What will we talk about today?

- Introductions
- Center for Healthcare Outcomes and Implementation Research (CHOIR)
- What is our goal for engaging Veterans in Research?
- Why is Veteran Engagement Important?
- Veteran Roles and Responsibilities
- Questions
Introductions

• What is your name?
• How are you connected to the VA? (e.g., military service, job, etc)
• What brings you to this meeting today? (Or what experience do you have with research?)
Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR)

Our mission is to improve Veterans' health and well-being by developing, studying, and applying evidence-based practices that are used across VA and community settings.
CHOIR is the largest of 19 VA Centers of Innovation in the country.

Located In:
- Bedford MA
- Boston MA
CHOIR’s Focus:

Conducting *health services research* to improve the responsiveness of the VA to those we serve, by:

- Examining the organization, delivery, and financing of health care
- Gathering perspectives of patients, caregivers, providers, and managers
- Improving the quality and economy of care and health outcomes
CHOIR’s Focus Areas:

Medication Optimization:
- Prescribing practices and trends
- Best use of medications

Recovery:
- Best approaches for social and behavioral vulnerabilities
- Interventions to support community reintegration

Health Communications:
- Patient-provider communication practices
- Best ways to communicate health information

Other Areas of Interest:
- Long-term care
- Patient safety
- How health technologies can improve Veteran’s lives
Medication Optimization

1. Examine how & why certain medications are used throughout VA
2. Estimate benefits and harms of medications as used in VA
3. Develop and study strategies to promote higher-quality use of medications to improve health for Veterans
Recovery

1. Define recovery, develop a common approach, and measure recovery orientation of programs

2. Develop interventions to support vulnerable Veterans with mental health and substance use concerns

3. Examine how to improve the delivery of recovery-oriented care in mental health and substance use treatment clinics and community settings
1. Identify, test, and implement strategies for better provider-patient communication

2. Develop and spread innovative technology that supports communication between providers and Veterans

3. Inform and motivate Veterans to change harmful health behaviors and exchange information about health priorities
Basic Research Process

Identify Questions:
What information do we need? What hypotheses do we have?

Select Methods:
What is the best way to explore our research questions?

Data Collection
Conduct interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and more.

Analyze Data
What does the data we collect mean?

Develop, Explain, or Revise ideas, theories, facts

Disseminate Findings
Who will benefit from the study results? How do we share findings?
A Typical Research Team

LEAD RESEARCHERS
- “Principal Investigators”, “Co-Investigators”, “Special Consultants”
- Trained in various fields (medicine, public health, anthropology, psychology)

PRE- and POST-DOCTORAL
- Training program for PhD and MD researchers

RESEARCH STAFF
- “Project Manager”, “Analysts”, “Research Assistants”
- Professionally trained
## Important Contributors

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<td><strong>Grant Reviewers:</strong> Review &amp; score based on importance and quality of research</td>
<td>Center for Disease Control</td>
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<td>National Institutes of Health</td>
<td><strong>Institutional Review Board (IRB):</strong> An ethics committee that oversees efforts to protect privacy, confidentiality and safety of research participants</td>
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Staying Mission Focused

- Ask the right questions
- Conduct quality research
- Share information

= Improve quality of care for and health of Veterans
Engaging Veterans In Our Research

Veterans **strengthen the value & quality** of research by:

- their ability to inform our strategic priorities
- providing consultation on specific research projects
- informing our practice through their consideration of all Veteran’s points of view.
Our hope is that involving Veterans in research will help:

• Expand our capacity to develop useful, relevant, patient-centered research

• Share research results with Veterans, caregivers, and others

• Improve the VA’s healthcare system through research
...HOW?

- **Stakeholder Council**: A council of Veterans who guide overall research, with special concentration on CHOIR’s focus areas.

- **Veteran Consultant Network**: Veterans and other stakeholders (providers, family and informal caregivers, etc.) who are available to consult on and/or be partners on specific grants and programs.
Our goal is to move from:

- Data Collection
- Administer Intervention (optional)
- Disseminate Findings
- Analyze Data
- Write Grant/Obtain Funding
- Select Methods
- Identify Questions:

Veterans Participate as Research Subjects

Research Process
Veterans Advise CHOIR’s Overall Research Strategy

To This...

Identify Questions

Select Methods

Write Grant/Obtain Funding

Administer Intervention

Data Collection

Analyze Data

Disseminate Findings

Veterans Contribute to Papers, Speak at Conferences

Veteran Experiences Inform Research Questions

Veterans Help Design Instruments

Veterans Help Interpret Data

Veterans Inform Recruitment

Veterans Assist With Data Collection

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With the Veterans Consultant Network

We want our research teams to move from this:
With the Veterans Consultant Network

We want our research teams to move from this:

... To this
Join the Veteran Consultant Network

We will match your interests with our researchers and invite you to:

✓ Provide input on VA CHOIR research projects
✓ Review research project materials created for Veterans and their families
✓ Help make sure the research speaks to Veterans’ interests
✓ Help find ways to improve the spread and use of health information
What To Expect

• Meet with lead researcher (PI) and study team
• Timelines vary for each project
• Training may be required but will likely be minimal
• Compensation will be provided for your time
• There will be paperwork to fill out
Want to Join the **VERG** Team?

Sign up with VCN Coordinator, Scott!

Scott.Reece@va.gov

(781)687-3500 (*leave a message*)

Tell your friends!

Attend regular meetings!
Do You Have Questions?

• About CHOIR?
• Research?
• Your role as a consultant?
• Others?
What do you think about the idea of being a part of a research team?

What can we do to help support your participation?