



Seattle

Center of Excellence

Director: David H. Au, MD, MS

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011

The Northwest Center for Outcomes Research in Older Adults (NW Center), a Health Services Research & Development Center of Excellence, is located at Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System (VA Puget Sound) in Seattle, WA. The NW Center conducts innovative research to generate relevant new knowledge, develop rigorous new research methods and provide high caliber training in health services research and support VA policy makers in a rapidly changing health care environment. The main research objectives are to provide information to improve the delivery of health services to Veterans and to contribute to scientific progress in the field of health services research by focusing on four emphasis areas:

- Management of Chronic Disease in Primary and Specialty Care
- Preservation of Independence in Older Adults
- Evaluation of Alternative Delivery Systems
- Basic Methodology in Health Services Research

In 2011, the NW Center had an unexpected change in leadership with the transition of Dr. Stephan Fihn to Director of the Office of Analytics and Business Intelligence. Dr. David Au, a Core Investigator since 1998, was appointed Acting Center Director. During this transition, the NW Center has continued to support 23 Core Investigators and 18 Affiliate Investigators, oversee 82 unique research projects, and manage \$13.4 million in funds from federal and non-federal sources.

Dr. Christopher Bryson, Core Investigator and Primary Care Physician agreed to new leadership roles as the Co-Director of the HSR&D Fellowship Program and as Principal Investigator for the Ischemic Heart Disease QuERI Coordinating Center. Dr. Bessie Young will Co-Direct the HSR&D postdoctoral fellowship program and has accepted the position of Chair, Research Review Committee.

The Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Demonstration Lab and the VISN 20 Rural Health Tele-dermatology Program are currently led by our Investigators and are co-located within the NW Center. In anticipation of VA Puget Sound relocating these operational activities, we are actively planning for capacity building and reallocating resources currently committed to these activities. In addition to a search for a permanent Center Director, there is a Joint Search with the University of Washington Biostatistical Department to recruit and develop a full time VA Investigator. Dr. Andrew Zhou, a Research Career Scientist and the lead of our Biostatistical Unit directs this effort. The objective of recruiting an additional Investigator is to develop statistical methodology in areas important to VA such as quasi-experimental designs and methods to improve causal inferences from observational data. We are also in the process of recruiting three full time data analysts to backfill PACT staff. We continue to focus on the career development of our brightest young Investigators and are planning to support three Career Development Award applications in the upcoming year.

In preparation of the 2012 Center of Innovation submissions, our Investigators have established weekly meetings to present works in progress and to discuss their research interests and new proposal ideas. These meetings, in addition to the Research Review Committee meetings, have been successful in creating new

research collaboration within the NW Center and stronger study teams.