



## VA DEMENTIA INITIATIVES

Overview for Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services  
Advisory Council Meeting  
January 14, 2013

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
GERIATRICS & EXTENDED CARE SERVICES (10P4G)  
SUSAN COOLEY, PHD, Chief, Dementia Initiatives

January 14, 2013



## Outline

- **Overview of VA dementia activities (Susan Cooley, PhD)**
- **VA dementia research (Pauline Sieverding, MPA, JD, PhD)**
- **VA caregiver support (Meg Kabat, LCSW-C, CCM)**
- **Questions & Answers**

## Guidance and Communication Infrastructure

- **VHA Dementia Steering Committee (DSC)**  
**(recommendations)**
- **VHA Dementia Education and Training Committee (DET)**  
**(projects; curriculum development process)**
- **VISN and VAMC Dementia Committees**  
**(communication; local priorities)**

## Current Emphases

- **Dementia Warning Signs (DWS) (improve recognition)**
- **Quality Indicator Dementia Workup (improve diagnosis)**
- **Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) (recognition, diagnosis, care coordination)**
- **Non-institutional Extended Care Pilot Projects**
- **Challenging Behavior Staff Training**

## Dementia Warning Signs

- **Dementia Warning Signs Workgroup (2011)**
  - **Quality improvement pilot project:** 10 VA primary care sites; demonstrated feasibility/acceptability of DWS work processes and materials.
  - **Toolkit:** Staff training slides, posters, templated note in electronic health record to document warning signs and initiation of work-up.
  - **Written guidance:**
    - VHA NCP Clinician Fact Sheet: Detection of Dementia  
[www.prevention.va.gov/docs/0514\\_VANCP\\_Dementia\\_Fact\\_F.pdf](http://www.prevention.va.gov/docs/0514_VANCP_Dementia_Fact_F.pdf)

## Quality Indicator Dementia Workup – FE18

- **Frail Elderly (FE) Quality Indicator** – age 75+; external peer review chart extraction; sampled from selected clinics.
- **FE18 Workup Prior to Dementia Diagnosis**
  - Pilot measure began FY12; revised for FY13, continued pilot testing
  - History, Physical Exam, Laboratory Tests
  - Based on VHA Dementia Steering Committee recommendations for dementia workup

## Patient Aligned Care Team/PACT

- **PACT** = Veteran-centric, team-based model of care; works collaboratively with Veteran/family; coordinates care across specialties, settings of care. (“Medical Home”)
  - Ongoing effort to integrate dementia care/care coordination needs into PACT team activities.
- **Local efforts** – VISN/VAMC Dementia Committees, local champions work with PACT implementation.
- **VA Central Office efforts** – DWS Toolkit, staff training; dementia diagnostic codes in PACT “Almanac” tool (allows grouping of patients by dx codes in medical record to facilitate patient cohort tracking).

## Non-institutional Extended Care Pilot Projects

- **Quality improvement pilot demonstration projects** initiated 2010; broad range of non-institutional extended care topics.
- **Projects with dementia focus:**
  - 23 projects
  - **Dementia care management, caregiver support, care transitions**
- Some recently completed; summary evaluation/lessons learned pending.
- Some still ongoing.
- Good practices and lessons learned to be shared.

## Challenging Behavior Staff Training

- 2008 educational conference; VISN Challenging Behavior Task Forces
- **STAR-VA staff training in VA Community Living Centers** – pilot tested; expansion underway; dementia behavior management (adapted from L. Teri)
- **Specific Behavioral Intervention staff training** (approach, cueing) – DVD; train-the-trainer sessions planned for FY13 for use in CLC, HBPC, inpatient psychiatry/medicine
- **Dementia Communication Strategies** (DVD) – PACT training FY13
- **Wandering** (DVD, Satellite broadcast)
- **Continuous meaningful activities** (Satellite broadcast)

## Centers of Excellence

- **VA Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECCS)** – 19 GRECCs nationwide; 4 have major dementia focus (New England, Madison, Minneapolis, Puget Sound); others have minor focus/projects on dementia. [www.va.gov/grecc](http://www.va.gov/grecc)
- **VA Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (MIRECCs)** – 10 MIRECCs nationwide; 2 with major dementia focus (Seattle, Palo Alto). [www.mirecc.va.gov](http://www.mirecc.va.gov)



## VA DEMENTIA RESEARCH

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Pauline Sieverding, JD, PHD Scientific Program Manager, Long Term Care &  
Aging, Health Services Research

January 14, 2013



## Veterans Health Administration

### VHA Operates the Nation's Largest Integrated Health Care System

- 6 million patients annually
- 153 hospitals
- 900 freestanding clinics
- 135 nursing homes
- 207 readjustment counseling centers
- 60% of all practicing MDs have trained at VA hospitals

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# VHA Electronic Medical Record

Includes virtually all clinical information  
Provides broad research value in aging medicine

| INFORMATION CHARACTERISTIC | TOTAL # OF FILE ENTRIES (through March 2012) | AVERAGE PER WORKDAY (in 2011) |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Orders                     | 3,192,843,576                                | 1,223,558                     |
| Images                     | 2,738,564,838                                | 2,249,440                     |
| Documents /Progress Notes  | 2,006,236,305                                | 994,278                       |
| Medication Administration  | 1,720,520,235                                | 646,552                       |
| Vital Sign Measurements    | 2,240,762,101                                | 951,885                       |

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Veterans Health Administration  
**R&D**  
www.research.va.gov

## Best Care Anywhere

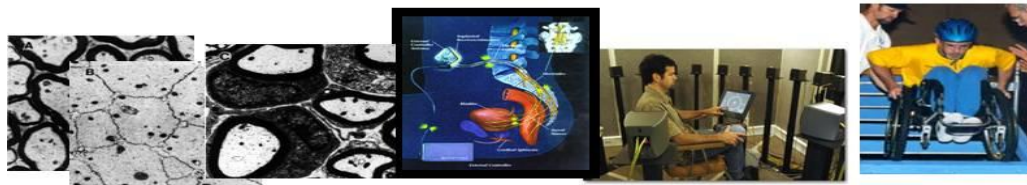


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## VA Office of Research & Development

- **Biomedical Laboratory** Research & Development (BLR&D)
- **Clinical Sciences** Research & Development (CSR&D)
- **Health Services** Research & Development (HSR&D)
- **Rehabilitation** Research & Development (RR&D)



Veterans Health  
Administration  
**R&D**  
www.research.va.gov

## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD

### Biology & Pathophysiology of AD

Palo Alto VAMC –Exposing young mice to plasma from old mice decreases synaptic plasticity and impaired learning & memory. An identified blood chemokine, which increases in blood and CSF with aging in humans, decreased neurogenesis & impaired learning and memory when given to young mice. Blood-borne factors can play a critical role in neurodegenerative diseases. (Nature, Aug. 2011)

San Antonio VAMC. Exposure to herbicides have been linked to neurodegeneration. Exposing a transgenic animal model of AD to an herbicide caused cognitive impairment & amyloidogenesis and this was linked to mitochondrial damage disease. (Neurobiol. Aging, Feb. 2012)

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## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD (cont)

### Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring

Bronx VAMC-Discovery of neuropsychological markers of memory deficits/cognitive impairments & cerebrospinal biomarkers. Early clinical identification of cognitive impairments will allow expedited treatments & management. (Neurobiol. Aging, Dec. 2011)

### Drug Discovery, Pre-Clinical Drug Development, Clinical Interventions

Seattle VAMC- Studies of the regulation of the blood-brain barrier has lead to a demonstration that intravenously delivered antisense oligo-nucleotide, which is directed at the amyloid protein precursor (APP), completely reverses age-associated increase in APP & improved memory in a mouse model of AD (J. Alz. Dis. Feb.2012)

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## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD (cont)

### Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) Trial for Alzheimer's Disease

- A randomized, clinical Trial of vitamin E And Memantine in AD (TEAM-AD).  
Memantine is a drug to treat symptoms of AD through blocking particular brain receptors.
- Started 10/6/2005 Completed 9/1/2012
- Over 600 subjects
- Analysis of Data is on-going.

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## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD (cont)

### Caregiver Support, Sociobehavioral Factors, & Delivery of Care

#### Nonpharmacologic Management of Challenging Behaviors in Veterans with Dementia -

- Gainesville, FL VAMC - A new project addresses the challenge of managing behavioral issues by testing the efficacy of a transformative patient-centric intervention designed to reduce the burden of behavioral problems in Veterans with dementia who live at home with family caregivers.
- Systematic Evidence Review (2011) – Looked at 28 systematic reviews and 25 primary articles in order to answer questions regarding non-pharmacological interventions for behavioral symptoms of dementia (VA-ESP Project 05-225).

#### Preventing Aggression in Veterans with Dementia -

- Houston VAMC – A new project is assessing whether a psychoeducational intervention: 1) decreases incidence of aggression, 2) decreases pain, 3) decreases caregiver burden and improves caregiver-patient relationship, and 4) decreases injuries, use of antipsychotic medication, and nursing home use.

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## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD (cont)

### Caregiver Support, Sociobehavioral Factors, & Delivery of Care

#### Clinical Trial of a Home Safety Intervention for Alzheimer's Disease

- Bedford VAMC - found that a multimodal educational **home safety tool-kit** intervention was effective in improving caregiver competence to create a safer home environment, and decreased the risk and accidents to Veterans with dementia living in the community. The home safety tool-kit is now moving into the QUERI implementation phase.

#### Mobile Applications and Internet-based Approaches for Supporting Non-Professional Caregivers

- Systematic Evidence Review on *Mobile Applications and Internet-based Approaches for Supporting Non-Professional Caregivers (2012)*. This review examined the usage and effects of mobile tools on caregiver burden outcomes, patient outcomes, clinical process measures, and healthcare utilization.

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## Major Research Areas of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Supported by VA-ORD (cont)

### **Long Term Care CREATE** (Collaborative Research to Enhance Transformation and Excellence)

- 3 coordinated, focused, multi-site research projects
  - INTERACT is a staff training and process control system that could be readily adopted if found to be successful in the VA CLC context.
  - The Discharge study provides useful information for GEC management and evaluates their efforts over the last several years to transform CLCs from long stay settings to post-acute programs responsive to Veterans' needs, including how different Centers actually implement changes to meet this goal.
  - The Medical Foster Home study characterizes and evaluates the treatment of Veteran's in the relatively less structured setting of a community foster home, which has been developed as an alternative to institutionally based long term care.
- Health-system partner(s) (geriatrics, CLCs, etc) are actively engaged at the outset of the research to speed up implementation of research findings

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Finally.....

**Interested in learning more about VA healthcare research?**

<http://www.research.va.gov/>

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## VA's Caregiver Support Program

Meg Kabat, LCSW-C, CCM  
Deputy Director, Caregiver Support Program  
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## VA's Caregiver Support Program

- Allow Veterans to remain at home in the community
- Address specific needs of Family Caregivers with a menu of programs and services
- Promote Veteran & Caregiver health and well-being
- Provide one location to obtain needed information
- Provide training & information on common conditions
- Reduce isolation with professional & peer support
- Provide options to give Caregivers respite
- Sensitize health care providers to the Caregivers' role

## Caregiver Support Coordinators

- At all VA medical centers
- Clinical experts on Caregiver issues
- Knowledgeable about VA and non-VA resources
- Assist with application for new benefits
- Organize Caregiver focused activities and services
- Ensure Caregiver sensitivity is integrated into all programs
- Provide National Caregiver Support Line follow-up
- Establish programming for National Family Caregiver Month in November



## Menu of VA Services

### **In-Home Care**

Skilled Nursing  
Home Health Aide  
Home Based Primary Care  
Veteran Directed Home &  
Community Based Care

### **Respite Care**

#### **Services to Address**

Equipment  
Home Modification  
Automobile Modification

#### **Education and Training**

#### **Financial Support**

Aid and Attendance  
Caregiver Stipend (Post 9-11)

#### **Information and Referral**

Caregiver Web site: [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)  
Caregiver Support Line

### **Caregiver Support**

Support Groups  
Caregiver Support Coordinators  
Interactive Website  
Peer Mentoring Program



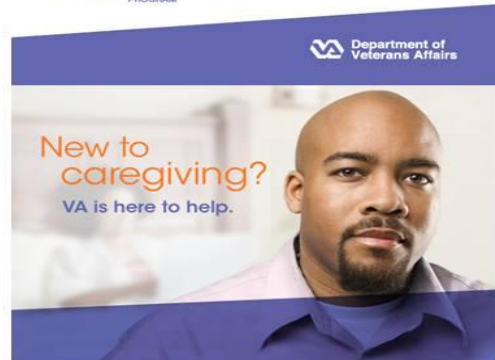
## Caregiver Support Line

- Over 64,000 calls received to date
- Averaging 100-150 calls per day
- Staffed by licensed social workers
- 24/7 coverage
- Follow-up provided by local Caregiver Support Coordinators
- Consistently positive comments and appreciation from Caregivers



Call VA's Caregiver Support Line toll-free today.

1-855-260-3274



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## Caregiver Support Program Website

- Provides zip code based interactive Caregiver Support Coordinator locator
- Contact info for Support Line
- "Caregiver Toolbox"
- Caregiver "connections" with stories from peer Caregivers
- Link to application for post 9/11 benefits/services with live chat support
- Videos of Family Caregivers and Veterans
- Averaging 1,200 visits per day with 3 pages viewed during a visit



[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

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## Caregiver Education and Training Expanding Evidence – Based Best Practices

### REACH VA

#### (Resources for Enhancing All Caregiver's Health)

- Designed to provide education support, and teach problem-solving for Caregivers of Veterans with Alzheimer's Disease/dementia
- Modified for use with Caregivers of Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury
- Currently available at 78 sites, with additional sites in training
- Recently modified to use more targeted intervention for a shorter period of time, allowing for larger scale implementation

## Caregiver Education and Training (contd.)

### Building Better Caregivers

- An interactive, web based workshop developed by Stanford University to be launched by VA Caregiver Support Program through a partnership with the National Council on Aging (NCoA) in Spring 2013
- Workshop is designed to provide education, support and teach problem solving to Caregivers of Veterans of all eras
- Trained moderators facilitate the program and courses
- Six week workshop topics include: stress management, difficult behaviors, sleep, healthy eating, exercise, difficult emotions for both the care recipient and Caregiver, decision making, resources, and planning for the future

## Caregiver Support

### Peer Support Mentoring Program

- Launched January 2012
- New Caregivers are matched to more experienced Caregivers
- Mentors are registered volunteers at their local VA
- Mentors receive additional orientation and on-going support from the National Peer Support Mentoring Program Manager
- Peer Mentor/Caregiver dyads are contacted regularly by the local Caregiver Support Coordinators and the Peer Support Mentoring Program Manager to ensure successful matches
- 29 Peer Mentor/Caregiver dyads are underway with additional Mentors in training
- Anticipate 50 Peer Mentor/Caregiver dyads by the end of FY13