The third meeting of CA-DRE’s Veteran Engagement Panel was also its largest. Eight Veterans and eight CA-DRE researchers gathered to discuss current studies investigating pharmacy service and delivery.

Drs. Bruce Alexander and Jason Egge provided an overview of pharmacy research in the VA to set the scene for the evening’s program.

Next Dr. Brian Lund presented his work on TAPPS, a pharmacy algorithm designed to help pharmacists triage the day’s patients. Erin Madsen, a Veteran in the group with computer expertise, provided suggestions for programming the software to track workflow.

Dr. Dan Livorsi presented his proposed Career Development Award (CDA). Dr. Livorsi’s presentation asked how patients can advocate for antibiotic stewardship. Veteran panelists confirmed the dilemma in balancing patients’ expectation for antibiotics with doctors’ knowledge of appropriate treatment and/or stewardship.

Response to the meeting was positive. However, both Veterans and Investigators expressed interest in delving into studies that were earlier in the development phase.

Our June 13 meeting agenda includes workshopping Dr. Katherine Hadland smyth’s focus group instrument for her CDA proposal.

For me, a VEP meeting is predicated by bundles of nerves and the feeling that no one is actually going to show up to my party. Fortunately, Veterans and Investigators who have attended not only show up, but they participate with gusto. It is a pleasure observing Investigators’ transformation from “serious scientist” to passionate PI as they engage in animated conversation with Veterans about their research. Likewise, it’s been fun to get to know the Veterans on our panel and be able to draw from their expertise and perspectives.

In addition to organizing this year’s meetings, I’ve also become a member of VA HSR&D’s National Veteran Engagement Workgroup. I’m currently focusing my effort on two subgroups: Underserved/Special Populations, and IRB and Regulations. Our goal is to gather information on these subjects and disseminate it to other COINs and research centers involved in Veteran engagement.

This year I also broadened my recruitment efforts by having an information table at the Iowa City VA Hospital Breast Cancer Awareness Fair. A woman I met there plans to attend our June 13 meeting.

As we move into FY18, we hope to begin meeting quarterly. Based on Veterans’ feedback, we will not only focus on study development, but also explore new avenues for dissemination.

—Kenda Stewart
GET TO KNOW THE VEP

ATTENDANCE

April 2015
February 2016
October 2016
June 2017

ARMED FORCES

Unknown
Army
Navy
Marines
Air Force

SERVICE ERA

Vietnam (4)*
OEF/OIF
OND
(4)*

EDUCATION

13 VETERANS ENGAGED*

• PhD
• Bachelor’s Degree
• High School

*13 unique Veterans total have participated in the VEP. Not all numbers reported are mutually inclusive or exclusive.