

UPSTATE NEW YORK VETERAN RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT BOARD

VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention; VA Center for Integrated Healthcare

I. Mission Statement

The overarching mission of the Upstate New York Veteran Research Engagement Board (hereafter referred to as “Board”) is to promote innovative, Veteran-centered research informed by stakeholder involvement that anticipates and addresses the needs of all Veterans.

II. Purpose

The Board will provide guidance and feedback to the Centers (VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention; VA Center for Integrated Healthcare) related to programmatic, educational, and research activities. The Board’s primary emphasis will be on research, and involvement will span the research process from topic generation to dissemination and implementation of results. The Board has two primary goals:

- a) Goal 1: Design research protocols that are tailored to VA health care consumers and the broader Veteran community.
- b) Goal 2: Increase Veteran engagement in the research continuum through training of Veteran Board members in the goals of research, gaining Veteran feedback during research development, and creating a continuous feedback loop with Veterans throughout several research studies.

III. Membership

The Board will be led by the Directors, a team consisting of:

- Designated liaisons from each Center
- Board Chair (Veteran Member)
- Leadership at each Center (in advisory capacity, as needed)

Board membership will consist of:

- Up to eight Veterans with an effort to vary by:
 - VHA service use
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Location (rural/urban)
 - Military history including combat exposure
- Up to two Veteran caregivers (adult child, spouse)

Membership terms will last one year staggered with new membership accepted in a rolling fashion. The team may remove a member after three consecutive missed meetings (without notice to the Directors or extenuating circumstances) or if a member fails to meet expectations as outlined in the Bylaws. Members will be provided Without Compensation (WOC) appointments with the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and with a modest monetary stipend.

IV. Qualifications

In order to qualify to serve on the Board, an individual must:

- Be able and willing to attend monthly meetings, and to engage electronically (via telephone, mail, and/or email) outside of meetings when necessary
- Be willing to share their opinions and actively participate
- Provide feedback on research/project ideas, proposals, and grants
- Respect the collaborative process and be willing to listen to differing views
- Come prepared to meetings (i.e., review materials as needed prior to meetings)
- Complete a brief assessment after each meeting
- Adhere to confidentiality and group standards

V. Recruitment and Application Process

Members will primarily be identified for recruitment using a seed community approach by conducting outreach with existing social networks. The Board will also be advertised in VA facilities, Vet Centers, and community venues with a focus on military/Veteran (e.g., university research facility) with information on how to apply.

Potential members will complete an application packet and be interviewed by members from one or both Centers. Upon completion of a successful interview, members will be invited to complete training and join the Board.

VI. Committee Procedures

Board meetings will last approximately two hours and occur monthly. Meeting duration and frequency may vary depending on the level of demand for Board feedback; however, a commitment of one meeting per month is expected. Communication outside of the meetings (e.g., by email, mail, telephone) may be required when necessary. Reasonable accommodations will be made for members without computer or internet services. Members will review materials prior to the meeting and come prepared to provide feedback. A formal process and outcome evaluation may occur in FYs 2017 and 2018.

VII. Priorities

Funded projects with explicit Veteran engagement components in the research plan as well as projects deemed “high priority” by Center leadership will be prioritized during scheduling/agenda development for Board use.

VIII. Training

Board members will receive training to:

- Understand the research process including ethics and human subjects protections (e.g., IRB)
- Be an engaged partner and provide useful feedback
- Communicate effectively
- Understand the missions and research areas of the Centers
- Understand procedures for board membership (e.g., expectations, meeting logistics, compensation)
- Maintain confidentiality

Liaisons will be trained to:

- Facilitate constructive discussion from all members

- Build group cohesion
- Resolve conflict
- Summarize feedback

Center staff will receive training on how to be effective users of the Board. Training will include:

- Purpose of Board and appropriate use
- Procedures for Board use (e.g., expectations, meeting logistics)
- How to prepare materials including framing questions and presentations in lay terms
- How to receive and use feedback

IX. Authority and Limitations

The Board is authorized to provide guidance and feedback to Center investigators, work that does not implicate the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

X. Operational Support and Funding

The Centers will split operational costs and support equally.

- Personnel support: 10% FTE coordinator from each Center
- Board liaisons from both Centers may contact members to remind them about upcoming meetings. Other responsibilities include, but are not limited to: schedule presentations and collect required documents from presenters; create agendas; disseminate materials to Board; and take meeting minutes. Liaisons will assist with rolling recruitment and new member education.
- Compensation: Each member will be paid \$599.99 annually
- Overhead costs: Costs associated with the development of materials for the Board (e.g., copying/printing, dissemination) and meeting logistics