

## **GERIATRIC RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND CLINICAL CENTERS**

Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECCs) are Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) centers of excellence focused on aging. They were established by VHA in 1975 to improve the health and health care of older Veterans. Congress authorized the expansion of the program in 1980 and again in 1985. Currently, there are 20 GRECCs located at VA Medical Centers across the country, and each is connected with a major research university.

The GRECCs were started to:

- Build new knowledge in geriatric care through research.
- Improve health care for older Veterans through the development of innovative clinical models of care.
- Provide training and education on best practices in caring for older adults for students in health care disciplines and VA staff.

**Research:** Scientific research is the key to understanding how aging affects the body, mind, physical functioning, and a person's role in society. GRECCs carry out a wide variety of research projects focused on aging. Some examine how cells and tissues change during aging. Others look at the effects of specific diseases like Alzheimer's disease or traumatic brain injuries. Various GRECC research projects also look at the effects of new treatments, while health services research projects try to determine how the health care system can adapt in order to meet the needs of older Veterans. Research is funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health, from VA's Office of Research and Development, and from private foundations and organizations.

**Education:** GRECCs education mission is twofold: to ensure that VA staff are prepared to provide exceptional care to older Veterans and to collaborate with University Affiliates to similarly prepare health professional trainees. GRECCs provide training to VA staff, community health care providers, Veterans, and caregivers across many settings, using multiple methods such as live, online and recorded lectures, and printed materials. For trainees, the GRECCs provide supervision in clinical rotations, online seminars and traditional instruction for students and trainees in a variety of health care disciplines.

**Clinical Innovation:** VA serves the health needs of older Veterans through numerous clinical programs. With a changing population and advances in knowledge, there is always room for enhancement. GRECCs develop and test new models of care that can be exported to other sites across VA. These are known as clinical demonstration projects. Each GRECC carries out several such projects each year and many have been disseminated around the country. They provide a way to ensure that older Veterans receive up-to-date and effective health care.

**For more information about GRECCs, visit:** <https://www.va.gov/GRECC/>.