



Clinical Science Research and Development



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

Terri Talks

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Message from the Director

This will be my last Newsletter communication to the CSRD community, as I will be retiring from VA service on January 31. This decision is one I make with so much enthusiasm, especially since I know the future is so bright for CSRD. The research in motion today is bound to drive even more potential solutions for Veterans. The field is well-placed with expert teams leading critical efforts for COVID-19, PTSD, suicide prevention, precision oncology, mental health and other priority topics, as well as with the CSRD team here in ORD who are so dedicated to continuing to serve the community. I wish you all the most success in your research as well as in your federal service – the combination, at least for me - has been a dream. With all of my gratitude for all that you have done and all that you will do, *Terri*

Intent to Fund Notices Distributed

Our initial CSRD Fall round of intent to fund notices had been sent to stations last week, with thanks to the entire team here for closing out our round on time. HOWEVER, we also just received additional funding in the interim, and thus, are pleased to announce a second round of funding notices are being relayed to stations today for additional applications. Congratulations to all of our new CSRD awardees!

As always, a decision to fund an application is made depending upon the availability of funds and with considering priority areas and portfolio needs. Decisions also consider our overall current investment for a topic area. Please reach out to your Scientific Portfolio Manager for clarity about a specific application, maybe even keeping in mind approximately 80% of our applications overall are not approved for funding. This is a particularly

challenging time budget-wise, with our still being under a Continuing Resolution (which means no final budget yet), and well as managing budget execution (related to the ORD-wide sweep of prior year money).

Suicide Prevention Efforts Noted

Joe Constans has been introduced to the national enterprise as our Senior Program Manager for Suicide Prevention. Since onboarding, he has been working to organize some specific efforts to support this high priority topic. The webpage and general information have been updated: [Suicide Prevention Research \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/suicide-prevention-research/). The generation of a new opportunity to apply for a Suicide Clinical Resource Center will be announced shortly. A webinar announcement describing methodology related to a new clinical trials database is being provided: [SPTD: Suicide Prevention Trials Database \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/suicide-prevention-trials-database/). Please consider what you can bring forward regarding any solutions to discuss for suicide prevention research by contacting Joe at joseph.constans@va.gov.



New Evidence-Based Resource on Cannabis

An online, independent, methodologically rigorous, and frequently updated cannabis evidence resource about the health effects of cannabis launched this January. The [STEM](https://www.cannabisevidence.org/) (Systematically Testing the Evidence on Marijuana) website aims to empower health care providers to have evidence-based discussions about cannabis use with their patients, and to identify specific gaps in evidence for researchers trying to design studies in the field of clinical cannabis research. [STEM](https://www.cannabisevidence.org/) is a collaboration between researchers at the Veterans Health Administration and the Center for Evidence-based Policy in Portland, Oregon.

The url address for the STEM is <https://www.cannabisevidence.org/>.

VA CURES Network Seeking More Sites

The VA CURES Network is seeking additional sites to join the nine VAs currently participating in ACTIV-4 ACUTE (ACTIV-4a).

This NHLBI-sponsored multicenter, randomized, controlled, adaptive platform trial investigates therapies for patients hospitalized for COVID-19. Its original focus was on antithrombotic strategies, but it has since expanded to other therapies designed to also reduce inflammation and prevent organ failure in SARS-CoV-2 infection. If your site is interested in joining this collaboration, please contact Ashlea.Mayberry@va.gov expressing your interest. We anticipate our second wave of site enrollment to begin May 2022. Qualifying sites will be provided extensive training and rigorous support, including central VA Privacy and Information Security review for all VA sites, and aid with submitting the VA-approved protocol to ACTIV-4a's commercial central IRB. Please reference:

ACTIV-4a Information: <https://petalnet.org/studies/public/activ4a>

Clinical Trials Link: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04505774>

CURES Network Information: https://www.research.va.gov/services/csrd/va_cures/

2022 VA-TEAM Application Available

The VA Translational Education and Mentoring Center (VA-TEAM) is requesting applications from VA investigators with inventions/patents where VA has rights on those inventions, for a two-stage translational training program. For the Phase 1 training, 16 investigators and their research teams will receive training in the fundamentals of translational research from finding product-market fit to financing, all within the context of their own research projects, and with special emphasis on Veteran health and VA's strategic priorities. Of these 16 research teams, 8 teams will be selected for Phase 2 for an advanced, more intensive program designed to drive selected late-stage translational research to the point where it is attractive for outside investment. The long-term goal of this training program is to expedite translation of VA research into clinical care of Veterans. The 2022 VA-TEAM Application, program announcement, RFA, and other information is available at va-team.org. For additional information or questions, please contact Dr. Andrew Cornwell (info@va-team.org), or Dr. Arun Sharma (Arun.Sharma@va.gov).

Thank you for your Service!

Thank you, Dr. Greenwood-Van Meervel, as you step down as chair for the NURP review Committee, as well as Chair of the Merit Review Committee recently. Your dedicated, quality, and long-time service are greatly appreciated.

"I couldn't believe it when I looked at my CV and noticed that I have reviewed for the VA for over 31 years. The last 15 years were the most intense, but I learned so much and feel very privileged to have been asked to serve the VA in a capacity that has improved the lives of our Veterans."

--Beverley Greenwood-Van Meervel, Ph.D.



REMINDERS

February 1 Deadlines:

As announced in last month's newsletter*, **Diversity Supplement Applications** are due February 1. For more information: Carol.Fowler@va.gov or VHACoordDEIWG@va.gov

As announced in previous newsletters*, nomination packages for the **John Blair Barnwell Award**, CSRD's highest honor for outstanding achievement in clinical science research are due by close of business on February 1. Information may be found at: [John Blair Barnwell Award \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/JohnBlairBarnwellAward)

*Past issues of CSRD newsletters may be accessed at: [Clinical Science Research and Development \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/ClinicalScienceResearchandDevelopment)

JIT Deadline in less than 20 days:

Applications selected for probable funding by CSRD from the Spring 2021 cycle are less than 20 days away from the 180-day deadline to complete Just-In-Time (JIT) requirements. A final decision on funding will be based upon the receipt and review of the JIT information. If the JIT is not completed for an application within the 180-day deadline, the application may be withdrawn from consideration for funding.

If you need an extension and have not yet requested one, please have your research office request a JIT extension waiver as soon as possible by emailing VHACOBLCsrdJIT@va.gov. Be sure to provide a justification for the extension and a remediation plan; include a detailed timeline of attempts to obtain regulatory approval and anticipated date(s) for submission of remaining JIT documents. Requests without this

information will not be considered. It is required to have an extension in place prior to the deadline to ensure no further action is taken.

CSRD Staff Highlight:

Welcome, Ryan Schumacher!

CSRD Welcomes Ryan Schumacher as a Health Science Specialist. Hailing from the Minneapolis VA, we welcome Ryan to the CSRD team where he started January 10 supporting the clinical research program. He comes with a heavy data management background, VA facility research administration background, and actually helped us organize our initial CSRD newsletter a few years back when he was with us on a detail assignment.

Ryan served as a Program Specialist with the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System since 2014. In that capacity he has worked as the local Research & Development Committee Coordinator and was one of the superusers responsible for deploying VARRIS there.



Prior to joining the Minneapolis VA, Ryan worked as a research assistant at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health as a research assistant on the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study and the Minnesota Hear Survey. He also spent 13 years in the United States Navy and Reserve as an Intelligence Officer. He earned his master's degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations at the University of Minnesota, his bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Central Florida and graduated from the Command and Staff Program from the US Naval War College.

CSRD DMC Announces New Schedule

The CSRD Data Monitoring Committee is moving from a schedule of bi-annual meetings to meetings on an annual basis as a standard practice for most studies. Progress Reports will be due July 15 from PIs whose projects are assigned to the Psychiatric, Behavioral Health and Neurologic Disorders (PBN) panel. For the Medical/Surgical DMC panel, the next Progress Reports will be due October 15, 2022. Reminders will be sent closer to these dates. As always, we thank DMC members for their service and welcome any suggestions for DMC quality improvement.

Both DMC panels are currently seeking new members. Qualifications for membership include funding history and clinical trial experience, academic position of associate professor or above, a solid publications record, and review experience. Members are needed from the following areas: cardiology, pulmonology, oncology, urology, neurology,

internal medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and biostatistics. For more information, please contact Dr. Paine (Tamara.Paine@va.gov).

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Scientific Portfolio/Program Managers: [BLR&D and CSR&D Contact Information \(va.gov\)](#)