

Increasing Veteran Engagement in Pain Research in the VA



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Why Engage Veterans in VA Research?

- Ensure we ask useful, **meaningful research questions** that can improve VA health services
- **Improve the relevance** of primary endpoints and **quality of** data collection instruments
- **Strengthen understanding** of our data and the population(s) we hope to help
- **Speed dissemination and uptake of innovations** to Veterans and those who care for them
- **Improve communication about research** to Veterans

Timeline of Veteran Engagement in VA Research

- Initiated in 2015, drawing on work by PCORI
- Requirement that all of our health services research Centers establish a Veteran Stakeholder Group – no specific goal given
- Supported by a Veteran Engagement WG that:
 - Developed a conceptual model
 - Promoted sharing and organized cyberseminars
 - Developed a tool kit describing planning, convening, running and evaluating groups.
- Developed more focused engagement activity around women's health, pain/opioids, suicide

Veteran Engagement Panel for Pain/Opioid Consortium of Research

- Consortium of researchers and operations partners working in areas of pain treatment, opioid management
- Engagement panel provides individual review and feedback of proposals
 - 12 veterans from around country with specific experience as patients with chronic pain
- Provide feedback on topic, acceptability of intervention, recruitment strategies, communication

Lessons Learned

- Preparation of researchers helps them get the most out of the veteran engagement panel
 - They need to frame what feedback they need
- Investigators value the advice about what messages will be effective in recruiting subjects
- Veterans want to be kept informed about progress
 - Often dismayed about slow pace of research