



## **Salt Lake City**

Research Enhancement Award Program

Director: Matthew H. Samore, MD

### **Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011**

The overall emphasis of the IDEAS Center continues to be informatics. The overarching goal of all our projects is to improve quality of care and health outcomes for Veterans. Because of our close links with operational partners we have been able to design projects which enhance impact. Our activities are tightly aligned with priorities championed by VHA leadership.

IDEAS Center work encompasses several lines of research which serve as themes. A close-knit eco-system has emerged that is tied to these topic areas. Groups of collaborating investigators interact in the form of research interest groups, which have coalesced around the following domains: infection surveillance, infection prevention, patient safety, quality measurement, pharmaco-epidemiology, and post-deployment health. Cognitive support, visual analytics, natural language processing, human-computer interaction, and ontologies serve as cross-cutting methods. The research interest groups are highly cross-linked, with overlapping membership.

IDEAS investigators are heavily invested in VA transformation initiatives, as leaders and participants in Veterans Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI) and Consortium for Healthcare Informatics Research (CHIR). VINCI and CHIR are key elements of T13, the ORD initiative to Perform R&D to Enhance the Long-Term Health and Wellbeing of Veterans. IDEAS investigators also play key roles in transformation initiative T16, which aims to shape the future of VHA clinical information systems through application of health IT and informatics.

The IDEAS Center has implemented several refinements to its internal processes to enhance productivity and maximize impact. Strategic committees include members from all aspects of the organization to ensure that processes meet real needs as opposed to entrench another layer of bureaucracy. Committees include emphasis on academic productivity, internal communication, investigator collaboration, and product dissemination.

The Academic Productivity Committee (APC) was formed to support the publication process within the Center. The APC meets twice each month to evaluate manuscript progress and to assist the Center as writing coaches, draft reviewers, and publication submission support. The Committee has implemented a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of publications, with posters in the hallways giving writing tips, lists of current manuscripts in preparation and a "Wall of Fame" where the APC displays recent investigators' publications. The Committee hosts a writing workshop the first Friday afternoon of each month to teach writing strategies and the Center dedicates this time for writing and literature review. The Committee maintains a database of papers in progress which includes milestone dates to keep papers on track for submission.

To facilitate internal communication, the VA has encouraged groups to utilize social media to facilitate collaboration. The Center has employed a VA YAMMER site to improve communication, information distribution, and collaboration within our Center. SharePoint is also used extensively as a shared workspace, a repository for communal resources and guides, and with separate project pages for all staff to have access

to project status, activities and products.

Internal project productivity has been improved by implementing a consistent Work Breakdown Structure across all projects. This provides a uniform structure for all projects, and allows simplified reporting of status and progress.