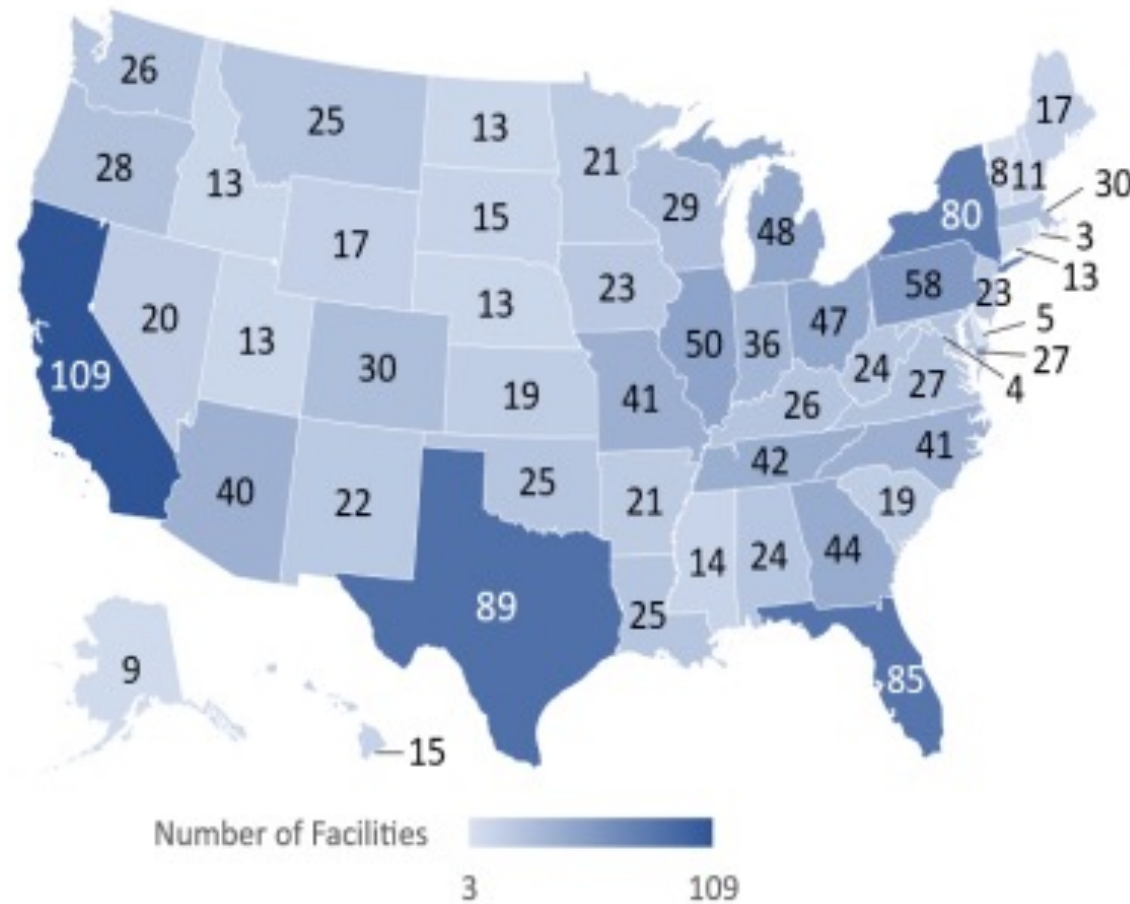


Why VA? Opportunities for VA Research Careers and Collaborations

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**The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors
and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the
Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States government.**

VA is the nation's largest integrated health care system

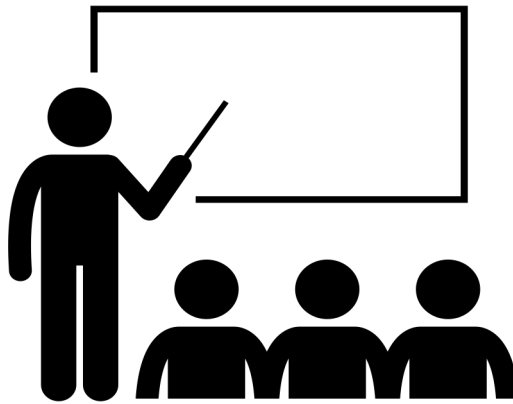


9,000,000 patients, 172 VA Medical centers, 1,241 community-based outpatient clinics, VA-paid community care

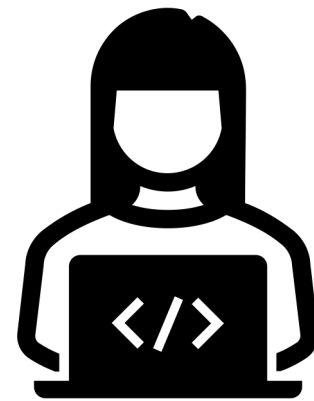
VA strives to improve the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health care delivery and innovation



Clinical service



Clinical + research training



Research

VA provides a range of interdisciplinary, integrated health care services

Addiction
Advice nurse
Audiology
Cardiology
Caregiver support
Dental/oral surgery
Dermatology
Emergency care
Gastroenterology
Geriatrics
Gynecology
Homeless Veteran care
Infectious disease
Laboratory and pathology
L g b q+ Veteran care

Mental health care
Military sexual trauma care
Minority Veteran care
Neurology
Nutrition, food, and dietary care
Ophthalmology
Optometry
Orthopedics
Otolaryngology
Pain management
Patient advocates
Pharmacy
Plastic and reconstructive surgery
Podiatry

➔ **Primary care**
Prosthetics and rehabilitation
Radiology
Recreation and creative arts therapy
Returning service member care
Social work
Suicide prevention
Surgery
Urology
Vascular surgery
Whole health
Women Veteran care



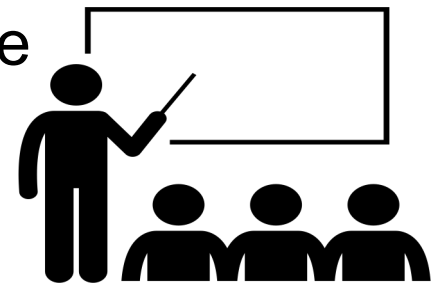
VA is the largest provider of U.S psychology training

Clinical internship

- 711 positions across 133 VAs
- 1 in 5 doctoral interns in psychology nationwide
- Specialized tracks in Behavioral Medicine, Neuropsychology, Health Psychology, Geropsychology
- Scholarly projects/protected time for research

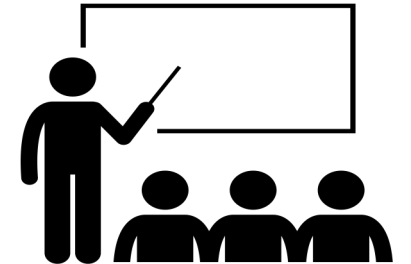
Clinical postdoctoral fellowship

- 454 positions at 145 VA medical centers
- 50% of APA-accredited psychology postdocs nationwide
- Scholarly projects/protected time for research



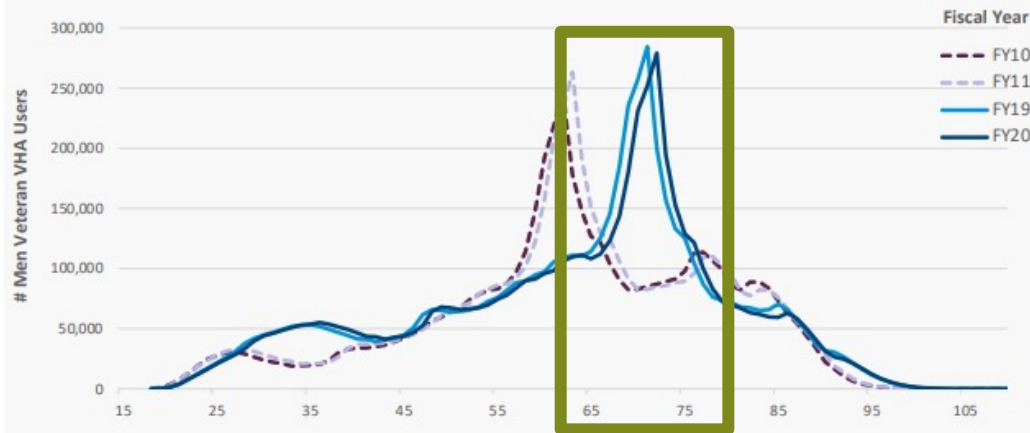
VA Research Training

- 149 VAs have academic affiliations with medical schools
- AFAR Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program
- Psychology research fellowships:
 - National Clinician Scholar Program, MIRECC (Trauma/PTSD, Dementia, Serious Mental Illness, TBI/Polytrauma, Data Science), Health Services Research, Quality Scholars, Women's Health
 - Clinician and non-clinician tracks available
 - 75% research, 25% clinical/QI



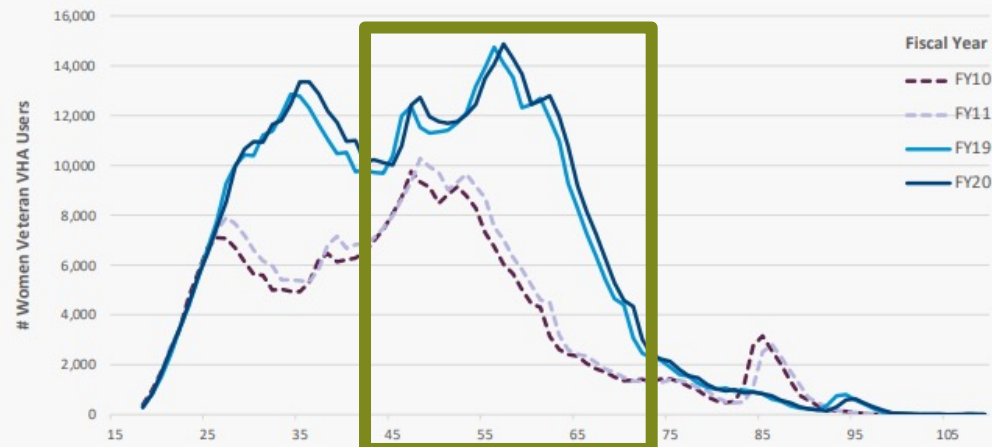
Relevance for Mental Health and Aging Research

Exhibit 2.F. Age Distribution of Men Veteran VHA Users, FY10-FY20



- FY19: 46% of women Veterans, 37% of men Veterans used VA MH/SUD care
- 31% of Veterans using VA care have a confirmed mental health diagnosis
- Most common: PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Substance Use Disorder
- PTSD 15x higher, age/sex-adjusted suicide rate 57% higher among Veterans

Exhibit 2.E. Age Distribution of Women Veteran VHA Users, FY10-FY20



VA Research Strategic Priorities

1. Increase Veterans' access to high-quality clinical trials
2. Increase the substantial real-world impact of VA research
3. Put VA data to work for Veterans

Priority: Put VA data to work for Veterans

- National electronic health record data (ICD Codes, pharmacy data, health factors, TIU notes/natural language processing)
 - Link to Medicare data (no charge)
- Million Veteran Program: Health records, self-reported surveys, genetics data, omics data, National Death Index, Medicare data for >1,000,000 Veterans
- Millenium Cohort (DoD): Biannual survey data assessing impact of military service on health and well-being; >250,000 service members and Veterans since 2001

VA Secretary's Research Priorities

Timely access to care

- Includes direct VA care, community care, rural health

Veteran well-being

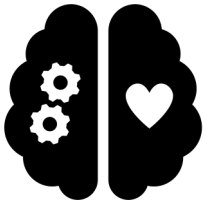
- Mental health, chronic health conditions, housing and other SDoH

Suicide prevention

Recent legislation

- PACT Act (Gulf War Illness, Military Exposures), MISSION Act (Community Care), Elizabeth Dole Act (Caregiving support)

VA Research: Broad Portfolios



Brain, Behavioral & Mental Health (BMH): Etiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases of the central and peripheral nervous systems



Health Systems Research (HSR): Discover, validate, and optimize the foundational methods necessary for sustaining learning health systems in real-world care to improve Veteran health (implementation science, data science, engagement science, system science, policy science).

VA Research: Broad Portfolios



Medical Health (MED): Pre-clinical, translational, clinical, data science, epidemiological and –omics research on disorders and diseases prevalent in the Veteran population. Priorities: disorders of the heart and vascular system, endocrine system, bone, skeletal muscle, GI, kidney, lung, blood, immune system, malignancies, infectious diseases; biology of aging; surgical aspects of medical disorders.



Rehabilitation Research, Development and Translation (RDT):

Maximize Veterans' functional independence, quality of life, and participation in their lives and community across the lifespan. Important themes: primary and secondary prevention; improvement, restoration, and replacement of lost or deteriorating function (physical, mental, sensory, etc)

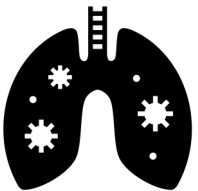
VA Research: Actively Managed Portfolios



Gulf War Research (GWR): Chronic multisymptom illness, medical unexplained illnesses, Gulf War Illness, affecting Gulf War Veterans deployed in the Southwest Asia theater during 1990-1991 Desert Shield/Desert Storm.



Military Exposures Research (MER): Laboratory studies related to toxic agents, exposure assessments of Service members completed post-military service, epidemiological research, and clinical and health systems studies related to military occupational and environmental exposures.



Precision Oncology (POP): Precision oncology-based approaches to translational, clinical, health services, implementation, and data science research with emphasis on studies that impact clinical practice and/or inform healthcare decision making.

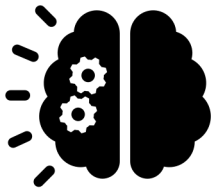
VA Research: Actively Managed Portfolios



Pain and Opioid Use (POU): Preclinical, translational, behavioral, epidemiological and health services/implementation research projects where pain, or opioid use, and the consequences of opioid use are the primary outcome(s) of the study.



Suicide Prevention Research (SPR): preclinical, translational, clinical, and health services/implementation studies that seek to improve the understanding of suicide and prevent suicidal behavior.



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): preclinical, translational, clinical, epidemiological, and health services/implementation research where the focus is on the consequences of TBI event(s) across the lifespan and where TBI is the precipitating condition for the development of brain and mental health disorders.

VA Research Career Development Awards

Award type	Budget cap	Duration
CDA-1	Salary + up to \$40,000 research funds	Up to 2 years
QUERI Early Career Implementation Science Leadership Initiative (ISLI)	Up to \$120,000/year for salary, travel, and/or other support	2 years
Office of Rural Health CDA	Up to 75% protected time and salary support + \$60,000/year research funds	2 years
VISN Early Career Award Program (ECAP)	Salary	2 years
CDA-2*	Salary + up to \$75,000/year research funds	3-5 years

*VA-BIRCWH Scholars: New partnership, up to 4 VA CDA-2 awardees/year

CDA-2 PI Qualifications

Non-clinicians

- ≤ 5 years past terminal degree or most recent training
- Clinicians not hired in clinical appt must apply as a non-clinician
- At pre-app: No VA paid requirement

Clinicians

- ≤ 10 years past terminal degree, ≤ 5 years past most recent clinical training
- At pre-app: Have worked out required 8th and protected research time with clinical service chief for duration of award

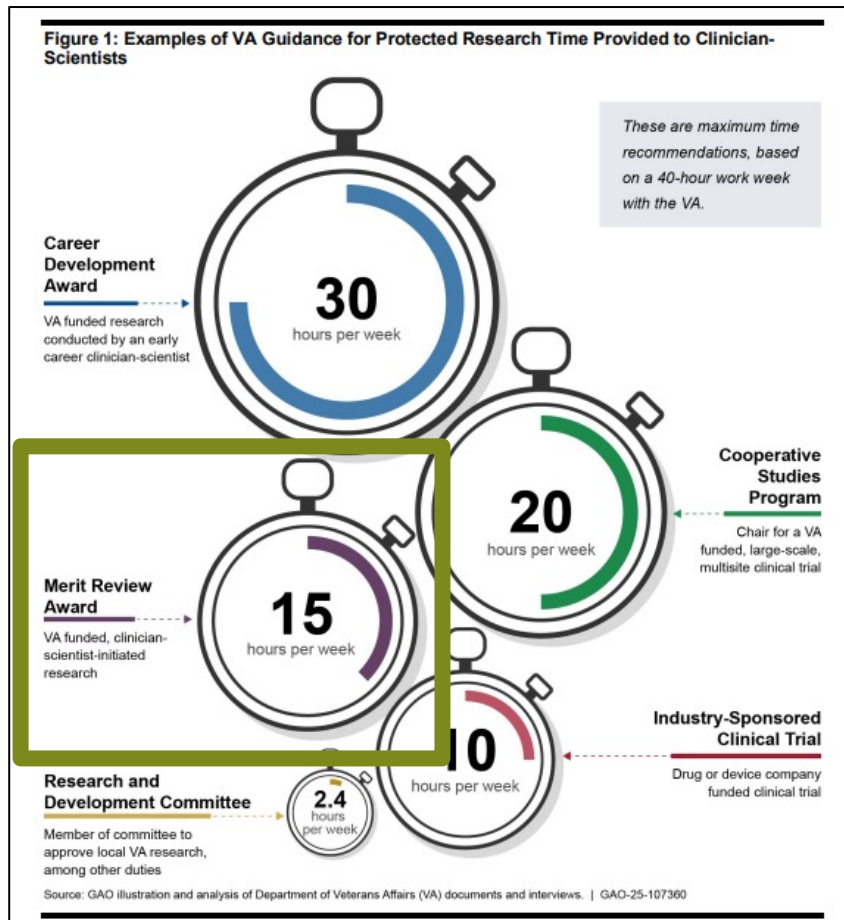
All

- $\geq 6/8^{\text{th}}$ VA appointment at time CDA is funded (**do not need at application**)
- Applicants cannot be PI on any other ISRM application in same cycle
- 1+ mentor with VA Merit funding (in past year), co-located primary mentor
- No past receipt of R01/Merit, CDA/K, or equivalent

Research Collaboration and Careers in the VA

- Without Compensation (WOC) affiliates
 - Requirements: U.S. citizen, background check, VA-required training
 - Unpaid volunteer or paid employee of VA non-profit, academic affiliate, other
 - 3-year, renewable appointments
 - Onboarding: 3-6 weeks (or months)
- Health Science Specialist positions, Research Career Scientist
 - Epidemiology and biostatistics, qualitative methods, health economics
 - Soft money, salary from grants
- Clinical staff/Clinician Investigator positions with protected research time
 - Hard money, salary from clinical service, time bought out with grants

VA Clinician-Investigators



- >60% of 4000 VA researchers are clinicians
- Protected time determined by site and service
- 20-25% typical minimum clinical service
- Labor mapping guidance for PI grants, not including co-I and other research activities

VA Investigator-Initiated Research Grants

Award type	Budget cap	Duration
Merit (non-clinical trial)	\$200,000/year	Up to 4 years (+ renewal up to 4 years)
Merit (clinical trial)	Single-site: \$600,000 for 2 years, \$900,000 for 3 years, \$1,200,000 for 4 years Multi-site: \$600,000 for 2 years, \$1,125,000 for 3 years, \$1,500,000 for 4 or 5 years	Single-site: Up to 4 years Multi-site: Up to 5 years
Merit (combined proof of concept + clinical trial)	Proof of concept (single-site only): \$300,000 for 1 year, \$600,000 for 2 years Trial phase: Single site: \$600,000 for 2 years, \$900,000 for 3 years, \$1,200,000 for 4 years; Two sites: \$600,000 for 2 years, \$1,125,000 for 3 years, \$1,500,000 for 4-5 years; Three+ sites: Additional \$100,000 per site/year	Proof of concept: 1-2 years Trial phase: Up to 5 years
Pilot	\$115,000/year	Up to 2 years

**Non-clinician PIs can request up to 3/8ths salary above budget cap*

Merit PI Qualifications

Non-clinicians

- At pre-app: Must have VA-paid appointment ($\geq 1/8^{\text{th}}$)

Clinicians

- Can apply with VA-paid or VA WOC appointment
- At pre-app: Have worked out required 8th and protected research time with clinical service chief for duration of award
- At funding: Must have $\geq 5/8$ ths VA appointment

All

- At pre-app: Must have supporting VA PI status
- Can only be PI/MPI on one application to a given RFA each cycle

VA CORE, VA Operations Funding Opportunities

- Pilot awards (1-2 years, ~\$50,000) often available from Pain/Opioid CORE, Virtual Care CORE
- Investigator in Residence Opportunities (1-2 years, 50% effort/salary) for mentored research with existing resources
- Investigator-initiated grants, center grants, and MOUs with VA program offices and operational partners

Non-VA Funding Opportunities

- VA investigators can apply to non-VA funders through academic affiliate or VA non-profit
- Clinicians and non-clinicians can take up to 50% university salary with non-VA grants (150% across VA/affiliate)***
- NIH, PCORI, DoD, private foundations, affiliate grants....

Psychologist Clinician-
Investigator (SFVA)

- 50% COIN (HSR Center)
- 30% VA HSR (MPI)
- 20% clinical service

Associate Professor,
Dept Psychiatry (UCSF)

- 15% NCCIH R01 (MPI)
- 25% NHLBI R01 (MPI)
- NCE TRDRP (PI)

***Site-specific

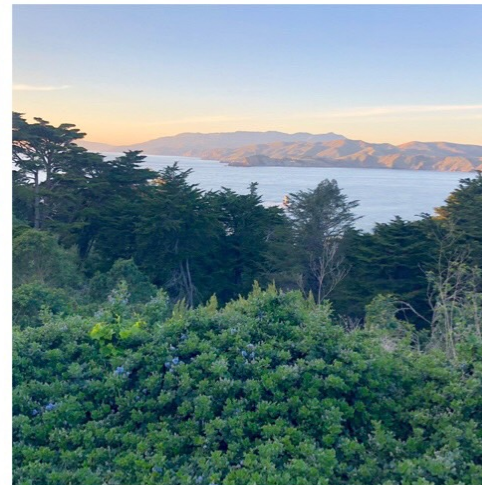
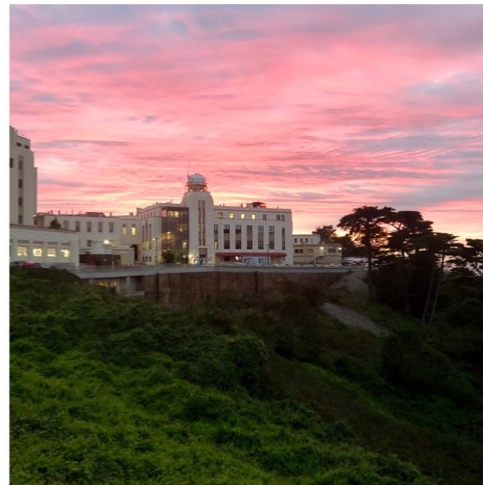
Collaborative Research Communities

Women's Health Research Network

- National resource for VA researchers and program offices
- Research consultation, cyberseminars and conferences, collaboration facilitation, advocacy, dissemination
- Women's Health Practice-Based Research Network (n=70)
- Women's Improvement Network (WIN): participatory research
- National research workgroups: Suicide Prevention, Reproductive Health, Menopause, Trauma, Harassment, Military Exposures, Aging, Substance Use Disorders*

Why VA?

- Local, regional, and national collaborations
- Real world impact
- Big data resources
- Opportunities and support for varied research methods
- Work on interdisciplinary teams (clinical and research)
- Funding: VA, NIH, DoD, foundations, university
- Multiple roles: Research, Clinical, Training
- Mission-driven



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