



GRECC Clinical Innovations Improve Access for Aging and Rural Veterans

...what follows is a small sampling of initiatives from the many Clinical Demonstration Programs currently underway in VHA's Geriatrics Research, Education, and Clinical Centers

Birmingham-Atlanta Expands Stroke Tele-Rehab to Rural Veterans

Birmingham-Atlanta GRECC's Dr. Andrew Butler is leading an Office of Rural Health (ORH) sponsored project to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of accessible tele-robotic stroke therapy provision to Veteran stroke survivors in rural and highly rural underserved locations. The goal of the project is to improve Veteran satisfaction, access, and quality of care as well and decrease costs.

Madison's "COMPASS" Fosters Partnerships Among VA and non-VA Health Systems, Veterans, and Caregivers

Madison GRECC's Dr. Amy Kind's Care-Coordination and Empowerment of Patients in System-to-System Transitions (COMPASS) program, through protocols that improve system-to-system communication/coordination, works with community-dwelling Veterans who are being discharged to short-term rehabilitation or skilled nursing facilities, with the goal of preventing long-term institutionalization. In FY15, the program served 239 unique Veterans during 284 transitions to 89 skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities.

Salt Lake City Increasing Access for Veterans Through Partnerships with Aging and Disability Resources Centers

Salt Lake City GRECC's Connecting Older Veterans Especially Rural to Community Or VA Eligible Resources (COVER to COVER) program provides additional access resources through community collaboration. The partnership in Utah includes: Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), VHA, VBA, and the State Offices of Veterans and Military Affairs. Options counselors within Area Aging Agencies are working side by side with Veteran Service Officers to complete enrollment and benefits applications. The project is an Office of Rural Health (ORH) promising practice and is actively being promoted for national dissemination, with start-ups planned or underway in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Palo Alto: Clinical Video Telehealth Provides Geriatrics Care and Neuropsychological and Capacity Evaluations to Rural Veterans

Palo Alto GRECC's Geriatric Consults to Rural CBOCs by Clinical Video Telehealth (GCVT) and expansion (GCVTe) provides interdisciplinary geriatrics consultation and neuropsychological and capacity evaluations to frail and vulnerable older Veterans served by VA Palo Alto Healthcare System rural community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) by utilizing clinical video telehealth technology. Consults have been primarily on cognitive impairment or polypharmacy. The goal of the program is to provide evaluations to more accurately diagnose dementia or cognitive impairments, improve treatment planning, and help Veterans and families work more effectively with CBOC providers around managing their health and cognitive impairments.

Local Contact:

P: 718-584-9000, ext. 3853

E: Annette.Hintenach@va.gov

Interdisciplinary ALS Palliative Care Clinic

Through partnership with the Bronx GRECC, the James J. Peters VA Medical Center's SCI Interdisciplinary ALS Clinic provides palliative care services for all ALS patients. In the FY 2015, 33 Veterans with ALS were actively receiving care through this program. The clinic is directed and coordinated by the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) program, an interdisciplinary care program with specialty in the unique needs of patients with severe functional disabilities. The ALS Clinic at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center is the ALS care specialty center for all of VISN 2. Under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Lindenberger, palliative care services are provided for all Veterans seen in the ALS Clinic, and palliative care is also available to these patients during inpatient stays in the SCI unit. For patients with advanced disease, home hospice services are offered in combination with clinic care to maximize home care support, attention to symptoms and quality of life, and continuity of care for patients and their families. The ALS Clinic also serves as a clinical training site for Fellows in the Interprofessional Palliative Care Fellowship Program at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center.

For more information about the ALS Palliative Care Clinic, contact Dr. Elizabeth Lindenberger at (718) 584-9000, ext. 3806 or at Elizabeth.Lindenberger@va.gov

