Nursing Research Opportunities at the Department of Veterans Affairs

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VA Health Care Administration

• Largest US Health Care System
  – Veterans: ~ 8.57 M enrolled; ~ 6.2 M receiving care;
    ~ 1M veterans receive care weekly
  – 152 Medical Centers; 135 Nursing Homes
  – 802 Out Patient Clinics; 293 Veterans’ Centers

• Nursing
  – ~ 50,000 RNs & ~4,900 APRNs)
  – ~13,600 LPN/LVN & ~11,200 Nursing Assistants

• Highly educated workforce
  – 45% Bachelor’s degree
  – 22% Masters degree or doctorate
“The VA Research Program is the foundation for advancements in veterans’ health care and represents the promise of a better life.”

James B. Peake, MD

Previous Secretary,
Department of Veterans Affairs
VA: Largest Funding Entity after NIH

- Total 2012 research funding-$1.87 billion
  - VA Research $581 million
  - VA Medical Care $581 million
  - Non-VA Federal sources $515 million
  - Non-Federal sources $195 million
- ~3,000 investigators
- ~2,130 projects
- ~100 sites conducting research
VA Nursing Research Opportunities

• Nursing Research Initiative
• Investigator Initiated Projects
• Career Development Awards
• Service Directed Projects
• Special funding, e.g., Nursing Research Pilot
• Office of Academic Affiliations Fellowships
• VA Quality Scholars
Nursing Research Initiative (NRI)

- **Purpose:** Development of nurse principal investigators to conduct independent research
- **Focus:** Identify, test, and/or implement nursing interventions that enhance and prevent disease in veterans across the care continuum
- **Equivalent to NIH’s K01, R21 or K99 awards**
- **Special populations of interest:**
  - PTSD
  - Substance Abuse
  - Mental Health
  - TBI
  - Amputations
  - SCI
  - Stroke
  - Chronic illness
  - HIV
  - Sensory Disorders
  - Age & age-related changes
  - Deployment-related health disorders
Career Development Awards (CDA)

- CDA 1 - entry level
- CDA 2 - mid-level program
- CDTA - transition award
- CDEA - enhancement award for senior VA scientists
- Equivalent to NIH’s K22-24 awards
Service Directed Projects

• Purpose: Implement and evaluate specific program and strategies to enhance healthcare quality and outcomes

• Emphasis: Applied, action-oriented research that uses established evidence to create & document real change within an organizational unit

• Research that responds to organizational need
• Nurse Fellowship Programs
  — Pre-doctoral
  — Post-doctoral
  — Equivalent to NIH’s F31 & F32
• Enhancing Academic Partnerships Program – VA Nursing Academy (VANA) Pilot Project; due to end this year unless re-funded
VA Quality Scholars

• Collaboration among VA (OAA & ONS), Dartmouth Institute, & RWJF QSEN program
• Curriculum expanded to be more inter-professional disciplinary
• Nurse Fellow Program
  – 2 year fellowship for pre- & post-doctoral nurses (PhD & DNP)
  – 8 host sites- Cleveland, White River Junction, Nashville, Iowa City, San Francisco, Birmingham, Atlanta & Palo Alto
Take Home Message

• The Department of Veterans Affairs provides opportunities for
  — Funding nursing research
  — Research fellowships
  — Multi-site research
VA Internet Sites

• Office of Nursing Services: http://www.va.gov/nursing/

• Office of Research & Development: http://www.research.va.gov/

• Office of Academic Affiliations: http://www.va.gov/oaa/