



VAMC Anchor

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The "Bread and Butter" of Medical Research



by Dr. Peter Freidman and Deb D'Allesandro
(Center on Systems, Outcomes & Quality in Chronic Diseases
and Rehabilitation)



Although research focused on technology or high-profile conditions gets much of the media attention, did you know that a major research program at the Providence VA Medical Center plays a vital role in improving the quality of health care delivered to our nation's Veterans? This research falls under the umbrella of Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D), one of four major research branches in the VA Office of Research and Development. Health services research at the Providence VAMC combines medical, public health, and social science methods to identify and evaluate innovative strategies that lead to accessible, high quality, and cost-effective care for Veterans.

The HSR&D program at the Providence VAMC is the Center on Systems, Outcomes & Quality in Chronic Disease & Rehabilitation (SOQCR). The Center's research focuses on three major themes: 1) redesigning the VA ambulatory care system to meet the needs of the 21st century Veteran; 2) enhancing post-deployment health and rehabilitation among OEF/OIF Veterans; and 3) optimizing institutional and community systems to meet Veterans' long-term care needs.

Dr. Peter Friedmann, Director of the Center, began the program in 2004 with six junior investigators. SOQCR has grown since then and now has twelve researchers and over \$5 million in funding from federal sources. Working closely with investigators from the Section of Health Services Practice and Policy in the Department of Community Health at Brown University, SOQCR's investigators perform research that informs and implements changes to existing systems to better serve the needs of our Veterans, especially those from vulnerable populations. Current HSR&D research at the PVAMC examines: (continued--page 2)

PVAMC Dedicates New Research Building

Building houses several rehabilitative research programs to benefit Veterans

On November 12, the Providence VAMC conducted a dedication ceremony for its new Research building for the Center for Restorative Medicine. The Center is a collaboration between the Medical Center, Brown University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(continued on page 3)



Dr. Roy Aaron (Director for the new Research Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine) speaks to attendees during the standing room only event.



November/December 2010

Willie Alexander Jr. (Housekeeping)
Edward Angell (Housekeeping)
Francesco Capaldi (Housekeeping)
Constance Pommenville (HIMS)
David Katz (Medical Service)
Bruce Torgerson (MHBSS)
Jennifer Nugent (Nursing Service)
Melissa Gillooly (Nursing Service)
Stephanie Resendes (Nursing Service)
Jennifer Ector (Nursing Service)
Reva Flores (Nursing Service)
Carolyn Levesque-Shikowitz (Nursing)
Mark Giglio (Patient Services)
Scott Lias (Police Service)
Joseph Louro (Police Service)
James Pollitt (Police Service)
Christopher Helme (Primary Care)
William Tsiaras (Surgical Service)
Therese Coutu (Dental Service)
Charles Simon (Nursing Service)
Marie Wilks (Nursing Service)
John Cerra (Police Service)
Xuan Nguyen (Primary Care)
Val Micucci (Research)
Xinkai Huang (Research)
Vincent Mor (Research)

TOWN HALL MEETING

FOR ALL EMPLOYEES



February 3, 2011
12 noon & 3:00 p.m.
Fifth Floor
Auditorium

Two Sessions:

Topics Include

- Integrated Ethics Survey - "High-5/Low-5"
- Resource allocation - how and why?



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Director's Spotlight

The road to transformation

You may recall from our last newsletter that I spoke about transformation in the VA. I mentioned that the five key measures of success that our Veterans are telling us in virtually all circumstances are Access, Responsiveness, Communications, Outreach, and Coordination of Care/Case Management. I also mentioned that we would soon engage each of you in a similar dialogue to explore what transformation means to us here at the Providence VA Medical Center.

Well, we have begun to do just that:

- Over the past month or so, we've facilitated several focus group meetings with employees throughout the Medical Center. The discussions have been very constructive, centering upon key values, how we demonstrate these values each and every day, and how we might further embed these values in everything we do. Though we haven't had a chance to study the feedback in detail, I can say that employee commitment to this organization and its mission is strong; participants appreciated the opportunity to share their thoughts on transformation, and many suggested we regularly hold similar focus group discussions throughout the year.
- We will also conduct a few more focus group sessions in February, this time involving some of the Veterans we serve. We have already spoken with several Veterans, and, in most cases, their responses are consistent with the categories mentioned above.

If you were not able to attend a focus group meeting, you can still participate in this dialogue by visiting our [Blog](#). You may do so anonymously, and we will include your input when we compile the data, analyze it, and use it to develop a framework to guide our strategic planning throughout the year.

WILLIAM J. BURNEY
Acting Medical Center Director

"Bread & Butter" (Con't from page 1)

The VA ambulatory care delivery system – to determine how VA clinics and evidence-based service offerings can best address the needs of Veterans with complex, chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus, severe mental illness, and homelessness. In addition to implementing innovative models of care, our investigators design and test quality indicators and provider performance tools to ensure that the VA continues to deliver the highest quality of ambulatory care in the nation.

Post-deployment health among OEF/OIF Veterans – studies the crucial issues of community reintegration, caregiver support, PTSD, and substance abuse among returning OEF/OIF Veterans. The goal is to inform the development and implementation of programs and services to optimize the health and functioning of these younger heroes.

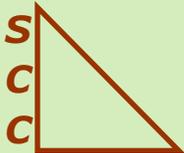
Veterans' long-term care needs – evaluates the accessibility, quality, and outcomes of long-term care delivered to Veterans in both nursing homes and the community. This research helps the VA continue to honor the service and sacrifice that older Veterans bestowed on our nation and be better prepared to care for younger Veterans as they age.

One of our investigators, Dr. Hank Wu, describes health services research as the "bread and butter" of medical research because the systems, programs, and services it examines has direct impact on vast numbers of Veterans. So, although HSR&D research at Providence VAMC maintains a low profile, it has a high impact in ensuring that the VA keeps its commitment to deliver Veteran-centered care that is safe, timely, effective, and efficient.



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Endoscopy

Specialty Clinic Corner

1. Overview: The Endoscopy Department, in conjunction with the 4B staff, manages patients with a variety of disorders of the gastro-intestinal or GI system. Patients come to us with symptoms of pain, bleeding, or weight loss. These are just a few of the disorders. Procedures are performed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The endoscopy team is on-call for emergency patients. The Endoscopy Department is staffed by 4 gastroenterologists, 9 GI fellows from Brown University, 2 nurse practitioners, 1 nurse manager, 2 registered nurses, 3 LPN's, 1 Health technician, and 2 supporting clerical staff.

2. Treatment and Testing Services:

a. EGD ("esophagogastroduodenoscopy" or upper GI endoscopy) is a procedure that enables the physician to examine the lining of the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract.

b. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure that enables the physician to examine the lining of the rectum and a portion of the colon.

c. Colonoscopy is a procedure that enables the physician to examine the lining of the colon for polyps or inflammation.

d. ERCP (Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography) is a specialized technique used to study the ducts of the gallbladder, pancreas, and liver.

e. Liver Biopsy is a procedure to remove a small piece of the liver so it can be examined with a microscope for signs of damage or disease.

f. Paracentesis is a medical procedure involving needle drainage of fluid from the abdomen.

3. Workload: The Endoscopy Department served 2872 Veterans in FY 10.

4. Patient Education: The very knowledgeable GI staff is always educating their patients. They educate them pre-, intra-, and post-procedure. Before the patient is discharged home they will know the findings of the procedure.

5. Did you know? Colon cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. One hundred and forty two thousand (142,000) people are diagnosed each year, and colon cancer takes the lives of 51,000 people each year. Early treatment is the key. This is a plea to get your colonoscopy – colonoscopies save people's lives!

Prepared by Karen Raposa, RN, Endoscopy Nurse Manager

Dialysis Unit Recognized

The PVAMC's Hemodialysis Unit was recognized as one of the top 7 facilities in the End Stage Renal Disease Network of New England to attain a consistently prevalent AV Fistula Rate of 70% or greater for our patients. The rate far surpasses quality guidelines and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services national goal. AV Fistula improves the quality of life for dialysis patients through fewer infections, reduced hospitalizations, and lower mortality.



From top left: Jeanne DeAngelis, Donna Berube, RN; Tracy Bardsley, RN; Nancy Garvey, RN; Lorraine Perry, RN; Beth Upham, RN; and Kim Turner, MIT. From lower left: Arthur Donovan, MIT; Mark Lamoureux, MIT; and Tricia Pendergast, RN. Not pictured are Ayygul Cetiner, RN; Rene Cabral, RN; and Cathy Butterfield, MIT.

"CRRM" (Con't from page 1)

The new building comprises 23,850 square feet of basic science and clinical research space dedicated to rehabilitation research for Veterans. The construction was funded with approximately \$7M from the Department of Veteran Affairs. Research programs include neuro-technology, prosthetics, skeletal biology, and regenerative medicine and advanced rehabilitation techniques. U.S. Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and U.S. Representative James Langevin were in attendance. The keynote speaker was Robert Jaeger, PhD, VA Office of Rehabilitative Research and Development.



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Staff in the News



John Cruz (left) of Diagnostic Imaging Service receives a certificate for **45 years of service** to the United States Government; **Julie White, NP, Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic** (right), was selected **Employee of the Quarter** for the period January 1, 2011 – March 31, 2011.



...Around the PVAMC...

(Pictured clockwise from top left): **Loren Spears** (Executive Director Tomaquaz Museum) receives a **certificate of appreciation** from Minerva Thomas and Lisa Lombard during a recent Native American Indian presentation; **Katie Gabriel** (PVAMC's Blind Rehab Specialist); **David Van Loan** (Region 1 Director- Blind Veterans Association (BVA)); **Randy Durrigan** (President – BVA, RI/SE Massachusetts), and **VIST Coordinator Adele Geringer** present a certificate to Veteran **Charlie Wilson** in honor of his **101st birthday**; **Steve Moss, Christine Fitzgerald, Janel Souza, Bonnie Wheeler, Heather Oberg, Michelle Martin, and Regina Correa-Murphy** pose for a photo after orchestrating December's Holiday Tea; members of the **Coventry High School JROTC** perform during the **Veterans Day Observance** here at PVAMC.



Got Story Ideas?

Please submit your ideas to
Thomas.Antonaccio@va.gov.

PVAMC Website



Need Enrollment Info?

Please call (401) 273-7100, ext. 3300