



OPERATIONAL PARTNER INVOLVEMENT



ESP aims to produce *independent* and *rigorous* products tailored to the needs of VA decision-makers. Operational Partners (OPs; *ie*, requestors) are involved in the ESP review process in the following way:

1. Recommend Technical Expert Panel (TEP) participants, who will:

- Provide content expertise to the review team through a couple of hour-long conference calls.
- Give input on key questions and eligibility criteria, advising on substantive issues or possibly overlooked areas of research; assure VA relevance; provide feedback on work in progress; and may be invited to review the draft report.

2. Approve final project scope and timeframe for completion

- OPs will be consulted as appropriate throughout review process to insure the report produced is relevant and actionable by VHA.

3. Provide feedback on draft report

- To maintain independence of the review team, *OPs do not participate in writing or editing the ESP report, and as such, are not included as authors. However, OPs will be given the opportunity to review the draft report and provide feedback.* OPs will be acknowledged in the report by name as the requestor; similarly, TEP members will be acknowledged for their role as a consultant.
- ESP's editorial review process is designed to ensure the accuracy, quality, consistency, and credibility of evidence reports produced for the VHA. In addition to the OP review, the draft report is reviewed by at least 3 external peer reviewers comprised of topic and methodology experts, and selected TEP members. The ESP Coordinating Center (ESP CC) manages this peer review process independently from the ESP Center producing the report and works with them to balance, manage, or mitigate any potential nonfinancial conflicts of interest identified.
- All comments received on the draft report are considered by the ESP Center in preparation of the final report. De-identified reviewer comments and their disposition will be included as an appendix in the report. *The synthesis of the scientific literature presented in the final document may not necessarily represent the views of OPs and peer reviewers.*

4. Assist with disseminating report findings to the field and relevant groups

- Final reports are posted on the ESP website and indexed in PubMed after an embargo period to allow for journal submission by the review team. The report will be available to VHA affiliates via the intranet during the embargo to support decision-making. OPs are not typically involved in manuscript development, but may be invited to participate if their contribution (*eg*, programmatic data) warrants it.
- The ESP Center will be available to present the findings at a venue appropriate to the topic and decision-making needs (*eg*, national webinar/cyberseminars, leadership briefings, program/committee meetings, or conferences). OPs will be invited to participate in webinars/cyberseminars as discussants, addressing such issues as implementation and policy implications.
- A Management eBrief will be developed to provide VHA management with a concise summary of findings to inform decision-making. OPs will be invited to review the draft and may provide messaging to be included as to the implications the report may have for VHA policy or practice, and identify appropriate dissemination targets.

5. Complete program follow-up questionnaire

- Upon completion of the report, OPs are surveyed on initial decision-making needs, resulting actions of the report's findings, implementation timeframe, and overall perception of report content to support continuous quality improvement and evaluate the impact of our evidence synthesis reports.