VA QUERI
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

Guide for Implementing Evidence-Based Clinical Practice and Conducting Implementation Research

Background:

In 1998, VA's Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D), working collaboratively with the Office of Quality and Performance (OQP), established the VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) to generate new knowledge about how to implement evidence-based research findings in clinical practice, and to facilitate systematic, continuous implementation into routine clinical practice in several specific disease areas. These efforts continue, and much has been learned about the real world requirements of implementing evidence into practice.

Purpose:

The QUERI Guide is a resource for those involved in QUERI and those who simply want to know more about this initiative. It contains valuable information from past and current projects, including important lessons learned. The Guide will be updated as QUERI progresses and will provide selected materials and links to a variety of other resources that also may be helpful.

Audience:

The Guide is intended for anyone interested in the implementation of research or evidence into clinical practice, particularly within VA. This includes persons relatively new to the field who want to learn more about the practice of translation or implementation research , as well as clinicians and researchers interested or involved in translation or implementation research or quality enhancement projects.

Disclaimer

The background and work presented in this QUERI Guide are necessarily brief and largely non-technical. The primary intended audience is people with health services research experience, but without extensive backgrounds in conducting implementation research. The Guide also provides information about QUERI activities that might be of interest and use to experienced researchers. However, implementation research is a newly developing field, and there are no "right" or even "best" answers to most questions that start with "how do I...?" Instead, this Guide is an attempt to provide resources to a specific group of researchers or practitioners. Anyone using this Guide is strongly encouraged to talk to one or more individuals in the existing QUERI groups to obtain their assistance in understanding the material presented herein, and in beginning the process of conducting implementation research.

I. Theory and Methods for Integrating Research into Practice

- **Part One** describes theoretical models underlying empirical work that has already been accomplished within VA QUERI. Each of the models contains specific frameworks to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating efforts to translate research findings into practice.

- **Part Two** provides important information on how to diagnose gaps in performance in a health care delivery system, and how to target interventions to address performance gaps. This section provides examples from ongoing QUERI work that illustrate the process of diagnosing organizational performance problems, as well as how to use that information to plan interventions.

- **Part Three** offers a brief overview and extensive references to assist in the design of intervention studies, focusing on quasi-experimental and non-randomized controlled trial designs.

- **Part Four** presents an overview of formative or process evaluation - a critical component of implementation research - focusing on practical aspects of formative evaluation.

II. VA QUERI Research

- **Part One** discusses lessons learned through the implementation activities. These lessons are provided with examples to assist in understanding how they relate to the process of conducting implementation research.

- **Part Two** presents tools and toolkits that were created by several QUERI groups as part of their efforts to conduct implementation research.

III. Resources for Implementing Research into Practice

- **Part One** offers information about the structure of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the organizational context in which QUERI work is being done. Links to web sites describing functions of key offices and brief descriptions of how those offices function in relation to implementation research are provided.

- **Part Two** provides a set of web-based resources both within and outside VHA to assist in planning and conducting implementation research.

- **Part Three** gives a description of journals that have published implementation research articles, and which may be venues for future publication.