



VETERAN AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH

Travis W. Runnels

Walan Chang

POLL: WHO ARE YOU?

PRESENTING TODAY



Veteran and Family Centered
Care Program Manger
Travis W. Runnels
Army Veteran



Co-Chair Veteran and Family
Advisory Committee
Walan Chang
Air Force Veteran

- What is Veteran and family centered care?
- Veterans and family engagement with Research
- Benefits of partnering with Veterans and families
- Getting feedback at your site



**CULTURAL SHIFT FROM DOING THINGS
“FOR” VETERANS TO DOING THINGS “WITH”
VETERANS....**



FOCAL POINT

REPRESENTATION OF VETERANS IN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

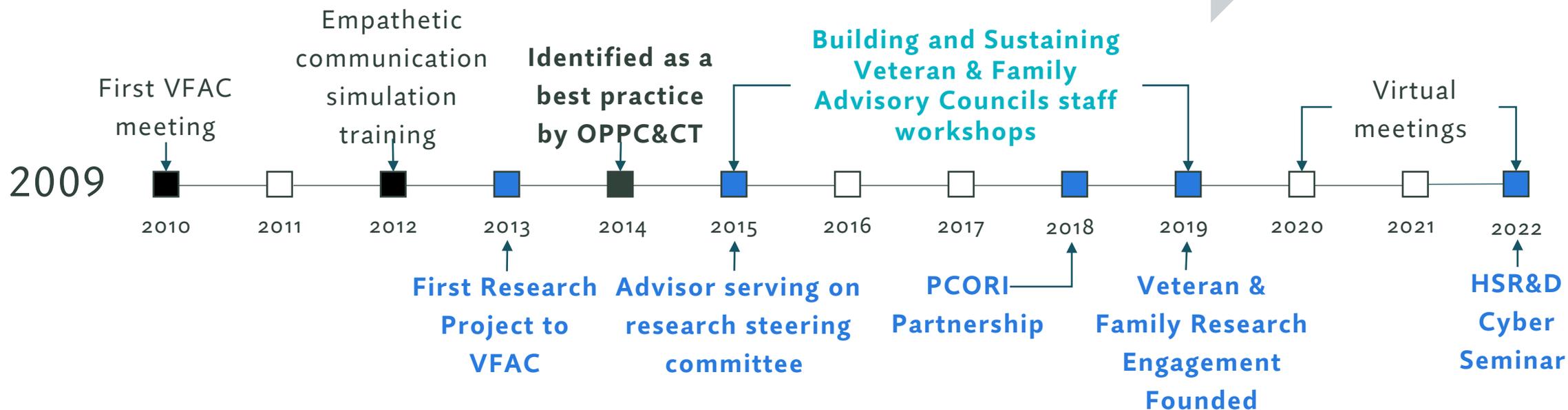
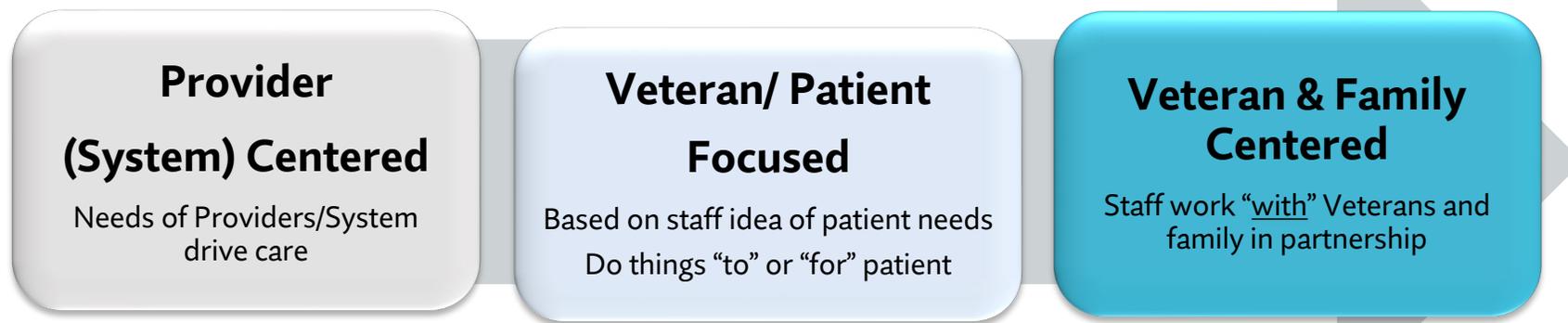
- Virtually 100% of our patients are Veterans, but only about 30% of staff are, so service and product development often lack Veteran experience and perspective.

POLL: DEFINITIONS, DEFINITIONS?

“Nothing about me, without me.”

Don Berwick, M.D.
Former Administrator of the Centers for
Medicare and Medicaid Services

THE EVOLUTION OF VETERAN & FAMILY CENTERED CARE



VETERAN & FAMILY ADVISORS

- Three Advisory Panels:
 - VFAC (Enterprise)
 - Research Engagement
 - Older Adult (65+)
- 18 Advisors
 - Veterans and Family Members
 - Army
 - Air Force
 - Marines
 - Navy
 - Coast Guard



ARMY



AIR FORCE



MARINES



NAVY



FAMILY



COAST GUARD

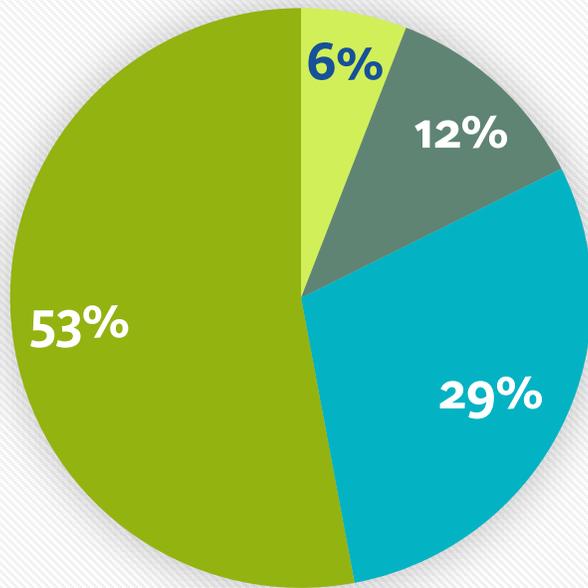
DEMOGRAPHICS

Other Advisor Characteristics

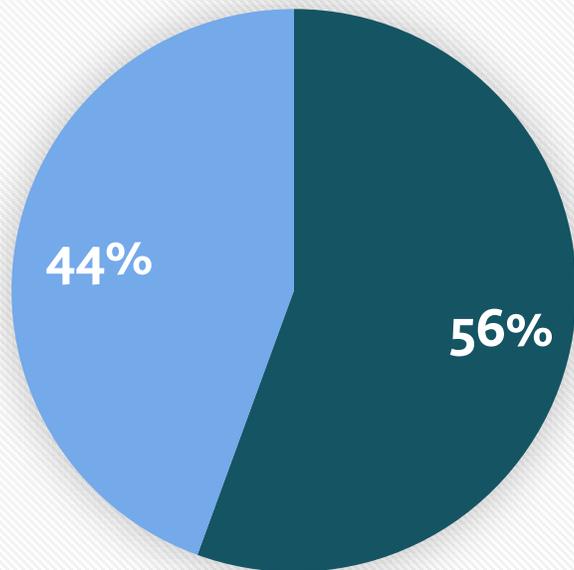
- Combat and peacetime service
- Permanent and temporary disabilities
- Various assistive mobility devices
- 3 Hospitals, 8 Community Based Outpatient Clinics

“VFAC's membership is diverse in age, gender, and service background so that issues that I might not spot are identified by others. The inclusion of family members on the committee is a vital element in giving voice to caregiver concerns.”

Steve McCray, Veteran Advisor, U.S. Navy



■ WWII ■ Korea ■ Viet Nam ■ Gulf War+



■ Male ■ Female

VETERAN AND FAMILY CENTERED CARE AT THE VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



Actively involve every Veteran & supportive family in personalized, high-quality care

In the clinic



Empower staff to fully engage with Veterans and their families

At the bedside



Veterans and Families are partners with Researchers in the design and direction of future research

In Research



Create systems and processes that promote participation & collaboration

Organizationally

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE? BEYOND VFAC MEETINGS, ADVISORS ARE...



Being the voice
for unique
populations



Sharing Veteran
perspectives
with leadership



Role
playing during
Communication
Simulation
trainings



Serving as team
members on
Rapid Process
Improvement
workshop



Representing
Veterans on
Healthcare
systemwide
committees &
Staff Selection
Interviews

NATIONAL OUTREACH



JANUARY 16-20, 2016
SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA USA





5/9/2022



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

POLL: DO YOU USE ADVISORS?



FOCAL POINT

STAFF TRAINING

- Staff trying to establish VFACs lack knowledge and support to build them, and no national-level office exists to train or guide them through the process.





STAFF WORKSHOP

VISION

A transformed culture that engages Veterans, Family Members, and Caregivers as active partners to develop patient-centered products and services throughout the VA system.

MISSION

Cultivate local and national community support for a trusted partnership between staff and Veterans to promote Veteran-centric design through effective Veteran and Family Advisory Councils.

“The VFAC consists of Veterans and family members from multiple perspectives, which allows projects to get a variety of feedback that is representative of the VA population. The feedback can improve the products we develop, improving their reach and impact.”

Cindie Slightam, MPH
Health Science Specialist National Center for PTSD

“I specifically asked women from the VFAC to come and tour our new mammography suite before go-live and give us feedback on how we can make it more safe and inviting.”

Payam Massaband, M.D.
DCOS for Ancillary and Clinical Support Services



LOCAL VETERANS & FAMILIES ENGAGING WITH VA STAFF

POLL: HOW DO YOU USE ADVISORS?



RESEARCH AND VETERANS

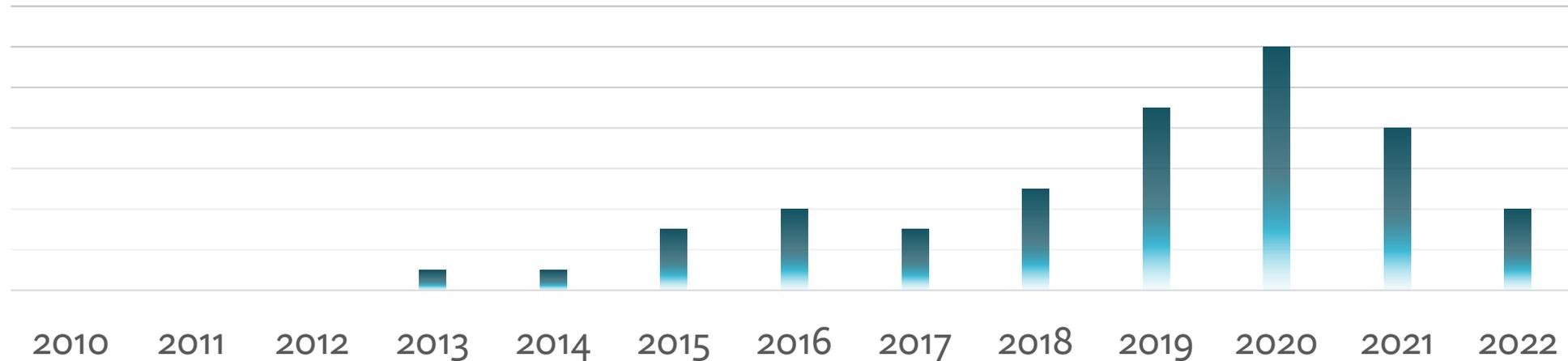
HSR&D and the other services have a mandatory section for all research proposals to explain how Veterans are engaged with the proposed research in the development, study design, and intervention in order for the research to address Veteran-centered care. Therefore, proposals that involve more engagement with Veterans can have more success at funding.



“The system is for us so we should have input as to how it works.”

Mary Louise Dorr
Veteran Advisor, U.S. Army

GROWTH OF ENGAGEMENT

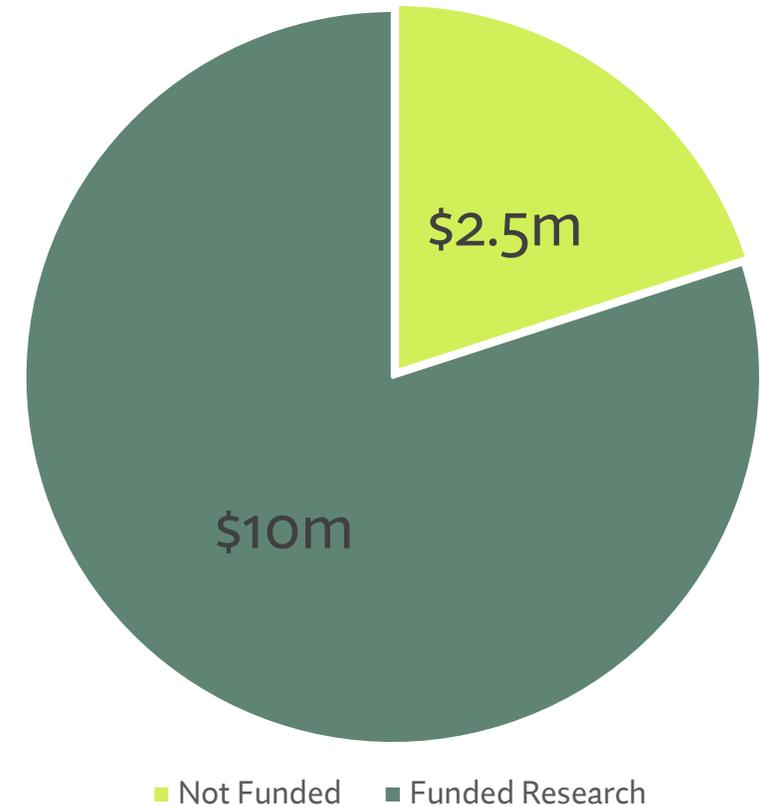


"I like being on a team. I suspect most Veterans feel the same way. Being a member of VFAC gives me the chance to be on a team of like-minded, committed individuals dedicated to making the VAPAHCS sensitive and responsive to Veteran and family needs. Although it's somewhat presumptuous, I also like to think that I'm part of the larger healthcare system team, dedicated to providing unequalled healthcare to our Veteran community."

Steve McCray,
Veteran Advisor, U.S. Navy

PALO ALTO RESEARCH

The work of the Council is a key contributor to the success of proposals being awarded at VA Palo Alto with an overall funding success rate of 80% and \$10 million in research funding per year.

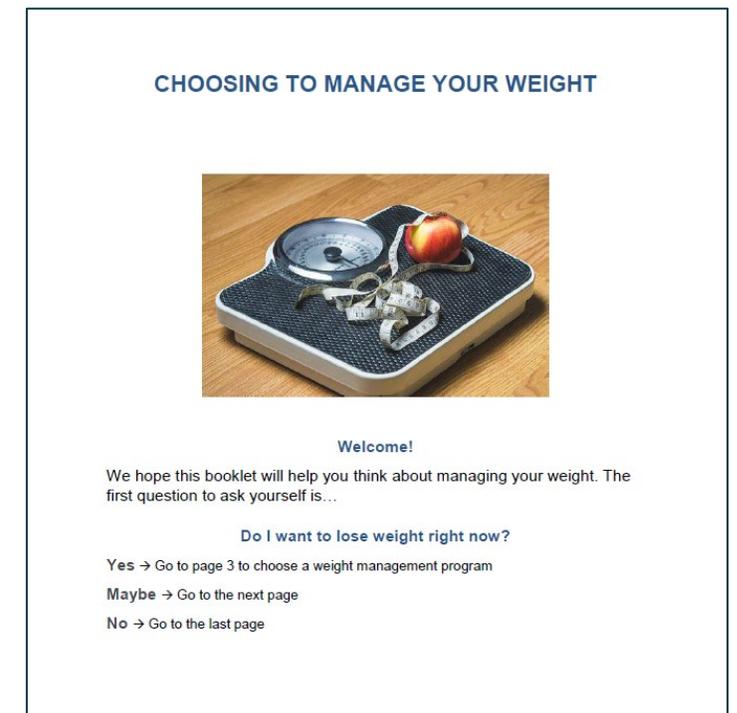


"Palo Alto's Veteran and Family Advisory Council is committed to partnering with researchers to ensure that our work has a meaningful impact on Veterans in our community and nationally. I am deeply grateful for the time that the members dedicated to reviewing the survey instrument for our study. Their comments helped us make meaningful changes to the study materials and protocol, which improved the quality of the data that we collected."

Donna Zulman, M.D.,M.S.

VISN 21 RESEARCH

In FY2021, VISN 21 had the second-highest VERA research support allocation of all the VISNs with a total of \$90 million.



"The Palo Alto VFAC has been instrumental to my research over the past 5+ years. I have come for feedback at different stages of projects (grant writing, presenting, recruitment) and always get useful information. Two experiences stand out, first we got really helpful suggestions about how to and, perhaps more importantly, how not to tailor materials for women Veterans. Second, we got to present at a national conference (the Society of Behavioral Medicine) with Travis and another Veteran in 2019. The session was great and was even chosen as a Presidential Panel, highlighting the value of their work."

Jessica Breland, Ph.D.
Research Fellow, VA Palo Alto

POLL: HOW CAN ADVISORS HELP YOU?



RESEARCH WITH VETERANS

"What is the benefit of serving on the VFAC? Being a voice of Veterans and being amongst others who desire to contribute to VAPAHCS to help make it better a than what it already is."

Darren McBride,
Veteran Advisor, U.S. Army



VARIABLES IN VETERAN SUBJECTS

STUDY RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION

RESEARCH STUDY DESIGN AND
TRANSLATION

RESEARCH STUDY FOLLOW UP



There is no “typical” Veteran.

GET VETERAN ENGAGEMENT AT YOUR SITE

"The reason we study value is to optimize care for Veterans—by bringing Veterans themselves to the table, we ensure that their voices are heard and that our research remains patient-centered and attentive to the preferences of those we serve."

Susie Hsieh,
Ci2i VA Palo Alto Research



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED
TOGETHER



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

THANK YOU!



“As a Service Chief I frequently reach out to the VFAC when we are looking for changing how we provide service or adding a new service.

Despite having dedicated my professional life to serving Veterans I know that I have a different perspective. There’s a great diversity in who are Veterans and their individual opinions. What I love about the VFAC is that you can sit in a meeting with Veterans that represent many different facets and have an enlightening discussion about how our care or research can be improved and/or more Veteran centric.”

Payam Massaband, M.D.

DCOS for Ancillary and Clinical Support Services

TRAVIS W. RUNNELS

Veteran and Family Centered Care
Program Manager
Travis.Runnels@va.gov

WALAN CHANG

Co-Chair, Veteran and Family
Advisory Committee
Walan.Chang@va.gov

- [Diffusion Marketplace \(va.gov\)](https://marketplace.va.gov)
https://marketplace.va.gov/innovations/building-and-sustaining-effective-veterans-family-advisory-councils-workshop
- [SERVE Toolkit](https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/serve/)
https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/serve/
- [2022 JGIM Chrystal_increasing engagement of WVs in hx research.pdf](#)
- [2022 JGIM Leykum_Recs to improve hx outcomes thru recognizing supporting caregivers.pdf](#)
- [Veterans Family Research Engagement Council Summary Report 2022.pdf](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/PAL/vfcc/VFCCAdvisorProgram/Staff%20Links%20and%20Resources/2022%20JGIM%20Chrystal_increasing%20engagement%20of%20WVs%20in%20hx%20research.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=UAmC4W)
https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/PAL/vfcc/VFCCAdvisorProgram/Staff%20Links%20and%20Resources/2022%20JGIM%20Chrystal_increasing%20engagement%20of%20WVs%20in%20hx%20research.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=UAmC4W
- [VHA Veteran and Family Advisory Councils MS Teams page](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a7e652e5d24924249bcc17c8eaaodaoc3%40thread.skype/conversations?groupId=7bac1014-9e7c-4c4d-8274-735240787ac3&tenantId=e95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf)
https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a7e652e5d24924249bcc17c8eaaodaoc3%40thread.skype/conversations?groupId=7bac1014-9e7c-4c4d-8274-735240787ac3&tenantId=e95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf



REFERENCES & RESOURCES