Research to Impact VeteRans (RIVR) Program

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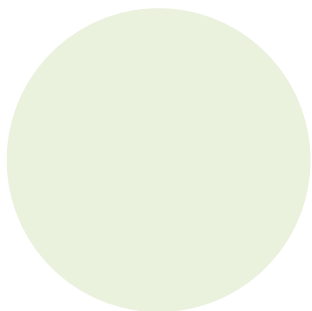Health Services R&D, Office of Research and Development
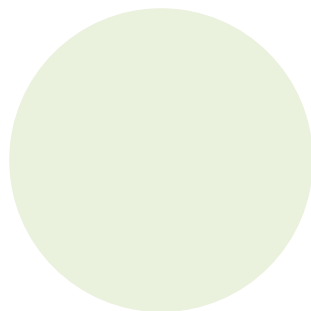Department of Veterans Affairs

RIVR Program Goals

- Funding tied to a **5 year "impact goal"**
- Each RIVR impact goal aligns with VA priority areas
  - VA legislative priorities (e.g., MISSION Act)
  - Cross-cutting ORD priorities (e.g. PTSD)
  - HSRD defined clinical priorities (e.g. Health Equity)
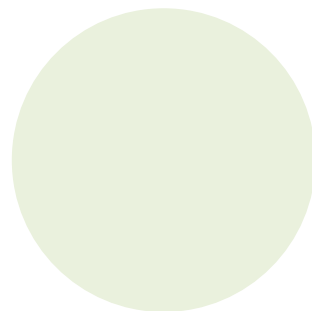 - HSRD methodological priorities (e.g. Data Sciences, Implementation Sciences, Systems Engineering)

RIVR Program Management

IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING

COALITION BUILDING

DATA AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

31 unique national program offices and 13 VISN-level leadership offices engaged

Value of RIVR Funding

- "The *flexible* nature of the RIVR funding has allowed us to alter our tasks as needed in the midst of COVID-19"

- " RIVR has allowed us to move this work forward (on a limited budget) *where the driver is stakeholder assessment of value*"

- "The impact-driven goals of this funding mechanism allow this project to focus on evaluation in the short term and on a rapid transition from research activities to implementation of a toolkit or intervention"

- "Provided us *critical coordination and analytic support* to maintain existing research and operations partnerships"

- "The 5-year timeline has allowed us to initiate the project grounded in a carefully developed conceptual framework and take time to understand the barriers & facilitators to implementation within the VISN before proceeding to a tailored and targeted implementation plan"

Action Framework- How to Evaluate Impact

Domain	Outcomes
Alignment	Relevant priorities, metrics, partner meetings, portfolio reviews
Commitment	Shared operational resources, tools, and strategies, dashboards, clinical metrics
Tailoring to local context	Implementation sites, providers using effective practice, Veterans served
Informing the field	Decision maker meetings and Congressional hearings, peer reviewed publications, scale up and spread
Observing healthcare change and generating **N**ew projects	Sustainability, policies and clinical practices informed and shaped, tangible improvements in quality of care and health outcomes, cultural changes in provider engagement; new project requests

Y1 RIVR Impacts- By the Numbers

Alignment

- 13 partner meetings
- 5 portfolio reviews
- 3 advisory panels created
- 7 focus groups

Commitment

- 6 data tracking dashboards
- 5 sets of clinical metrics
- 3 tool kits
- 6 new data resources

Tailoring to Local Contexts

- 9 clinical pathways implemented
- 2 train the trainer programs
- 2 pilot projects funded

Informing the Field

- 3 lit reviews submitted
- 1 publication submitted
- 3 user guides for field

Observing Longterm Healthcare

- 1 QI project

Y1 Impacts: COVID-19 Pivot

- Assessing the effect COVID-19 has on reducing use of low-value care and generating new attitudes about how to prioritize care during both the pandemic and the recovery phase
- Tracking the telehealth delivery of evidence-based practices (EBPs) for PTSD during the pandemic
- Collecting and disseminating best practices for delivering EBPs via telehealth
- Collating and disseminating virtual wellness options for San Francisco area Veterans
- Examining experience with COVID-19 as part of study about fostering improved coordination of care within VA primary care teams, between VA primary care teams and Veteran patients, and between VA primary care and other settings
- Including COVID-19 questions and assessments in surveys, analyses, and implementation studies

Best Practices for Engaging with Partners

- Give partners multiple mechanisms to engage with the project
- Learn to speak a new language
- Work with many touch points in partner offices because roles are constantly changing
- Connect and contextualize research project within other initiatives and priorities of the partner
- Avoid duplication with partner efforts
- Treat partners as vital end users of your product or practice

RIVR Projects on this Panel

- Cataloging and Evaluating Mental Health Care Quality Measures for Better Comparative Performance Management (Schmidt)

- Advancing Measurement of Veteran Function and Independence: Pursuing a set of measures around the patient centered theme of home time (Van Houtven)

- Implementation of Telecare Collaborative Management of Chronic Pain in Primary Care (Rollins, McGuire)