Overview

Functional status, such as a person’s ability to perform normal daily activities, fulfill usual roles, and maintain health and wellbeing, is an essential determinant of quality of life. Health-related functional impairments often lead to disability, which is a significant driver of healthcare use and costs. By 2017, 9.8 million Veterans will be aged 65 or older, the age group at highest risk for developing a disability. Function QUERI was designed to improve function and independence in these Veterans by promoting the rapid translation of research findings into practice through implementation strategies that promote flexibility of clinical programs and that enhance the performance of healthcare teams. Specific aims of Function QUERI include:

• Implementing and evaluating three distinct but related clinical programs that address high priority gaps in clinical care identified by national partners.
• Adapting an innovative, team-based implementation intervention (CONNECT) to promote team readiness for use in a diverse mix of clinical settings and VA medical centers, and evaluating its impact across projects; and
• Developing a Team Building and Readiness Toolkit for VA clinical programs to distill and disseminate findings from Function QUERI implementation activities.

Implementation Strategy

Function QUERI will utilize a core implementation strategy focused on promoting flexibility of clinical programs to fit local environments (Replicating Effective Programs), and will evaluate the effect of a “booster” implementation strategy (CONNECT) designed to facilitate the readiness of teams to adopt new clinical programs. CONNECT is a bundle of interaction-oriented activities that include group storytelling, role play to improve daily interactions between providers, relationship mapping of communication patterns, strategies for creative problem solving, and individual mentorship to sustain new interaction behaviors. Function QUERI’s nested model of team function and performance (see figure, over) provides a framework for conducting and evaluating implementation activities.
Project Summaries

- **STRIDE.** This project addresses immobility during hospitalization through a supervised walking program. The goal is to implement and evaluate STRIDE in eight VA medical centers, compare the effectiveness of implementation using REP alone versus REP + CONNECT, and examine the impact of STRIDE on key patient and caregiver outcomes. STRIDE will be conducted as a cluster randomized trial (CRT) with a mixed methods evaluation.

- **Group PT for Knee Osteoarthritis (OA).** This study fills a gap in the use of non-pharmacological therapies for patients with knee OA, through expanded access to physical therapy in a group-based model. The overall goal of this quality improvement project is to rapidly evaluate processes for implementing a group-based physical therapy program for Veterans with OA at the Durham VA Healthcare System.

- **i-HI-FIVES (Implementing--Helping Invested Family Members Improve Veteran Experiences Study).** This project will deliver a multimodal, evidence-based skills training program to caregivers of Veterans with cognitive and/or functional limitations who have recently been referred to home and community-based services. Similar to STRIDE, the goal is to implement HI-FIVES in eight VA medical centers to compare the effectiveness of implementation using REP alone versus REP + CONNECT, and to examine the impact of HI-FIVES on key patient and caregiver outcomes. i-HI-FIVES will be conducted as a cluster randomized trial with a mixed methods evaluation.

**Program Leadership**

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**Principal Operational Partners**

- VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care
- VA Caregiver Support Program
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services
- Office of VA Voluntary Services
- VA Mid-Atlantic Healthcare Network (VISN 6)

**For More Information**

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