

**Department of Veterans Affairs
National Research Advisory Council Meeting**

**Phoenix Park Hotel –Federal City Room
520 North Capitol Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.**

September 21, 2010

Minutes

Members Present:

Wenzel, Richard, Chair
Butler, Aaron
Kelch, Robert
Peckham, P. Hunter
Reece, Albert

Members Absent:

None

OEF/OIF Subcommittee Consultants:

Waxman, Stephen

Guest Presenter:

Nebeker, Jonathan, Salt Lake City VA Medical Center

VA Staff Present:

Kupersmith, Joel
O’Leary, Timothy
Birdsall, Holly
Atkins, David
Cates, Lynn
Centanni, Amy
Clemons, Gina
Crow, Janet
Cuccherini, Brenda
Dorn, Patricia
Eisen, Seth
Garcia, Stephen
Gorman, Karyn
Guccione, Andrew
Hannon, Peggy
Hawkins, Alison
Ommaya, Alex
Przygodzki, Ron

Welcome and introductions – Dr. Richard Wenzel, Chair

Office of Research & Development Update – Dr. Kupersmith

Dr. Joel Kupersmith, Chief Research & Development Officer gave an overview and update on research including:

ORD's move to NoMa at 131 M Street NE, which is now scheduled for mid October. The space and strategy for the move were briefly discussed.

The budget is flat as the government is in a budget deficit. It brings up the question of whether money inhibits finding of young professionals. There is an aging faculty track with funding awards leaving little for young investigators.

There is a discussion about Health Services Research and the idea that these studies are not implementable has been a recurring theme.

“Patient Centered Medical Home” is now “Patient Centered Care” will become “Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)”

AAMC Working Group on data sharing recommendations and differences between consent/non consented research – if data sharing is properly consented, must share data.

The Gulf War Research Steering Committee – cohort of 30 thousand randomized trials and genomics studies. RFAs funded for treatment of symptoms. There was some controversy surrounding “mindfulness” studies, certain groups thought this implied GWI was “all in the head.”

There is recruitment for a Deployment Research Director to report to Dr. Kupersmith.

There is a September 28 meeting at NIH on Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs) meeting. Idea is to bring more attention to the work VA is doing.

2010 NRAC Annual Report

Discussion of report grading-

Infrastructure: There are a number of priority one deficiencies. Extended conversation/discussion research infrastructure regarding priority/deficiencies.

Want to bring issue to broader attention. Any public/private partnerships with lease back arrangement? Space at Yale which has public land, is a model of inter-organization collaboration. Concern that outdated labs are inhibiting recruitment. Discussion of building new labs vs. doing renovations.

Council was:

- 1) Impressed by productivity especially given physical infrastructure.

2) VA and DoD interaction improved

Further comments:

- 178,000 Veterans with TBI, more people living with lower quality of life. PTSD is an overwhelming problem, also an issue for the general population.
- Service delivery trends
- Motion on portfolio – is it balanced?

Report approved.

OMR Process - Dr. Tim Hammond

Transformation Initiatives (T21) Four work streams

- 1) Genomics, tissue banking, MVP genetic database
- 2) VINCI/CHIR, IT infrastructure
- 3) Randomized point of care
- 4) Tools – RAMS, research management, HR, contracting

Monthly report due to the Deputy Secretary

Results: improvement in IT resources , contract support, HR support has gone up.

Point of Care Randomization – Dr. O’Leary

Veterans are enrolled in comparative research projects at the time they are receiving usual clinical care. They are randomized to Point of Care Research at a decision point in clinical care where two or more alternative treatments or strategies are considered equivalent. No extra patient visits are required and the outcomes are obtained by automated extraction of data from the medical record. The goal of this project is to advance the understanding of linkages between medical care and individual Veteran characteristics.

Research Presentation – Dr. Jonathan Nebeker

VINCI is an information system for researchers to access and analyze nationally consolidated structured and unstructured databased (CHIR) in a high performance, secure computing network. Dr. Nebeker discussed the organization of the project and associated activities such as being able to use data in free text and the current Lack of tools for HSR. He referenced his comments in the context of IT schism with an increasing difficulty to get access to data. VINCI has a tight relationship with IT partners The current data system, VistA, lots of data but it is hard to get. There is a cottage industry for data.

Communications Update - Gina Clemons

- Introduction of new staff.
- VA Research Currents is being repopulated by VHA on Facebook and Twitter.

- Research & Development posters - pictures will change, and much of the text is acting as placeholder. Some commented that the names of the Services are taking a lot of space and makes it too busy.
- Research Week- looking for themes and suggestions for keynote speakers, perhaps from a major school with a relation to the VA. Would like to have a presentation with a “wow” factor such as DEKA Arm with interface.
- *Advance* publications. It was recommended to add the names of the collaborators.

PRIDE Update - Dr. Lynn Cates

The 2011 Local Accountability Meeting for Research is pending approval by the Deputy Secretary. The meeting will target ACOSs, AOs, RCOSs, IRB Administrators, ISOs, and Privacy Officers.

VA Central IRB - Dr. Cates was asked if the application process can be sped up. She replied that the process will never be cut to two weeks since the studies are very complicated. Nevertheless, having an IRB software package would help speed up the process. Dr. Kupersmith stated that public perception is a concern. There's a need to be safe in the research process.

Technology Transfer Update- Amy Centanni

The TTP program is trying to train field and regional council. There are two web-based training programs available.

Attended the MAGI meeting in Boston last May. Next MAGI conference which will be held from October 24-27 in San Francisco.

ORD has master agreements with 10 pharmaceutical companies and 15 agreements under negotiation.

RR&D Update - Dr. Patricia Dorn

VA Optimization Study- DARPA Arm Gen2 phase included 23 subjects (including active duty military females). Gen 3 trials are the next step.

Spinal Cord Injury - 5-10 year data shows that unemployment is prevalent in Veterans with SCI.

An announcement to fill the Director position (RR&D) has been posted and closed. Dr. O'Leary states that they are looking for someone with academic and pragmatic experience.

HSR&D Update - Dr. Guccione (for Dr. Eisen)

Released a new priorities document.

Dr. Guccione identified the need to develop critical relationships with stakeholders. There has been a decrease in submissions, as PIs are “stolen away by stimulus money at NIH”, as well as other reasons.

REAP Sites- information from each study can feed new studies.

After a period of public, open comment, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM