The Center for Policy Evaluation

Conducting evaluations to support implementation of evidence-based policies and programs in VA

The Center for Policy Evaluation (CPE) will conduct rigorous evaluations supporting the implementation of evidence-based policies and programs in the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Leveraging our advanced methodological skills, we will work with operational partners to conduct evaluations, using both existing administrative data and prospective designs, to provide insights into causal mechanisms. Studies employing causal inference are a powerful tool for operational decision-making, by clarifying treatment effects of interest and providing unbiased estimates of them.

Center Organization

1. **Methods Core**: This core will design and conduct evaluations to identify the causal effects of policies and programs.
2. **Learning and Translation Core**: This core will identify opportunities to implement and disseminate findings from the Methods Core, thereby helping VA translate science into action as a learning health care system.
3. **Operations Core**: This core will coordinate efforts and communication within the center, with operational leaders, and other QUERI centers.
Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Across a Wide Range of VA Priority Areas

The Center will be led by Drs. Todd Wagner, David Chan, and Anita Vashi. The leadership team has unparalleled experience in conducting rigorous health services and health economic research with VA operational groups. Supporting the leadership team are 30 VA investigators with diverse content expertise to support evaluations in top priority areas, particularly in:

- **Methodological expertise**: Center investigators have experience with causal interference methods, machine learning, prospective evaluations, and qualitative and Mixed Methods.
- **Veteran Engagement and Diversity**: Center will engage Veterans in its evaluations. CPE is also committed to improving diversity, inclusion, and equity through ongoing initiatives at VA Palo Alto and Stanford University.

Evaluations and Core Data Resources

Along with the two proposed evaluations, core data resources will be created to improve the quality and speed of subsequent evaluations by characterizing each VA medical center and their local market conditions.

**Evaluation 1: Evaluating Suicide-Prevention Efforts and the Role of Veterans’ Disability Benefits**

**Project Team**: Led by Dr. Kritee Gujral with assistance from Drs. Liam Rose and Todd Wagner

**Goals**: Estimate causal effect of VA’s disability-related benefits & policies on Veteran suicide, suicide-related ED visits, & suicide-related behaviors

**Operational Partners**: Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Office of Rural Health, Office of Enterprise Integration

**Methods**: Use a regression discontinuity design to compare outcomes for Veterans just below & just above a given disability score associated with substantial VA benefits

**Impacts**: Provide VA with evidence to guide VBA and VHA policy when it comes to benefits and mental health

**Evaluation 2: Evaluation of VA Health Connect**

**Project Team**: Led by Drs. Diem Tran, Liam Rose, Jaqueline Ferguson, and Anita Vashi

**Goals**: Assess effectiveness of VA Health Connect to streamline access to care & maximize first-contact resolution in improving Veteran access to timely, quality care compared to care as usual prior to implementation

**Operational Partner**: Integrated Veterans Care

**Impacts**: Help VA improve access and encourage greater reliance on VA for services

**Methodological expertise**: Center investigators have experience with causal interference methods, machine learning, prospective evaluations, and qualitative and Mixed Methods.

**Veteran Engagement and Diversity**: Center will engage Veterans in its evaluations. CPE is also committed to improving diversity, inclusion, and equity through ongoing initiatives at VA Palo Alto and Stanford University.

For more information, check out: https://www.queri.research.va.gov/

If you would like to learn more or partner with us, please contact our Program Coordinator, Angela So, at Angela.So@va.gov

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