

# QUERI

## Partnered Evaluation Initiative

June 2016

### Evaluation of OSC Specialist Knowledge Management Initiatives: The Co-Laboratory for Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Research

Denver, CO    Cleveland, OH

#### Overview

A critical issue for efficiency and effectiveness of care is the rational organization of specialist expertise—and its application to the care of individual patients and panels of patients. A series of four initiatives were sponsored by the Office of Specialty Care (OSC) Transformation Initiatives Program: 1) e-consults, 2) VA SCAN-ECHO, 3) Mini-residencies, and 4) Specialty Care Neighborhood. Evaluation of the four Office of Specialty Care initiatives is essential to policy decisions about their continuation and improvement. Each of these initiatives is designed to contribute to improving healthcare for the millions of Veterans with chronic diseases by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of specialist care. Specifically, these initiatives focus on enhancing the ability to take advantage of specialist expertise closer to where the Veteran lives. This will improve Veterans' ability to meet their own healthcare needs by reducing travel time, and will increase satisfaction with care. There also will be benefits to the satisfaction of the patient-aligned care teams (PACT) whose morale is critical to the long-term successful delivery of quality care.

In order to evaluate the programs and their implementation, two Evaluation Centers were jointly funded by OSC and VA QUERI to form the **Evaluation of OSC Specialist Knowledge Management Initiatives: The Co-Laboratory for Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Research** (OSC-QUERI Evaluation Center). The Cleveland Center consists of personnel from the Cleveland, OH, Ann Arbor, MI, and East Orange, NJ VA Medical Centers; the second center consists of personnel from Denver, CO and Seattle, WA. Although funded separately, the two Evaluation Centers have—for all intents and purposes—merged.

Investigators have adopted a coordinated approach to governance (Figure 1), philosophy (Figure 2), and evaluation (Figure 3). In addition to a PI/sitePI group, they established quantitative and qualitative groups, each consisting of personnel from several sites. Work is allocated based on availability of personnel and funds re-allocated as needed. This virtual organization has maintained its coherence and integrity for four years, and has led to other collaborations including two new QUERI Centers.

#### Governance and Philosophy

(over)



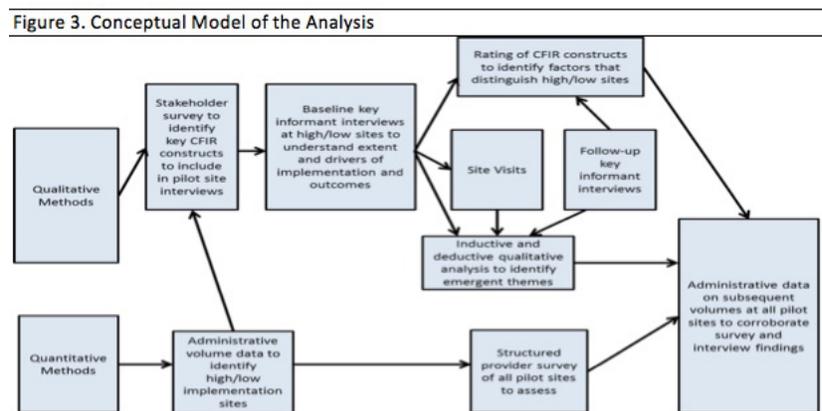
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Health Services Research & Development Service

#### General QUERI Information

For general QUERI information, please send your comments or questions to [vacoqueri@va.gov](mailto:vacoqueri@va.gov) or visit the QUERI website at: [www.hsrd.research.va.gov/queri](http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/queri).

The OSC-QUERI Evaluation Center is designed to address two major goals:

- Evaluate the extent to which each of the four transformational initiatives meet the clinical and organizational goals of each program (i.e. improving clinical outcomes, access to care, and patient/provider satisfaction); and
- Assess the implementation of the initiatives, and variations in implementation success across sites, in order to improve implementation as the initiatives are disseminated, and to inform the QUERI program about successful implementation of future initiatives.



The general approach to evaluate all four OSC initiatives involves the following aims:

- Determine key clinical outcomes associated with implementation of each initiative.
- Determine patient satisfaction associated with the implementation of each initiative, with specific attention to the domains of care integration.
- Examine the impact of each initiative on staff satisfaction and team functioning.
- Assess the impact of each initiative on organizational outcomes, including health services utilization and cost of care, access to and use of specialty care, use of fee-basis care, and Veterans' travel costs (beneficiary travel and indirect costs).
- Assess effectiveness of implementation at the participating sites using the RE-AIM framework, including description of structures and processes of care and practice.
- Understand the findings from the previous aim by examining implementation at a sample of the participating sites using the CFIR (Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research) framework.

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#### Operational Partner

The mission of the Office of Specialty Care Transformation Initiatives Program is to serve as the subject matter expert to the Under Secretary for Health and VHA-field components, as well as advocate for the field and represent their needs related to resources, clinical guidance, and any other issues. The OSC also develops policies and procedures intent on improving processes and care provided to Veterans, and assists in providing oversight to field-based clinical programs through performance measurement and management tools.