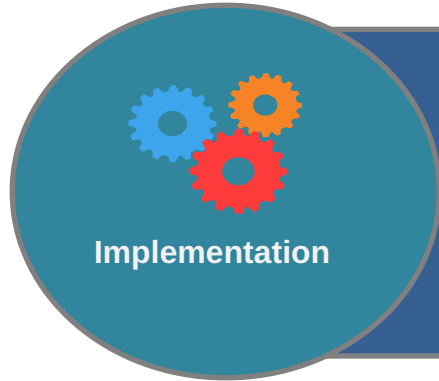




# VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)

Amy M. Kilbourne, PhD, MPH  
Director, QUERI

# Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)



More rapidly implement effective practices into routine care using quality improvement strategies  
National Network of QUERI Programs

>60 complex effective practices implemented across VA by >3,500 providers, >250,000 Veterans



Support rigorous, stakeholder-driven evaluations of national programs and policies  
Partnered Evidence-based Policy Resource Center (PEPReC)

25+ rigorous evaluations of national policies, e.g., suicide prevention, opioid misuse, health equity



Support implementation and quality improvement science across the translation spectrum  
Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources (CEIR)

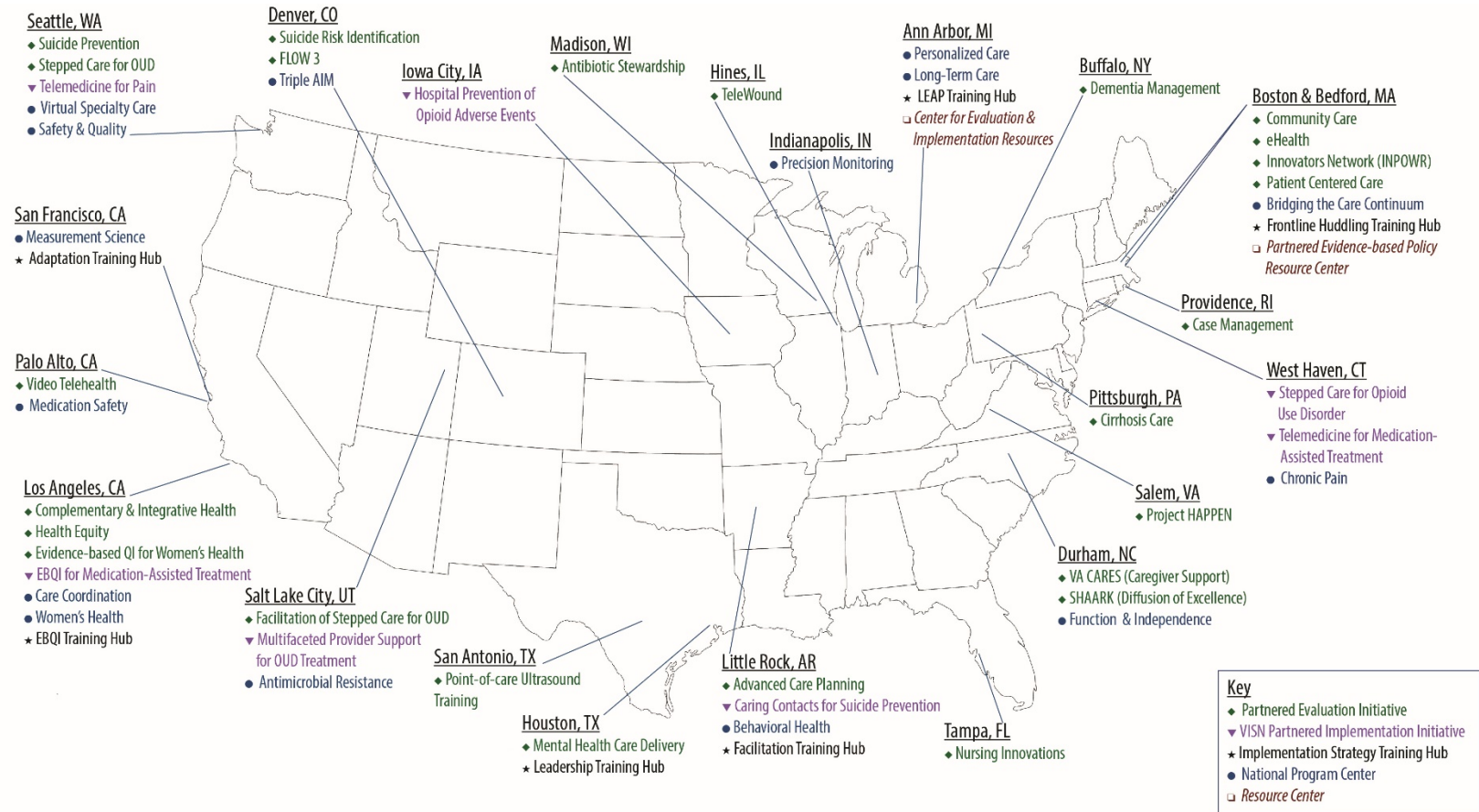
Implementation Roadmap  
Evaluation Toolkit

# 40+ QUERI Centers Across VA

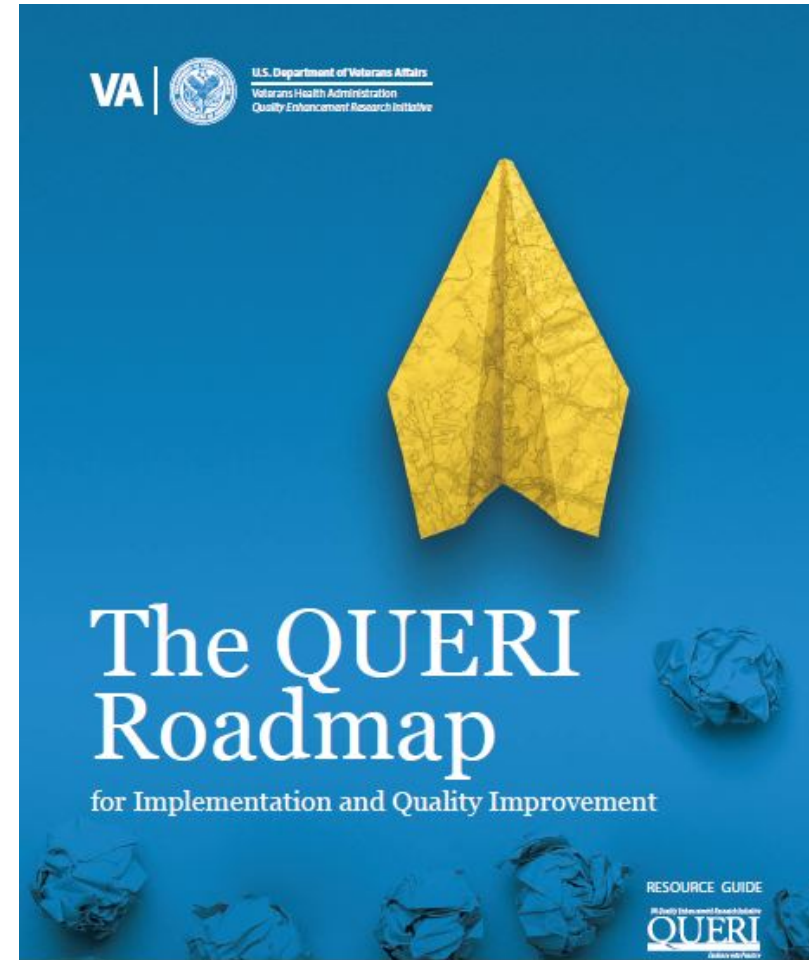
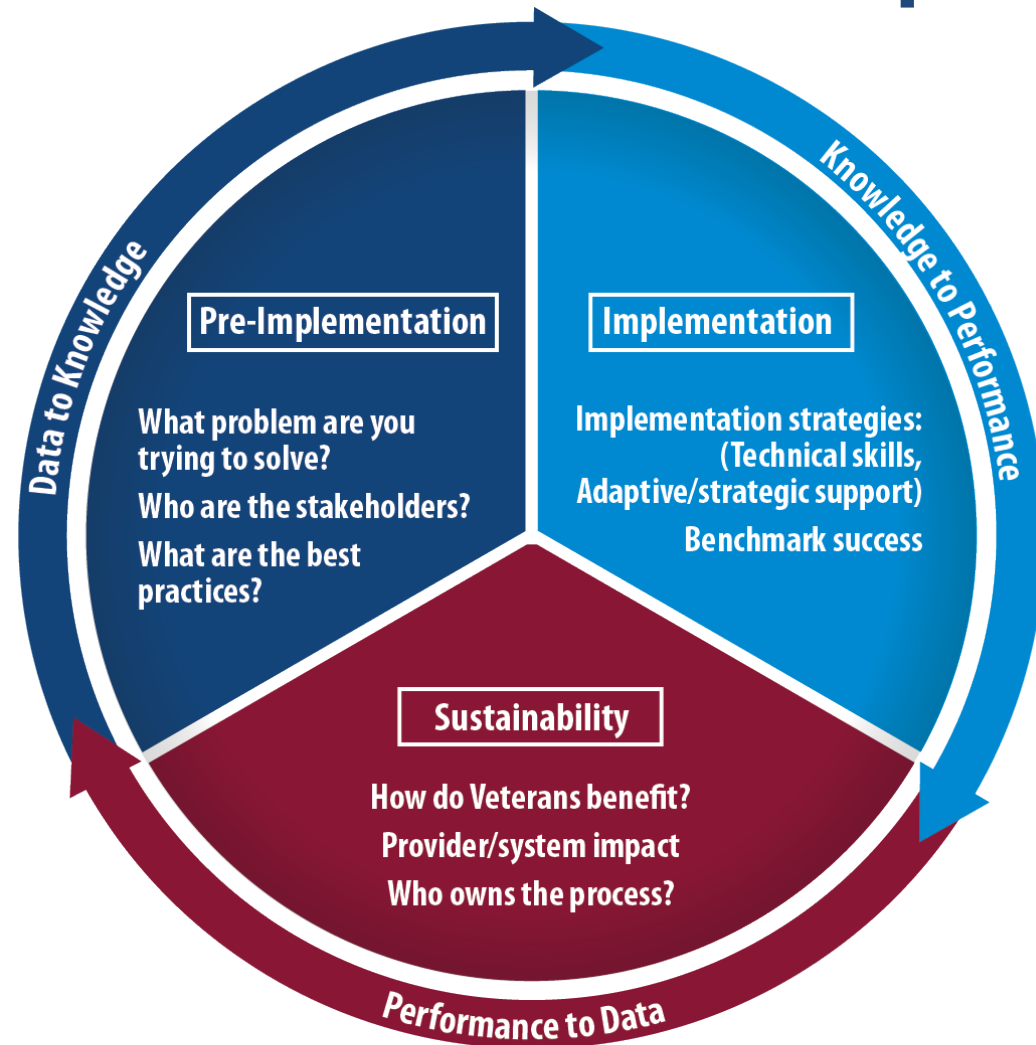
**Mission:** Improve Veteran health by accelerating evidence into practice

**Vision:** Become a trusted purveyor of implementation science to enable more frontline providers deploying effective practices using quality enhancement methods

**Values:** Excellence, Commitment, Partnerships, Rigor, Resilience, Flexibility




# QUERI Roadmap for Implementation and Quality Improvement



Kilbourne, et al, Med Care, 2019



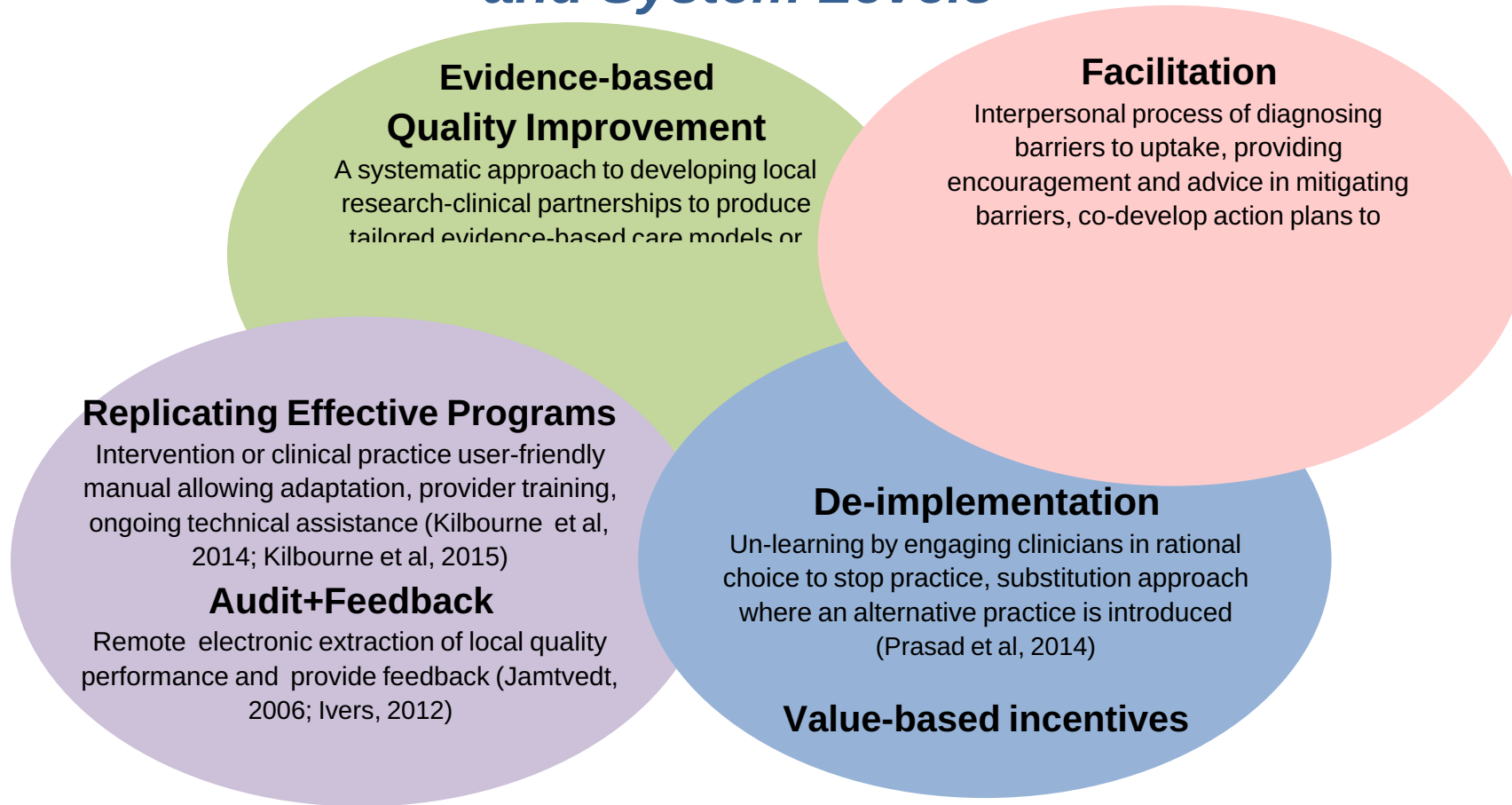
# QUERI Implementation Roadmap

	Pre-implementation	Implementation	Sustainment 
<b>What is being implemented?</b>	<b>Identify a problem and solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify high-priority need and goals</li> <li>Agree on evidence-based practices (EBP) and settings</li> <li>Clarify EBP core elements, adaptation options (Veteran, provider input)</li> </ul>	<b>Implement an intervention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select implementation strategies</li> <li>Tailor strategies to local settings</li> <li>Disseminate implementation plan and support tools</li> </ul>	<b>Sustain an intervention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop business plan to continue EBP</li> <li>Monitor for changes in EBP, whether different EBP is needed</li> <li>Weigh costs of maintaining EBP</li> </ul>
<b>Who and what settings are involved?</b>	<b>Engage stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivate leadership/stakeholder support</li> <li>Assess capacity, including barriers and solutions to EBP delivery</li> <li>Package EBP with delivery adaptations</li> </ul>	<b>Activate implementation teams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convey top-down practice support “push” to local sites from leadership</li> <li>Empower bottom-up “pull” to enhance stakeholder buy-in at local level</li> <li>Create stakeholder feedback channels</li> </ul>	<b>Transition ownership to stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide management support</li> <li>Plan and budget for resources</li> <li>Support continuous learning and innovation in local stakeholder teams</li> </ul>
<b>How is it being measured?</b>	<b>Develop measures and data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design evaluation to match goals</li> <li>Identify measures of success and data sources</li> <li>Establish baseline performance</li> </ul>	<b>Monitor implementation progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report progress to stakeholders</li> <li>Make data accessible to stakeholders</li> <li>Adjust plan based on feedback</li> </ul>	<b>Ongoing Evaluation and Reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veteran outcomes</li> <li>Delivery of EBP (fidelity vs. adaptation)</li> <li>Provider and system costs</li> </ul>

# Examples of QUERI Implementation Strategies

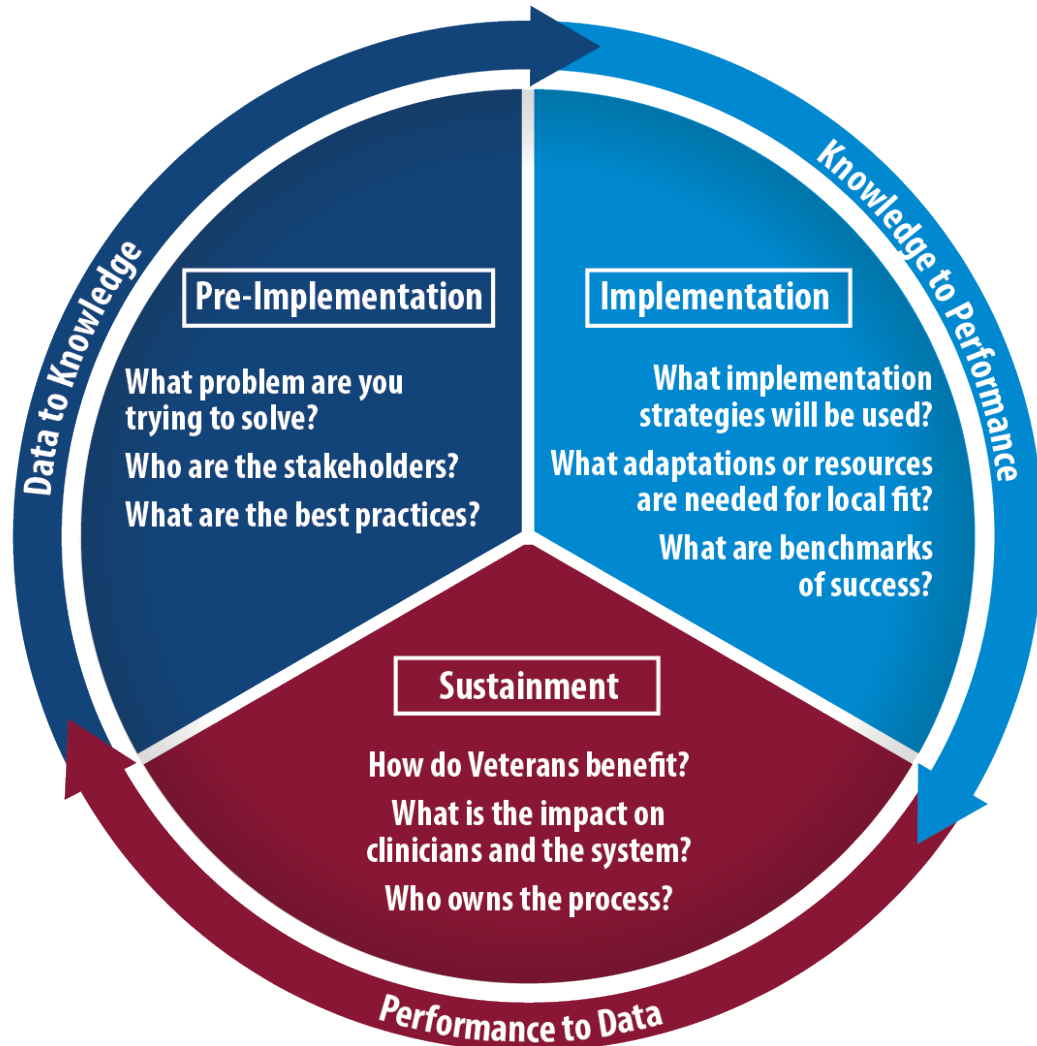
*Tools Informed by Research that Enhance Quality Improvement at the Provider and System Levels*

**Relative Intensity of Strategy**



**Relative Site Complexity/Need**

# QUERI Implementation Roadmap Overview



**CyberSeminar: The QUERI Implementation Roadmap: A Framework to Guide Partnered Implementation and Quality Improvement Efforts in a Learning Health System**

[Link for recording](#)

[Link for slide deck](#)

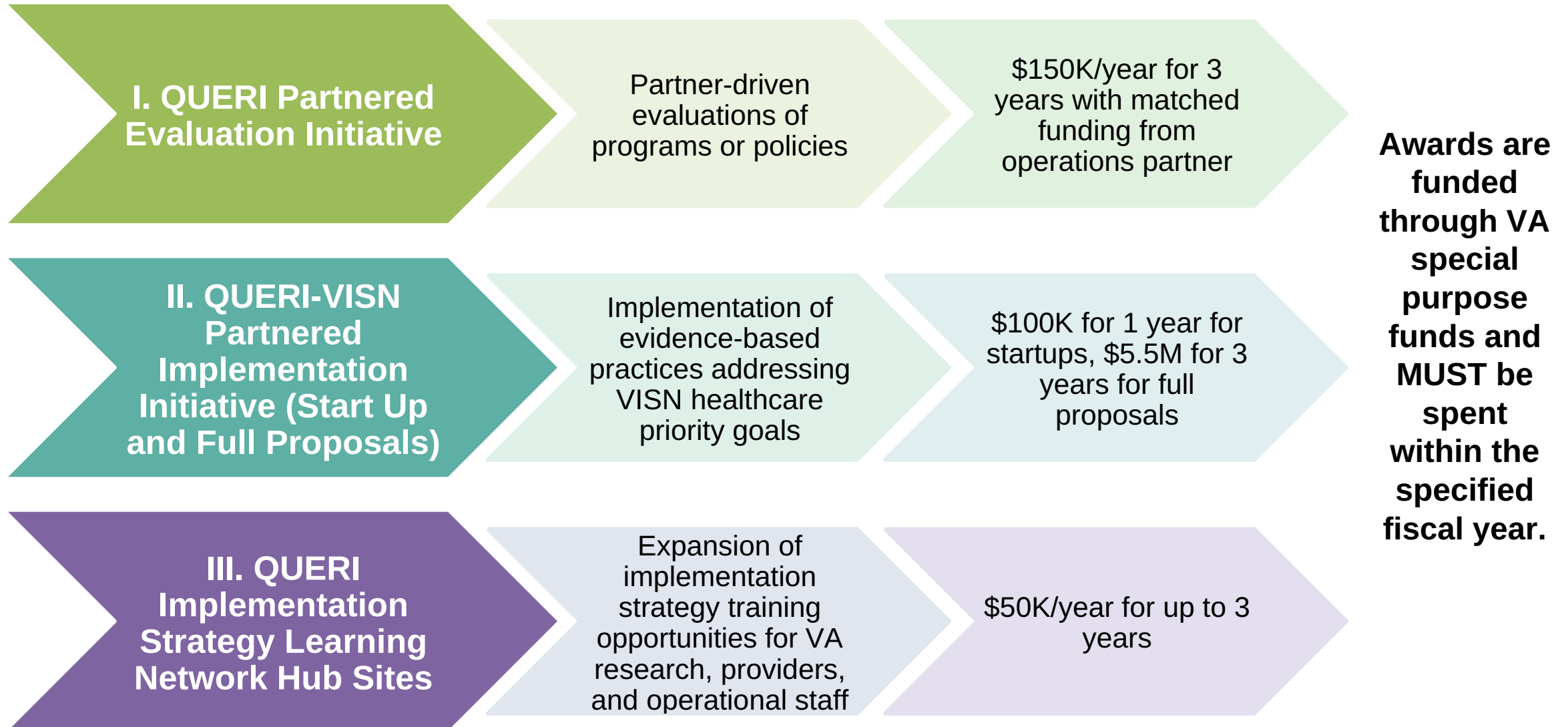
# QUERI Impact Framework: ACTION

(Braganza and Kilbourne, JGIM, 2020)

Domain	Outcomes
Alignment	Relevant priorities, metrics, partners
Commitment	Shared operational resources and financial support, scientific tools & strategies
Tailoring to local context	Implementation sites and providers using effective practice, Veterans served
Informing the field	Decision-maker meetings and Congressional hearings, peer-reviewed publications, scale up and spread beyond initial sites
Observing healthcare change and generating New projects	Sustainability, policies and clinical practices informed/shaped, tangible improvements in quality of care and health outcomes, cultural changes in provider engagement and new project requests



# QUERI Global Request for Applications (RFAs)



# QUERI Projects are Not Research

- QUERI projects are non-research projects because of the **funding source** (medical administration (0160) funds) and their focus on **improvement** within VA. QUERI projects do not meet the definition of research.
- Protocols involving data collection are non-research if the **data are fed back to providers or operations leaders** to directly improve care and/or other VA processes. The activity does not meet the definition of research.
- In situations when a QUERI project wants to collect additional data above and beyond what is needed for informing improvement within VA, a determination should be sought as to whether the project's activities constitute research.

**CyberSeminar:  
Everything You Need to  
Know About QUERI Non-  
research Protocols**

[Link for Recording](#)

Password: queri-093019

[Link for Slide Deck](#)

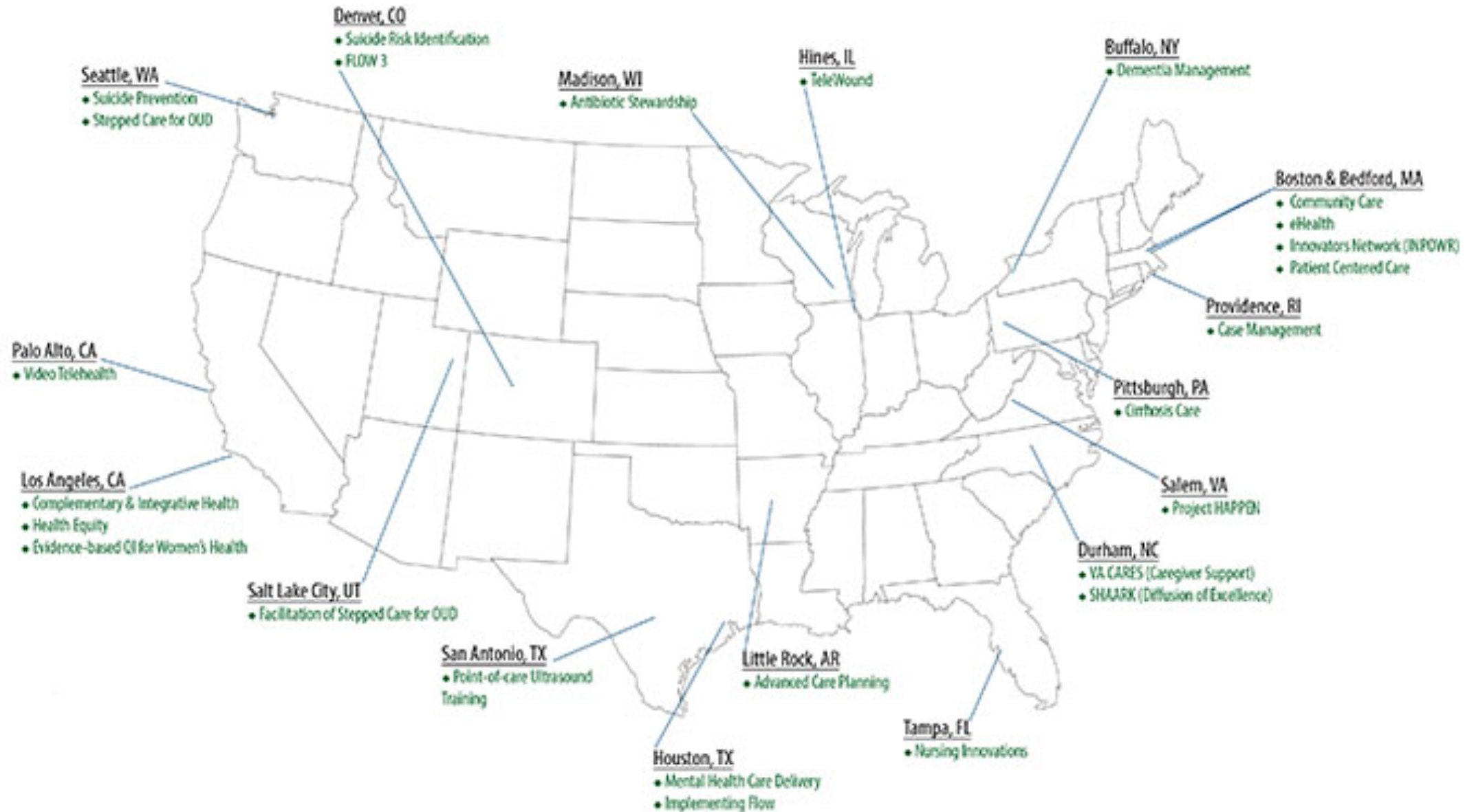
# I. QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiatives (PEI)

- Objective: Support rigorous evaluations of programs or policies that are primarily directed and funded by a VA operations (VA Program Office, VISN), federal agency (e.g., NIH, CDC, AHRQ, HHS), or not-for-profit foundation partner
- Anticipated Impacts:
  - Support VHA's compliance to the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018
  - Promote VA's transformation into a [Learning Health System](#) through leveraging data and rigorous evaluation to promote sustainability of evidence-based practices
  - Focus resources more efficiently and improve consistency and spread of best practices

# I. Overview of PEI Funding Announcement

- **Data Driven Decision-Making Focus.** Goal is better integration of more rigorous but practical research methods (e.g., stepped wedge comparisons, population-based studies) into VA healthcare.
- **Operations Partner Directed.** Project goals should be aligned with VA national priorities and specific goals to be achieved by the partner.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$150,000 each year for up to three years.

# I. Current Partnered Evaluation Initiatives





## II. QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiative

- Objective: Implement evidence-based practices (EBPs) at the frontline clinical level for healthcare priorities chosen by VISN leadership
- Anticipated Impacts:
  - Modernize systems and reduce clinical variation through scale up and spread of EBPs across VISNs (see [VHA Performance Plan](#) Leading Change Goal)
  - Improve Veteran health by rapidly implementing EBPs, particularly in **sites experiencing quality gaps in that healthcare area**

## II. Overview of QUERI VISN PII Funding Announcement

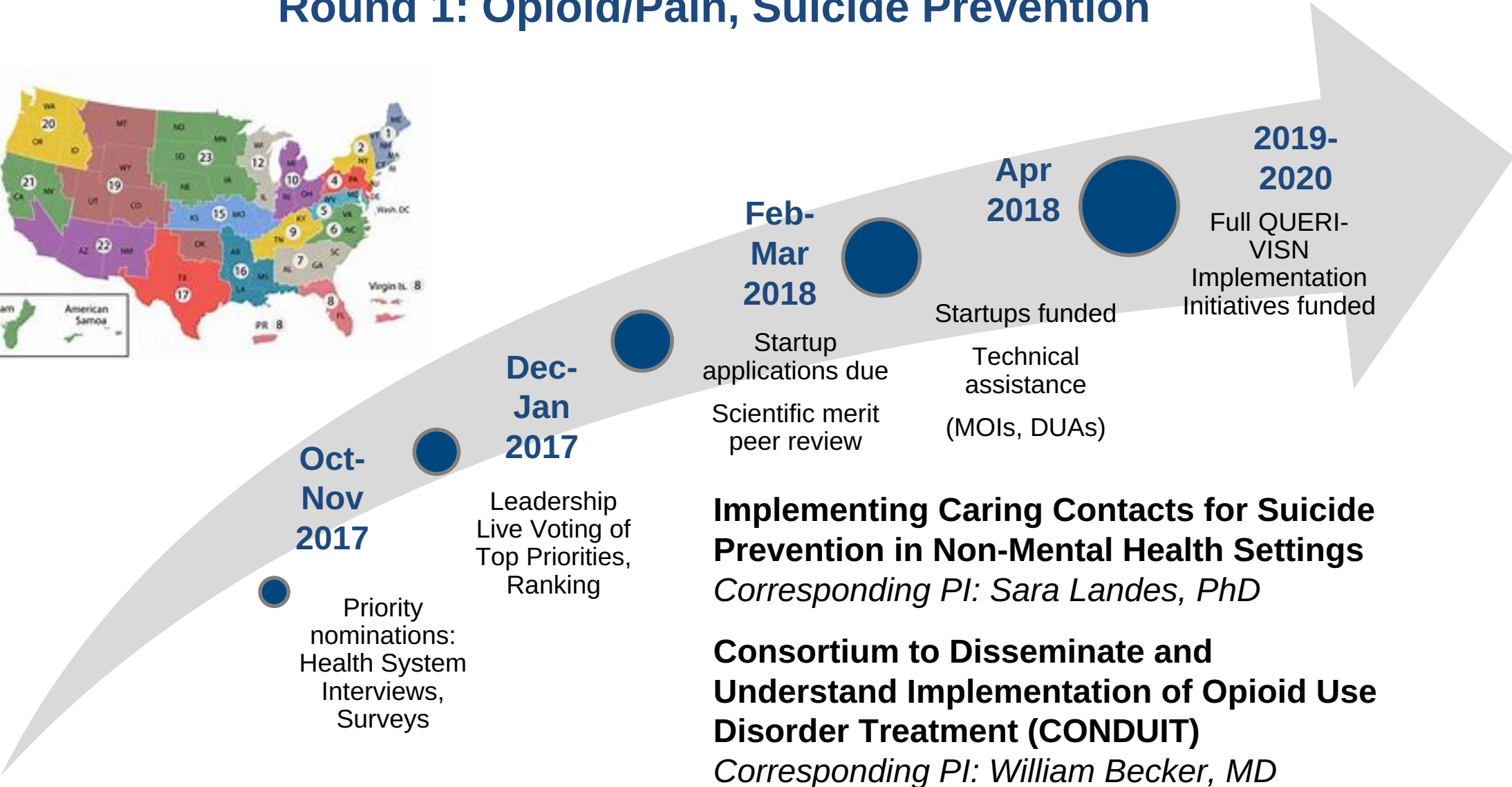
- **Quality Improvement Focus.** Proposals should focus on deployment of evidence-based practices (EBPs) that support at least one of the healthcare priority goals selected by Network Directors. A specific implementation strategy or set of strategies used to promote the uptake of the EBP, especially for facilities that demonstrate gaps in quality or outcomes related to the healthcare priority, must be described in the proposal.
- **VISN Directed.** Projects must be co-led by a VISN leader (Director or CMO) and a VA implementation expert. The VISN chooses the priority, and implementation activities in the proposal must support [VHA Performance Plan](#) goals of modernizing systems through better consistency and spread of EBPs.

## II. Timeline: Implementation of VISN Healthcare Priorities



# II. QUERI VISN Partnered Implementation Initiatives

## Round 1: Opioid/Pain, Suicide Prevention



## II. Top VISN Healthcare Priorities (2019-2020)

- Improve provider **productivity** and enhance primary care **efficiency**
- Identify inter-facility **functional network** opportunities within regions
- Increase **access** to primary care, mental health, & specialty care services across VA
- Promote effective use & management of **community care** services external to VA
- Enhance **care coordination** within VA



## II. QUERI VISN PII Funding Mechanism

Startup PII Award  
\$100K

Implement  
evidence-based  
practice (EBP) in  
at least one site  
within 1 year

Full PII Proposal  
\$5.5M for ~3 years

Implement EBP in  
at least 44 sites  
(including 22  
medical centers)  
across at least 5  
VISNs

## II. QUERI VISN Full PII Scale Up and Spread

- **Funding Mechanism.** Successful QUERI VISN PII full proposal applicants will receive QUERI medical care funds of up to \$5.5M for 3 years.
- **Ready for Scale up and Spread.** PIs with successful implementation of one new evidence-based practice (EBP) in at least 1 site within the 1-year startup period can apply for full QUERI VISN PII funding to scale up and spread the EBP across 44 sites in at least 5 VISNs.
- **Project Leads.** For each VISN in which there is a significant implementation effort, there should be a VISN lead (VISN Director or CMO) and an Implementation Expert who is a VA investigator.

# III. QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Network Hub Sites

- Objective: Expand training opportunities for VA research and operational staff in the use of specific implementation strategies
- Anticipated Impacts:
  - Increase VA community awareness and expertise with implementation science
  - Support the role of implementation science as standard aspects of VA research improvement efforts

# III. Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs

- **Real World Focus.** The goal is to provide frontline providers, investigators, and operational staff with the practical skills needed to implement effective practices in routine care.
- **Eligibility.** You do not need to have received QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Network Hub Site startup funding to apply.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$50,000 each year for up to 3 years. QUERI expects to fund only one hub for a specific implementation strategy. Funds can be used to cover training faculty time related to the development of materials and delivery of the training program, purchase materials relevant to the training program, and cover the material cost of conducting the training.

# III. QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs

Implementation Training Opportunities for Investigators, Health Care Leaders

- Train providers, researchers in specific implementation strategies to ensure sustainment of EBPs
- Learning Hub Sites coordinated by Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources (CEIR)
- Strategies are evidence-based; Hubs structure training around QUERI Roadmap
- For more information contact:  
CEIR Program Manager Veronica Williams  
(Veronica.Williams9@va.gov)





# QUERI Partnered Evidence-based Policy Resource Center (PEPReC)

- PEPReC provides guidance on rigorous evaluation methods to operational and clinical managers, researchers, policy makers and the general public.
- Collaborations with VHA operations partners to help them develop and refine their ideas for quality and efficiency improvements to encourage evidence-based policy and programs.
- Applied state-of-the-art techniques for analyzing big data to develop and apply evidence-based performance metrics.
- Designed and helped launch randomized program evaluations of high-priority clinical and policy interventions
- Helps VA comply with the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act, which requires all Cabinet-level agencies to justify budgets using evidence

# Additional Resources



- Selecting and assessing fidelity to implementation strategies: [QUERI's Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources \(CEIR\)](#)



- National policy and economic evaluation methods, partnerships: [QUERI's Partnered Evidence-based Policy Resource Center \(PEPReC\)](#)



- Cost/economic analyses and evaluation appropriate for the selected strategies and training on data science/organization: [HSR&D's Health Economics Resource Center \(HERC\)](#)



- VA data resources and considerations regarding Cerner implementation: [HSR&D's VA Information Resource Center \(VIReC\)](#)