

Pain/Opioid CORE

VA HSR

Pain/Opioid Consortium of Research

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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veteran Engagement Panel 2024 In-Person Meeting



Pain/opioid CORE VEP members and staff at the 2024 In-Person meeting | Photo credit: [Minneapolis VA Health Care System Newsletter](#)

Last month, members of the national Pain/Opioid CORE Veteran Engagement Panel (VEP) convened in Minneapolis, MN for an in-person meeting. Throughout the day, panel members engaged in discussions on various critical topics including the role and impact of Veteran Engagement within Pain/Opioid CORE and more broadly at the VA; the current state of pain and opioid research of the VA; and strategies for disseminating research findings to the Veteran population.

The VEP was also featured in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System newsletter, recognizing the important contributions Veterans provide on VA research initiatives. [Read the article on the Minneapolis VA website.](#)

The Pain/Opioid CORE VEP is a group of 13 Veterans from across the country who work as patient advisors to VA researchers and other partners to advance patient-centered research and care. The VEP is a complimentary resource to VA investigators and project leaders. For more information about the VEP or the meeting process, [visit our website](#). For inquiries or to schedule a consultation with the panel, contact Tracy Sides at Tracy.Sides@va.gov.

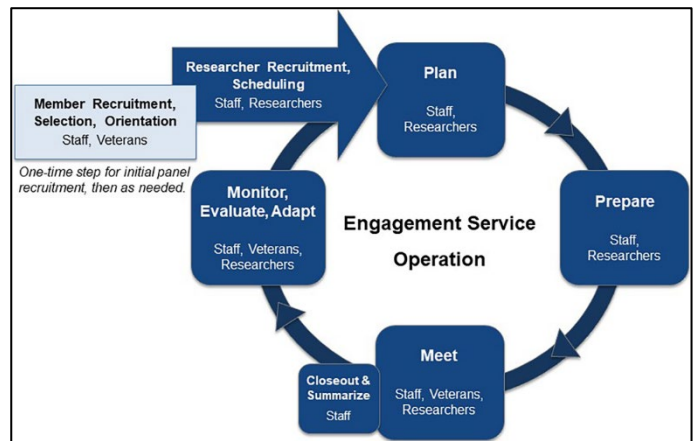
FEATURED ARTICLE

Experiences and Lessons Learned from a Patient-Engagement Service Established by a National Research Consortium in the US Veteran Health Administration

Sides T, *Jensen A, Argust M, Amundson E, Thomas G, *Keller R, Mahaffey M, & Krebs K. **Experiences and Lessons Learned from a Patient-Engagement Service Established by a National Research Consortium in the US Veteran Health Administration.** *Learning Health Systems* Apr 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1002/lrh2.10421>. * U.S. Military Veteran

We are pleased to announce the publication of a new article co-authored by a member of our CORE Veteran Engagement Panel (VEP), which offers a comprehensive review of the first three years of the Pain/Opioid CORE's work to develop, operate, and evaluate a national patient-engagement service, featuring a standing Veteran engagement panel.

In this paper, the authors review the context, creation, and operational strategies of the service, along with evaluation methods and outcomes observed during the initial three-year period. The article also reviews the meeting process and provides an in-depth examination of the experiences and lessons learned.



VA Pain/Opioid Consortium's engagement service operational model | <https://doi.org/10.1002/lrh2.10421>

Three key features that significantly contributed to the productivity (48 consultations in 3 years) and high-quality experiences and outcomes were reported by all partners. Successes of the panel include:

1. Each consultation follows a repeatable, though flexible, process facilitated by skilled staff,
2. Consistent collection of formal and informal evaluation measures to track engagement quality and outcomes of consultations enable timely adjustments to continuously improve, and
3. Relationships *really* matter - VEP members and staff work together with guest researchers or project leaders to consistently create a safe, inclusive, and constructive meeting environment for authentic discussion.

For further details about these findings, the methods, discussion, and links to resources and other supplemental material, access the full article [online](#).

Pain/Opioid CORE Member Highlight

Aimee Kroll-Desrosiers, PhD

Aimee works as a Research Health Scientist at VA Central Western Massachusetts and was awarded Rapid Start Funding (RSF) from the Pain/Opioid CORE in 2021. Aimee's project, "*Exploring Pain Management Strategies for Perinatal Veterans*," sought to better understand pain-related conditions and complementary and integrative health (CIH) pain management strategies among perinatal Veterans. Aimee and her team have completed two manuscripts from this project [[Article 1](#), Article 2 is under review].



The research team found that Veterans with chronic musculoskeletal pain were more likely to be diagnosed with mental health conditions and to utilize VA mental health care during pregnancy compared to Veterans without chronic musculoskeletal pain. They also found through qualitative interviews with Veterans with chronic pain that each Veteran is unique, and it is important to understand individualized needs of Veterans to provide quality pain care during the perinatal period. Veterans offered recommendations to improve VA care, including offering greater access to Whole

Health, providing pregnancy specific equipment (e.g., back braces), and offering support groups for pregnant and/or postpartum Veterans to connect.

Aimee and co-investigators recently received funding through the 2024 Pain/Opioid CORE and Whole Health funding opportunity to continue identifying ways to best support the care of pregnant Veterans. In this project they will explore the use of Whole Health utilization and referral patterns for pregnant Veterans to better understand the use of Whole Health practices to understand how to improve communication and/or use of Whole Health among pregnant Veterans.

PAIN AND OPIOID UPDATES

Announcements

NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) Initiative - Request for Information

The HEAL Initiative funds research to develop and test non-addictive treatments for pain as part of the overall HEAL effort to combat the opioid crisis in America. They are seeking input for their strategic planning efforts, which will guide HEAL's future investment in pain and opioid use disorder research. As a forum for the open and efficient exchange of information and ideas relevant to VA pain services, you can provide your expertise and invaluable perspectives on priorities for future HEAL pain research. [Visit the Request for Information \(RFI\) webpage](#) for additional information, including topics they are seeking input on and additional areas on interest. **Email feedback to HEALquestion@od.nih.gov by July 31, 2024, with "HEAL RFI" in the subject line.**

Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for HEAL Initiative: NIH-DOD-VA Pain Management Collaboratory - Pragmatic and/or Implementation Science Demonstration Projects ((UG3/UH3) Clinical Trial Required)

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) intends to publish a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to solicit UG3/UH3 phased cooperative agreement research applications. The NOFO is expected to be published in Fall 2024 with an expected application due date in November 2024. Please visit the [NIH webpage](#) for more information.

Events

SAVE-THE-DATE: August 7, 2024, 12:00 - 1:00 ET | VA Office of Research and Development - Changes to the VA Intramural Research Awards Program

The VHA Office of Research and Development (ORD) is undergoing a research enterprise transformation. Within ORD, the Investigators, Scientific Review, and Management (ISRM) Initiative will be implementing three key changes on October 1st, 2024: (1) transitioning from a service-based to a portfolio-based research organization, (2) centralizing key operations functions to support portfolios, and (3) standardizing key aspects of the RFA process. [Register for this webinar online.](#)

SAVE-THE-DATE: September 10, 2024, 11:00 - 12:00 ET | Scalable Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Chronic Pain: Results from the Learning to Apply Mindfulness to Pain (LAMP) Pragmatic Clinical Trial

Diana Burgess will present results from the LAMP trial, which compares two scalable, mindfulness-based interventions for Veterans with chronic pain. Among Veterans with chronic pain and high levels of psychiatric comorbidity, both interventions improved pain functioning and important biopsychosocial outcomes. [Register for this webinar online.](#)

Can Implementing a Whole Health System Facilitate Uptake of CIH for Chronic Pain? It Depends!

During this session, Rendelle Bolton discusses a multimethod study that investigated the impact of implementing the Whole Health System on the use of complementary and integrative health (CIH) use among patients with chronic pain. The presentation focused on the organizational context and relationships influencing CIH use. [Watch the recording online.](#)

Examining Trends in Telehealth Prescriptions of Controlled Substances: Modalities, Medications, Patient/Provider Relationships

HSR investigators Jacob Baylis and Sophie Huebler present a decade-long study on controlled substance prescribing trends across telephone, VA video connect, and clinical video telehealth. The session will cover medication types, patient-provider relationships, and new medication initiations without prior in-person encounters. [Watch the recording online.](#)

2024 NAADAC Annual Conference & Hill Day | October 18 - 23, 2024 | Washington, DC

[Learn, Connect, Advocate, Succeed](#): The 2024 NAADAC (the Association for Addiction Professionals) meeting will be held this fall. Join over 1,500 addiction professionals for a six-day addiction-specific presentations, advocacy prep, professional development, networking, and more. [Register for the event online.](#)

48th Annual AMERSA Conference | November 14 - 16, 2024 | Chicago, IL

[Empowering Change: From Evidence to Action in Addiction Care and Research](#): Registration for the 2024 AMERSA (Association for Multidisciplinary Education and Research in Substance use and Addiction) is now open. The conference will feature several engaging speakers, presentations, and workshops.

23rd Annual Pain Medicine Meeting | November 21 - 23, 2024 | Las Vegas, Nevada

[LET'S GO! Advancing Advocacy and Access](#): The annual American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (ASRA) Pain Medicine Meeting will be held this fall. **Abstract submissions are open until August 6.**



[More information about the VA Pain/Opioid CORE >>](#)

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Access and Community Care CORE

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Virtual Care CORE

[Click here](#) for more information about VA HSR Consortia of Research (COREs).