Designing for Implementation: QUERI-CSP Supplemental Funding Opportunity

The VHA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) program is a unique research-operations partnership funded through VHA special purpose funds. The mission of QUERI is to improve care by studying and facilitating the adoption of evidence-based treatments into routine practice. In the traditional “pipeline” approach, QUERI has focused on implementing treatments once proven effective; however this process may take years if not decades due to barriers to uptake across different practice settings. To this end, in coordination with the VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP), QUERI has developed a supplemental funding program for VA Cooperative Studies to support the design and advancement of “implementation-ready” clinical treatments of proven effectiveness to ultimately reduce the gap between research and clinical practice.

QUERI-CSP supplemental projects are limited to $50,000 per year for up to two years and are accepted on a rolling basis. Projects should address an implementation or quality improvement question designed to reduce barriers to uptake if the clinical treatment or practice is proven effective, and may include the following:

- Observational studies describing barriers, facilitators, or other mechanisms of treatment or practice uptake and effectiveness at the provider and organization (e.g., clinic or facility) levels in order to prepare for subsequent scale-up and spread after the CSP study
- Development of specific tools, processes, or policies to facilitate implementation of treatments or practices proven effective
- Testing new provider or organizational measures for eventual use in implementation studies
- Piloting implementation intervention strategies to promote the uptake of the treatment or practice (if shown to be effective; also see Curran et al., Med Care, 2012).

Given the focus on the implementation and sustainability, gap analysis, efficacy or effectiveness research studies are not appropriate for this solicitation.

The project PI is required to be a full-time (5/8th employee) and either be on the Executive Committee or a Site PI of a currently funded or recently completed (i.e., <1 year) CSP study. Supplement applications are limited to 2 pages (11 point font), and please include as a header the Title, PI, PI location, and affiliated CSP Study Title and Number:

1. **Specific Aims:** Summarize the overall goal, specific aims, and hypotheses of the supplemental project. Briefly describe the significance that the CSP study is addressing and the gaps in quality or outcomes of care experienced by Veterans that the study is addressing

2. **Rationale:** Briefly summarize the evidence supporting the intervention and/or clinical importance of the problem addressed in the CSP study. Provide justification for why a supplemental implementation study is warranted at this time (e.g., time-sensitive nature of the need to address clinical problem in VHA practice).

3. **Research Plan:** Describe proposed design and approach; specifically:
   a. Proposed implementation or quality improvement conceptual framework guiding the study.
   b. Study design and methods (e.g., quantitative, qualitative design or tool or methods development)
   c. Key outcomes and analyses, including summative/process evaluation, and if applicable, formative evaluation or other methods used to obtain feedback on tool or methods development
   d. Key covariates: Describe measurement of contextual factors to be assessed that are potentially relevant to the generalizability, success, spread, and/or sustainability of the clinical treatment or (e.g., health system, site, provider, and patient).

4. **Impact and future directions:** Describe how study might achieve a measurable impact on future implementation effects and potential for spread beyond the CSP study.

5. **Study PI and Co-I’s experience with implementation research, VA operations, and QUERI.**

The PI should send electronic copies of the Supplemental application and VA budget sheets (1313-3/1313-4) to Jorge Caridad, QUERI Program Assistant (Jorge.Caridad@va.gov), copying QUERI Program Manager Linda McIvor (Linda.McIvor@va.gov). Supplements will undergo a review by QUERI and CSP program staff to determine appropriateness for funding mechanism and fit with QUERI and CSP priorities.

The following references also provide guidance for writing implementation studies: