

Spark Investee Projects



ACUPUNCTURE IN PRIMARY CARE

Christina Gallop | christina.gallop@va.gov | VA Salt Lake City Health Care System | Salt Lake City, UT

The VA Salt Lake City Primary Care Clinic often sees 20–30 patients a day seeking help for acute musculoskeletal pain, anxiety, and substance use disorders. This project will offer same-day acupuncture treatment, along with standard care, for Veterans presenting acutely for a subset of complaints for which acupuncture has been shown to improve outcomes.

AMBULATORY EYE MOVEMENT RECORDING DEVICE FOR DIAGNOSIS OF EPISODIC DIZZINESS

Mark Walker | mark.walker5@va.gov | VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System | Cleveland, OH

Accurate diagnosis of episodic vertigo is difficult without observation of an attack, but these rarely occur when a patient is being examined at a clinic. This project will design and prototype a simple and inexpensive take-home device to record the patient's abnormal eye movements during an episode.

ANIMATING VA COMMUNITY AS MEDICINE

Erica Simon | erica.simon@va.gov | VA Palo Alto Healthcare System | Palo Alto, CA

Unlike the national infrastructure for delivering medication prescriptions, there is no delivery system for behaviors that underlie health. This project will prototype a "behavioral pharmacy": a highly innovative, community-empowered approach to addressing the chronic, progressive, behaviorally-mediated diseases that are driving human suffering and more than 85 percent of health care spending.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AUTO-RESPONDER FOR VETEXT

Robert Durkin | robert.durkin@va.gov | VA Loma Linda Healthcare System | Loma Linda, CA

The VEText system has received over one million inbound text messages that are categorized as "Other," which is unmonitored; however, many of these messages are valid questions or requests. This project will develop an Artificial Intelligence Auto-Responder feature to automatically respond to inbound text messages that fall into this category.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CATALOG

John Miller | john.miller@va.gov | Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center | Richmond, VA

Providers nationwide lack quick access to the innovations of the Assistive Technology Program at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA. Assistive Technology Catalog proposes an online catalog with custom solutions they have developed, so that those solutions can be better disseminated across the country and help more Veterans.



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BIKE SHARE PROGRAM

Matt Cox | michael.cox8@va.gov | Chillicothe VA Medical Center | Chillicothe, OH

How can VA encourage and increase Veteran and employee health, activity, and mental stability? Bicycles improve well-being and help people with physical disabilities, and this project procures and distributes these bicycles to Veterans and VA employees.

VET TUNES

Elise Henning | elise.henning2@va.gov | Cincinnati VA Medical Center | Cincinnati, OH

Older adults with dementia, neuropsychiatric symptoms, or delirium are at risk of receiving chemical and/or physical restraints which can pose deleterious effects. Music therapy has been shown to improve emotional, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes in older adults with cognitive impairment and/or delirium, as well as improve the well-being of caregivers and staff.

DESIGNING A BETTER MOBILITY DEVICE

Brittney Muir | brittney.muir@va.gov | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Seattle, WA

Walkers are designed to improve mobility and reduce falls but are not particularly effective. This project proposes the creation of a more stable assistive device that promotes community mobility.

DROP EASE

Terri Ohlinger | terri.ohlinger@va.gov | Cincinnati VA Medical Center | Cincinnati, OH

A soft lever-based device, to assist with eye drop instillation. Will allow for lever extension for weaker patients (the longer the arms the weaker the patient), a rubber oval to “seat” the bottle and a snap on “aiming” assist if necessary.

ELECTRICAL SOCKET PROTECTIVE BUMPER FOR SCI UNIT

Benjamin Salatin | benjamin.salatin@va.gov | Raymond G. Murphy Medical Center | Albuquerque, NM

Damaged electrical outlets in the spinal cord injury (SCI) unit were potential safety risks that were costly to repair. This project will create a protective bumper for electrical sockets to reduce damage to outlets and plugs.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Kent Wagoner | kent.wagoner@va.gov | Martinsburg VA Medical Center | Martinsburg, WV

In the event of an emergency evacuation of a medical center, every second counts. This project saves lives using a simple, standardized process for identifying whether a patient requires an evacuation sled or evacuation chair as a method of evacuation.



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ENNEAGRAM-BASED AWARENESS OF PERSONALITY FOR VETERANS RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA AND PTSD

Lori Davis | lori.davis@va.gov | Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center | Tuscaloosa, AL

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and personality disorder treatment lacks a patient-centered approach and does not provide a meaningful bridge to help patients better understand themselves. This program seeks to treat Veterans with PTSD by providing training on the Enneagram Personality System, which defines nine strength-based personality types that have distinct traits, beliefs, and a spectrum of healthy versus maladaptive expressions.

GROUP MEDICAL VISITS

Cynthia Moore | cynthia.moore7@va.gov | Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System | Biloxi, MS

Increased wait times and repeat appointments have decreased Veteran satisfaction and increased provider burnout. Group Medical Visits consolidate similar needs into a teaching environment, freeing providers' time for face-to-face appointments and increasing Veteran satisfaction, empowering them in their health care decisions.

HER SPACE: HEALING, EMPOWERMENT, AND RESILIENCE RETREAT FOR WOMEN

Anne Mann | anne.mann2@va.gov | VA Central Ohio Healthcare System | Columbus, OH

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) increases risk for multiple adverse health outcomes, yet nearly 50 percent of women Veterans with MST do not receive care through VHA. This project proposes a two-day, offsite, therapeutic retreat for women Veterans with a history of MST who are unengaged or under-engaged in VA services.

HYBRID-POWERED SCOOTER

Jonathan Duvall | jad75@pitt.edu | VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System | Pittsburgh, PA

Power wheelchairs and scooters rely on electric batteries which have a limited capacity and must be charged regularly via an outlet. Hybrid-powered scooters can be charged on the fly with a propane generator in locations where electrical outlets are not available.

INSOMNIAX

Carmen Wong | carmen.wong@va.gov | Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center | Richmond, VA

There is no tool that provides individual physician burnout trends and how it relates to sleep quality and behavior. This innovation combines biometrics with machine learning to identify trends in burnout and its relationship to sleep quality.



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THE JOHN WAND

Terri Kennedy | teri.kennedy@va.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

Obese Veterans confronted with immobility or bedbound status experience difficulty toileting with a standard urinal and require nursing assistance to hold anatomy and devices. The John Wand is a simple, effective device that allows Veterans independence and the ability to retain dignity and privacy.

JUST IN TIME TRAINING

Misoor Goueli | misoor.goueli2@va.gov | Cincinnati VA Medical Center | Cincinnati, OH

VHA trainees do not receive thorough training on all medical procedures, creating patient risk. Just in Time Training provides training immediately before high-risk procedures.

LOW-COST INJECTION MODEL FOR TEACHING ULTRASOUND-GUIDED INJECTIONS

Jared Gilman | jared.gilman@va.gov | Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center | Richmond, VA

There is currently a limited number of training models for ultrasound-guided injections, and those that are available are expensive. This project allows users to practice these injections on a low-cost model in a low-stress, no-harm environment.

MAGIC BOX TECHNOLOGY

Zahira Sanabria | zahira.sanabria@va.gov | North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Gainesville, FL

There is a growing need in VA Community Living Centers (CLC) for therapeutic, cost-effective, and non-pharmacological nursing interventions to improve the health and quality of life for elderly people living in the CLC. Magic Box Technology (MBT) will provide an interactive projection system to keep residents engaged.

MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION WITH CUSTOMIZED CONTACT LENSES

Heather Jonasson | heather.jonasson@va.gov | VA San Diego Healthcare System | San Diego, CA

Fitting patients with scleral lenses improves vision, but the lenses may lead to potential corneal complications. This project will create customized scleral contact lenses based on a mold of the cornea for each individual patient, improving vision and providing a safe contact lens for the patient's ocular health.



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ONE AND DONE NOTIFICATION: SUICIDE DESKTOP ICON

Colleen Cashner | colleen.cashner@va.gov | VA St. Louis Health Care System | St. Louis, MO

Managing suicide ideation calls is an inefficient process in which getting connected to the suicide-prevention team can take too much time and effort. With One and Done, entering a keyboard combination or clicking a computer icon will immediately connect the Veteran in need to the suicide-prevention team, focusing more time and energy on the Veteran.

OPERATION FOLLOW THE NEED: PILOT CLINIC FOR VETERANS WITH CO-OCCURRING PTSD AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Telsie Davis | telsie.davis@va.gov | Atlanta VA Medical Center | Atlanta, GA

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) treatment has been shown to decrease both PTSD and substance use disorder (SUD) symptoms, yet each disorder is largely treated in separate programs by different providers. This innovation will allow Veterans with co-morbid PTSD and SUD to receive evidence-based, integrated treatment for both disorders in one place by one treatment team.

OPERATION VERTICAL VETERAN

Jonathan Lowman | jonathan.lowman@va.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

Annually, 2.8 million geriatrics are treated for fall injuries, and there is no proactive, easily accessible injury prevention kit currently available. Operation Vertical Veteran (VV) will streamline access to injury prevention kits, provide educational statistics of negative outcomes, and initiate care in the community and/or outpatient fall consultations for home safety evaluations.

PERSONALIZING OBESITY TREATMENT

Loren Whyte | loren.whyte@va.gov | North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Gainesville, FL

Traditional scales, along with body mass index (BMI), do not accurately depict changes in body composition. With Inbody 570, educators and providers can offer Veterans more insight into their overall health by showing them how changes in diet, activity, and weight loss medication specifically impacts body fat, muscle mass, and visceral fat.

PILOTING GROUP AURICULAR ACUPUNCTURE AT THE HINES VA HOSPITAL

Vishal Kamani | vishal.kamani@va.gov | Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital | Hines, IL

Group acupuncture can offer a means to scale acupuncture delivery, and the Hines VA Hospital currently does not offer group acupuncture for Veterans. This innovation aims to pilot group auricular acupuncture at the Hines VA Hospital.



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PRIDE IN ALL WHO SERVED: PROMOTING RESILIENCY, INNOVATION, DISPARITY REDUCTION, AND EDUCATION FOR LGBT VETERANS

Michelle Hilgeman and Tiffany Lange-Altman | michelle.hilgeman@va.gov; tiffany.lange-altman@va.gov | Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center | Tuscaloosa, AL

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans are at an increased risk for mental health concerns and suicide. The PRIDE individual therapy aims to increase access to care by providing a tool for clinicians who may not feel culturally competent in addressing the unique psychotherapy needs of sexual- and gender-minority Veterans.

PROVIDER FREEDOM CART

April Jones | april.jones@va.gov | Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center | Tuscaloosa, AL

Provider desks in exam rooms at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center force providers to turn their backs to patients in order to chart findings during an exam, increasing the risk of assault and decreasing patient satisfaction. The Provider Freedom Cart will offer a mobile workstation to allow freedom of movement and positioning in exam rooms and increase face-to-face time with Veterans.

REFRIGERATOR INVENTORY

Eric Ayala | eric.ayala@va.gov | Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center | Milwaukee, WI

Nutrition staff walk to each refrigerator on the inpatient floors to check the inventory, then they must return to the kitchen with the required number of items to restock. This is a time-consuming process that can leave Veterans hungry. This project proposes a connected inventory tray that is able to transmit inventory levels to a remote server.

RELIEF RX

Muthu Narayan | muthu.narayan@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Healthcare System | Minneapolis, MN

Antibiotics are commonly—and often inappropriately—prescribed for patients with acute respiratory tract infections (ARTI), a significant contributor to antibiotic resistance. Relief Rx was developed to ease Veterans' ARTI symptoms and help limit inappropriate antibiotic prescriptions.

REWARDING MEDICATION ADHERENCE IN VETERANS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

Sarah Forster | sarah.forster2@va.gov | VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System | Pittsburgh, PA

Missed or delayed administration of long-acting injectable antipsychotics increases the risk of psychosis relapse, rehospitalization, and suicide in patients with serious mental illness (SMI). This project plans to adapt a reward-based behavioral intervention, suited to the unique needs of SMI patients, to improve injection adherence in patients with substance use disorders.



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SERVICE ANIMALS

David Kincaid | david.kincaid@va.gov | Cincinnati VA Medical Center | Cincinnati, OH

There is an unmet need to provide a clean, safe, and secure environment for service animals to accompany their Veterans. Through the use of pet protection devices in the vehicles of trained government employees, this project will provide world-class customer service for service animals.

START NOW

Ida Carvell | ida.carvell@va.gov | Lebanon VA Medical Center | Lebanon, PA

Women Veterans have higher-than-average rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), homelessness, poor mental and/or physical health, suicidal ideation/attempts, and substance use disorders. Strength, trauma, anxiety, rehabilitation, treatment (START) Now is a strength-based program designed to build resilience, confidence, and overall well-being in women Veterans.

STEADI YOUR PATIENTS IN PRIMARY CARE AND PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT FOR EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF FALL RISK REDUCTION

Allyson Armstrong | allyson.armstrong@va.gov | VA Salt Lake City Health Care System | Salt Lake City, UT

Assessing geriatric patients and referrals to physical therapy for fall risk is not standardized. This innovation incorporates the Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) tool in primary care with creation of direct same-day access to physical therapy (PT).

TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE VETERAN ENGAGEMENT, SOCIALIZATION, AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE PAIN AND FUNCTIONING IN THE CLC

Leslie Carnahan | leslie.carnahan@va.gov | Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System | Biloxi, MS

Veterans report experiencing less pain when they are distracted, and Community Living Centers (CLC) currently offer puzzles, model building, bingo, therapy, and television for recreation. Introducing virtual reality (VR) technology would improve Veteran experience, socialization, and activity, and decrease anxiety, pain, and depression.



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TELE PREDIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Lauren Littlejohn | lauren.littlejohn@va.gov | Atlanta VA Medical Center | Atlanta, GA

This innovation will provide a significant and innovative resource for tackling the prediabetic epidemic by providing access to an evidence-based, online health and lifestyle-coaching platform for management of prediabetes. This intervention will reduce barriers to care and allow participants more freedom in their efforts to sustain health and reduce the progression to type 2 diabetes.

TELE-EXERCISE FOR REHABILITATION OF PULMONARY PATIENTS (TERPP)

Gerald Supinski | gerald.supinski@va.gov | Lexington VA Medical Center | Lexington, KY

Ninety-five percent of VA patients fail to receive post-hospitalization exercise-based rehabilitation, even though studies indicate that exercise-based rehabilitation of pulmonary patients after hospitalization markedly reduces readmissions and improves long-term functionality. Incorporating telehealth capabilities and remote monitoring with in-home exercise equipment will increase compliance, decrease costs, and improve Veterans' quality of life.

THERAPEUTIC DESIGN FOR DEMENTIA

Karlynn White | karlynn.white@va.gov | Lexington VA Medical Center | Lexington, KY

Ninety-five percent of VA patients fail to receive post-hospitalization exercise-based rehabilitation, even though studies indicate that exercise-based rehabilitation of pulmonary patients after hospitalization markedly reduces readmissions and improves long-term functionality. Incorporating telehealth capabilities and remote monitoring with in-home exercise equipment will increase compliance, decrease costs, and improve Veterans' quality of life.

UCC TELE-CONNECT

Allyse Starks-Daniels | allyse.starks-daniels@va.gov | Central Ohio VA Healthcare System | Columbus, OH

The increased number of non-urgent patients being seen in the Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) is a significant problem facing VA. UCC video connect will allow health care professionals to remotely treat non-urgent acute patients and address their case needs in a timely manner.



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VA CRISIS LINE AWARENESS FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT USE THE VA-VIRTUAL PIVOT

Christa Holland | christa.holland@va.gov | Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center | Milwaukee, WI

Compared to the general population, Veterans have a higher risk of suicide. This project plans to place VA Crisis Line information in a variety of locations online, expanding awareness across VA and the Veteran community.

VETERAN COMMUNICATION TOOL

Jamie Simpson | jamie.simpson@va.gov | Chillicothe VA Medical Center | Chillicothe, OH

Patient satisfaction scores revealed that although Veterans are mostly satisfied with their care, there is room for improvement in the areas of pain control, discharge preparedness, and communication with nurses regarding the next step in their care. The communication tool will serve as a visual aid and reminder to encourage and support Veteran communication.

VHA CONTACT CENTER MODERNIZATION

Shane Elliott | shane.elliott@va.gov | VA Loma Linda Healthcare System | Loma Linda, CA

Contact center agents receive countless calls from Veterans and their family members, but the current system for completing inbound requests is inefficient. This project modernizes the way contact centers do business to become patient-centered and efficient by consolidating information into one interface for the contact center agent.

VIRTUAL REALITY: HELPING ONE VETERAN AT A TIME

David McAdon | david.mcadon@va.gov | VA Central Iowa Health Care System | Des Moines, IA

Veterans face distinct challenges which they cannot experience until they face them head on. This project introduces a creative way for Veterans to experience real-life situations, similar to the Computer Assisted Rehabilitation Environment (CAREN) system, while also providing a safe, controlled setting for Veterans to work on the skills needed to achieve real-life, functional goals.

VIRTUAL REALITY FOR EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

Colin McNerney | colin.mcnerney@va.gov | VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System | Reno, NV

There is a need for workforce development that encourages and engages customer service and Veteran experience, high-reliability organization, leadership and career development, and job simulations. Virtual reality (VR) and simulation technology provide safe places for people to gain experience and learn from mistakes and successes.



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VIRTUAL REALITY FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

Thai Vu | thaihu@uw.edu | VA Puget Sound Healthcare System | Seattle, WA

Physicians often increase pain medications with minimal to no pain relief for patients; however, in some patients, distraction techniques have proven to be extremely effective. By providing virtual reality headsets to hospital patients suffering from pain, patients are able to practice distraction techniques and evade their pain in a fully immersive virtual environment.

VIRTUAL REALITY WHOLE HEALTH SCI/D

Sarah Brady | sarah.brady1@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Healthcare System | Minneapolis, MN

Veterans with spinal cord injuries or disorders (SCI/D) are at risk for isolation in the community and hospital. By incorporating virtual reality (VR) technology and Whole Health interventions, VHA can improve Veteran experience that lasts beyond their hospital stay.

VOICE-CONTROLLED SEAT TILT ON POWER WHEELCHAIR

Ben Salatin | benjamin.salatin@va.gov | Raymond G. Murphy Medical Center | Albuquerque, NM

Tilting back to 55 degrees in a power wheelchair is clinically recommended for reducing pressure sores, but some Veterans are unable to tilt their own power wheelchairs due to physical limitations. A high school volunteer programmed an Alexa-based system that allows Veterans to tilt their wheelchair using a voice-controlled system.

WHOLE HEALTH WALKING PATH

Cari Whitlock | cari.whitlock@va.gov | VA Western Colorado Health Care System | Grand Junction, CO

Physical activity can increase health and well-being, improve mental state, and decrease the risk of depression. This project will design and construct a walking path for Veterans and employees to offer an accessible way to exercise.

WINDSHIELD SUN SHADE VETERAN CRISIS NUMBER

Micah Roten | micah.roten@va.gov | VA Western Colorado Health Care System | Grand Junction, CO

Suicide prevention can only be accomplished with easy access to care, but resources may not be readily available to a Veteran in crisis. The goal of this project is to increase awareness of the Veterans Crisis Line by creating windshield sun shades that display the number.



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BLOOD PRESSURE SUPPORT FRAME

Kimberly Jones | kimberly.jones10@va.gov | VA Boston Healthcare System | Boston, MA

Veterans with disabilities or limited mobility may struggle to take their own blood pressure. Blood Pressure Support Frame has developed a blood pressure cuff for people with limited ability to self-apply.

A COMFORTABLE AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

Ravi Rasalingam | ravi.rasalingam@va.gov | VA Boston Healthcare System | Boston, MA

Most Veterans with obstructive sleep apnea remain untreated because of discomfort from the current “brute-force” solutions available. This project has developed a patient-specific mouth prosthesis that uses gentle suction to prevent obstruction of the airway at the back of the mouth during sleep.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES IN PERIOPERATIVE SETTING TO REDUCE ANXIETY

Nicholee Froese | nicholee.froese@va.gov | Albany Stratton VA Medical Center | Albany, NY

Patients are often stressed, anxious, and afraid when facing an upcoming surgery, leading to increased pain after surgery and decreased patient satisfaction. This innovation will provide an array of complementary therapies to help alleviate pre-operative anxiety, decrease pain, and increase patient satisfaction.

CONSULT CASE MANAGEMENT HUB

Stephanie Coyne | stephanie.coyne@va.gov | VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System | Pittsburgh, PA

Veterans can experience long wait times at VA facilities, leading to substandard care. Consult Case Management Hub is a service that facilitates specialty consults or workups generated through primary care so Veteran care is completed sooner.

EQUINE EXPERIENCE PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH SUNY COBLESKILL

Lyndsey Rhodes | lyndsey.rhodes2@va.gov | Albany Stratton VA Medical Center | Albany, NY

Equine therapy has proven successful in treating anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Through a partnership with State University of New York (SUNY) Cobleskill, the Equine Experience Program will provide equine-assisted activities to Veterans and Veteran-specific knowledge to therapeutic horsemanship students.



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EYE CARE UNIVERSITY: VA OPHTHALMIC TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Jessica Byrd | jessica.byrd@va.gov | Atlanta VA Medical Center | Atlanta, GA

As the third-most requested service at VA, ophthalmology is experiencing a high patient demand and a low supply of technician labor. The development of an internal training program for ophthalmic technicians will increase the workforce and therefore improve patient care.

FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS: INCREASING EMPLOYMENT FOR VETERANS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Stephanie Thomas and Matthew Sprong | stephanie.thomas7@va.gov; matthew.sprong@va.gov | Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital | Hines, IL

The Compensated Work Therapy program offers transitional worksites at the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, but Veterans from surrounding rural communities are expected to travel over 85 miles for services. This program provides Veterans in rural communities with access to employment services by implementing transitional worksites in their areas.

FINANCIAL PEACE FOR VETERANS

Katie Vervoren | katie.vervoren@va.gov | Tomah VA Medical Center | Tomah, WI

Finances and relationships are two major contributing factors to suicide, with finance relating to a large part of relationship issues. VA has the unique ability to better equip Veterans to participate in their health care by facilitating a proven curriculum that will decrease their financial stress while ultimately improving emotional well-being.

FREEZE THE KEYS!

Sabah Ocasio | sabah.ocasio@va.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

In 2014, approximately 67 percent of Veteran deaths were caused by suicide as the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Freeze the Keys! is a tangible, inexpensive solution that effectively deters suicide, injury, and accidents caused by firearms.

GREENING THE OPERATING ROOM: ONE WRAPPER AT A TIME

Sheena Strong | sheena.strong@va.gov | Gulf Coast Veterans Healthcare System | Biloxi, MS

Greening the Operating Room started as a recycling project with the potential to evolve into a major mindset and practice change within VA. This program will mandate surgical smoke evacuators for cleaner air, fluid management systems to decrease employee exposures, and recycling to decrease hospital waste.



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HARMONICAS FOR HEALTH

Stephanie Woodworth | stephanie.woodworth@va.gov | North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Gainesville, FL

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a progressive and incurable lung disease that requires pulmonary exercise, education, and support to help Veterans learn to breathe and function at the highest level possible. This program provides harmonicas and training materials to patients with chronic lung diseases so they can learn to regulate breathing by playing the harmonica.

IMPROVING COMPLIANCE, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND THE VETERAN'S EXPERIENCE (ICOVE)

Peter Bulatao | peter.bulatao@va.gov | Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center | Tuscaloosa, AL

There are challenges in identifying efficient methods to improve regulatory compliance, organizational efficiency, and the Veteran's Experience (VE). The IntelliVault cabinets improve compliance by automating prescription drug monitoring program reporting, increasing internal efficiency by reducing facility and pharmacy call center volume, and enhancing VE by notifying the Veteran when their prescription is ready.

IMPROVING PATIENT SAFETY THROUGH DATA COLLECTION EFFICIENCY

Sharon Self | sharon.self@va.gov | Martinsburg VA Medical Center | Martinsburg, WV

Veterans experience high morbidity and mortality from preventable healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). The mobile application will improve data collection efficiency, which will allow clinicians more time for HAI prevention interventions, leading to improvements in quality of life.

MICRO GUIDE APP-CDSS

Bobbie Masoud | bobbie.masoud@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Healthcare System | Minneapolis, MN

The Antimicrobial Computer Decision Support System (CDSS) is a tool within the electronic health record (EHR) that offers evidence-based prescribing advice based on local guidance. The Micro Guide App-CDSS will provide access to CDSS outside of the EHR when and where you need it: as a smartphone app.



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MOBILE OPS

George Kaufman | george.kaufman@va.gov | VA Puget Sound Healthcare System | Seattle, WA

Many Veterans with amputations fail to get the care they need due to a combination of factors, including mental health, distance, living situation, and mobility issues. Mobile Orthotic & Prosthetic Services (OPS) provides care for Veterans with amputations and complex bracing needs in a location that works for them.

OPERATION PEACE

Carolyn Gartner | carolyn.gartner@va.gov | Martinsburg VA Medical Center | Martinsburg, WV

Access to the Martinsburg VA Medical Center Reiki Circle and Reiki Level I training is limited. Adding a monthly Reiki Circle at a community-based outpatient clinic, as well as a virtual dimension to the existing monthly Reiki Circle and Level I training, will improve access to these Whole Health offerings.

OUTPATIENT FALL PREVENTION

Andrew Muth | andrew.muth2@va.gov | VA Central Iowa Health Care System | Des Moines, IA

Accidental falls continue to be a leading cause of injury among the Veteran population and have significant associated morbidity and mortality. Despite known risk factors and the efficacy of interventions, screening for fall risk is not routinely performed. This project aims to reduce accidental falls by 50 percent with a comprehensive fall prevention dashboard.

PRESCRIBING MODEL INNOVATION

Brian Storts | brian.storts@va.gov | VA St. Louis Health Care System/Oklahoma City VA Health Care System | St. Louis, MO/Oklahoma City, OK

Veterans have reported dissatisfaction with the number of pills they are prescribed. They must then split these pills, leading to higher medication costs and an increased chance of medication error incidents. This innovation will create automated prescribing models which increase efficiency, reduce cost, and increase patient safety.

SANITIZER AND GLOVE ACCESS STATION

Ernest Gallesyan | ernest.gallesyan@va.gov | VA Boston Healthcare System | Boston, MA

Hospital staff are often non-compliant with hand hygiene guidelines, occasionally bypassing sanitizing or washing hands prior to donning gloves. This innovation encourages compliance with hand hygiene guidelines in health care settings by requiring the use of hand sanitizer prior to accessing gloves.



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SAVE A WARRIOR AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Debra Whittingham-Short | debra.whittingham-short@va.gov | Central Ohio VA Healthcare System | Columbus, OH

According to a VA study released September 26, 2018, the rate of suicide among 18- to 34-year-old Veterans continues to increase. The Veterans who attend this free, week-long program will learn tools and have the opportunity to establish a lasting support network, decreasing the likelihood of their return to isolation.

THE SHOE SLIDE

Saprina Butler | saprina.butler@va.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

Thousands of Veterans lose mobility and independence yearly due to the effects of a stroke. The Shoe Slide provides many the ability to walk by eliminating the need to lift the leg in order to walk.

SHORT STAY JOINT REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Kate Deisseroth | kate.deisseroth@va.gov | Lebanon VA Medical Center | Lebanon, PA

The Short Stay Joint Program is transforming the typical hospital stay from over three days to one day. This project is empowering Veterans, enhancing their experience, and conserving hospital resources.

SLING SHIFT

Steve Morin | steve.morin@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Health Care System | Minneapolis, MN

Reduced strength and mobility wheelchair users have difficulty with inclined ramps and obstacles. The Sling Shift device hopes to provide the equivalent of a hands-free downshifting automatic transmission for wheelchair push rims.

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE: TIC IS THE NEW CPR!

Lora Cunningham | lora.cunningham@va.gov | Chillicothe VA Medical Center | Chillicothe, OH

The purpose of Trauma Informed Care: TIC is suicide prevention through frontline staff engagement and activation, purposeful wellness, and the introduction of new best practices for restoring resiliency among Veterans and staff. This project utilizes community partners for training and support of VA staff and Veteran volunteers for wellness activities such as drumming circles.



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URINARY VACUUM ASSISTED CONTAINMENT SYSTEM

Andrew Kelley | andrew.kelley@va.gov | VA Boston Healthcare System | Boston, MA

External urinary containment devices can cause urinary tract infections and skin breakdown from frequent removal and reapplication of external devices. The Urinary Vacuum Assisted Containment System is a minimally invasive, reliable, and comfortable system to contain urinary output in the inpatient and intensive care unit setting.

VA-RURAL HEALTH UBER CARE (V-R-UR-CARE)

Indra Sandal | indra.sandal@va.gov | Memphis VA Medical Center | Memphis, TN

A large portion of no-show patients occur because Veterans have no means of getting to VA facilities. This project plans to reduce no-show appointments and increase patients by providing reliable transportation.

VETERANS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM (VETRHEP): AN INNOVATIVE, PILOT REPRODUCTIVE CARE COORDINATION MODEL

Lori Gawron | lori.gawron@va.gov | VA Salt Lake City Health Care System | Salt Lake City, UT

Disparities in reproductive health care services exist for women Veterans, especially those who live in a rural area or access care in a VA community clinic. Reproductive Care Coordination Model proposes an innovative approach to care provision, including virtual, direct-to-Veteran screening, and care coordination.

VIRTUAL PREVENTION OF DIABETIC WOUNDS

John Prior | john.prior@va.gov | North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Gainesville, FL

The high recurrence rate of diabetic foot ulcers—40 percent in the first six months after healing—is the reason for the high non-traumatic lower extremity amputation rates within VA. The predictive value of re-ulceration using this innovation will allow caregivers to take preventive measures and mitigate subsequent complications.

VIRTUAL REALITY WITH INPATIENT OPERATION IQAQUI FREEDOM AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF/OEF) VETERANS WITH DIAGNOSIS (DX) OF PTSD

Maria Bergman | maria.bergman@va.gov | Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center | Tuscaloosa, AL

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may develop after a traumatic event (e.g., combat exposure), which can lead to emotions that release brain chemicals and produce physiological changes. Virtual reality (VR) is a tool that has been shown to effectively treat anxiety and improve quality of life.



Seed Investee Projects



WAGE-GRADE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Tiffany Truehill | tiffany.truehill@va.gov | Memphis VA Medical Center | Memphis, TN

Wage-grade employees often lack the skills needed for upward mobility. Creating the Wage-Grade Workforce Development Program will provide these employees the opportunity to gain knowledge and resources to become competitive in the workforce.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CLINIC – MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO OBESITY MANAGEMENT

Aman Rajpal | aman.rajpal@va.gov | VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System | Cleveland, OH

The obesity epidemic occurs throughout the nation, and Veterans are no exception. Obesity is a preventable chronic disorder which leads to various medical conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, hypogonadism, sleep apnea, cardiac diseases, and others. Since obesity is a complex disease, this project will take a multi-dimensional and multidisciplinary approach for treatment.



Spread Investee Projects



AROMATHERAPY AS AN ADJUNCT THERAPY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE AND REDUCE THE BURDEN OF AS-NEEDED MEDICATIONS

Beth Abele | beth.abele@va.gov | Chillicothe VA Medical Center | Chillicothe, OH

Aromatherapy can benefit Veterans across the country and assist VA in becoming a high-reliability organization through decreased use of as-needed medications. This project includes extensive staff training, a focus on VA, documentation, monthly calls, a VA Pulse toolkit, aromatherapist certification, and personalized aromatherapy.

BETA-LACTAM ALLERGY ASSESSMENTS: SAVING LIVES ONE ASSESSMENT AT A TIME

Amanda Gillion | amanda.gillion@va.gov | Memphis VA Medical Center | Memphis, TN

90 percent of reported beta-lactam allergies (BLA) are not real, driving an increase in the unnecessary use of broad-spectrum antibiotics, which leads to negative sequelae. This project has developed an allergy-assessment algorithm and pharmacist-run allergy clinic to eliminate false BLA labels.

CREATIVE WRITING FOR VIETNAM VETERANS WITH PTSD

Richard Kelly | richard.kelly4@va.gov | Charles George VA Medical Center | Asheville, NC

An estimated 250,000 Vietnam Veterans are still living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and we as a nation have a moral obligation to support their recovery and healing. This creative writing program has been transformative for Veterans, their families, and the community, helping to restore the humanity stripped from them as young men.

DOMINATING DIABETES

Adam Gold | adam.gold@va.gov | Martinsburg VA Medical Center | Martinsburg, WV

DOMinating Diabetes is a care initiative that includes revamping treatment care plans, self-care training, nutritional coaching, nursing involvement, and peer support through weekly DOM Diabetes meetings. Coaching Veterans to DOMinate diabetes has resulted in the safest possible diabetes care, fewer rapid responses, lower prescription expenses, increased Veteran satisfaction, and independent self-care, decreasing the chance of relapse/readmission.



Spread Investee Projects



EMERGENCY NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION AND OPIOID EDUCATION

Denise Mathews | denise.mathews@va.gov | VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System | Cleveland, OH

Naloxone rescue kits were previously unavailable in medical centers, preventing employees from treating opioid overdoses. Emergency Naloxone Distribution and Opioid Education has created and implemented lockboxes that can be accessed with an employee badge and alert police to respond when opioid overdoses occur.

EMS "CLEAN" PLASTIC COVERS

Robert Bankston | robert.bankston@va.gov | VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System | Cleveland, OH

It is often difficult to select one disease prevention technique and quantify its effect. Environmental Management Service (EMS) CLEAN (capitalized for emphasis) visually communicates to patients, family, and staff that hospital equipment is sanitized and ready for use.

ENGAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Alyssa Welch | alyssa.welch@va.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

Many Veterans miss opportunities for active participation in therapeutic and diversional activities provided in the Community Living Centers (CLC) because they are bedbound or face other barriers. Engagement Solutions offers RecTV, recreational therapy delivered through an internal television channel.

HOME TELEHEALTH PATIENT IDENTIFICATION DASHBOARD

Andrew Muth | andrew.muth2@va.gov | VA Central Iowa Healthcare System | Des Moines, IA

Home Telehealth enrollment can be unpredictable, causing VA not to offer telehealth services to those who would use it. This project plans to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to improve Home Telehealth enrollment.

HOUSEKEEPING CART SWEEPER ATTACHMENT

Larry Hillson | larry.hillson@va.gov | VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System | Reno, NV

The Housekeeping Cart Sweeper Attachment provides a sweeping action while housekeepers push their carts from point A to B, thus improving their productivity. Additionally, it assists in improving the cleanliness of the hospital environment by keeping the floors clear of dust, dirt, and debris.



Spread Investee Projects



I CAN

Lisa Anderson@va.gov | lisa.anderson@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Health Care System | Minneapolis, MN

Veterans discharged from non-VA hospitals often pay out-of-pocket for urgent medications at non-VA pharmacies, and then request VA reimbursement. Some Veterans cannot afford the up-front costs and go without needed treatments. Immediate Community Access to Needed Medications (I CAN) provides approval and up-front payment for Veterans discharged from community hospitals needing emergency medications.

MODERNIZATION VIA DIGITAL DENTISTRY

Regina B. Cunningham | reginab.cunningham@va.gov | Lexington VA Medical Center | Lexington, KY

Having dental crowns made historically involves two 2-hour appointments, two shots, two travel claims, and this process can spread up to eight weeks apart, all of which are time-consuming, expensive, and uncomfortable for Veterans. Modernization via Digital Dentistry lowers costs, improves efficiency and clinic access, and increases Veteran satisfaction.

PEN SHOP AND WOOD TURNING RECREATIONAL THERAPY

Alyssa Welch | alyssa.welch@VA.gov | Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System | Little Rock, AR

Veterans in long-term care often feel isolated and are in desperate need of sensory stimulation. Through the Wood Turning Program, Veterans develop an increased sense of independence and accomplishment, while decreasing their loneliness or situational depression through relationships with volunteer leaders.

A SAFE, SECURE, AND EFFICIENT WOUND IMAGE CAPTURE, STORAGE, AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

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Amy Hartjes | amy.hartjes@va.gov | Tomah VA Medical Center | Tomah, WI

The Mobile iPad with 3D Measurement Camera obtains wound images, uploads them to Computerized Patient Record System/Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture (CPRS/VistA), and measures and graphs their healing progress. This helps clinicians and administrators save costs and avoid delays in Veteran care.

SEEING LENS PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Amy Cook | amy.cook2@va.gov | Lebanon VA Medical Center | Lebanon, PA

There is a growing recognition of the need for effective complementary treatment approaches that can address the complex behavioral health care needs of the Veteran population. The Seeing Lens: Therapeutic Photography Group is a 10-week photography-based therapeutic intervention designed to foster self-exploration and self-discovery in Veteran populations.



Spread Investee Projects



SEXUAL HEALTH AND FERTILITY IN SCI: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

April Conway | april.conway@va.gov | VA St. Louis Healthcare System | St. Louis, MO

Due to a lack of education, a significant deficit exists when providing sexual health services for spinal cord injuries (SCI), which can lead to decreased self-esteem, isolation, and depression. The interdisciplinary team developed a process for educating staff and Veterans about sexual health in SCI.

SPARTAN PLEDGE

Lisa Howard | lisa.howard@va.gov | VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System | Reno, NV

Suicide is a nationwide epidemic, and Veterans are an especially vulnerable group. The Spartan Pledge is an annual suicide-prevention event, centered around a pledge: "I will not take my own life by my own hand until I talk to my battle buddy first. My mission is to find a mission to help my warfighter family."

STRIVE PROGRAM

Helena Hanson | helena.hanson@va.gov | VA Central Iowa Healthcare System | Des Moines, IA

Entry-level employees (GS-6, WG-equivalent, and below) experience high turnover rates. The Strive Program, which concentrates on inspiring personal growth, professional skills, group collaboration, and the application of VA's mission, seeks to improve employee engagement through professional development programs focused on retention and fostering institutional commitment through talent development.

TELEHEALTH LACTATION PROGRAM (TLP)

Brooklyn Giovannetti | brooklyn.giovannetti@va.gov | Memphis VA Medical Center | Memphis, TN

Despite the well-established benefits of breast milk, no facility was routinely providing services to increase the breastfeeding rates of women Veterans. TLP was initiated to support, educate, and empower women Veterans throughout their pregnancies and lactation journeys, with the ultimate goal of making these services available nationwide.



Spread Investee Projects



THROUGH OUR EYES, THE WOMEN VETERAN'S EXPERIENCE ROADSHOW

Christina Burr | christina.burr@va.gov | VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System | Reno, NV

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System is dedicated to promoting a positive culture for women Veterans both in the VA facilities and the community at large. This portrait exhibit features images and their My Life, My Story biographies, which increases the cultural awareness of the women Veteran experience.

TOBACCO CESSATION & EDUCATION (TCE) GROUP DURING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT

Stephanie Bertucci | stephanie.bertucci@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Healthcare System | Minneapolis, MN

Nicotine addiction is more prevalent and poses greater risks in populations with other substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health disorders. The Tobacco Cessation and Education (TCE) Group is integrated into intensive outpatient programming for substance use disorders to more effectively treat tobacco use and increase motivation to change tobacco habits.

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE: TIC IS THE NEW CPR!

Sierra Phillips and Sarah Dahl | sierra.phillips@va.gov; Sarah.Dahl@va.gov | Tomah VA Medical Center | Tomah, WI

The purpose of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is suicide prevention through frontline staff engagement and activation, purposeful wellness, and the introduction of new best practices for restoring resiliency among Veterans and staff. This project utilizes community partners for training and support of VA staff and Veteran volunteers for wellness activities such as drumming circles.

VETERAN AMPUTEE PROSTHETIC SOCK MANAGEMENT TOOL

Billie Slater | billie.slater@va.gov | Minneapolis VA Healthcare System | Minneapolis, MN

Incorrect use of prosthetic socks has serious consequences for some Veterans with lower-limb amputations who use a prosthesis. The Prosthetic Sock Management Tool is an instructional system that clinicians can use to train and re-train Veterans to correctly use socks.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT RIDESHARE INITIATIVE

Charles Franklin | charles.franklin2@va.gov | VA Boston Healthcare System | Boston, MA

Access to a vehicle or transportation can be a hindrance for Veterans, particularly homeless Veterans, seeking employment. Community Employment Services Ridesharing Project uses a combination of public transportation and ridesharing services to provide eligible Veterans access to transportation to increase their employment opportunities.



Spread Investee Projects



VIRAL ILLNESS SUPPORT PACK

James Fagan | james.fagan@va.gov | Central Ohio VA Healthcare System | Columbus, OH

Prescribing antibiotics unnecessarily can increase overgrowth of pathogenetic organisms, result in excess costs, and lead to selection of antibiotic-resistant organisms in the populace at large. A Viral Illness Support Pack consisting of information and symptomatic treatment allows VA providers to treat patients appropriately and avoid antibiotic misuse for viral upper respiratory tract infections.

VIRTUAL REALITY IMMERSION: DISTRACTION THERAPY FOR VETERANS

Caitlin Rawlins | caitlin.rawlins@va.gov | Charles George VA Medical Center | Asheville, NC

In response to a need for non-pharmacologic therapies for pain, stress, and anxiety, virtual reality (VR) immersion was introduced to post-operative Veterans at Charles George VA Medical Center in July 2018. VR draws attention to a different “reality,” leaving less attention to process pain signals and focus on stressors.

VISION SCREENING BY HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE THERAPISTS REDUCES FALL RISK IN PATIENTS 65+

Gina Green | gina.green@va.gov | VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System | Cleveland, OH

Vision impairment is a significant contributing factor to falls. Home-based primary care therapists can complete vision screening and provide interventions to minimize fall risk.

