

QUERI Implementation Guide

III. Resources for Implementing Research into Practice

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Section III Part 1: Resources for Implementing Research into Practice

Selected Organizational Units of the Department of Veterans Affairs Relevant to Implementation Research

The Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Veterans Health Administration, are large, complex organizations. Understanding some of the key offices and important functions of the agency may help implementation researchers determine who they should consult about projects they are considering, and where to go for information about the system of care. Implementation research has unique characteristics in that the context of care is critical to the success of an implementation effort. The information presented here provides an overview, and possible guideposts for further exploration and contact as you consider initiating an implementation project.

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) is a cabinet-level federal agency. The [Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs](#) is a Presidential appointee, serving at the will of the President of the United States, and confirmed by the Senate of the United States.

The [Veterans Health Administration](#) (accessible via INTRANET ONLY) (VHA) is a major component of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The top official in the VHA is the [Under Secretary for Health](#). The Under Secretary for Health is appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate, reporting to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The [Office of the Under Secretary for Health](#) (accessible via INTRANET ONLY) is organized into several departments; you can view the organizational chart by clicking the preceding link. Biographies of current senior leaders within VHA, who serve under the Under Secretary for Health, can be viewed by clicking [here](#) (accessible via INTRANET ONLY) and following the links for each person in the organizational structure.

Several key offices in the VHA are of particular importance to understanding the organizational landscape of VHA and planning for implementation research. Even at the stage of single-site or small-scale evaluations or demonstrations of innovative practices or implementation efforts, it is worth attempting connections with senior leaders within VHA, either at Central Office in Washington, DC, or in VISN (Veterans Integrated Service Networks) offices across the country.

Central Office

Key organizational units within Central Office (CO) include:

- [The Deputy Under Secretary for Health](#) (accessible via INTRANET ONLY)

The Deputy Under Secretary for Health reports to the Under Secretary for Health, and has a broad span of organizational units reporting to him. These include:

- [The Office of Patient Care Services](#) (accessible via INTRANET ONLY)

*** Please note that the following links marked by an asterisk are accessible via INTRANET ONLY.**

The Office of Patient Care Services is organized into Program Offices and Strategic Health Groups. These include, among others, the [*Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Strategic Health Group](#); the [*Acute Care Strategic Health Group](#), which includes the Program Offices for [*Cardiology](#), [*Diabetes](#), and [*Oncology](#), among others; the [*Public Health Strategic Health Group](#), which includes the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Program; and the [*Mental Health Strategic Health Group](#), which includes [*Substance Use Disorders](#), as well as other groups specific to providing mental health services and research within VHA.

- [The Office of Research and Development](#)

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) includes [Health Services Research and Development](#) (HSR&D). The [National QUERI program](#), a program within HSR&D, consists of eight disease-specific groups: chronic heart failure, colorectal cancer, diabetes mellitus, HIV/AIDS, ischemic heart disease, mental health, spinal cord injury, and substance use disorders. Each of these is organized with a Research Coordinator, a Clinical Coordinator, an Implementation Research Coordinator, an Administrative Coordinator, and an Executive Committee. Links to each group's web page can be found on the [national QUERI page](#).

- [The Office of Information](#)

The Office of Information (OI) is responsible for maintaining, extending, and creating the data systems with which VHA operates. It is a complex organizational unit, including field-based personnel at each facility who are responsible for the operation of the clinical information system in each facility, as well as personnel at the VISN level who are responsible for VISN level information systems (including electronic mail and data security functions), and at the national level, responsible for a wide variety of functions. These include administration and oversight of the [Austin Automation Center](#), which houses all the VHA and VA national databases; [Systems Design and Development](#), which creates new functionality for Vista/CPRS; and many other systems which we rely on to do our daily work.

- [*The Office of Quality and Performance](#)

The [*Office of Quality and Performance](#) (OQP) is another very complex organizational unit within VHA that is responsible for several key functions related to quality and monitoring performance. [*Accreditation activities](#) are coordinated at the national level through OQP. Performance monitoring is coordinated through the [*Performance Measurement](#) Group. Guideline development and updating and coordination of national clinical reminders are coordinated through the [*National Clinical Practice Guideline Council](#), which is under the management of OQP. [*Clinical Practice Guidelines](#) adopted by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) are maintained and updated through OQP. The [*External Peer Review Program](#) is coordinated through OQP.

In addition, numerous data gathering and reporting functions are coordinated through the Office of Quality and Performance, including the [*Survey of Health Experiences of Patients](#) and other surveys through the Performance Assessment Center of Excellence (PACE). Data are presented for action through the [*Executive Briefing Book](#). [*Several successful projects](#) implementing evidence-based practices have been collated and reported through the OQP web site.

- [*The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Health for Operations and Management](#)

The Deputy Under Secretary of Health for Operations and Management reports to the Under Secretary for Health, and has a broad array of organizational units within VHA reporting to her. These include, notably:

The Field

Reporting through the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations and Management, the [*National Leadership Board](#) (NLB) is composed of the [Directors](#) of each of the 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks ([*VISNs](#)), which constitute the operations branch of VHA in the field.

Relationships with VA Leadership

VHA is a complex organization. We recommend discussing any contacts with individuals in a VISN office or at Central Office with knowledgeable leaders within your institution before beginning dialogue about an innovation or plan for implementation of evidence-based best practices. We also recommend discussion with leadership within the national QUERI program office prior to initiating contact.

Section III, Part 2: Resources for Implementing Research into Practice

Resources for Integrating Research into Practice

This section offers information and resources to assist in practical aspects of integrating research findings into practice. Within each category, the resources are listed alphabetically. There are additional links within other sections of the Guide, for example, in the Formative Evaluation section and the Tools and Toolkits section.

The [Veterans Health Administration Intranet Home Page](#) may be useful in locating other information or resources about VHA. However, it is only accessible if you are logged onto the VA domain, either by being present at a VA facility, using the network available there, or through remote access connections enabling log-on to the VA domain. If you do not have a VA affiliation, you will need to work with someone who has VA log-on privileges in order to gain access to the Intranet resources.

- [Other VHA Resources and Links](#)
- [Other U.S. Government Resources](#)
- [Non-Government Resources](#)

Please note that links to other sites are not endorsements of those sites, the organizations, or content on those sites. These links are provided to assist you in identifying potentially useful information, ideas, or resources.

Other VHA Resources and Links

The website for [Advanced Clinical ACCESS](#), the VA initiative for improving access to services, contains information about addressing access issues and other resources related to clinical improvements.

The [Employee Education System](#) (EES) is the Veterans Health Administration's education and training organization for employees. EES has established VISN teams that coordinate with VISN leaders and determine regional and facility-specific education and training. There are also 10 Employee Education Resource Centers.

VA [Health Services Research and Development Service](#) (HSR&D) offers opportunities for funding projects designed to integrate research and evidence-based findings into practice along with other research opportunities. The HSR&D website provides guidance about funding types available within VA, including format, timelines, and submission deadlines for the types of research funding available. This site also hosts the [QUERI](#) national website.

HSR&D's [Health Economics Resource Center](#) (HERC) is a national center that assists VA researchers in assessing the cost-effectiveness of medical care, evaluating the efficiency of VA programs and providers, and conducting high-quality health economics research.

HSR&D's [Management Decision and Research Center](#) (MDRC) mission is to enhance the delivery of the highest quality health care by providing VA senior staff with consultation, technical assistance, management information, and research findings.

[HSR&D's Information Dissemination Program \(IDP\)](#) disseminates HSR&D research findings and information to the VA and larger health care communities, and creates opportunities and forums for dialogue among VA managers, clinicians, policy makers, and researchers. Its goal is to help

improve health care practice through the dissemination and diffusion of information and findings via various publications and media.

HSR&D's [Measurement Excellence Training and Information Center](#) (METRIC) serves as a resource for improving the overall quality of measurement in the health services research community. MEI exists to: 1) Disseminate information about finding, evaluating, and applying measurement instruments; 2) Educate researchers in all phases of measurement methodology; 3) Facilitate the sharing of measurement knowledge; and 4) Advance measurement science through research.

HSR&D's [VA Information Resource Center](#) (VIREC) was established in 1998 to support researchers who use databases and informatics by providing an infrastructure of database and informatics experts, customer service, expert advice, information products, and Web technology.

The VA [National Center for Patient Safety](#) (NCPS) applies human factor analysis and the safety research of high reliability organizations (aviation and nuclear power) targeted at identifying and eliminating system vulnerabilities in VHA.

The [VA Office of Policy and Planning](#) supports the Office of Under Secretary for Health as an advisor on strategic planning, VHA policy development and implementation, and knowledge/data management.

[Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#) (AHRQ) web site provides practical health care information, research findings, and data to help consumers, health providers, health insurers, researchers, and policymakers make informed decisions about health care issues.

[Cancer Control Planet](#) is a jointly sponsored site (by CDC, NCI, ACS, SAMHSA) that offers informative cancer information and has links to resources for collaboration and disease control programs.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) is the leading federal agency for the protection of people's health and safety, providing information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships. CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion, and its education activities are designed to improve health.

The HHS [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS), formerly HCFA, administers the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

The [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) is the U.S. government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. Most of the other government agencies listed here are under HHS.

The [National Guideline Clearinghouse](#)™ (NGC), sponsored by AHRQ, is a database of clinical practice guidelines and related materials. The NGC mission is to provide physicians, nurses, and other health professionals, health care providers, health plans, integrated delivery systems, purchasers, and others an accessible mechanism for obtaining objective, detailed information on clinical practice guidelines and to further their dissemination, implementation, and use.

The [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#) (NHLBI) provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, blood, and sleep disorders. NHLBI plans, conducts, fosters, and supports an integrated and coordinated program of basic research, clinical investigations and trials, observational studies, and demonstration and education projects. For

health professionals and the public, the NHLBI conducts educational activities, including the development and dissemination of materials in the above areas, with an emphasis on prevention. The [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) is the major national funding source for health-related studies. The goal of NIH is to acquire new knowledge to help prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat disease and disability.

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) is the Federal agency charged with improving the quality and availability of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitative services in order to reduce illness, death, disability, and cost to society that results from substance abuse and mental illnesses.

Non-US Governmental Resources

[AcademyHealth](#) is a professional organization for health services researchers, policy analysts, and practitioners, and is a resource for health research and policy. The organization promotes interaction across the health research and policy arenas by bringing together a broad spectrum of players to share their perspectives, learn from each other, and strengthen their working relationships.

The [American Health Quality Association](#) (AHQA) represents Quality Improvement Organizations and professionals working to improve health care quality and patient safety. AHQA focuses on improving health care quality through community-based, independent quality evaluation and improvement programs.

The [American Society for Quality \(ASQ\) Healthcare Division](#) encourages research, innovation, and the formation of learning partnerships to advance the knowledge of healthcare quality. ASQ disseminates information relating to applications, research, and innovations in quality theory and practice in healthcare.

The [Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences](#) (CECS), at Dartmouth, is a group of scientists and clinician-scholars who conduct research on critical medical and health issues with the goal of measuring, organizing, and improving the health care system.

Their [Clinical Improvement of Health Care](#) section works to translate research into tangible action throughout the health care system. One of their clinical initiatives is [Clinical Microsystems](#), which focuses on understanding those systems that provide care to a population.

The [Centre for Health Evidence](#) (Canadian) is a non-profit organization funded by grants and service contracts that engages in projects and partnerships that promote evidence-based practice. Their emphasis is the use of Internet technologies. Within the CHE site, the [Users' Guides to Evidence-Based Practice](#) section offers a series of articles on clinicians' use of the medical literature to find evidence for practice.

The [Commission for Health Improvement's](#) (CHI) aim is to improve the quality of patient care in the National Health Service (NHS) of the United Kingdom. For CHI the patient's experience with the NHS is at the heart of its work. CHI conducts assessments of NHS organizations and conducts investigations, assuring that national guidelines are being followed.

The [Foundation for Accountability](#) is a consumer-oriented, national organization working to improve health care for Americans by advocating for an accountable and accessible system where consumers are partners in their care and help shape the delivery of care.

The [Health Services Research Projects in Progress](#) (HSRProj) database contains descriptions of ongoing health services research projects funded by government and state agencies, foundations, and private organizations. Use HSRProj to access information about ongoing health services research projects before results are available in a published form.

The mission of [Improving Chronic Illness Care](#) (ICIC) is to help the chronically ill through quality improvement and research. The site describes the Chronic Care Model and provides some tools and examples of how it has been used in quality improvement efforts. Dr. Ed Wagner is its National Program Director.

The [Institute for Health Care Improvement](#) (IHI) is a not-for-profit organization focused on the improvement of health by advancing the quality and value of health care. IHI offers resources and services to help health care organizations make improvements that enhance clinical outcomes and reduce costs. The site includes a variety of tools, resources, and links to other resources. Within the IHI site, you may want to look at [Pursuing Perfection](#) and [Quality Healthcare.org](#).

The mission of the [Institute of Medicine](#) (IOM) is to advance and disseminate scientific knowledge to improve human health. The Institute publishes information and advice concerning health and science policy to government, the corporate sector, the professions, and the public.

The [Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations](#) (JCAHO) works to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public through the provision of health care accreditation and related services that support performance improvement in health care organizations.

The [National Committee for Quality Assurance](#) (NCQA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve health care quality everywhere. This site is a source for information about the quality of our nation's managed care plans. NCQA is perhaps best known for its work in assessing and reporting on the quality of the nation's managed care plans through its accreditation and performance measurement programs.

The [National Patient Safety Foundation](#) (NSFP) is a resource for individuals and organizations committed to improving the safety of patients.

The [Stanford Patient Education Research Center](#) has developed the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, which is a series of workshops for people with chronic health problems to help people deal with and manage their chronic conditions. The workshops are meant to be participative, and participants' mutual support and success build confidence in managing their health and maintaining active and fulfilling lives.

Section III, Part 3: Resources for Implementing Research into Practice

Journals

Many journals have websites and may have materials that relate to the translation of research into practice. This ranges from those journals that outline problem areas in clinical medicine to those that publish results of clinical trials, in addition to those that publish articles about design and

impact of quality improvement efforts or policy issues related to health care improvement. Searches in health care journals may be done at the National Library of Medicine [PubMed](#) site.

Journal Publishing Records for Articles on Translation

This list is provided as a resource for those who plan to publish professional articles on translation and implementation research. Dr. Brian Mittman has been compiling a bibliography of articles related to these topics over a number of years. The following table lists the number of times the indicated journal had a citation in this bibliography (known as the Mittman Index). The total number of articles in 2001, where available, is displayed in the last column. This is provided as a means to compare the overall number of articles in a journal.

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Brad Doebbeling compiled the lists on which this summary is based, and Dr. Brian Mittman's bibliography provided the source for the Mittman citation Index.

Journal Publishing Records for Translation Articles	Mittman Index: # of citations in Dr. Mittman's translation bibliography:	# 2001 Articles
Journal Name		
JAMA	150	389
British Medical Journal	125	577
New England Journal of Medicine	85	375
Archives of Internal Medicine	78	278
Hospitals and Health Networks	65	
Joint Commission Journal on Quality Improvement	64	
Medical Care	62	129
Annals of Internal Medicine	54	205

Health Affairs	52	141
Journal of General Internal Medicine	42	107
Cochrane Library	42	
Evaluating Health Professionals	41	
Canadian Medical Association Journal	34	
Journal of Advanced Nursing	34	
Lancet	33	569
Milbank Quarterly	23	20
American Journal of Cardiology	20	
Annual Rev Psychology	18	
Health Education Quarterly	18	
Journal of Family Practice	17	86
American Journal of Preventative Medicine	17	142
Social Science and Medicine	17	274
International Journal for Quality in Health Care	17	55
Journal of Clinical Epidemiology	17	
Quality in Health Care	17	
Chest	16	720
Hospital and Health Services Administration	16	
Journal of American College of Cardiology	16	

Journal of the American College of Cardiology	16	
Academic Medicine	15	357
Health Care Management Review	15	22
Canadian Journal of Public Health	15	99
American Heart Journal	15	
Medical Care Review	15	
British Journal of General Practice	14	123
Annals of Thoracic Surgery	14	
Medical Care Research and Review	13	22
Journal of the American Geriatrics Society	13	
American Journal of Medicine	12	173
Health Services Research	12	60
Public Health Reports	12	59
Hospitals	12	
Journal of Applied Social Psychology	12	
Nursing Management	12	
Preventive Medicine	11	149
Modern Healthcare	11	
Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law	10	58
American Journal of Medical Quality	10	24

Journal of Quality Improvement	10	
QRB	10	
American Journal of Managed Care	9	
Arthritis and Rheumatism	9	
Family Practice	9	
Internal Journal of Technology Assessment in Healthcare	9	
Journal of Cardiac Failure	9	
Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions	9	
Strategic Management Journal	9	
Health Care Financing Review	8	
Journal of the American Board of Family Practice	8	
Physical Therapy	8	
Statistic in Medicine	8	
American Family Physician	7	
American Journal of Community Psychology	7	
American Journal of Sociology	7	
American Sociological Review	7	
Annals of Surgery	7	

Circulation	7	
Common Market Law Review	7	
Nature	7	
NLN Publications	7	
Quality Management in Health Care	7	
American Journal of Public Health	6	312
Medical Decision Making	6	48
Health Education Research	6	54
ACP Journal Club	6	
Annals of Behavioral Medicine	6	
Ans. Advances in Nursing Science	6	
European Heart Journal	6	
Fortune	6	
Healthcare Demand and Disease Management	6	
Journal of Health Services Research and Policy	6	
Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association	6	
Journal on Quality Improvement	6	
Managed Care Interface	6	
Psychiatric Services	5	172
Journal of Nursing Administration	5	71

ABA Journal	5	
Academy of Management Journal	5	
AHSR and FHSR Annual Meeting Abstract Book	5	
American Journal of Health Promotions	5	
ANNU MEET INT SOC TECHNOL Assess Health Care	5	
Archives of Family Medicine	5	
Canadian Journal of Cardiology	5	
Family Medicine	5	
Health Care Strategic Management	5	
Health Policy	5	
International Journal of Epidemiology	5	
Journal of Industrial Economics	5	
Journal of Medical Education	5	
Review of Industrial Organization	5	