000/year for Years 1-3 at COINs and \$50,000/year at facilities not affiliated with COINs**
- **Candidate's training, experience and research accomplishments**
- **Career Plan**
- **Mentoring Plan**



HBCU Research Scientist Training Program Award Mentored Research

Letter of Intent – Deadline April 15, 2021: reviewed for acceptance

ITS required (ART) Window: April 23 to May 7, 2021

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cdp/default.cfm>

- **VA primary mentor and HBCU co-mentor required**
- **Nominee must have attended an HBCU or have a faculty appointment at an HBCU**
- **5 years of Salary Support**
- **Supplement support funds \$65,000/year Years 1-3**
- **Follows CDA-2 application format**
- **Candidate's training, experience and research accomplishments**
- **Career Plan**
- **Mentoring Plan**



Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
April 15, 2021	CDA Letter of Intent due
April 23, 2021	ITS Opens and CDA ITS deadline
May 7, 2021	ITS Closes
May 14, 2021	Waiver deadline
May 15, 2021	Grants.gov opens
June 8, 2021	Down to the Wire Submission
June 10, 2021	Last Submission Date Grants.gov
June 15, 2021	Verification Deadline
August 2021	Scientific Merit Review



COVID-19

ORD COVID-19 SharePoint site:

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacommm/admin/projects/covid19>

Please direct questions:

ORDCOVI19@va.gov



QUERI RFAs

QUERI RFA CyberSeminar April 13, 2021

11:00 am ET

Registration link:

<https://veteransaffairsevents.webex.com/veteransaffairsevents/onstage/g.php?MTID=ec421eb9b8ee99bcb3013c83e73909734>



Questions



vhacoscirev@va.gov

Pandemic-Related Disrupted and Deferred Care

RFA:

VHACOHSRDDisruptedCa@va.gov

HSR&D RFAs:

<http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm>

**Thank you for your attendance.
Please stay safe.
We hope to review your
application soon!**

