

New Associate Director Named for QUERI

David Atkins, MD, MPH, recently joined VA's Office of Research and Development as the new Associate Director of the Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI). Dr Atkins brings outstanding expertise in the field of implementation science to the QUERI program, having spent



David Atkins, MD, MPH
QUERI Associate Director

more than a decade as Chief Medical Officer at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). His duties at AHRQ included supervising

13 Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs), where he had ample hands-on experience in negotiating at the intersection of research, quality improvement, evidence-based practice, and public policy.

Before serving as Chief Medical Officer for the EPCs, Dr. Atkins was the Coordinator for Clinical Preventive Services at AHRQ's Center for Practice Technology Assessment. In that role, he directed an array of programs and research activities relating to clinical preventive services and health promotion, such as directing the work of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Board certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Atkins also has a Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology. Prior to joining AHRQ, he split his time between conducting epidemiologic research on cardiovascular disease prevention and providing primary care in the

ambulatory setting.

In addition to several faculty appointments, Dr. Atkins has served on national committees that include the Armed Forces Epidemiology Board, American College of Preventive Medicine's Practice Guidelines Committee, and the American Cancer Society's Detection and Treatment Advisory Group. Dr. Atkins is a

Implementation Issues Resound at National Meeting

"Implementation Across the Nation: From Bedside and Clinic to Community and Home" was the theme of the 26th HSR&D National Meeting that was held February 13-15 in Baltimore. Hosted by HSR&D's Center for Research in the Implementation of Innovative Strategies in Practice (Iowa City), the meeting included 580 researchers, clinicians, and policymakers who participated in more than 30 paper sessions and workshops and viewed 120 posters on an array of veteran-related healthcare issues, as well as several exhibits. This national forum provided many opportunities for discussion, collaboration, and the development of strategies that will improve healthcare for veterans, including our new generation of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with particular healthcare needs.

The theme reflects the need to extend what we have learned about the dissemination of information

member of the editorial board for the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, and he has authored nearly 40 articles and/or book chapters and given more than 50 presentations on topics such as improving cancer screening in the primary care setting, assessing outcomes of health promotion and disease prevention, and the science of practice guidelines.

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Implementation Issues Resound at National Meeting

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and the implementation of new interventions in clinics and hospitals to a broader range of delivery settings and to new veteran populations.

Research presentations focused on diseases/conditions that are prevalent among veterans, such as: home-based monitoring to improve blood pressure control, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), pain management, racial differences in type 2 diabetes, traumatic brain injury in OEF/OIF veterans, and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Meeting Highlights

Carolyn Clancy, MD, Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) gave the keynote address titled, "Quality at All Bedsides." Her talk focused on getting clinical research to the bedside quickly – the right care to the right patient at the right time. She also discussed some of AHRQ and VA's joint projects; for example, Partners in Patient Safety Improvement Corps, which works to identify the root causes of adverse events.

The meeting also featured special guest speakers: Carole Estabrooks, RN, PhD, Professor of Nursing at the University of Alberta, who spoke about the state of implementation science, and Garth Stewart, a veteran injured in Iraq, who told attendees about his experiences with both DoD and VA healthcare.

In addition to these exciting speakers, Dr. David Atkins, the new director of VA/HSR&D's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI), spoke about the importance of bringing research into day-to-day practice. Dr. Seth Eisen, Director of HSR&D, also discussed the importance of implementation science, in addition to focusing on HSR&D research priorities that include VA/DoD collaborations, genomics, and health issues affecting veterans of OEF/OIF, particularly the importance of pre-

deployment data to understanding the etiology of conditions affecting these veterans. Dr. Joel Kupersmith, VA's Chief Research and Development Officer, emphasized the importance of health services research in the field of genomics, as well as a new virtual informatics consortium that will allow even better use of VA's electronic medical record.

Next year's HSR&D National Meeting is planned for February 2009 under the theme, "Defining Optimal Care: Balancing Quality, Cost and Patient Preferences."



Dr. Joel Kupersmith, VA's Chief Research and Development Officer (l) and Dr. Seth Eisen, HSR&D Director (r) congratulate Dr. David Asch on his receipt of the 2008 Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research. Margaret O'Shea Caplan, Associate Director of the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, accepted a share of the award for the facility.

ESP Program Offers Online Reports

The Evidence-Based Synthesis Program (ESP) was established to provide timely and accurate syntheses of the evidence on targeted health care topics of particular importance to veterans' health care. For example, investigators at the Portland VA Medical Center, and part of HSR&D's Evidence Synthesis Program, conducted a comprehensive review of studies on the management of benign prostatic hyperplasia in order

to assess the evidence regarding effective treatment. A summary of their findings is included in one of the four ESP reports currently available on the HSR&D website at www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/publications/esp/. Three other reports address: "Self-Monitoring of Blood Glucose in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes," "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the VA Healthcare System," as well as "Screening Men for Osteoporosis."

Journal Highlights VA Chronic Care Conference

To further our understanding of the many issues surrounding chronic care, in 2006 VA brought together experts in the area from both within and outside VA to participate in a state-of-the-art (SOTA) conference on "Managing Complexity in Chronic Care." SOTA participants focused on what is needed in clinical care, research, and education to help create a health care system that will best manage the complexity associated with veterans who have multiple chronic illnesses.

As part of the SOTA, background papers were commissioned and then augmented as a result of the SOTA deliberations. A special supplement recently published in the *Journal of*

General Internal Medicine features papers from the SOTA conference.* Articles focus on an array of topics including self-management needs of patients with multiple chronic conditions (MCC); the business case for cost-saving mechanisms to improve quality of care; how multiple chronic conditions are related to functional impairment and increased mortality rates, as well as health expenditures associated with MCC. Investigators also address informatics strategies that may have the potential to improve care for chronic illnesses.

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Newly Funded Projects

(Only awards/projects with funding start dates that have been confirmed since the last issue of Research Briefs in August 2007 are listed here.)

Career Awardees

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| Michael Fischer, MD, MSPH | Hines VAMC | Role of Kidney Disease in an Elderly High-risk Population |
| Anouk Grubaugh, PhD | Charleston VAMC | Improving Mental Health Services for Diverse Veterans with PTSD and SMI |
| Lynn Soban, PhD, MPH, RN | VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System | Nursing Processes of Care and VA Inpatient Quality |

Research Career Scientists

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| Elizabeth Yano, PhD, MSPH | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System |
| Andrew Zhou, PhD | VA Puget Sound Health Care System |

Deployment Health Research

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| Cynthia Brandt, MD | VA Connecticut Health Care System | Women Veterans Cohort Study |
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Implementation Rapid Response Projects

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| Barbara Bokhour, PhD | Bedford VAMC | An Intervention to Improve Patient-Provider Communication about HIV Testing |
| Dawn Bravata, MD | Indianapolis VAMC | Racial Disparities in Blood Pressure Management among Stroke Patients |
| Laura Damschroder, MS | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Barriers and Facilitators in Uptake of MOVE! in the VA |
| Lisa Dixon, MD, MPH | VA Maryland Health Care System | Can Family/Caregiver Involvement Improve TIDES Outcomes? |
| Sonia Duffy, PhD, MS, RN | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Facility Level Smoking Cessation Intervention in VISN 11 |
| Dana Epstein, PhD, RN | Phoenix VAMC | Modification to Insomnia Treatments for OEF/OIF Veterans with TBI |
| Eric Garshick, MD | VA Boston Health Care System | Assessment of Osteoporosis in Chronic Spinal Cord Injury |
| Ronald Gironda, PhD | Tampa VAMC | Chronic Headache among OEF/OIF Veterans Exposed to Blasts |
| MaryAnn Gregor, DrPH | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Enhancing Caregiver Support for VA Patients with Diabetes |
| Marylou Guihan, PhD | Hines VAMC | Developing a Home Telehealth Program to Manage Pressure Ulcers in SCI/D |
| Sue Haddock, PhD | Columbia VAMC | Assessing Evidence for Nurse Staffing to Improve Patient/Organizational Outcomes |
| Christian Helfrich, MPH, PhD | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Psychometric Validation of an Organizational Readiness-to-Change Scale |
| Stephen Henry, DrPH, MPH | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Implementing a Project to Reduce Missed HIV Clinic Appointments |
| Susan Kirsh, MD | Cleveland VAMC | Diabetes Shared Medical Appointments: System Redesign and Implementation |
| Sarah Krein, PhD, RN | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Study of Women Veterans in Menopause (SWIM) |
| Mary Jo Pugh, PhD | VA South Texas Health Care System | Multifaceted Assessment of Coordination of Care for OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Maude Rittman, RN, PhD | North Florida/South Georgia VA Health Care System | Evaluation of Caregiver Guidebooks |
| Joanne Robbins, PhD | Madison VAMC | Dose Response-Driven Fluid Implementation to Assess and Treat Dysphagia |
| John Rumsfeld, MD | Denver VAMC | Evaluating the Implementation of the VA Cardiovascular Assessment Reporting and Tracking System for Cath Labs (CART-CL) |
| Nina Sayer, PhD | Minneapolis VAMC | Community Re-Integration Problems and Treatment Preferences among OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Sherrie Schuldheis, PhD, RN | Portland VAMC | Glycemic Management Using an Insulin Infusion Protocol in a Non-ICU Area |
| Carol Smith Hammond, PhD | Durham VAMC | Ability of Cough to Predict Dysphagia in Rehabilitation Patients |
| Constance Uphold, PhD | North Florida/South Georgia VA Health Care System | Intervention Development for Shared Decision-Making in Stroke Prevention |
| Marcia Valenstein, MD | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Suicide and Firearm Experience (SAFE): Developing Strategies to Increase Veterans' Safety |
| Carol VanDeusen Lukas, EdD | VA Boston Health Care System | Multi-Site Coordinated Evaluation of the Impact of Quality-Based Payment Strategies (AHRQ ACTION) |
| Bonnie Wakefield, PhD, RN | Columbia VAMC | Caregiving Appraisal in Caregivers of Chronically Ill Veterans |
| Rhonda Williams-Avery, PhD | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Peer Visitation for OEF/OIF Veterans with PT/BRI and their Caregivers |

Investigator-Initiated Research

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| Virginia Chang, MD, PhD | Philadelphia VAMC | The Influence of Obesity on Veteran's Quality of Care |
| Sylvain Delisle, MD, MBA | VA Maryland Health Care System | From Syndromic to Disease-Course Surveillance |



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| Susan Eisen, PhD | Bedford VAMC | Predicting Post-Deployment Mental Health Substance Abuse and Service Needs |
| Angela Fagerlin, PhD | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Impact of a Plain Language Prostate Cancer Decision Aid on Decision Making |
| David Litaker, MD, PhD Jay McDonald, MD | Cleveland VAMC St. Louis VAMC | Summary Measures of Quality for Diabetes Care Using VA Databases to Identify Drug AEs and their Health and Cost Impact |
| Karin Nelson, MD, MSHS | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | The Impact of Neighborhood Environment on Veteran Health and Survival |
| Steven Pizer, PhD | VA Boston Health Care System | Outpatient Waiting Times, Outcomes, and Cost for VA Patients with Diabetes |
| Michelle Salyers, PhD | Indianapolis VAMC | Illness Management and Recovery for Veterans with Severe Mental Illness |
| Yujing Shen, PhD | VA New Jersey Health Care System | Longitudinal Analysis of Utilization and Cost by VA Patients with Diabetes |
| Alexander Sox-Harris, PhD | VA Palo Alto Health Care System | Process Quality Measures of Addiction Care: Validation and Refinement |
| Michael Steinman, MD | San Francisco VAMC | Guideline Adherence in Elders with Heart Failure and Multiple Comorbidities |
| Elizabeth Yano, PhD, MSPH | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Empirical Evaluation of Structure-Outcome Links in VA's Quality Transformation |
| <i>Nursing Research Initiative</i> | | |
| Bonnie Steele, PhD, RN | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | An Intervention to Enhance Function in Severe Cardiopulmonary Illness |
| Charlene Weir, RN, PhD | VA Salt Lake City Health Care System | Minimizing Harm from ADEs by Improving Nurse-Physician Communication |
| <i>Service-Directed Research</i> | | |
| Valerie Lawrence, MD Amy Rosen, PhD | VA South Texas Health Care System Bedford VAMC | Long-Term Outcomes in Burned OEF/OIF Veterans (LOBO) Validating the Patient Safety Indicators in the VA: A Multi-Faceted Approach |

Publication Notification

HSR&D requires notification of all articles by HSR&D investigators when the article is ACCEPTED for publication. When an article is accepted, please send an email to vhacohsrd@va.gov and to research.publications@va.gov and include the journal name, expected publication date, funding source, and a copy of the accepted article.



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