

# VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) Winter 2023 Request for Applications

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VA



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

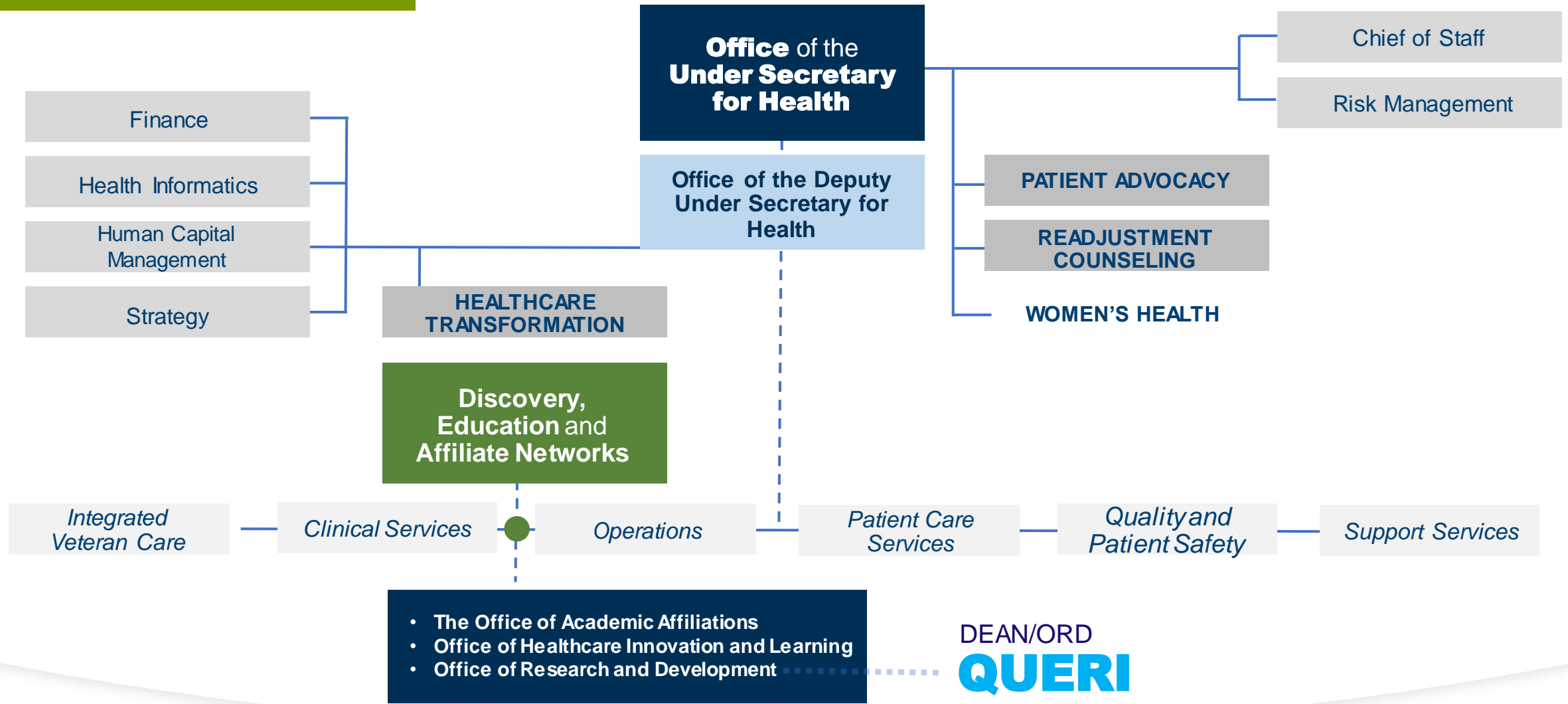


# Overview of QUERI

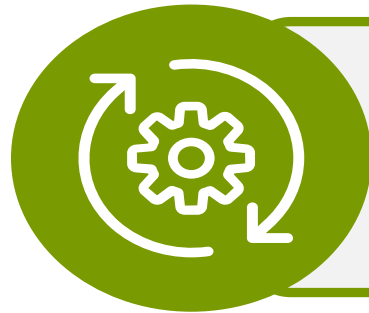
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# VHA Organizational Chart



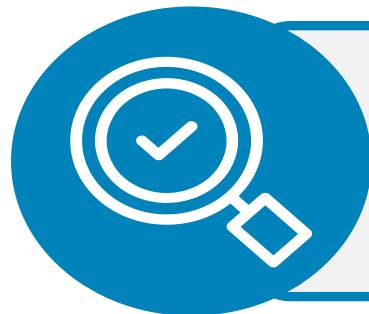
# QUERI Strategic Methodology



## Implement

Plan, deploy and sustain effective practices across diverse settings

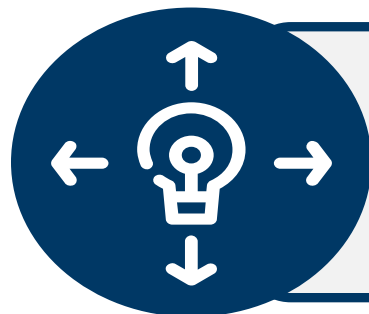
Enhance Veteran access to cutting edge, personalized treatments



## Evaluate

Conduct rigorous evaluations to optimize programs and policies affecting Veterans

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships  
Inform rollout of high priority initiatives

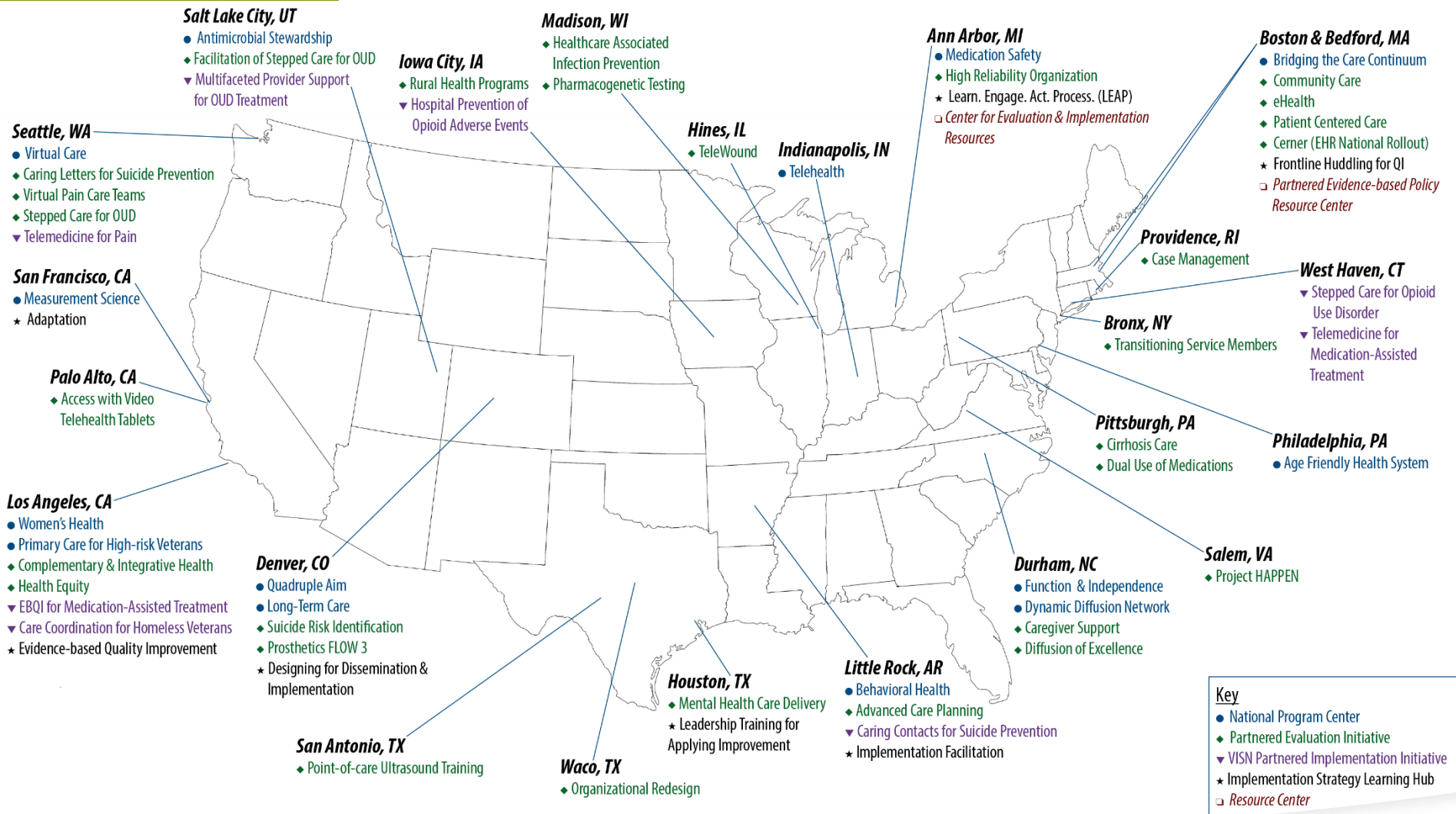


## Disseminate & Sustain

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



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# QUERI Projects are Non-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**

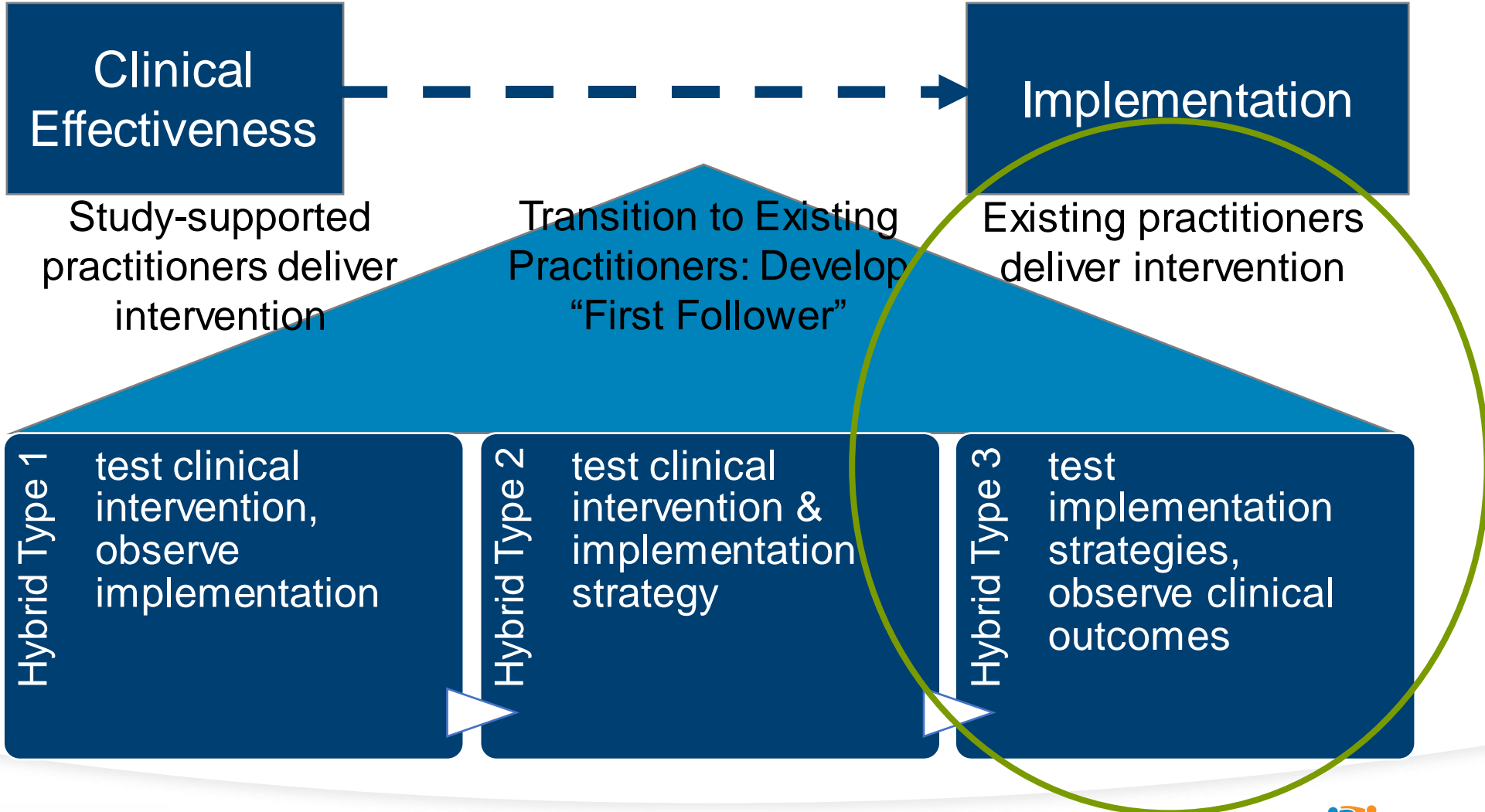
[Link for Recording](#)  
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[Link for Slide Deck](#)

# 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 not 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





# 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](#)

[Link for QUERI Implementation Roadmap Guide](#)

# QUERI Impact Measures

## ACTION Impact Framework, Braganza, et al, JGIM, 2020

Domain	Measures
<u>A</u> lignment	Priorities, metrics, partners
<u>C</u> ommitment	Shared operational resources and financial support, evidence-based strategies and products
<u>T</u> ailoring to local context	Implementation sites, providers using effective practice, Veterans/family members/caregivers served
<u>I</u> nforming the field	Briefings with key decision-makers, publications, scale-up and spread
<u>O</u> bserving healthcare change and generating <u>N</u> ew projects	Sustainability, quality of care and health outcomes, policy, culture, employee engagement and new projects requests

# QUERI Addresses Diverse Multi-Level Priorities

- National Priorities: VHA Learning Organization, SecVA Goals
- 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
  4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  5. Build scientific community
- Clinical, Health Services, and Rehabilitation Research
- Implementation science and quality improvement research

## Research Priorities

## Multi-Level VA Priorities

## Legislative, Executive, and Veteran Priorities

- Veterans' and their caregivers' needs
- Veterans Service Organizations
- Congressional Priorities
  - "Megabus" Act
  - Hannon Act
  - NDAA
  - 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
- Presidential Executive Orders and memoranda

# QUERI Lifecycle: Systematic Process to Implement VHA priorities at the Frontline Level: Identifying Priorities, Funding Initiatives to Address Priorities, Communicating Results and Impacts

## Evidence Act is Law (US PL 115-435)

- ✓ Influences agency budgets
- ✓ Requires annual evaluation plans on top priorities that inform policies and resource allocations
- ✓ Evaluation plans made public
- ✓ Leverage other legislative mandates

Braganza, Kilbourne et al., HSR 2022



## Priorities will inform QUERI support for:

- ✓ [VA Strategic Plan for FY2022-2028](#) highlights the need for VA to deliver timely, accessible, high-quality care and services to meet the unique needs of Veterans
- ✓ [FY22 Annual Evaluation Plan, FY23 Annual Evaluation Plan](#)
- ✓ FY23 QUERI Priorities (based on input from leaders across VA)

# Under Secretary for Health Goals

## USH Priorities:

1. Hire faster and more competitively
2. Connect Veterans to the soonest and best care
3. Serve Veterans with toxic exposures
4. Accelerate our journey to high reliability
5. Support Veterans whole health, their caregivers and survivors
6. Prevent Veteran suicide

## Strategic Enablers:

1. Retain, invest in and support our people
2. Scale best practices and driving innovation
3. Improve our technology systems and workflows
4. Drive equity for women, minority and LGBTQ+ veterans
5. Partner with Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), states, advocates and interagency partners



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# Current QUERI Priority Nominations

1. Improve workforce recruitment, onboarding, and retention of VA employees and trainees
2. Promote a culture of safety, learning, and knowledge translation (e.g., innovation, psychological safety, zero harm, manager/leader training)
3. Enhance employee and trainee experience and reduce burnout (e.g., de-implementation of low value practices)
4. Improve clinical care and organizational efficiency (e.g., administrative documentation, technology, supply chains)
5. Optimize post-pandemic care across in-person, virtual, and community care services to improve Veteran access, quality, cost, and equity
6. Reduce health disparities for underserved, marginalized, and at-risk Veterans
7. Evaluate strategies to improve outcomes for Veterans with a history of toxic exposure and support implementation of the PACT Act
8. Evaluate the increase in virtual work on employee and trainee outcomes (e.g., virtual training, virtual supervision)
9. Evaluate EHR implementation and sustainment for impact on patient safety and outcomes, work efficiencies, and employee satisfaction/experience

# QUERI Funding Mechanisms

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# QUERI Advancing Diversity in Implementation Leadership (ADIL)

- **Objective:** grow a pipeline of implementation, quality improvement (QI), and evaluation expertise from populations that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves
- **Anticipated Impacts:** promote VA as a national leader in applying high-reliability, learning organization and evidence-based policy methods to improve health care, especially for underserved populations



## MISSION

Improve Veteran health by accelerating evidence into health care practice and policy



## VISION

Become a trusted purveyor of evidence, implementation, and quality improvement (QI) methods across VA, supporting frontline providers in deploying effective practices that transform Veteran care



## VALUES

Excellence, Commitment, Partnerships, Rigor, Resilience, Flexibility



# Overview of ADIL

- **Hands-on Learning.** Support a hands-on implementation, QI, or evaluation partnered initiative and mentored experience.
- **Impact Focus.** Non-research project aligned with a current priority listed in the ADIL RFA.
- **Preparation for Implementation Leadership Opportunities.** Next step is to apply for independent project funding, an employment opportunity or promotion, or leadership training opportunity that is related to implementation or quality improvement science.
- **Funds Available.** QUERI 870 funding will be a maximum of \$100K/year for up to 2 years.

# ADIL Eligibility

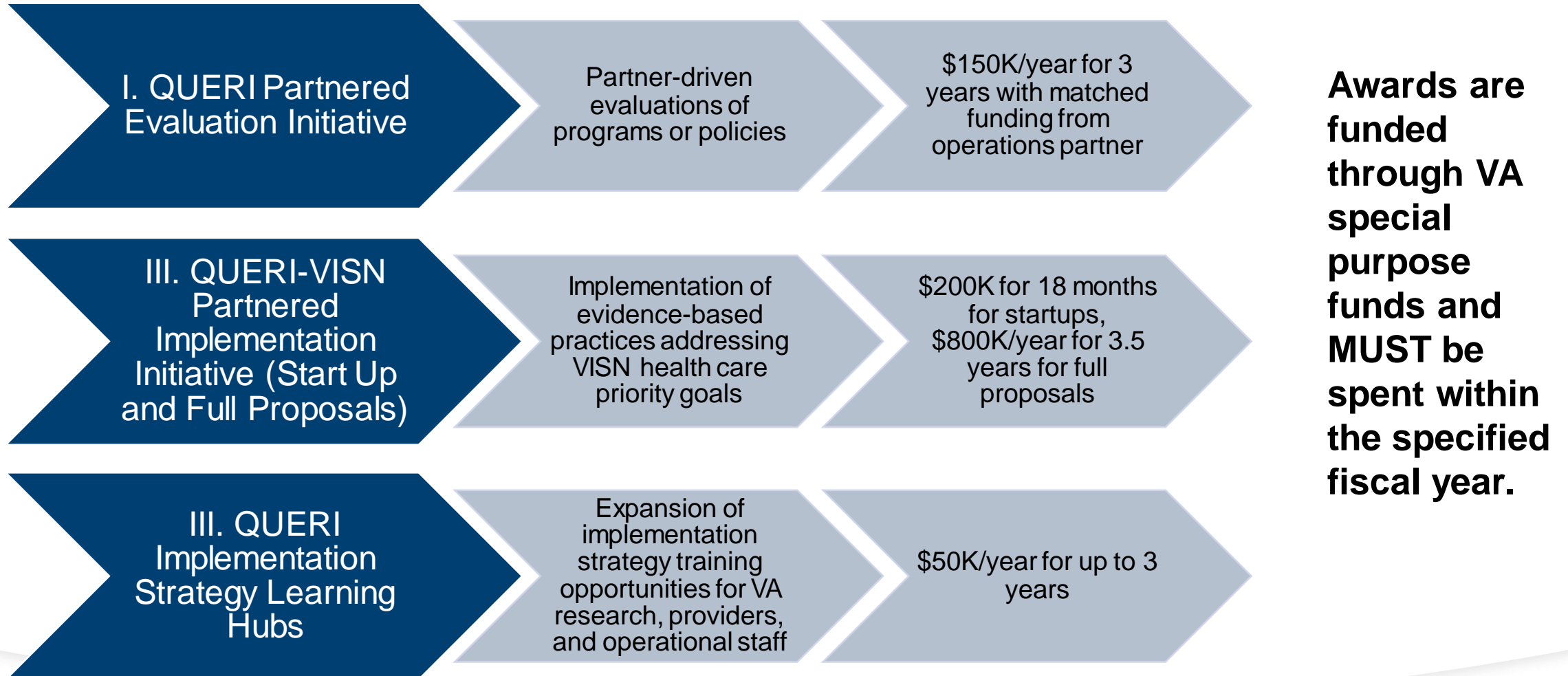
- Open to candidates who are investigators, staff, or students **affiliated with a QUERI center** (with at least one year left in the funding period) and are from populations that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves.
  - Includes: individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in the health-related sciences, Veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds
- The proposed candidate must also be eligible to become a VA employee/WOC.

# ADIL RFA Updates

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- Updated USH priorities (slide 13) and FY23 QUERI priority nominations (slide 14)
- SPM POC: Kara Beck, PhD

# QUERI Global Request for Applications (RFAs)



# 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
  - Focus resources more efficiently and improve consistency, spread, and sustainability of best practices that benefit Veterans and their families

# 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 health care.
- **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. Funding Level Commitments for QUERI PEIs

Partner Match Source (minimum one-year commitment)	Minimum Requirement for Match Commitment	Additional Requirements
VA Central Office (VACO) Program Office	\$200,000/year	Letter of support from VACO program office lead confirming funding commitment
VISN	\$100,000/year	Letter of support from VISN Director confirming funding commitment and describing how the proposed evaluation addresses VISN priorities
Other Federal Agency (e.g., NIH, CDC, AHRQ, HHS)	\$200,000/year	Interagency Agreement or letter detailing funding commitment that specifies funding to be routed to not-for-profit corporation or University affiliate. Agency letter must specify how program supports improved care for Veterans.
Not-for-profit Foundation	\$200,000/year	Letter detailing funding commitment that specifies funding to be routed to Applicants' VA Facility's not-for-profit corporation or University affiliate. Other requirements, such as a CRADA, MOU and/or OGC review may apply.

\*Other means of matching support from the partner such as FTE, data, or other resources can be considered.



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## II. QUERI-VISN Partnered Implementation Initiative

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



# II. Overview of PII Funding Announcement

- **Quality Improvement Focus.** Proposals should focus on deployment of EBPs that support at least one of the health care 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 priority, must be described in the proposal.
- **VISN Directed.** PIs must be co-led by a VISN leader (Director or CMO) and a VA implementation expert. The VISN chooses the priority, and implementation activities must support [VHA Performance Plan](#) goals of modernizing systems through better consistency and spread of EBPs.

# II. QUERI VISN PII Funding Mechanism

Startup PII Award  
\$200K

Implement  
evidence-based  
practice in at least  
two sites within 18  
months

Full PII Proposal  
\$800K/year for 3.5  
years

Implement EBP in  
at least 30 sites  
across at least 3  
VISNs

# II. FY22 VISN Priorities, Performance Plan

- **FY22 Network Director Priorities:**

1. Improve workforce development, retention, and wellbeing of VA employees and trainees, especially in rural areas
2. Improve clinical care efficiency (e.g., administrative, technology, supply chains)
3. Evaluate strategies to mitigate the long-term impact of COVID-19 (e.g., preventive care), including reducing adverse outcomes associated with delayed or suppressed care due to COVID
4. Assess MISSION Act standards of care and impacts on quality improvement and policy changes

- **Key themes to come out of this year's Performance Plan:**

- Maintaining high quality care across conditions (e.g., benchmarked on publicly-reported quality metrics for preventative care, behavioral health care, women's health, CVD risk)
- All-Employee Survey scores and employee diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Health care efficiency
- Veteran experience, especially with virtual care options

# III. QUERI Implementation Strategy Learning Hubs

- **Objective:** Expand training opportunities for VA employees 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. Overview of Learning Hub Funding Announcement

- **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.
- **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.

# QUERI Global Scientific Merit Review Timeline

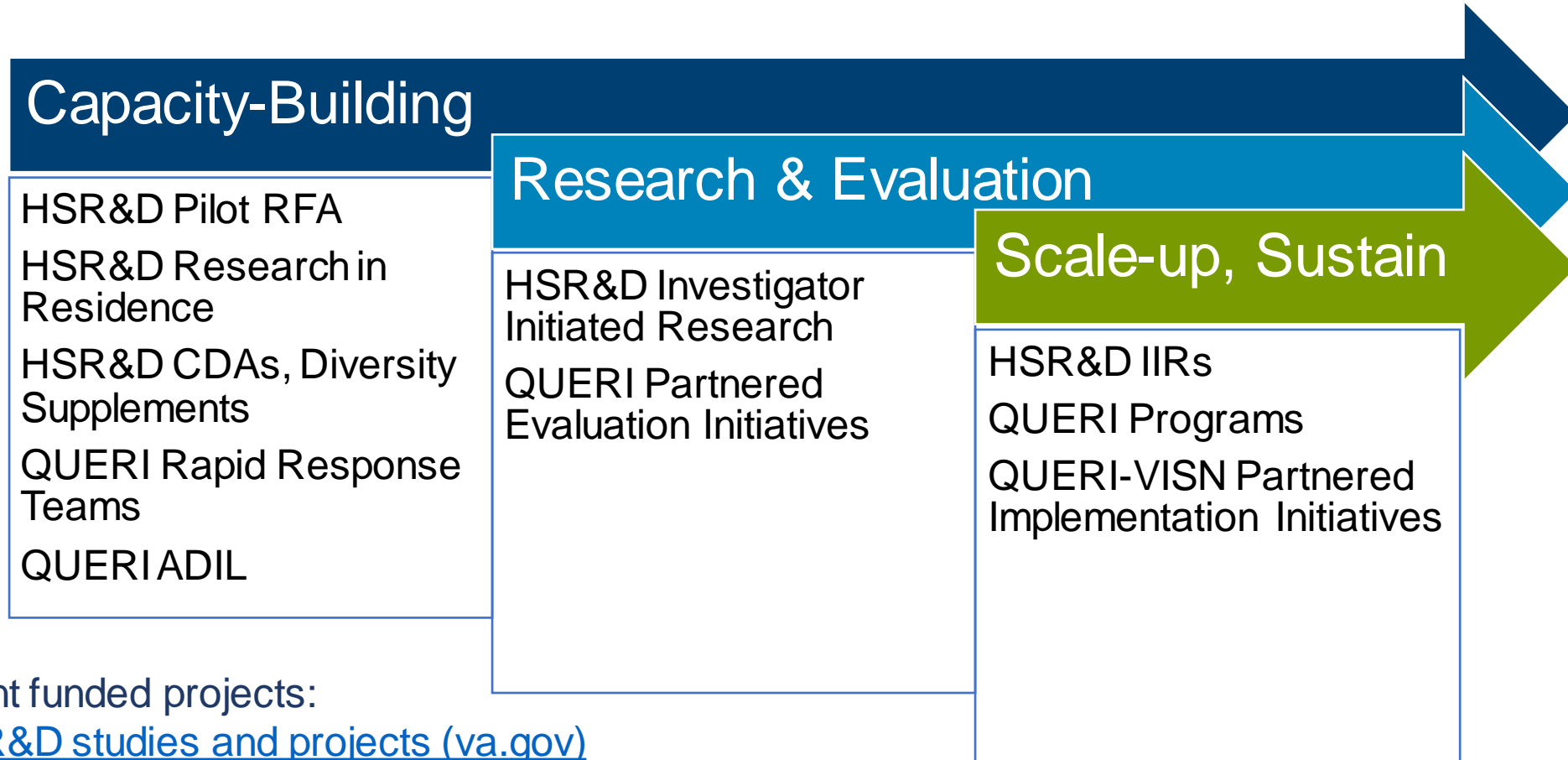
October 3-  
November 14,  
2022  
ITS Submission

December 2022  
Application  
Submission

March 2023  
QUERI Scientific  
Merit Review  
Notification of  
Review Outcome

April 1, 2023  
Earliest Start Date  
for New QUERI  
Initiatives

# Summary of HSR&D and QUERI Funding Pathways



List of current funded projects:

[Current HSR&D studies and projects \(va.gov\)](#)

[Quality Enhancement Research Initiative \(QUERI\)](#)

[\(va.gov\)](#)

# QUERI Global RFA Updates

- [FY 2022-2025 VHA Long-Range Plan Framework](#)
- Updated USH priorities (slide 13) and FY23 QUERI priority nominations (slide 14)
- Updated PII funding limits, duration, # implementation sites (slide 26)
- Evaluation designs are strongly encouraged to include a comparison group
- Table of contents for letters of support
- Automated transcription options encouraged
- SPM POC: Kara Beck, PhD



# Questions

**We are happy to answer any questions!** Please feel free to reach out to Kara Beck at [kara.beck@va.gov](mailto:kara.beck@va.gov).

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

**The QUERI ADIL RFA is posted on the QUERI website:**  
<https://www.queri.research.va.gov/QUERI-ADIL.pdf>



**VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative**

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EVIDENCE INTO PRACTICE

**Thank you!**