OPTIMIZING VA RESEARCH, PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPACT

Grant Huang, MPH, PhD
VHA Office of Research and Development
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THE SERIES CONTINUES...
• The VA Research Enterprise – What is Enterprise Optimization

• Examples of Enterprise Optimization in Research and Operations

• Considerations for ACOS-Rs and R&D Offices
OBJECTIVES

• To provide an overview of the Enterprise Optimization Division in ORD in order to:
  • Communicating to local investigators
  • Help with identifying where VAMC activities and ORD directions align
  • Facilitate local strategic planning on collaborative / partnered activities
What is the VA Research Enterprise?

VA Research Enterprise is the entire set of people, tools, and processes committed to a whole-of-VA approach for improving Veteran health and well-being through scientific endeavors.

Unique Value Proposition: leverage our position as the only Federal research entity devoted to Veterans’ interests and being embedded in the nation’s largest integrated healthcare system

Real-World Outcomes: define our success in terms of tangible real-world improvements in Veterans’ health and well-being

Engaged People: composed of a vibrant, diverse research community united in our mission to improve Veterans’ well-being through research

Integration: cultivate relationships and partnerships to that accelerate our ability to achieve our mission

Organizational Excellence: operates with streamlined processes, effective collaboration, high-quality customer service, and appropriate resources
How can we make our powerhouse enterprise work together to bring the best science to do the most good for Veterans?

→ How does this occur at the facility level?
 Units are not individual components – The enterprise concept involves partnering and supporting one another, especially where there are intersecting areas of expertise
Key themes: Research activities involving 2+ VAMCs; Operational efficiency & structure; Innovative science requiring cooperative / collaborative approaches
What is Enterprise Optimization?

“a systematic process of planning, integrating, coordinating and executing all dimensions of enterprise activities for best-possible mission-focused results”

Making the whole greater than the sum of its parts
Activities undertaken by Enterprise Optimization will focus on areas that benefit / affect multiple VA medical centers - “Big Boulder” Strategy
Enterprise Optimization

Making the whole greater than the sum of its parts in order to...

Generate the highest quality evidence for advancing Veterans’ health and care done by top talent

Provide a platform for generating sustainable innovation

Exemplify the power of an enterprise approach (e.g., multi-site, partnerships) by demonstrating value and impact in achieving outcomes for Veterans and the nation
COOPERATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM: VA NATIONAL CLINICAL RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

West Haven, CT
Seattle, WA
Palo Alto, CA
Albuquerque, NM
Durham, NC
Hines, IL
Washington, DC
Perry Point, MD
Boston, MA
West Haven, CT
Philadelphia, PA
Perry Point, MD
Washington, DC
Durham, NC

CSP Coordinating Centers are ISO 9001:2015 registered
BRINGING TRIALS TO VETERANS

Coordination  Recruitment  Clinical insight  Quality

Industry

Education  Reducing Barriers

Education  Reducing Barriers

Other Federal Sponsors

ChooseVA
Specific Ways the PRP Supports VA Participation in Industry Trials

- Connect interested companies with VA clinical and scientific experts to assess viability of specific projects.
- Provide information and resources to stakeholders related to partnering with VA on multisite clinical trials
- Facilitate centrally executed Confidentiality Disclosure Agreements (CDAs)
- Facilitate Master Agreements (e.g., Master CDAs and Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA))
- Collaborate with others in VA, VHA and ORD to identify challenges and best practices and, when appropriate, offer solutions (e.g., minimize inaction and bottlenecks)
VA’s Million Veteran Program

• Launched in 2011, MVP is a national VA research program and one of the world’s largest programs on genetics and health

• Designed to advance precision health care by learning how genes, lifestyle, and military experiences and exposures affect health and illness

• Any Veteran can join online at mvp.va.gov or by calling 866-441-6075 to schedule an appointment at the nearest MVP enrollment site.
### Current Research Areas Using MVP Data

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<th>Research Areas</th>
<th>4 patents filed</th>
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<td>PTSD</td>
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<td>Multi-substance use</td>
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<td>Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder</td>
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<td>Cardiovascular disease and cardiometabolic disorders</td>
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<td>Age related macular degeneration</td>
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<td>Gulf War Illness</td>
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- PTSD
- Multi-substance use
- Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder
- Cardiovascular disease and cardiometabolic disorders
- Diabetes and complications
- Age related macular degeneration
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<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>phenotyping methodologies</th>
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<td>Tinnitus</td>
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<td>Osteoarthritis</td>
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<td>Suicidality</td>
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<td>Phenotyping methodologies</td>
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<td>Parkinson's disease</td>
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<td>Alzheimer's disease</td>
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<td>Traumatic brain injury</td>
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<td>Pharmacogenomics of opioid agonists</td>
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<td>Kidney injury</td>
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<td>Multiple myeloma</td>
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Research enterprise initiatives serve as models for future opportunities
Enterprise Optimization seeks to systematically bring forth scientific innovations and findings to improve Veteran health and care.
Strong Research-Clinical collaboration is essential for achieving real-world impact in Veteran healthcare.
VA HAS HAD A ROBUST & RAPID RESEARCH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Research
- Clinical studies
- Vaccines
- Therapeutics
- Observational
- Predictive modeling & “big data” analyses
- Genomic targets
- Biorepository

Operational
- Enhanced partnerships with VA/VHA, federal partners & Veterans
- New capabilities and procedures for ORD and field
- Best practices & lessons learned

VA’s COVID-19 research response took an enterprise-wide strategy that:
✓ Coordinated across offices and research groups
✓ Leveraged existing infrastructure and capabilities
✓ Accelerated culture & expectations for a post-COVID-19 world

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The beginnings of the Actively Managed Portfolios framework can be seen in the development of the Lung Precision Oncology Program (LPOP).

An example of AMP functionality in practice.
Military Exposures Research Program

➢ Enterprise-level core capabilities to support funded investigator studies needing exposure assessment, data/survey tools and analysis, biospecimen collection, storage and analysis.
  • Houston = data/biorepository core; Baltimore = exposure assessments core; Durham = administrative/coordination core

➢ Capacity Building: Intra- and Inter-federal and academic partnership building are imperative to move military exposure assessment and health research forward efficiently and uniformly.

➢ Requests for Applications (RFA): RFAs will be developed and released broadly to support key gap portfolio areas.

➢ ORD Military Exposure Research Innovation Center(s) (MERICs) will be launched to support high impact, highly innovative key priority projects.
Enterprise Optimization seeks to systematically bring strengthen R&D Offices as a core element of the field enterprise.
Activities will be organized around categories that are central to the success of the VA research enterprise, with particular focus on the R&D office, to achieve efficiency and effectiveness emphasizing:

- People – to further enhance training to build the R&D Office workforce
- Processes & Policies – to outline expectations and enable more effective management
- Tools & Resources – to enable more efficient conduct of activities
- Communications – to better connect all pieces of the field/ORD enterprise
- Enterprise Development – to strategically position VA research offices and staff to meet ongoing and emerging priorities
ENTERPRISE OPTIMIZATION – FIELD PRIORITIES

• Help raise the prominence of local and enterprise VA research by enhancing the success and excellence of R&D Offices

• Address problems that impact efficiency or increase burdens affecting many – “removing the big boulders”

• Give tools and training to help R&D Offices effectively address their “big boulders”

• Build communities of R&D leaders (ACOS-Rs & AOs) to leverage their talent, experiences and ideas to optimize the larger research enterprise
Problem-framing statement:

**Given that** ACOS-R leaders are critical to the overall success of the VA Research Enterprise...

**How might we** better understand their needs so that we can provide “just-in-time” support, training, tools and guidance to ensure ACOS-Rs leaders are best prepared to contribute to the overall success of VA Research?
BY THE NUMBERS

• We gathered anonymous feedback from ACOS-Rs across the country—including large, medium and small sites

• Respondents came from a cross-section of professional credentials

• Experience ranged from very new to the role (1<) to 20+ years

58
Survey Responses

29
1:1 Interviews

1
Email Response

1,835
Data Points

131
Thematic Groupings

7
Opportunities
1. Hire and train for ACOS-R essential attributes & skills
2. Improve the onboarding experience
3. Increase networking opportunities
4. Resource (through information & training) for negotiation
5. Increase knowledge related to administrative oversight
6. Decrease administrative complexity
7. Consider the unique challenges of small sites
As an enterprise, VA Research can be tremendously powerful for improving Veteran and national health.
thank you!