



VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) Summer 2021 Request for Applications (RFAs)

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Director, QUERI



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

Poll Question #1

What is your primary role in VA?

- A. HSRD/QUERI Investigator, Coordinator, Analyst
- B. Clinician
- C. ACOS, AO, or other research leadership
- D. VISN/VAMC leadership/staff
- E. Program Office leadership/staff

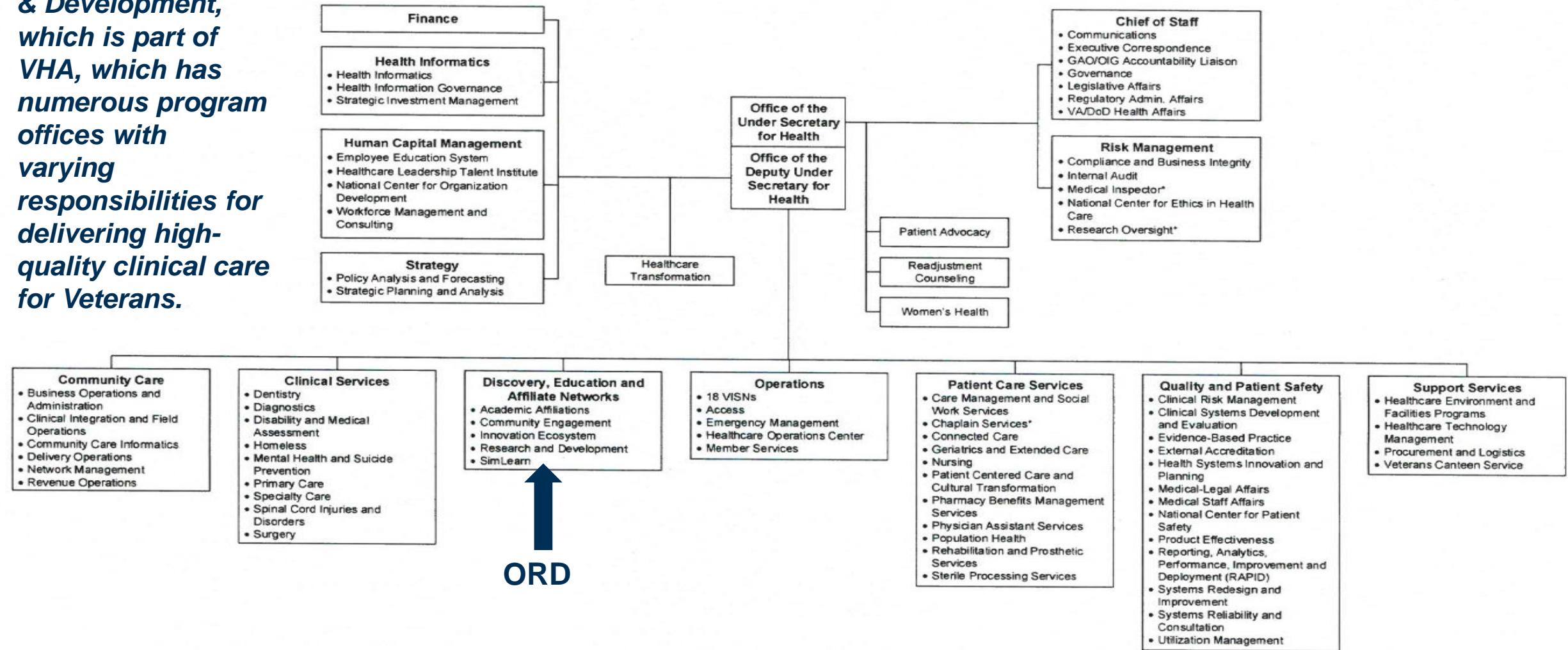
Poll Question #2

Have you previously received QUERI funding?
(Select all that apply.)

- A. Yes, for a QUERI Program or VISN PII
- B. Yes, for a QUERI Partnered Evaluation
- C. Yes, for a QUERI Learning Hub
- D. No, I am new to QUERI


QUERI is under the Office of Research & Development, which is part of VHA, which has numerous program offices with varying responsibilities for delivering high-quality clinical care for Veterans.

VHA Organization Chart



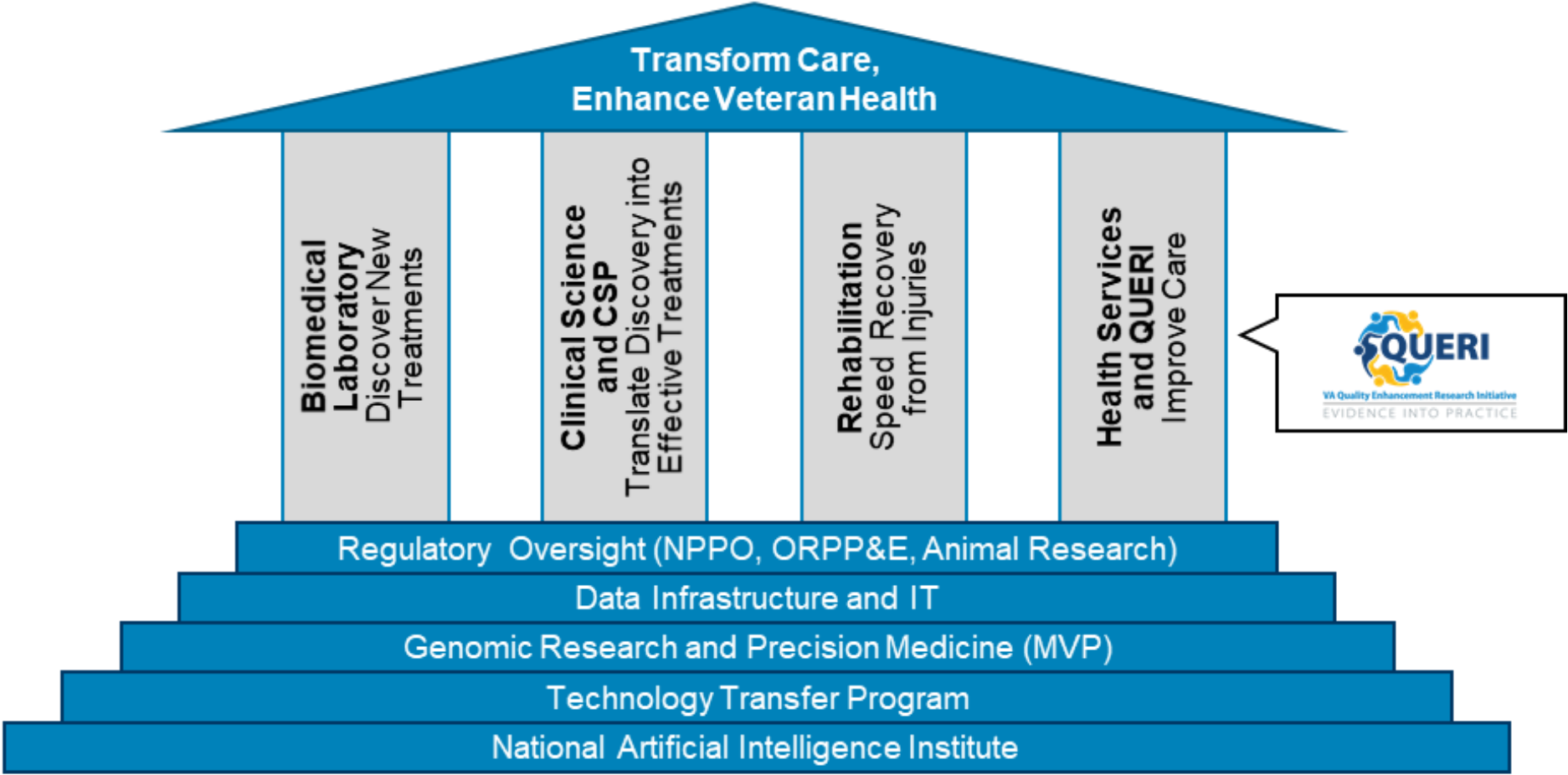
*Reports to the Under Secretary for Health

Source: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VACOVACOMPM/orgimp/SitePages/Home.aspx>


 Richard A. Stone, M.D.
 Executive In Charge

2020 Jul 1
 Date

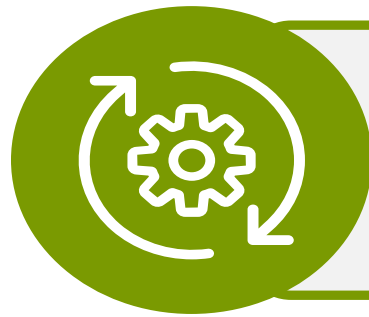
QUERI is under Health Services Research (HSR&D)



CSP: Cooperative Studies Program
MVP: Million Veteran Program

NPPO: Nonprofit Program Office
ORPP&E: Office of Research Protections, Policy, and Education

QUERI Strategic Methodology



Implement

Plan, deploy and sustain effective practices across diverse settings

Enhance Veteran access to cutting edge, personalized treatments

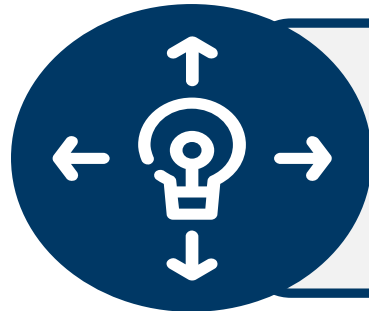


Evaluate

Conduct rigorous evaluations to optimize programs and policies affecting Veterans

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships

Inform rollout of high priority initiatives



Disseminate & Sustain

Promote the application of implementation and quality improvement sciences across the translation spectrum

Drive a culture of learning and knowledge translation across VA

QUERI Funds 40+ Centers Across the VA

1. Implement

QUERI Programs develop strategies and tools to support the scale up and spread of effective practices

QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiatives (PIIs) deploy effective practices that address time-sensitive regional priorities

2. Evaluate

Partnered Evaluation Initiatives (PEIs) evaluate a policy or program affecting Veterans

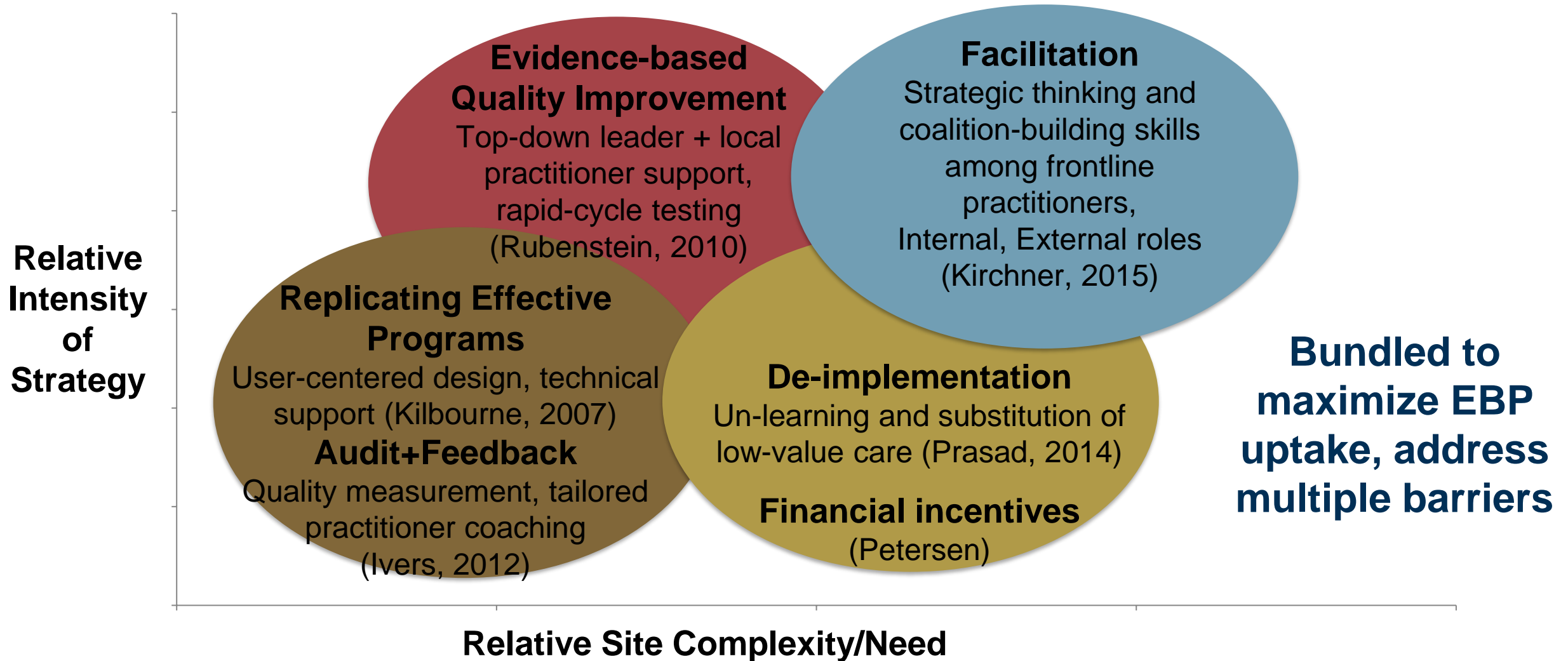
Partnered Evidence-based Policy Resource Center (PEPRc) performs data analysis for VA policy, planning, and management initiatives

3. Disseminate & Sustain

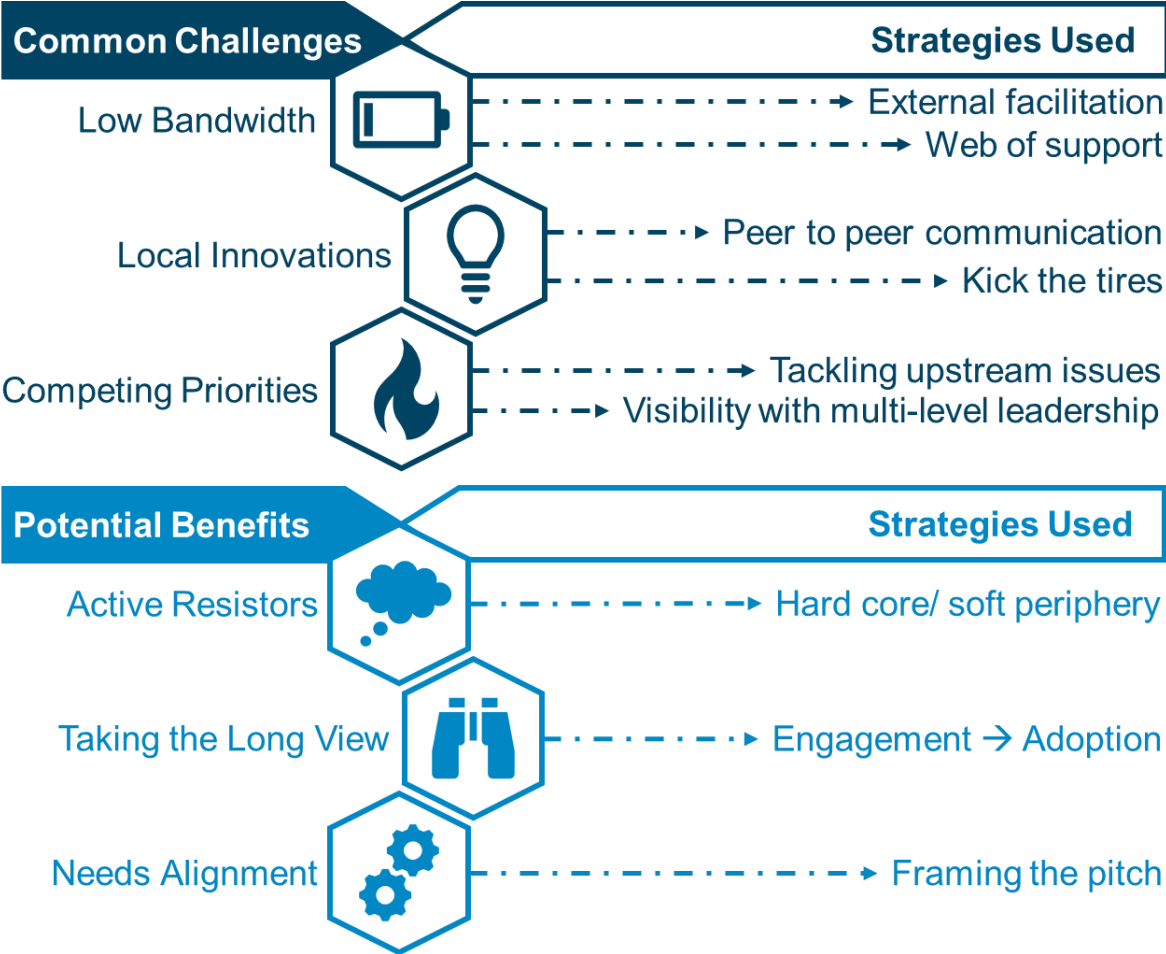
Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs provide training in implementation and quality improvement strategies

Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources (CEIR) develops resources and provides guidance to support implementation efforts

Examples of QUERI Implementation Strategies



ESP Report: Implementation Strategies from Diffusion of Excellence, SAIL, QUERI



“they kind of stole from each other, which was great”



“we’ll go fight the battles for you”



“It’s not one size fits all. They have room to adapt”



Miake-Lye et al, Scaling Beyond Early Adopters

QUERI Projects are Not Research

- QUERI projects are non-research projects because of the **funding source** (medical administration (0160) funds) and their focus on **improvement** within VA. QUERI projects do not meet the definition of research.
- Protocols involving data collection are non-research if the **data are fed back to providers or operations leaders** to directly improve care and/or other VA processes. The activity does not meet the definition of research.
- In situations when a QUERI project wants to collect additional data above and beyond what is needed for informing improvement within VA, a determination should be sought as to whether the project's activities constitute research.

**CyberSeminar:
Everything You Need
to Know About QUERI
Non-research
Protocols**

[Link for Recording](#)

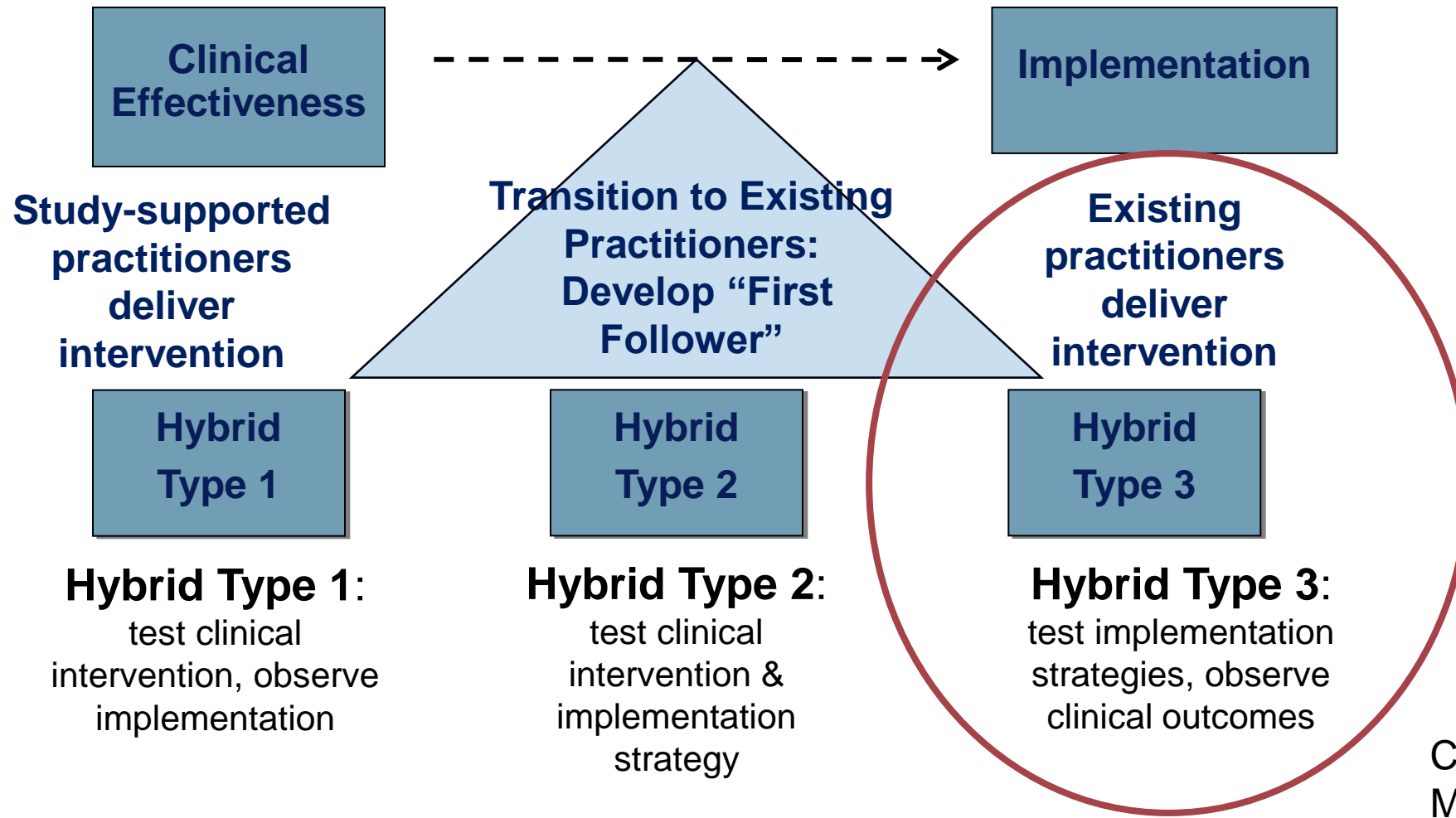
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[Link for Slide Deck](#)

Key Characteristics of Non-Research Activities

- **Primary purpose of quality assessment and quality improvement for internal VA purposes.**
 - The activity is designed and implemented for internal VA operational purposes (i.e., its findings are intended to be used by VA or by entities responsible for overseeing VA).
- Non-research protocols may involve **randomization (e.g., cluster-randomization)**; randomization by itself does not define research
- **Not designed for generalizability beyond VA.**
 - The activity is not designed to produce information that expands the knowledge base of a scientific discipline (or other scholarly field).
 - However, this does not mean that a research activity done solely within VA is not research if it is only conducted within VA.

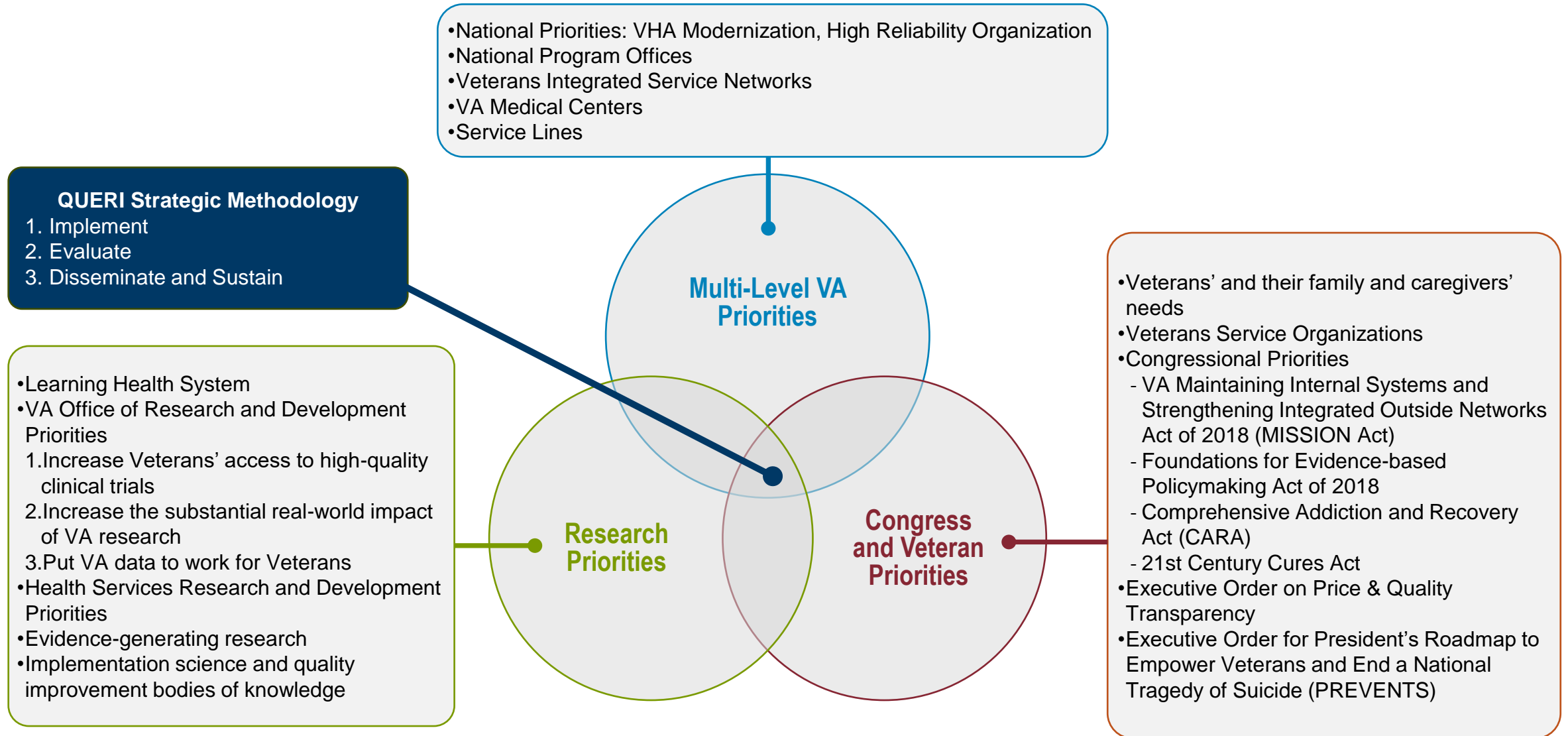
QUERI Funds Rigorous Designs



Guidance and Resources for Data Access

- View the [recording](#) of VIREC's Database and Methods CyberSeminar: Requesting Approval for Access to VA Data
- Check out the [VIREC website](#) for more information.
- For questions, contact: Linda Kok, Data Access & Policy Liaison (Linda.Kok@va.gov) or HelpDesk VIREC@va.gov

QUERI Addresses Diverse Stakeholder Priorities



QUERI Implementation Roadmap



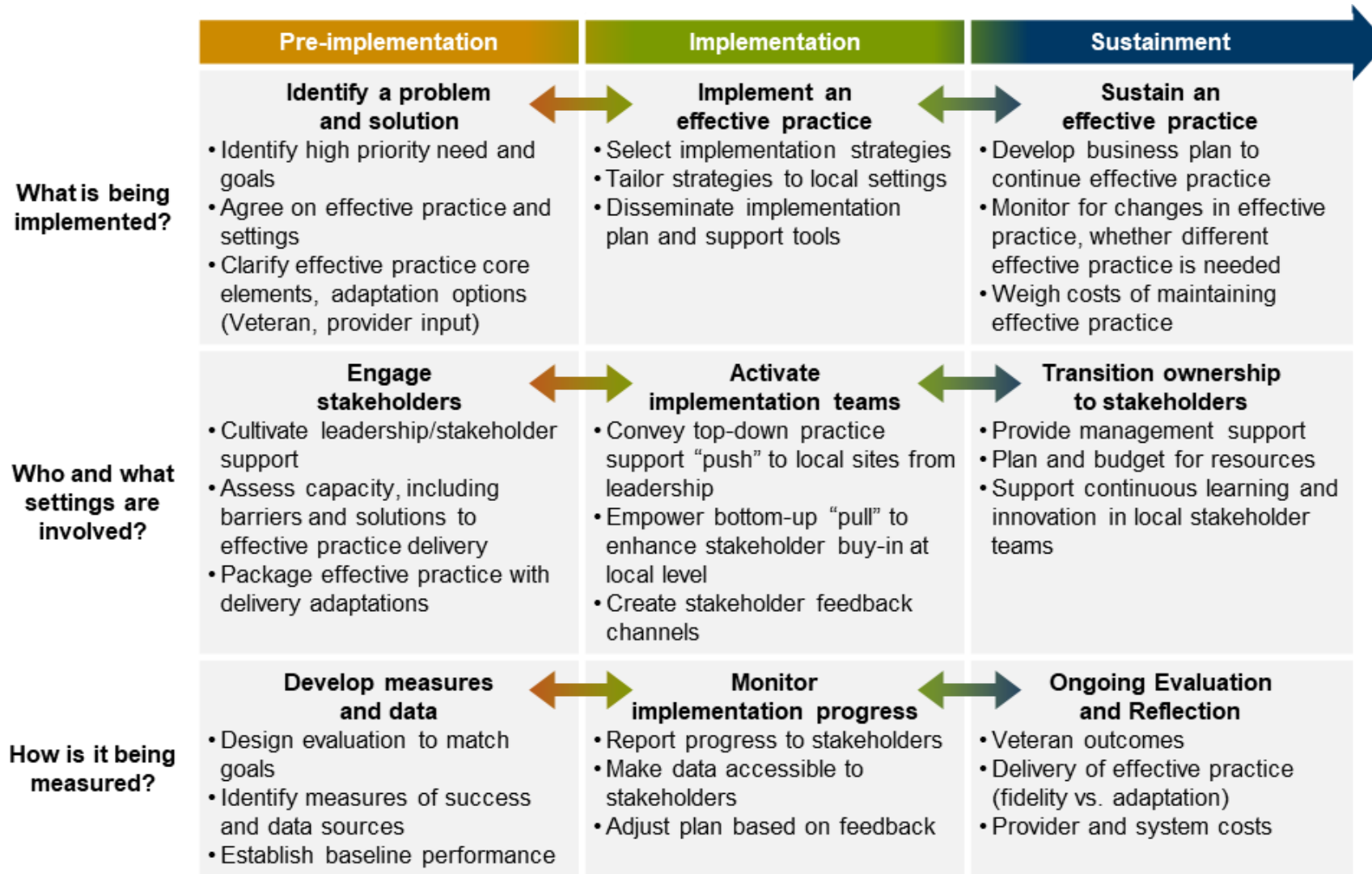
CyberSeminar: The QUERI Implementation Roadmap: A Framework to Guide Partnered Implementation and Quality Improvement Efforts in a Learning Health System

[Link for recording](#)

[Link for slide deck](#)

[Link for QUERI Implementation Roadmap Guide](#)

The QUERI Implementation Roadmap



QUERI Impacts

ACTION Impact Framework, Braganza, et al, JGIM, 2020

Domain	Measures
Alignment	<i>Relevant priorities, metrics, partners</i>
Commitment	<i>Shared operational resources and financial support, scientific tools & strategies</i>
Tailoring to local context	<i>Implementation sites and providers using EBP, Veterans served</i>
Informing the field	<i>Decision-maker meetings and congressional hearings, peer-reviewed publications, scale up and spread beyond initial sites</i>
Observing healthcare change and generating New projects	<i>Sustainability, policies and clinical practices informed/shaped, tangible improvements in quality of care and health outcomes, cultural changes in provider engagement and new projects requests</i>

FY21 QUERI Priorities, Based on VA Leadership Input

- Improve Veteran experience and quality of virtual care options in VA and community care
- Address health disparities and Veteran social determinants of health
- Reduce adverse outcomes associated with delayed or suppressed care due to COVID
- Reduce burnout and improve mental health among VA employees and trainees
- Improve long term care and home care service options for older Veterans
- Assess and improve quality and cost of community care

QUERI Advancing Diversity in Implementation Leadership (ADIL)

- **Objective:** grow a pipeline of implementation, quality improvement (QI), and evaluation expertise from populations that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves
- **Anticipated Impacts:** promote VA as a national leader in applying high-reliability, learning organization and evidence-based policy methods to improve health care, especially for underserved populations



MISSION

Improve Veteran health by accelerating evidence into health care practice and policy



VISION

Become a trusted purveyor of evidence, implementation, and quality improvement (QI) methods across VA, supporting frontline providers in deploying effective practices that transform Veteran care



VALUES

Excellence, Commitment, Partnerships, Rigor, Resilience, Flexibility

Overview of ADIL

- **Hands-on Learning.** Support a hands-on implementation, QI, or evaluation partnered initiative and mentored experience.
- **Impact Focus.** Non-research project aligned with a FY21 priority listed in the RFA.
- **Preparation for Implementation Leadership Opportunities.** Next step is to apply for independent project funding, an employment opportunity or promotion, or leadership training opportunity that is related to implementation or quality improvement science.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$100K/year for up to 2 years.

ADIL Eligibility

- Open to candidates who are investigators, staff, or students **affiliated with a QUERI center** (with at least one year left in the funding period) and are from populations that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves.
 - Includes: individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in the health-related sciences, Veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds
- The proposed candidate must also be eligible to become a VA employee/WOC.

ADIL FAQs

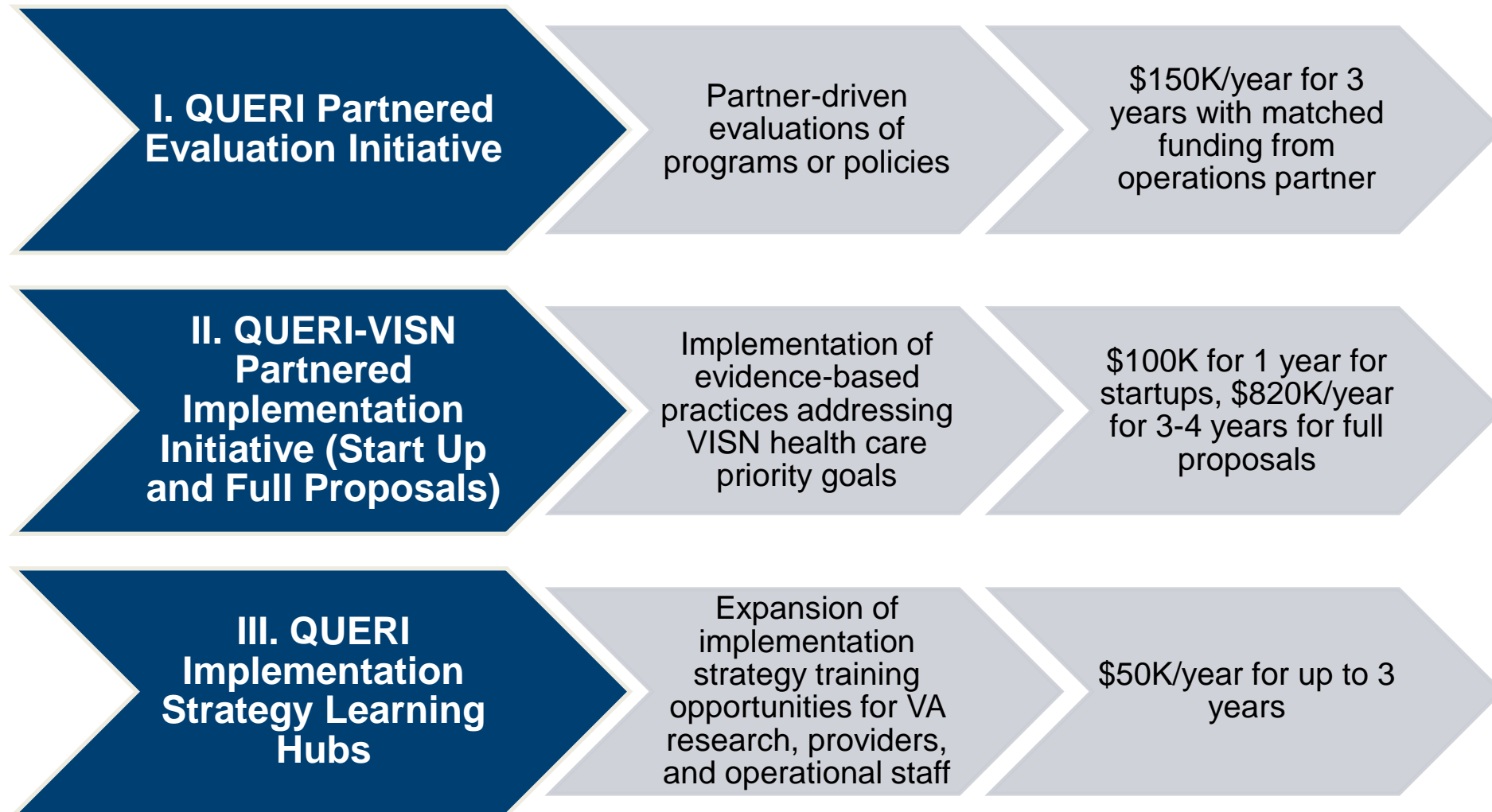
- **Do I have to apply under a currently funded QUERI center?** Yes, any currently funded QUERI center (Program – QUE, VISN Partnered Implementation Initiative – PII, Partnered Evaluation Initiative – PEC, Learning Hub – QIS) with at least 1 year left in its funding period is eligible.
- **How do I find a QUERI mentor?** Check out the [QUERI website](#) under the National Network of Centers tab to find a center/mentor that has expertise and projects that align with your interests. Contact the PI directly to see if their center has bandwidth to support your mentoring experience.
- **When is the application due?** Applications are accepted on a rolling basis via [this link](#).

Additional QUERI Training Opportunities

- Train VA employees in specific implementation and quality improvement strategies to ensure sustainment of EBPs
- Strategies supported by evidence and theory
- Check out the [QUERI website](#) to learn more!



QUERI Global Request for Applications (RFAs)



Awards are funded through VA special purpose funds and MUST be spent within the specified fiscal year.

I. QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative (PEI)

- **Objective:** Support rigorous evaluations of programs or policies that are primarily directed and funded by a VA operations (VA Program Office, VISN), federal agency (e.g., NIH, CDC, AHRQ, HHS), or not-for-profit foundation partner
- **Anticipated Impacts:**
 - Support VHA's compliance to the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018
 - Promote VA's transformation into a [Learning Health System](#)
 - Focus resources more efficiently and improve consistency, spread, and sustainability of best practices that benefit Veterans and their families

I. Overview of PEI Funding Announcement

- **Data Driven Decision-Making Focus.** Goal is better integration of more rigorous but practical research methods (e.g., stepped wedge comparisons, population-based studies) into VA health care.
- **Operations Partner Directed.** Project goals should be aligned with VA national priorities and specific goals to be achieved by the partner.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$150,000 each year for up to three years.

I. Funding Level Commitments for QUERI PEIs

Partner Match Source (minimum one-year commitment)	Minimum requirement for match commitment*	Additional Requirements
VA Central Office (VACO) Program Office	\$200,000/year	Letter of support from VACO program office lead confirming funding commitment
VISN	\$100,000/year	Letter of support from VISN Director confirming funding commitment and describing how the proposed evaluation addresses VISN priorities
Other Federal Agency (e.g., NIH, CDC, AHRQ, HHS)	\$200,000/year	Interagency Agreement or letter detailing funding commitment that specifies funding to be routed to not-for-profit corporation or University affiliate. Agency letter must specify how program supports improved care for Veterans.
Not-for-Profit Foundation	\$200,000/year	Letter detailing funding commitment that specifies that funding will be routed to Applicants' VA Facility's not-for-profit corporation of the applicant's VA facility

*Other means of matching support from the partner such as FTE, data, or other resources can be considered.

II. QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiative

- **Objective:** Implement evidence-based practices (EBPs) at the frontline clinical level for health care priorities chosen by VISN leadership
- **Anticipated Impacts:**
 - Modernize systems and reduce clinical variation through scale up and spread of EBPs across VISNs
 - Improve Veteran health by rapidly implementing EBPs, particularly in sites experiencing quality gaps in that health care area

II. Overview of PII Funding Announcement

- **Quality Improvement Focus.** Proposals should focus on deployment of EBPs that support at least one of the health care priority goals selected by Network Directors. A specific implementation strategy or set of strategies used to promote the uptake of the EBP, especially for facilities that demonstrate gaps in quality or outcomes related to the priority, must be described in the proposal.
- **VISN Directed.** PIIs must be co-led by a VISN leader (Director or CMO) and a VA implementation expert. The VISN chooses the priority, and implementation activities must support [VHA Performance Plan](#) goals of modernizing systems through better consistency and spread of EBPs.

II. QUERI VISA PII Funding Mechanism

Startup PII Award
\$100K

Implement
evidence-based
practice (EBP) in
at least one site
within 1 year

Full PII Proposal
\$820K/year for 3-4
years

Implement EBP in
at least 32 sites
across at least 3
VISNs

II. QUERI VISN PII Level of Evidence

- **Evidence related to the model of delivery vs. the actual intervention.** Cite evidence in support of the underlying framework or model of delivery (e.g., Collaborative Care Model, Cognitive-behavioral therapy).
- **Specify the core elements** from the model that are being used (i.e., active ingredients that have been demonstrated in studies that make the practice effective).
- **Provide underlying evidence supporting model, especially in situations where the model was adapted to a different population or setting.** In general, citing evidence to a modality of practice or treatment that has an evidence base is sufficient as long as the core elements are specified.
- **Proposing bundle of interventions.** Generally speaking, the applicant needs to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the individual interventions that are part of a bundle or overall program. In addition, they should provide evidence that the bundle of individual practices is feasible in a VA setting.

We encourage you to visit the [HSR&D ESP website](#) to identify any relevant VA-focused systematic reviews.

II. Full PII Scale Up and Spread

- **Funding Mechanism.** Successful QUERI VISN PII full proposal applicants will receive QUERI funds of up to \$820K for 3-4 years.
- **Ready for Scale up and Spread.** PIs with successful implementation of an EBP in at least 1 site within the 1-year startup period can apply for full QUERI VISN PII funding to scale up and spread the EBP across 32 sites in at least 3 VISNs.
- **Project Leads.** For each VISN in which there is a significant implementation effort, there should be a VISN lead (VISN Director or CMO) and an Implementation Expert who is a VA investigator.

II. Timeline: Implementation of VISN Priorities



III. QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs

- **Objective:** Expand training opportunities for VA employees in the use of specific implementation strategies
- **Anticipated Impacts:**
 - Increase VA community awareness and expertise with implementation science
 - Support the role of implementation science as standard aspects of VA research improvement efforts

III. Overview of Learning Hub Funding Announcement

- **Real World Focus.** The goal is to provide frontline providers, investigators, and operational staff with the practical skills needed to implement effective practices in routine care.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$50,000 each year for up to 3 years. QUERI expects to fund only one hub for a specific implementation strategy. Funds can be used to cover training faculty time related to the development of materials and delivery of the training program, purchase materials relevant to the training program, and cover the material cost of conducting the training.

Resources

Applicants are encouraged to consult the following HSR&D/QUERI resources for:

- Selecting and assessing fidelity to implementation strategies: [QUERI's Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources](#) (Veronica Williams, CEIR Program Manager, ceir@va.gov)
- Cost/economic analyses and evaluation appropriate for the selected strategies and training on data science/organization: [HSR&D's Health Economics Resource Center \(HERC\)](#)
- VA data resources and considerations regarding Cerner implementation: [HSR&D's VA Information Resource Center \(VIReC\)](#)
- Aligning evaluations and implementation projects with legislative mandates, including the Evidence Act and MISSION Act ([Partnered Evidence-based policy Resource Center \(PEPREC\)](#))

Summary of QUERI Global RFA Changes

- Updated FY21 Priorities
- Change in budget and project duration caps and MPI limit for full QUERI-VISN PIs
- Enrollment of non-Veteran Waivers (fatal error)
- Clarification on co-investigator requirements
- Operations support in budget justification
- Clarification on IPA cost of living allowances

QUERI Global Scientific Merit Review Timeline

April-May 2021
ITS Submission

June 2021
Application
Submission

August 2021
QUERI Scientific
Merit Review
September 2021
Notification of
Review Outcome

October 1, 2021
New QUERI
projects Kickoff

Questions

Happy to answer any questions! Please feel free to reach out to Melissa Braganza at vacoqueri@va.gov.

**The QUERI Global RFA is found under the Health Services Research & Development section on the ORD RFA website:
<https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm>**

**The QUERI ADIL RFA is posted on the QUERI website:
<https://www.queri.research.va.gov/QUERI-ADIL.pdf>**