

# QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative

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## Evaluating Evidence-Based Quality Improvement of Comprehensive Women's Health Care in Low-Performing VA Facilities

Los Angeles, CA

### Overview

Gaps in the delivery of gender-sensitive comprehensive care have resulted in disparities in quality and patient experience among women seen in the VA healthcare system. VA policy action providing guidance on delivery of comprehensive healthcare services for women Veterans was disseminated nationally in 2010, followed by annual assessments of progress and site visits evaluating local efforts. While substantial inroads have been made, policy implementation, even when leveraged by field-based women's health leaders, has not been uniformly successful in achieving delivery of comprehensive care by designated providers in gender-sensitive care environments that ensure women's privacy, dignity and safety, all tenets of VA policy guidance.

As part of a multi-year effort to use research to accelerate implementation of comprehensive care for women Veterans, a VA research team tested an evidence-based quality improvement (EBQI) approach to tailoring VA's medical home model (Patient-Aligned Care Teams or PACTs) to the needs of women Veterans. The EBQI strategy yielded significant local improvements in women Veterans' care, improved team function, decreased provider burnout, and was adopted by VA Women's Health Services for facilities that might benefit the most. EBQI builds capacity for innovation and implementation and spreads evidence-based practice through training, provider/staff engagement in structured improvement plans, measurement, evidence review, and facilitation, in the context of VA policy priorities.

The QUERI Women's Health National Partnered Evaluation Initiative's goals are to evaluate:

- Factors that help or hinder delivery of comprehensive women's healthcare.
- EBQI effectiveness in improving:
  - How VA women's healthcare is organized (e.g., level of comprehensive services available);
  - Frontline provider/staff women's health knowledge and attitudes; and
  - Women Veterans' quality of care and patient experience.
- Local factors (people, processes, places) that influence what EBQI can accomplish.

### Methodology

QUERI Women's Health investigators are evaluating the rollout of EBQI in women's health across more than 20 VA facilities over time, collecting data from all eligible VA facilities each year. In addition, QUERI investigators are conducting qualitative interviews with VA leaders, clinicians and staff, and are conducting surveys of frontline VA primary care and women's health providers and staff, as well as surveys of primary care and women's health directors about how VA women's health-care is organized. They also will analyze VA administrative data on quality and patient experience.

### Findings and Anticipated Impact

Results from this evaluation will inform VA planning and policy, and improve diffusion of best practices VA-wide. For example, lower performing VAs, many of which are less studied, may require uniquely concentrated and tailored efforts to support systematic and sustainable improvements in women Veterans' care.

### Operations Partner(s)

VA Women's Health Services addresses the healthcare needs of women Veterans to ensure that timely, equitable, high-quality, comprehensive healthcare services are provided in a sensitive and safe environment at all VA healthcare facilities.



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