**Community Care Research Evaluation & Knowledge (CREEK)**

**Quarterly Call Minutes**

**December 16, 2020 at 2PM Eastern**

1. **CREEK Welcome** 
   * 1. Our second quarterly call
     2. Members: Dr. Kristin Mattocks, Dr. Denise Hynes, Dr. Megan Vanneman, Dr. Michelle Mengeling, Dr. Amy Rosen, and Dr. Melissa Garrido
     3. Still in infancy (funding started July 1st)
        + 1. Will continue to evolve
          2. Welcome more feedback on how we can be of service
     4. Website: <https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/centers/creek.cfm>
2. **OCC Updates** 
   * 1. We have research meetings with OCC once a month (first Friday)
        + 1. Talk about policy changes, contracts, data, etc.
          2. Attached recent meeting minutes in calendar invite (will share these on the website as well)
     2. Highlights from December and November calls
        + 1. Data from Region 4
          2. How Cerner will be able to manage care coordination
          3. High performing provider program (Power Point attached)
          4. PIT data
     3. Investigator questions drive CREEK’s meetings with OCC
        + 1. Send us specific question you may have for OCC the last week of the month and we will share on the following call
          2. OCC executives attend, so very likely someone will be able to answer the question
     4. OCC planning to have information session about PPMS
        + 1. Please send any questions you have before this meeting

Will be sure to pass along all information gained

* + - * 1. OCC is willing to hold various information sessions about Community Care topics
    1. Started OCC letter of support program for Community Care grants
       - 1. CREEK asks researchers to provider brief blurb about grants
         2. Will send blurb to OCC and they will find someone on their team that is interested
         3. Next grant season we will have a hard deadline to send in blurbs

Want to assist OCC as much as possible, so it does not get overwhelming

* + 1. Leadership should not change with the Biden administration
       - 1. Structure will remain the same
         2. Dr. Mark Upton will still be OCC’s Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care

1. **CCN Provider Information:**
   1. All provider information (e.g., NPI, specialties, care sites) are housed in the PPMS system (PPMS = Provider Profile Management System)
      1. You can get an idea of what PPMSholds by going toVA.gov and find VA locations (city, facility type, service) <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>
         * 1. This site’s information is fed from PPMS data
           2. Unfortunately, it is not a practical data source for research purposes because you can’t extract/download the information.
           3. OCC is working on getting PPMS data into CDW, but this has not happened yet.
           4. There are ~1.5 million providers in the PPMS system and over 5 million provider specialties
           5. Data in PPMS is constantly being updated – the Contractors can send updates 24/7
2. **Summary of Needs Assessment Results** 
   * 1. Appreciate everyone who completed the survey
        + 1. About 80 responses
          2. Want to support all challenges and needs
     2. Biggest challenge was identifying variables to use
     3. Want to know what CC data are available
        + 1. Using and accessing
          2. Would like to see a data FAQ and sample codes
     4. Interested in updates from OCC (calls, minutes, presentations, etc.)
     5. Email anyone in CREEK if questions come after the call
3. **Current Community Care Projects**
   * 1. Created list of currently funded Community Care
        + 1. Will be included in the medical care supplement
          2. Please send edits if need be or project information if not included
     2. Hope to connect researchers with similar projects/interests
4. **Recently Published Papers**

Griffith- Appointment Wait Times for Specialty Care in Veterans Health Administration Facilities vs Community Medical Centers

Kaul- Does Community Outsourcing Improve Timeliness of Care for Veterans With Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

Mattocks- Racial Differences in the Cesarean Section Rates Among Women Veterans Using Department of Veterans Affairs Community Care

Schlosser- VA‑Community Dual Care: Veteran and Clinician Perspectives

Waldo- Outcomes Among Patients Undergoing Elective Percutaneous Coronary Intervention at Veterans Affairs and Community Care Hospitals

Wang- Association of VA Payment Reform for Dialysis with Spending, Access to Care, and Outcomes for Veterans with ESKD

Yoon- Use of the Veterans’ Choice Program and Attrition From Veterans Health Administration Primary Care

1. **Dr. Kevin Griffith – Wait Time Repository** 
   * 1. Tables in CDW
     2. Information about consults (all steps of the process)
        + 1. Requested and approved (know how long that takes)
          2. When appointment was scheduled
          3. When appointment was scheduled for
     3. Have station and county level wait times
        + 1. Merged with various databases
          2. Compared over time
          3. VA and Community Care
     4. Created code that does this specific data pull
        + 1. Data repository
          2. Approval to add station level wait times
          3. Individuals level consult data at zip three level
     5. Link: [https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/rmk89k4rhb/2](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdata.mendeley.com%2Fdatasets%2Frmk89k4rhb%2F2&data=04%7C01%7C%7C7cf178eca55f4197083c08d8a377762e%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637439080780272538%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=3HWUXpvGI7ZVmZ8yKQzwIt%2FpJ3n9CEM3WI7TuA1yBvE%3D&reserved=0)
2. **Next Call**
   * 1. March 17th
        + 1. Please send published papers, questions, comments before then
3. **Questions**

**Q1:** You mentioned the va.gov website for "find locations." Could you post that website?

A: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

The website gives you an idea of what is included in PPMS, but it's not useable for research. The PPMS database is huge, but direct access to PPMS data is needed for research. OCC is working to get PPMS into CDW - we will have a huge announcement when that happens.

**Q2:** Kevin, can you share in written form the info about the Mendeley resource?

A: Absolutely! I'll share the link to the Mendeley repository which has the wait time code, a short data brief describing the data and how they were created, and the STA3N and individual-level datasets. Link: <https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/rmk89k4rhb/2>

The individual-level data does not have patient characteristics - it has year, stop code, first three digits of the Veteran's home zip code, stop code, the wait time measures, and an indicator for whether or not it was a community care appointment

**Q3:** Could the minutes also be posted to the CREEK website? Is there a way to get some of the minutes sooner?

A: Yes, we will start to post all CREEK and OCC minutes on our website <https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/centers/creek.cfm>

**Q4:** Our group has been in discussion with OCC about the much awaited "consolidated community care datasets." It does not sound like these are currently available for research, it would be super helpful to know the timeline and whether your group has any ability to advocate for this?

A: Currently, no timeline or estimated date (asked about it the day before).

**Q5:** Are you aware of whether there are any restrictions on VA researchers directly contacting non-VA providers?

A: Yes, OMB approval (could speak with investigator James Schlosser)

**Q6:** Kevin- we have heard from some community care programs that consults were sitting for weeks/sometimes months as a result of COVID. Are you able to determine how long a consult was sitting before action was taken? would be of relevance for HSRD questions related to care delays due to COVID. thanks

A: Yes, shows all steps of the process: Consult requested and approved, when appointment was scheduled, when appointment was scheduled for.

**Q7:** My understanding is that patient identifiers in PIT contain real SSN. Is there consideration of having a different identifier used in the researcher-facing databases? For some of our work, this is the only reason we need to request access to real SSN.

A: Haven’t heard of move to make these changes. We will ask if OCC is willing to provided ICN vs. real SSN or scrambled.

**Q8:** We ran into some issues with PIT data not containing addresses where the services are provided (rendering address)?

A: Linking NPI with NPPES (found in CDW) can provide addresses.

Look at PIT.PITClaim.ServiceFacility

**Q9:** Are there data dictionaries for PIT and eCAMS variables?

A: No, there are no formal dictionaries for researchers. Erin will be working on variable resources. This is the link to the internal OCC PIT data dictionary on the CDW BISL website:<https://vaww.cdw.va.gov/metadata/Metadata%20Documents/PIT%201.0/PIT_data_dictionary_v2.0_05192020.xlsx?Web=1>

**Q10:** Does anyone have experience looking at community care authorizations using PIT data?

A: PIT is not great for authorizations. CCRA would be better in this situation.

**Q11:** What are eCAMS and CCRA?

A: eCAMS: Electronic Claims Adjudication Management System.

CCRA: Community Care Referral & Authorization.

**Q12:** Is eCAMS just about the finances, or will it have utilization that PIT doesn't capture?

A: eCAMS is supposed to flow into PIT and you should be able to get utilization data

from there.

Thank you!