



# PROVEN

Coordinating Hub to Promote Research  
Optimizing Veteran-centric EHR Networks

PROVEN Hub Newsletter

October 2024

## Welcome to the PROVEN Hub Newsletter!

The PROVEN Hub is designed to provide a single point of contact for the VA research community to design, conduct, and disseminate cutting-edge, operationally prioritized research and evaluation in support of a safe, effective, and efficient implementation of the Federal EHR throughout VA.

## PROVEN 2024 VA EHRM Research Summit

Thank you to those of you who joined our 2024 VA EHRM Research Summit! A recording of the session as well as a brief written summary of the presentations are now posted on the [VA Intranet](#). If you'd like to request slide presentations from the meeting, please email us at [provenhub@va.gov](mailto:provenhub@va.gov).

## HSR Research and EHR Synergy Cyberseminar Series

### Optimizing support for VA nurses during the EHR transition: Assessment of non-VA nursing experiences

Wednesday, October 23, 2024  
12:00pm ET/ 9:00am PT

[Register Now](#)

**Presenters: Alexis Amano, MS, and Lauren Gauntlett, MPH**

**With Discussants: Julian Brunner, PhD, Jessica Davila, PhD, and Sarah Krein, PhD, RN**

This presentation will describe qualitative findings of nursing experiences from three non-VA facilities that underwent an EHR transition. This includes key lessons and recommendations for future implementation within VHA.

Check out the [archive](#) of previous presentations in this series.

*Next in our series: Wednesday, November 6, 2024*

*Partnered Evaluation of Peer Support from the National EHRM Supplemental Staffing Unit (NESSU): Sarah Cutrona, MD, MPH, and Julian Brunner, PhD, will discuss findings from an evaluation of NESSU's impact on Lovell's EHR transition, and will outline their mixed-methods approach, which has incorporated diverse data elements including surveys, EHR log (Lights On Network) data, Teams chat logs, workload tracking, and qualitative methods.*

## Spotlight on PROVEN EHRM Projects

### Lessons from VA's Field-Based Informatics Professionals During EHR Modernization



*Julian Brunner, PhD*

An important strength of the VA's health IT system, including its usability and support of innovation, is the VA's workforce of field-based informatics professionals. The workforce includes Chief Health Information Officers (CHIOs), Clinical Application Coordinators (CACs), Nurse Informaticists, and many others who support local clinicians' use of digital tools. But Electronic Health Record (EHR) transitions, particularly those from a homegrown system to a single-vendor product, can dramatically affect the work of hospital informatics professionals—often placing them in entirely different roles with novel functions and goals. To ensure that local informaticists can continue to play their vital role, PROVEN has funded a rapid pilot project (Oct 2024 – March 2025) on field-based informatics in EHRM. The project, led by Dr. Julian Brunner (VA Greater Los Angeles) aims to understand changes in the roles of field-based informatics professionals at EHRM sites, the challenges they face, and the lessons they have learned.

**Methods:** The project, in partnership with the Office of Clinical Informatics, will first conduct focus groups to identify high-priority information needs and areas of uncertainty for informaticists at CPRS sites. Informed by these information needs, the investigators will interview field-based informaticists at facilities live on the new Federal EHR. Findings will be used to help leaders across VA prepare field-based informatics to support the new EHR.

### Federal Electronic Health Record Data Users' Experience in VA Research



*Jessica Davila, PhD*

*Gemmae Fix, PhD*

*Michael Weiner, MD, MPH*

VA research personnel from across the U.S. routinely work with local, regional, and nationwide VA research data in their investigations. Although some are working with the new Federal electronic health record (EHR) data for research, and the VA is addressing certain policies and practices relating to such research, the VA has not undertaken a systematic qualitative assessment to determine the perspectives and experiences of those personnel.

This new PROVEN pilot project, led by Dr. Jessica Davila (VA Houston), Dr. Gemmae Fix (VA Bedford), and Dr. Michael Weiner (VA Indianapolis), aims to understand the experiences of VA research personnel who have used data from the VA's new Federal EHR. This internal quality-assessment project will help the VA to learn more about use of data for research, experience in accessing or working with new data, and barriers or difficulties.

This project uses a qualitative study design. The study team will interview a sample, from a nationwide pool, of VA researchers who have attempted to access or work with, for the purpose of research, data from the VA's new Federal EHR system. The interviews will be analyzed for content. This is a one-time interview-based quality assessment.

If you have used data from the new Federal EHR system and are interested in participating, please contact the PROVEN Team at [provenhub@va.gov](mailto:provenhub@va.gov).

## VA EHRM Researcher Spotlight

**Edwin Wong, PhD, MA**

**Core Investigator, VA Puget Sound; Associate Professor, University of Washington School of Public Health**



*Edwin Wong, PhD, MA*

Dr. Edwin Wong, PhD, MA, is a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Health Systems and Population Health at the University of Washington and a Core Investigator at the Center for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care within the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. Dr. Wong is a health economist and health services researcher with a diverse portfolio of federally funded research. His work applies big data analytics to address questions in four key areas: 1) understanding economic and policy factors influencing healthcare utilization and costs, 2) examining the economic implications of large-scale health system interventions, 3) assessing the economic burden of chronic disease and 4) developing novel methods applications to improve measurement of health system performance. Dr. Wong also serves as a mentor to numerous graduate students, and postdoctoral and clinical fellows. Dr. Wong received his BS in Computer Science from Texas Christian University, and his MA and PhD in economics from the University of Washington.

Dr. Wong is a PI on the Reducing Employee Turnover and Identifying Workforce Needs During EHRM (RETAIN) Study, a multi-methods study examining the effects of electronic health records modernization (EHRM) across VA nationally. The key innovation of the study is the generation of new scientific knowledge that comprehensively identifies how EHRM affects four workforce outcomes: turnover, absenteeism, burnout, and engagement. New insights gained from this study will provide timely insights to meaningfully improve the course of EHRM in VA and guide other non-VA health systems planning their own EHRM. Dr. Wong also serves as quantitative lead of the EHRM Partnership Integrating Rapid Cycle Evaluation to Improve Cerner Implementation (EMPIRIC) project, which seeks to improve clinician and staff experiences with EHRM.

## EHRM Patient Safety & Human Factors Research Workgroup

Our EHRM Patient Safety & Human Factors Research Workgroup was launched to help investigators develop ideas that result in funded research and evaluation projects related to the EHR transition. The workgroup, led by PROVEN co-investigators Drs. Kristina Cordasco and April Savoy, aims to support researchers by providing feedback on project ideas, connecting them with relevant operations partners, and identifying the resources they need to be successful. VA researchers with specific interests in patient safety or human factors engineering are invited to participate. The workgroup convenes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month.

Our guest speaker for the next meeting on Friday, October 18 is Dr. Sherry Ball, who will present on a quality improvement evaluation study that examined clinician and staff perceptions of patients' experiences during VA's EHR transition. Data collected during the first year of the VHA's first transition site (September 2020-November 2021) and from the most recent site to undergo the transition will be presented. Study investigators found that during the first year of the transition at the first site (and less so at a more recent site), providers and staff were deeply affected when hearing from and seeing Veterans who were struggling to use the new patient portal. They offer recommendations for addressing those struggles going forward. The presented recommendations are expected to inform health policies and strategies to maintain the health workforce and their patients especially during EHR transitions.



*Sherry Ball, PhD*

If you are interested in participating in this workgroup, please email [provenhub@va.gov](mailto:provenhub@va.gov) with your VA location and a few sentences about your area of interest. *Please note that this group is currently open to VA researchers only.*

## VA EHRM Research Resources

The [PROVEN guidance for EHRM proposals](#) has been updated for the current proposal cycle.

The PROVEN [Project Registry](#) contains current information on EHRM projects.

Access the JGIM special issue "[The Science of Electronic Health Record Transitions](#)"

The EHRM-IO Intranet web page provides updates on the [deployment schedule](#) when they become available.

Access VIREC's [VA Millennium EHR Data Documentation & Resources](#) on the Intranet.

VIREC's Summary Documentation Tables include detailed information about data found in the [Corporate Data Warehouse](#). (Intranet site)

[VA Millennium EHR Data](#) on the VHA Data Portal contains information about the data available, and how to access data for research, quality improvement, and operations projects. (Intranet site)

[EHRM-IO Data Migration and Management team SharePoint site](#) links to resources related to data syndication. (Intranet site)

[EHRM & Research SharePoint](#) has research resources related to the Oracle Health EHR implementation. (Intranet site)

***Are you conducting an EHRM research or quality improvement project?***

***Let us know at [provenhub@va.gov](mailto:provenhub@va.gov)***

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