VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)
Winter 2021 QUERI Request for Applications (RFAs)

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Director, QUERI

QUERI
VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

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

VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Poll Question #1

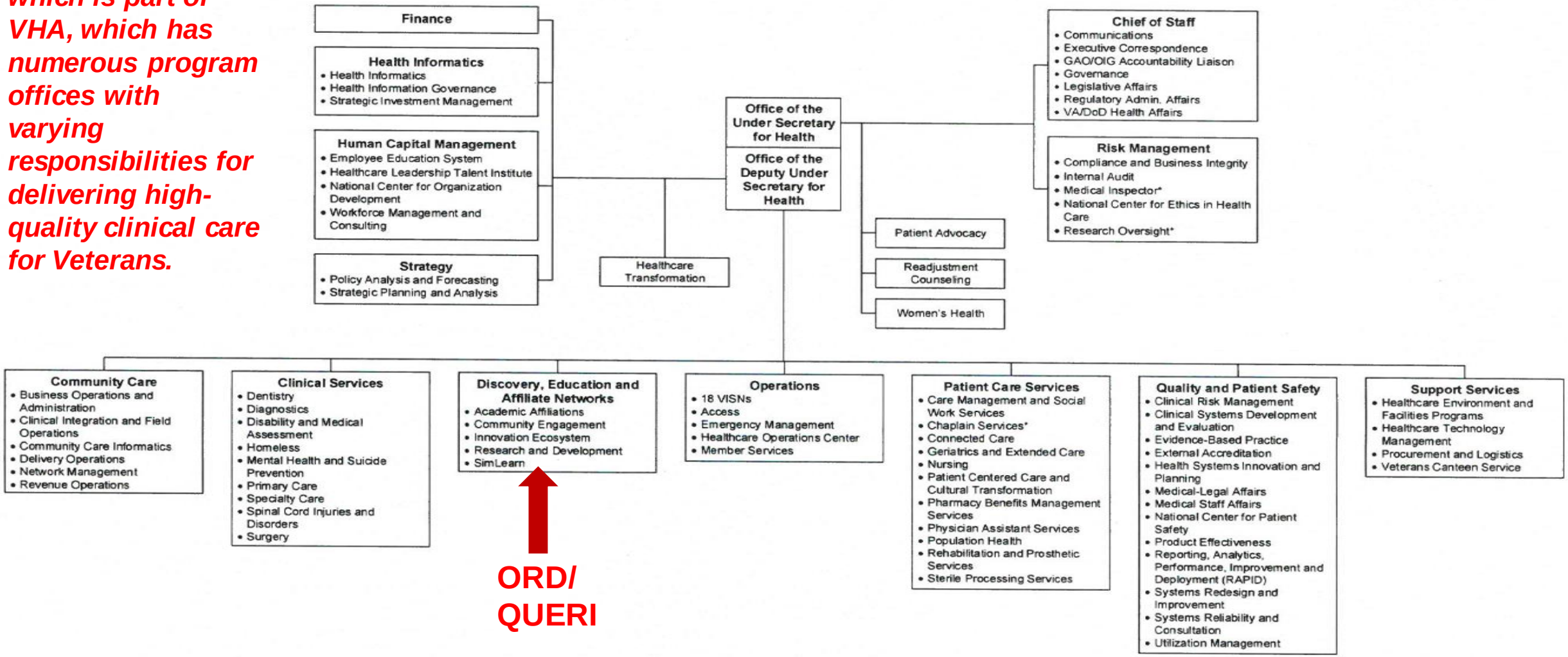
- What is your primary role in VA?
  - HSRD/QUERI Investigator, Coordinator, Analyst
  - Clinician
  - ACOS, AO, or other research leadership
  - Operations leadership/staff
  - Other

Poll Question #2

- Have you previously received QUERI funding? (Select all that apply.)
  - Yes, for a QUERI Program or VISN PII
  - Yes, for a QUERI Partnered Evaluation
  - Yes, for a QUERI Training Hub
  - No, I am new to QUERI

QUERI is under Office of Research & Development, which is part of VHA, which has numerous program offices with varying responsibilities for delivering high-quality clinical care for Veterans.

VHA Organization Chart



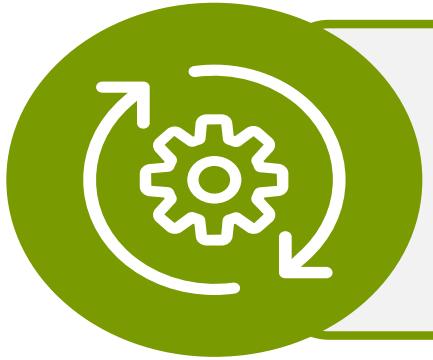
*Reports to the Under Secretary for Health

Source: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VACOVACOMPM/orgimp/SitePages/Home.aspx

Richard A. Stone, M.D.
Executive In Charge

2020 Jul 1
Date

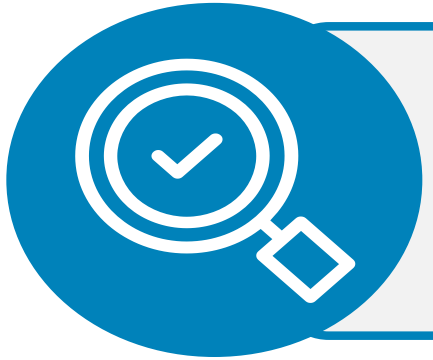
QUERI Strategic Methodology



Implement

Plan, deploy and sustain effective practices across diverse settings

Enhance Veteran access to cutting edge, personalized treatments

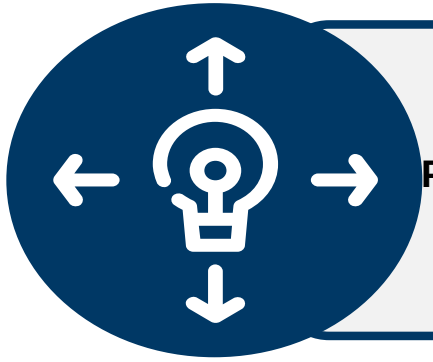


Evaluate

Conduct rigorous evaluations to optimize programs and policies affecting Veterans

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships

Inform rollout of high priority initiatives



Disseminate & Sustain

Promote the application of implementation and quality improvement sciences across the translation spectrum

Drive a culture of learning and knowledge translation across VA

QUERI Funds 40+ Centers Across the VA

1. Implement

QUERI Programs develop strategies and tools to support the scale up and spread of effective practices

QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiatives (PIIs) deploy effective practices that address time-sensitive regional priorities

2. Evaluate

Partnered Evaluation Initiatives (PEIs) evaluate a policy or program affecting Veterans

Partnered Evidence-based Policy Resource Center (PEPReC) performs data analysis for VA policy, planning, and management initiatives

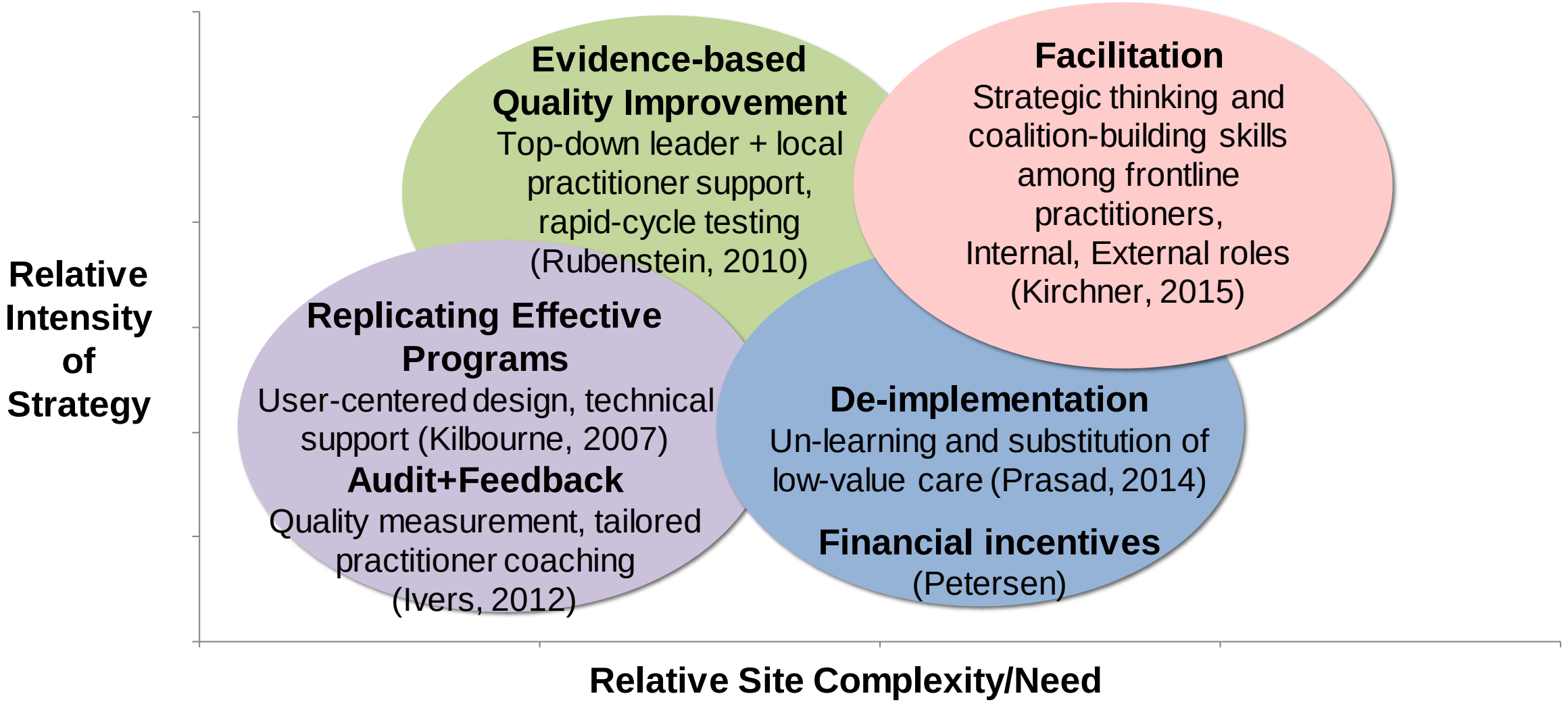
3. Disseminate & Sustain

Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs provide training in implementation and quality improvement strategies

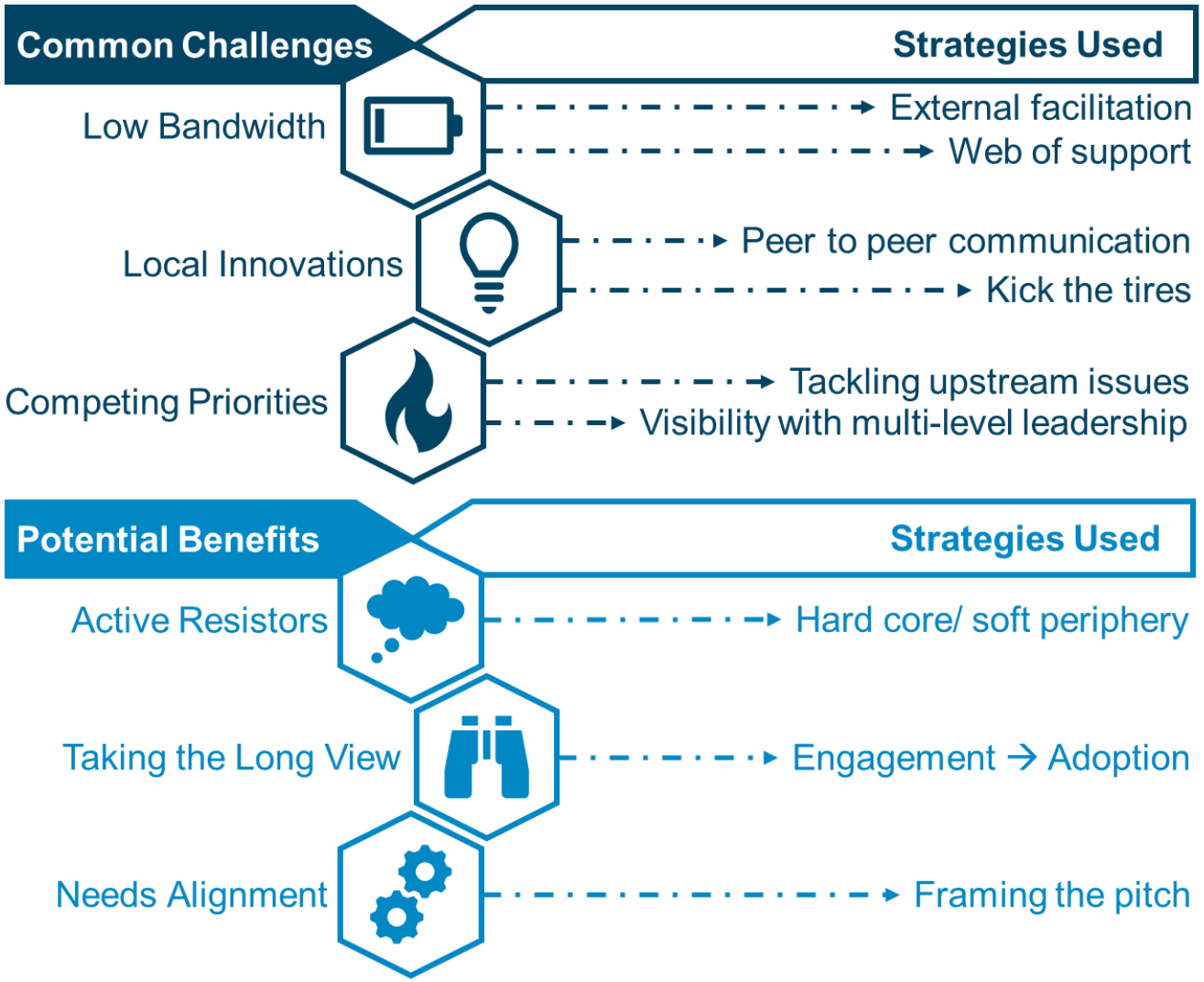
Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources (CEIR) develops resources and provides guidance to support implementation efforts

Examples of QUERI Implementation Strategies

Bundled to maximize EBP uptake, address multiple barriers



ESP Report: Implementation Strategies from Diffusion of Excellence, SAIL, and QUERI



"they kind of stole from each other, which was great"

"we'll go fight the battles for you"

"It's not one size fits all. They have room to adapt"

Miake-Lye et al, Scaling Beyond Early Adopters

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

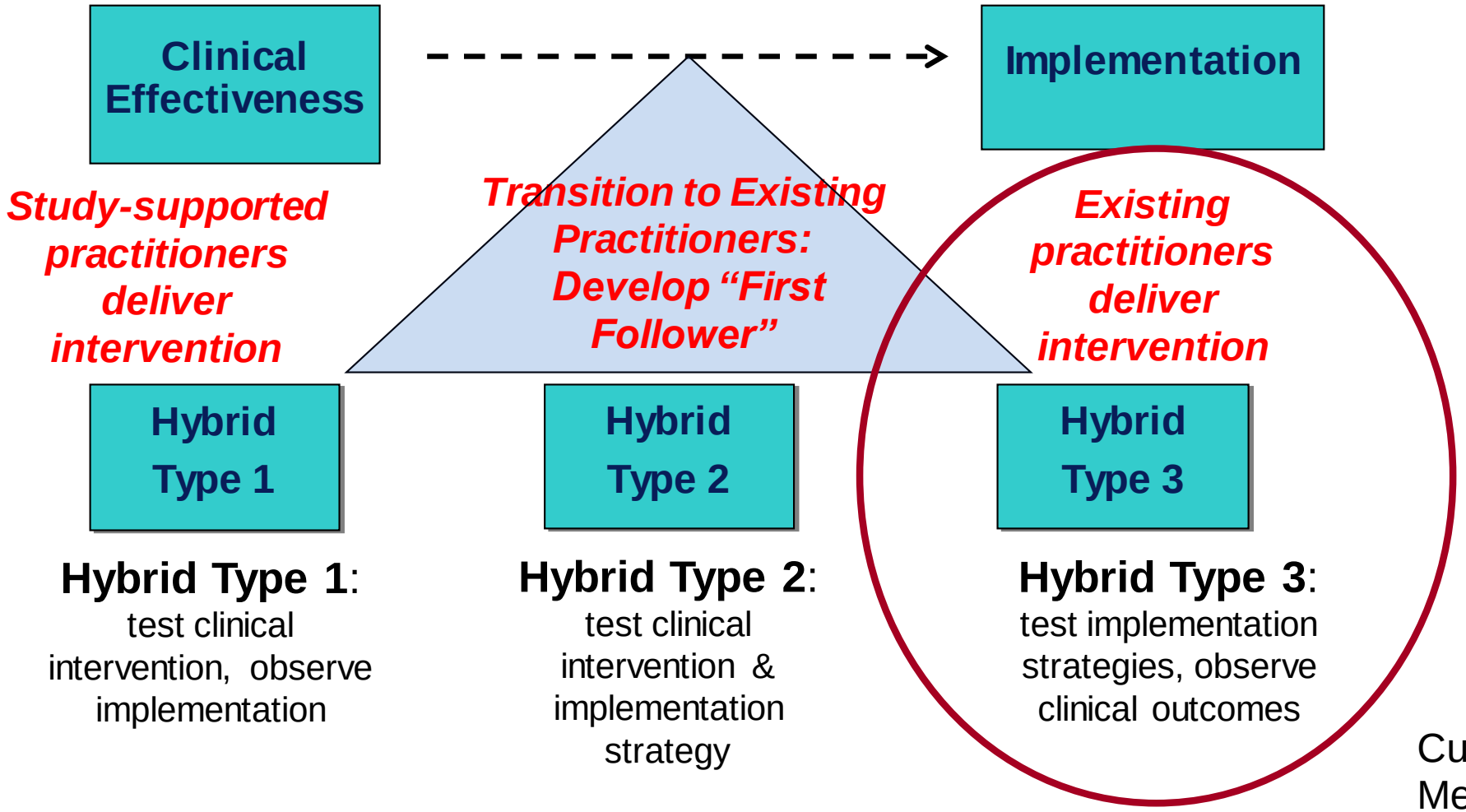
Link for Recording
Password: queri-093019

Link for Slide Deck

Key Characteristics of Non-Research Activities

- **Primary purpose of quality assessment and quality improvement for internal VA purposes.**
  - The activity is designed and implemented for internal VA operational purposes (i.e., its findings are intended to be used by VA or by entities responsible for overseeing VA).
- Non-research protocols may involve **randomization (e.g., cluster-randomization);** randomization by itself does not define research
- **Not designed for generalizability beyond VA.**
  - The activity is <u>not</u> designed to produce information that expands the knowledge base of a scientific discipline (or other scholarly field).
  - However, this does not mean that a research activity done solely within VA is not research if it is only conducted within VA.

QUERI Funds Rigorous Designs e.g., Hybrid Type 3 Implementation



Hybrid Type 1: test clinical intervention, observe implementation

Hybrid Type 2: test clinical intervention & implementation strategy

Hybrid Type 3: test implementation strategies, observe clinical outcomes

Curran, et. al.
Med Care 2012

QUERI Global Request for Applications (RFAs)

I. QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative	Partner-driven evaluations of programs or policies	$150K/year for 3 years with matched funding from operations partner
II. QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiative (Start Up and Full Proposals)	Implementation of evidence-based practices addressing VISN healthcare priority goals	$100K for 1 year for startups, $5.5M for 3 years for full proposals
III. QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Network Hub Sites	Expansion of implementation strategy training opportunities for VA research, providers, and operational staff	$50K/year for up to 3 years

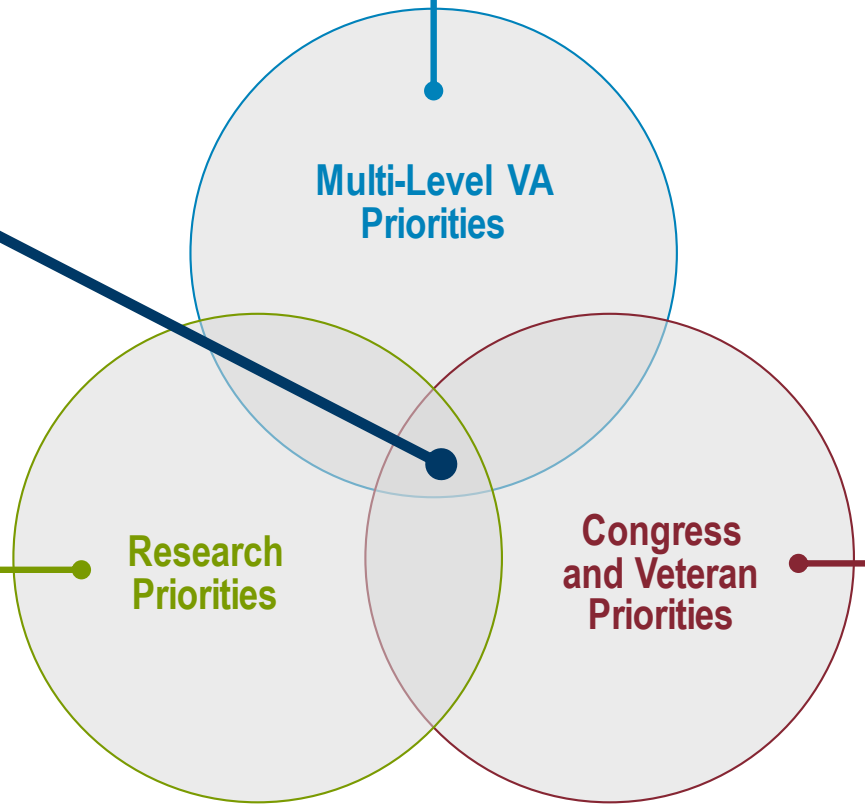
Awards are funded through VA special purpose funds and MUST be spent within the specified fiscal year.

QUERI Addresses Diverse Stakeholder Priorities

- National Priorities: VHA Modernization, High Reliability Organization
- National Program Offices
- Veterans Integrated Service Networks
- VA Medical Centers
- Service Lines

QUERI Strategic Methodology

1. Implement
2. Evaluate
3. Disseminate and Sustain



- Learning Health System
- VA Office of Research and Development 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
- Health Services Research and Development Priorities
- Evidence-generating research
- Implementation science and quality improvement bodies of knowledge

- Veterans' and their family and caregivers' needs
- Veterans Service Organizations
- Congressional Priorities
  - VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (MISSION Act)
  - Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018
  - Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)
  - 21st Century Cures Act
- Executive Order on Price & Quality Transparency
- Executive Order for President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS)

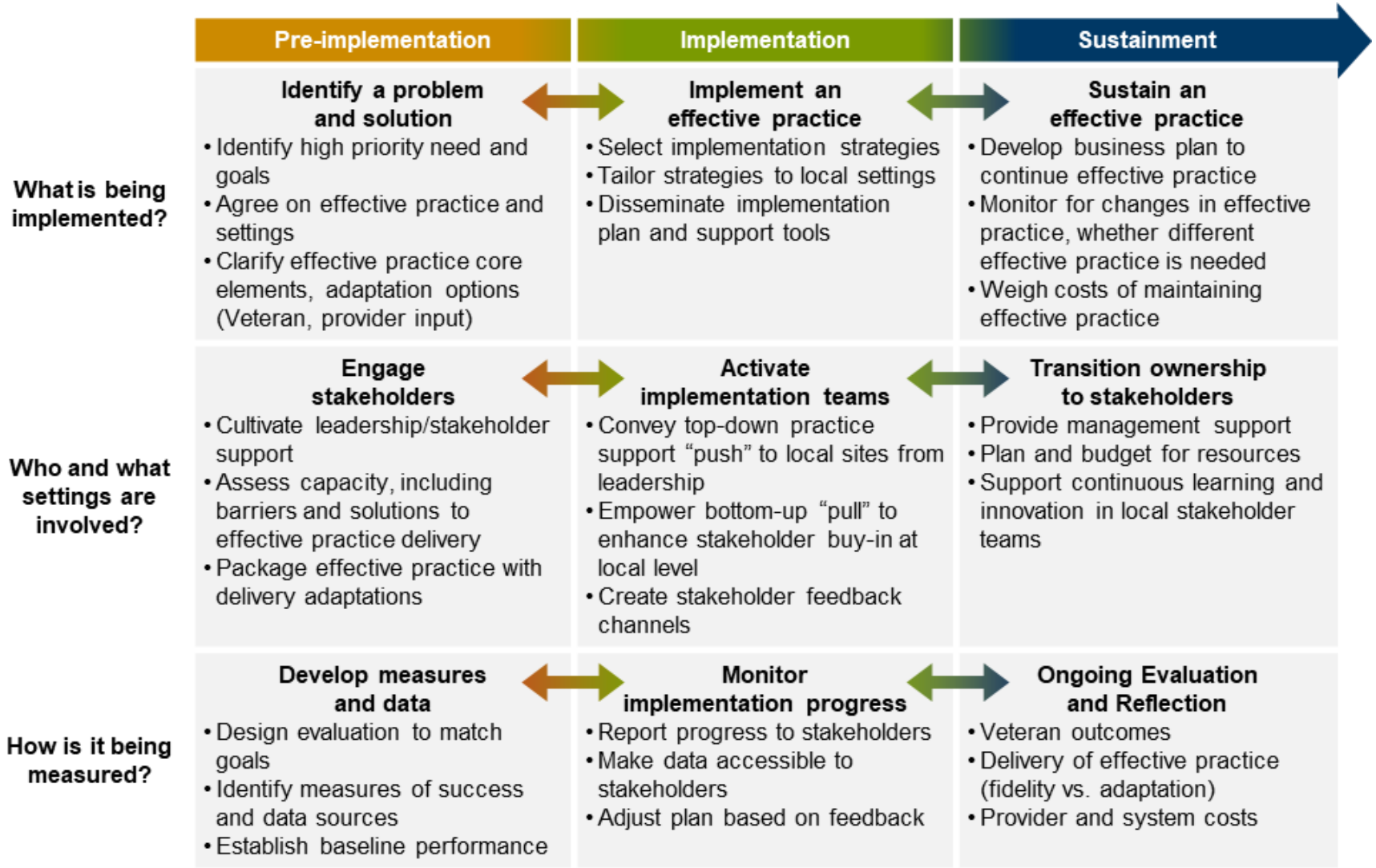
QUERI Implementation Roadmap

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]

The QUERI Implementation Roadmap



QUERI Impacts

(ACTION Impact Framework, Braganza, et al, JGIM, 2020)

Domain (NAM)	Measures
Alignment	Benchmark to VHA and other quality performance metrics
Partnership	Shared operational resources, business case analysis
Informing the field	Operations and other decision-maker meetings, hearings, peer-reviewed publications
Inspiring action	Tools, methods, and strategies used by VA providers, tangible improvements in quality of care
Effecting Change	Policies and clinical practices informed/shaped Scale up and spread of EBPs and implementation strategies

I. QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative (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. Winter 2021 Special PEI Solicitation

Goal: Evaluate the set up and implementation of Intensive Evaluation and Treatment Programs across 5 Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers, complementing existing VA research efforts in Polytrauma and enabling the development of a Learning Health System around the care and management of Veterans with traumatic brain injury .

Type of Award	Goal	QUERI Funding Available	Co-Funding Available	Duration	PD/PI	Letter of Support from Partner
QUERI PEI with VHA Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation National Program Office	Evaluate the implementation of the Intensive Evaluation and Treatment Programs (IETP)	Up to $450,000 ($150,000/year)	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation will provide up to $200,000/year	3 years	Up to 3 MPIs are allowed	Not required.

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.

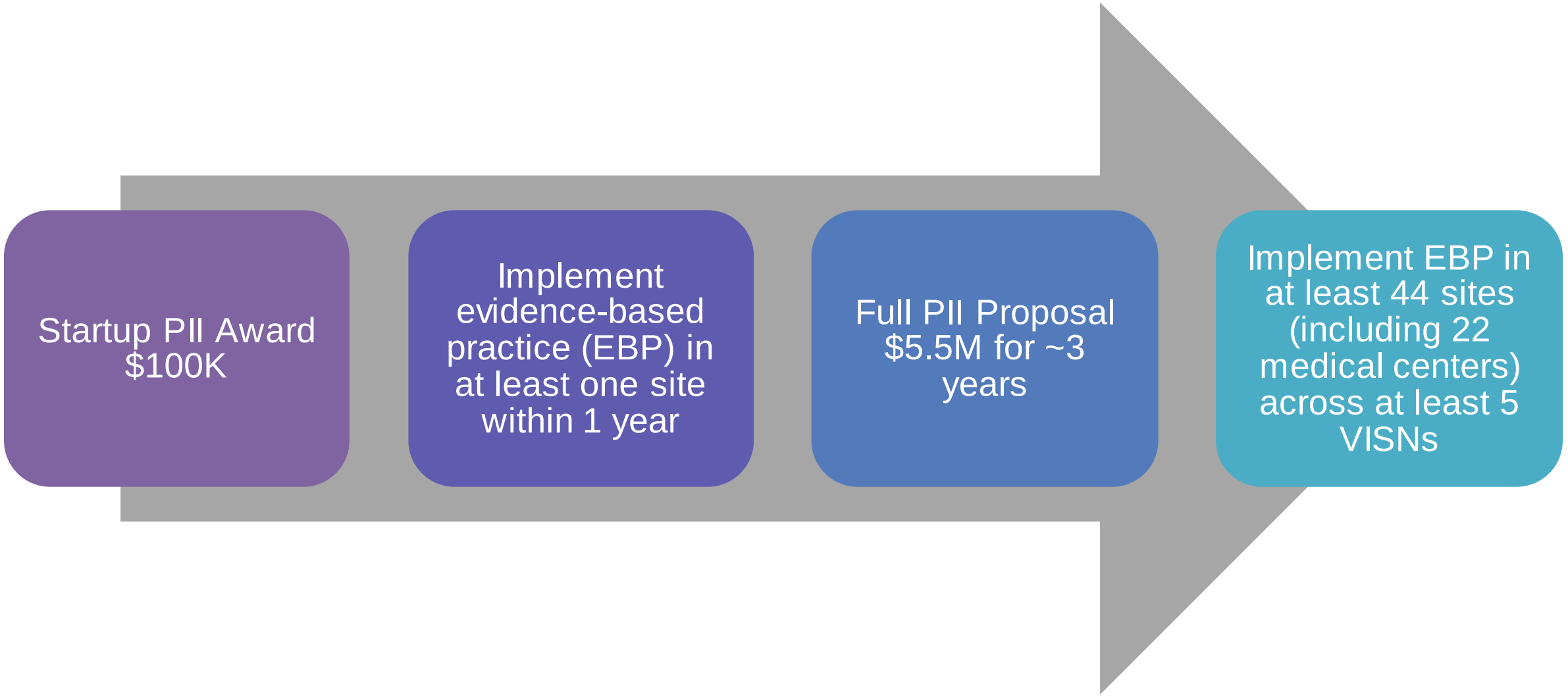
- **VISN Directed.** Projects must be co-led by a VISN leader (Director or CMO) and a VA implementation expert. The VISN chooses the priority, and implementation activities in the proposal must support VHA Performance Plan goals of modernizing systems through better consistency and spread of EBPs.

II. Timeline: Implementation of VISN Healthcare Priorities

II. 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



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.** PIIs 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.

II. QUERI VISN PII Level of Evidence

- **Evidence related to the model of delivery vs. the actual intervention.** Cite evidence in support of the underlying framework or model of delivery (e.g., Collaborative Care Model, Cognitive-behavioral therapy).
- **Specify the core elements** from the model that are being used (i.e., active ingredients that have been demonstrated in studies that make the practice effective).
- **Provide underlying evidence supporting model, especially in situations where the model was adapted to a different population or setting.** In general, citing evidence to a modality of practice or treatment that has an evidence base is sufficient as long as the core elements are specified.
- **Proposing bundle of interventions.** Generally speaking, the applicant needs to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the individual interventions that are part of a bundle or overall program. In addition, they should provide evidence that the bundle of individual practices is feasible in a VA setting.

We encourage you to visit the HSR&D ESP website to identify any relevant VA-focused systematic reviews.

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.

Current QUERI Implementation Learning Hubs

- Train providers in specific implementation strategies to ensure sustainment of EBPs
- Strategies supported by evidence and theory
- Hubs structured around QUERI Roadmap
- Coordinated by CEIR (Veronica.Williams9@va.gov, CEIR Program Coordinator)
- Key customers:
  - VHA Clinical Operations
  - Frontline Staff and Managers
  - Researchers planning Hybrid Type 2, 3 studies
  - Innovation Ecosystem/Diffusion of Excellence

Diffusion of EXCELLENCE
Diffusing Promising Practices Across VHA

Resources

- Applicants are encouraged to consult the following HSR&D/QUERI resources for:
  - Selecting and assessing fidelity to implementation strategies: QUERI's Center for Evaluation and Implementation Resources (Veronica Williams, CEIR Program Manager, Veronica.Williams9@va.gov)
  - 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)
  - Aligning evaluations and implementation projects with legislative mandates, including Evidence Act (Partnered Evidence-based policy Resource Center (PEPREC)

Guidance and Resources for Data Access

- View the recording of VIReC's Database and Methods CyberSeminar: Requesting Approval for Access to VA Data
- Check out the VIReC website for more information.
- For questions, contact: Linda Kok, Data Access & Policy Liaison (Linda.Kok@va.gov) or HelpDesk VIReC@va.gov

Summary of QUERI Global RFA Changes

- ITS window is from **October 1 to November 16**, see Table 10 in QUERI Global Merit Review Award RFA for other key deadlines.
- Service-Directed Partnered Evaluation Initiative opportunity with the VHA Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) National Program Office, see "Supplemental Document for Service Directed QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiatives (PEIs)", posted on the ORD RFA website, for more details.
- Resource for quality measures: Office of Quality and Safety's Electronic Quality Measurement resource hub
- Across all HSR&D RFAs: VA Phenomics Library Initiative, Provisional guidance on Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) Impact on Data and Systems Access is provided

QUERI Program Scientific Merit Review Timeline

Questions

Happy to answer any questions! Please feel free to reach out to Melissa Braganza at melissa.braganza@va.gov.

The QUERI Global RFA and Supplemental Document are found under the Health Services Research & Development section on the ORD RFA website:
https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm