



The Center for eHealth  
Innovation and Process  
Transformation



# Collaboration Opportunities between VA and University

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- What is a VERC
- Our NE VERC portfolio
- What is a QUERI
- Our eHealth QUERI portfolio
- Challenges and Opportunities

# What is a VERC?

## Veterans Engineering Resource Center (VERC)

- Rooted in a research / medical center operations collaboration
  - Grounded in NAE/IOM 2005 recommendations
  - Proof of concept – engineering student projects
  - Highly visible transformative improvements
- Four VERC established June 2009
  - Funded with medical care appropriations
  - Resource centers for
    - applied operations systems engineering support
    - Engaging faculty to develop novel operations systems engineering in support transformative improvement

- Partners:
  - Boston VHA, WRJ VHA, VA Quality Scholar, COLMR, MAVERIC
  - WPI, MIT, Northeastern
- Strategic Goals:
  - Develop innovative solutions to important VHA problems
  - Educate engineers and healthcare professionals about systems engineering
  - Promote research
  - Spread successful innovations

- Compensation and Pension Planning Models
  - Simulation, system dynamics, and costing approaches
  - Number and types of providers, different process configurations (e.g., contracting, separate flows for 'easy' and 'hard' requests), effects of hiring delays and training
- Specialty Care
  - Developing an algorithm for service agreements in Cardiology and Allergy
  - Examining alternate consultation modes (e.g., e-consults)
- Secure Messaging

# What is a QUERI?

- Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)
  - launched in 1998 as part of a system-wide transformation
  - Mission is to improve care by studying and facilitating the adoption of new treatments, tests, and models of care into routine clinical practice
  - QUERI project opportunities are available for VA researchers, clinicians, and managers through a broad range of funding mechanisms, programs, and ongoing collaborative projects.

# List of QUERI Centers

- Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) QUERI
- Diabetes Mellitus (DM) QUERI
- HIV/Hepatitis QUERI
- Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD) QUERI
- Mental Health (MH) QUERI
- Polytrauma and Blast-Related Injuries (PT/BRI) QUERI
- Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) QUERI
- Stroke QUERI
- Substance Use Disorders (SUD) QUERI
- **eHealth QUERI**

- **Mission:** to work with VA program offices to implement into practice and evaluate eHealth as a model of care
- **Strategic Goals:**
  - To augment **access** and **meaningful use** of eHealth tools; and
  - To enhance **Veteran self-management and participation** in collaborative care through the design, evaluation, and implementation of appropriate eHealth tools.



- Patient portal patient survey
  - From QUERI core funds and VERC support
- Integrating secure messaging into the care team's care delivery workflow
  - QUERI Rapid Response Project (RRP)
- Interactive medication reconciliation by secure messaging
  - QUERI Rapid Response Project (RRP)
  - VERC internal support

As non-VA employees, we cannot:

- Be a PI on internal VA research grants (e.g., RRP)
- Receive a significant portion of funds  
→ Limits the amount of work we can do

As non-VA employees, it is more difficult to:

- Access VA systems (e.g., RFP)
- Analyze VA data  
→ Might limit the type of work we can do

- Work closely with VA personnel, who
  - know how the VA works
  - can serve as PIs and access the data
- Work closely with directors
  - NE VERC Director Janis Hersh has been very helpful in finding solutions
  - eHealth QUERI Director Dr. Thomas Houston has been very supportive of this collaboration

## Collaboration has been valuable

- For WPI:
  - Working within a reflective health care organization, identifying challenging and interesting problems
  - Connecting with motivated NE VERC engineers, VA researchers and clinical staff
- For VA (NE VERC and eHealth QUERI):
  - Access to systems expertise (engineering, process and IT)
  - Identifying new issues and opportunities for improvement and research

## Questions?