

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care



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Geriatric Research Education  
and Clinical Center

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*Discover, Educate and Innovate to  
Improve Health for Older Veterans*

FY 2021 Annual Report  
June 2022

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## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND, HISTORY AND OVERSIGHT.....	2
GEOGRAPHY OF GRECCS.....	3
GRECC CONTRIBUTIONS.....	5
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.....	8
EDUCATION AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.....	11
CLINICAL ACTIVITIES.....	14
PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	19
FUTURE OF THE GRECCS.....	21
SEARCHABLE DATABASE.....	23
GRECC SITES, STAFF AND FOCUS AREA.....	24

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes fiscal year (FY) 2021 activities of the Veteran Health Administration (VHA) geriatric centers of excellence, the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs). As is evident from even a brief perusal of their work, the GRECCs enhance the VA's mission in countless ways. GRECCs conduct cutting-edge biological, clinical and health services research; generate novel and exportable clinical innovations; and provide critical geriatrics-related education to VA's workforce. GRECC staff serve as a valuable resource for Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISN) and medical centers and hold many crucial leadership positions within them. Although this report contains many numerical outcomes, including performance measures, it is impossible to quantify all the activities of the twenty GRECC sites.

The GRECCs would not exist and would not thrive, without the support of their VISNs and host medical centers. On behalf of the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, I offer them a sincere thanks for making this work possible.

I also thank the Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee (GGAC), which provides policy guidance to the Secretary about all geriatric issues, oversees the GRECCs and conducts site visits to each GRECC. The VA greatly benefits from the expertise and thoughtfulness of the Committee in crafting its recommendations for national programs and GRECC sites.

I welcome your thoughts and comments about the GRECC program and the contents of this report. Please feel free to contact me at [Marianne.Shaughnessy@va.gov](mailto:Marianne.Shaughnessy@va.gov) for additional information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marianne Shaughnessy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marianne Shaughnessy, Ph.D., AGPCNP-BC, GS-C  
National Director, GRECC Program

## **BACKGROUND, HISTORY AND OVERSIGHT**

GRECCs were formed to prepare for the wave of aging Veterans with unique health needs that was going to challenge the resources and expertise of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The first six GRECCs were initiated in 1976. In 1980, Public Law 96-330 mandated GRECCs to “advance scientific knowledge regarding the medical, psychological, and social needs of older Veterans, and the means for addressing them, through: (1) geriatric and gerontological research; (2) the training of personnel providing health care services to older persons; and (3) the development and evaluation of improved models of clinical services for eligible, older Veterans.”

In 1985, Public Law 99-166 authorized up to 25 sites to be designated as GRECCs. Presently, 20 GRECCs are in operation at 25 sites in 17 Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISN); all VISNs except VISN 15 have at least one GRECC. Three VISNs (8, 10 and 19) each have two GRECCs. Other than the original six GRECCs, each site subsequently chosen has been selected in response to a call for proposals that was then subjected to peer review from both within and beyond VA. A subset of the original applicants was then subjected to on-site reviews by a team made up of members of the VA Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee (GGAC), a group of non-VA stakeholders and geriatrics experts chartered in the same 1980 legislation that authorized the GRECCs. GGAC is charged with overseeing GRECCs as well as providing input to the Secretary and Under Secretary for Health on aging Veterans and the agency’s programs on their behalf.

By law, each GRECC has a tripartite mission of geriatric and gerontological research, education, and clinical innovation. During FY 2021, the GRECC Director’s Association adopted new Values, Vision and Mission statements that reflect the nature of their work:

**Values:** Discovery, education, and clinical innovation are foundational to VHA achieving and sustaining excellence in Veteran-centered health care delivery and health outcomes for older and frail Veterans.

**Vision:** GRECCs propel VHA toward continuous advancement and application of evidence-based patient-centered preventive, therapeutic and restorative care to achieve best possible health outcomes, including optimal function and quality of life, for older Veterans and all older Americans.

**Mission:** GRECCs are interdisciplinary Centers of Excellence for discovery and innovation that:

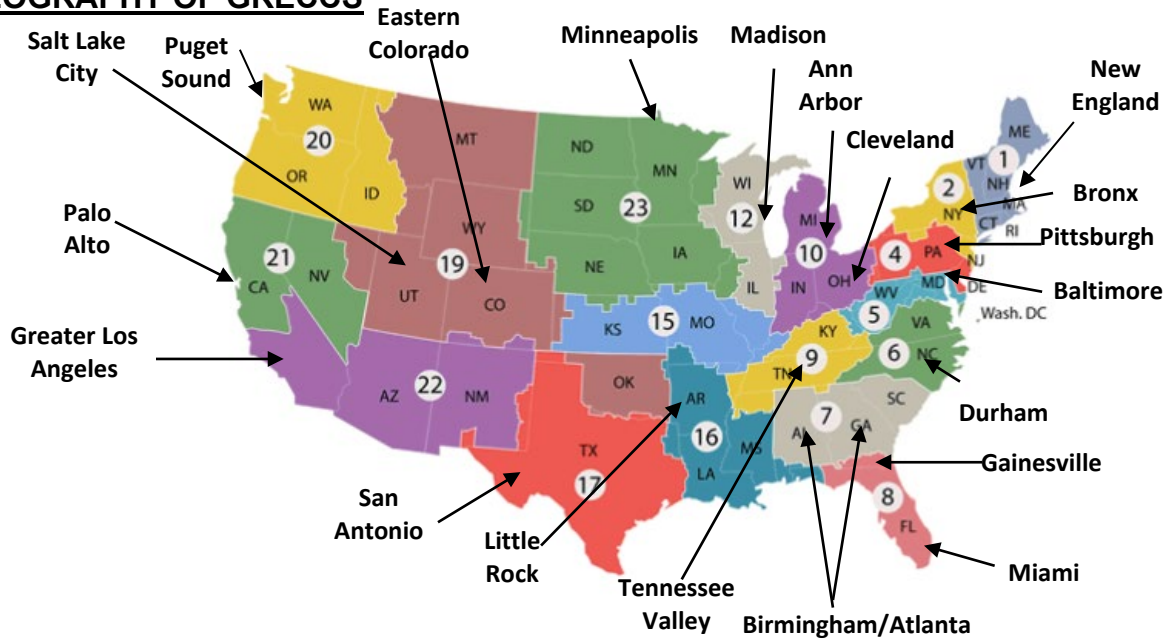
- Conduct geriatrics and gerontological research
- Educate and develop current and future geriatrics and gerontology investigators, educators, clinicians, and leaders
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate models of clinical services that improve care and health outcomes for older Veterans

GRECCs are VHA Centers of Excellence and are therefore subject to the terms for oversight described in Directive 1215, “Standards for VHA Centers of Excellence.” The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care conducts ongoing oversight of GRECC activities, responds to queries from GRECCs and organizes cross-GRECC activities, including regular communications among the Directors and each of the Associate Director groups, as well as other ad hoc committees.

Each GRECC submits information on an annual basis about their research, educational and clinical activities, as well as any challenges in accomplishing goals. This information is entered into a database from which this report is compiled. Performance measures are computed from these data. GEC leadership holds calls with each GRECC to review the report and to discuss plans for the coming year.

In its oversight role, GGAC normally convenes twice annually in VA Central Office. In FY 2021, due to pandemic restrictions, two meetings were held virtually, and the findings of the FY20 annual reports were reviewed. GGAC usually site visits the GRECCs, during which the GGAC Chair, GEC staff and several committee members review the previously submitted annual reports along with self-studies completed by the GRECCs and interview respective leadership of the GRECC, the VA Medical Center, the VISN, the University Affiliate(s) and the Advisory Subcommittee. The site visit reports become part of the GGAC’s annual report to the VA Secretary, which by statute, is also sent to the respective Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate VA oversight subcommittees. In 2021, GRECC site visits were conducted virtually.

**GEOGRAPHY OF GRECCS**



**VA’s Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers**

A list of all the GRECCs, including leadership and areas of focus, is included at the end of this report.

**Note: This report contains multiple references to GRECC publications, products, and projects. A searchable database is provided at the conclusion of this report for VA users. Non-VA users may contact [Marianne.Shaughnessy@va.gov](mailto:Marianne.Shaughnessy@va.gov) for access to any of the items referenced herein.**

### GRECCs by the Numbers 2021

These national totals provide some perspective on the scope and overall contributions of the GRECCs:

	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>
Number of GRECCs	20	20	20
Total GRECC Staff	533	513	522
Total GRECC FTE	298	280.8	315.7
Number of aging-related presentations by GRECC staff	2721	2626	2209
Career development awardee mentees	273*	268*	329*
Number of grants and projects awarded	782	750	928
Peer-reviewed publications	649	1605	1886
Grants reviewed	4296	443	972
Manuscripts reviewed	1545	3178	3312
Trainee slots for allied health	457	408	296
Medicine residents, fellows and students who rotated through GRECC sites	1656	1538	1726
Total annual grant and projects expenditures	<b>\$119,546,684</b>	<b>\$168,623,445.89</b>	<b>\$184,688,316.44</b>
Total qualified research expenditures (subject to VERA)**	<b>\$69,968,078</b>	<b>\$109,053,709.65</b>	<b>\$120,296,964.22</b>
VERA allocation for GRECC trainees***	<b>\$16,398,870</b>	<b>\$ 9,766,610.97</b>	<b>\$ 20,543,780.27</b>

\*This sums the mentees that each GRECC staff person supervised. This was not necessarily as the primary or only mentor, so some mentees may be double counted.

\*\* Data Sources: Office of Research & Development and Allocation Resource Center

\*\*\* Data Source: Office of Academic Affiliations Support Center

## **GRECC CONTRIBUTIONS**

As part of their annual reporting process, GRECCs enumerated their contributions to research, education, clinical and administrative programs within their VISNs, medical centers and national program offices. National contributions included dissemination of novel clinical programs, such as:

- Gerofit, an exercise program for community-dwelling older adults which is offered in 31 VA facilities
- Integrated Management and Polypharmacy Review of Vulnerable Elders (IMPROVE), a program focused on reducing harmful polypharmacy within the older Veteran population which is available in 4 locations
- Assi**ST**ed Ea**R**ly Mob**Il**ity for Hospitalize**D** Older Veterans (STRIDE), available at 27 locations and provides a supervised inpatient walking program to prevent disability related to immobility during hospitalization
- Geriatric Emergency Departments where 7 GRECCs have implemented practices consistent with requirements for geriatric accreditation as outlined by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- Age-Friendly where 17 GRECCs have assisted with implementation of Age-Friendly principles at their medical centers

GRECC national education activities for VA trainees and staff included:

- Geriatric Scholars Program which infuses geriatrics into VA primary care settings
- GRECC Webinars, monthly webinars on geriatric syndromes provided to VA staff nationwide
- Dementia training for VA staff made available nationally
- VIRTUAL Geriatrics, formerly known as GRECC Connect, which provides twice monthly accredited case-based geriatric webinars to rural Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) staff

Three noteworthy educational products for FY 2021 included Brain Health in Aging, managed, and distributed by the Puget Sound GRECC, Dementia Disease Management Protocols for the national VA TeleHealth Dementia Caregivers program developed by the Miami GRECC and the Health Professional Trainees (HPT) standardized geriatric curriculum being developed by multiple GRECCs.

GRECCs also contributed at the VISN level to ensure that geriatric research, education, and clinical innovations reached facilities within their VISN. They participated in various research activities that included hosting a Center for Medication Safety, identifying protein markers with dementia severity, promoting Antimicrobial Stewardship, and expanding research in aging and related

disorders to other facilities. Education has been offered to VA staff in the areas of dementia, falls prevention, palliative care, and caregiver support. Clinically, GRECCs provided E-consults for primary care providers, supported Age-Friendly dissemination, implemented Telerehabilitation and Hospital in Home (HIH), instituted deprescribing of anti-psychotics and developed of a COVID Toolkit for providers on the CLC.

At a local level, many GRECCs have Centers on Aging located within their university-affiliate sites. They study Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, COVID-19 effects on those in long-term care settings and identify optimizing flu prevention regimens for Veterans residing in State Veterans Homes (SVHs). Clinical programs at the local level include falls prevention, TeleDementia, Age-Friendly initiatives and delirium screening. GRECC educational staff oversee Nurse Practitioner (NP) and Integrated Medicine residencies, HPTs, and Fellowship programs. GRECC faculty mentored these trainees as they received geriatric experience in clinic, inpatient, home and long-term care settings. The GRECCs also provided staff education which included the Virtual Dementia Tour, COVID handouts, ethics training, interprofessional education opportunities and telehealth.

Another important contribution, difficult to quantify but regularly brought to light during every GRECC site visit, concerns recruitment of talented and productive clinicians to VHA. Many of the HPT clinical preceptors state that their training experiences in VA began in GRECC and that the interdisciplinary care VHA provides to Veterans remains unmatched to the private sector. Many funded GRECC researcher-physicians report they would not be in full-time academic positions if not for the resources, collaborations, research opportunities, stability and mix of responsibilities within a GRECC. These scholars bring tangible and intangible assets to their medical centers and university affiliates. They serve as magnets for other recruitments, trainees, and resources, and assist in strengthening ties with academic affiliates. They elevate the visibility, academic environments, and clinical capabilities of their host medical centers and of the entire VHA system.

GRECCs provided material value to their VISNs by several mechanisms. First, research expenditures are "recaptured" by means of the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) research allocation, in which a proportion of the total money spent on a grant is given to the medical center to support the research. (It is analogous to "indirect costs" in NIH grants.) Second, medical centers receive money through VERA for educational activities, based on the number of trainee positions. Third, education projects receive money through various internal and external mechanisms, including the Office of Rural Health. Finally, GRECC staff perform clinical activities that are not directly related to the GRECC, but that benefit the medical center.



## **AWARDS:**

From the dozens of awards and recognitions earned by GRECC researchers, several deserve special mention this year:

- Dr. Kenneth Heilman (North Florida/South Georgia GRECC) received the National Academy of Neuropsychology's Distinguished Lifetime Contribution Award
- Dr. Kelvin Lim (Minneapolis GRECC) was appointed to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Board of Scientific Counselors
- Dr. Christiann Roumie was appointed as the chair for the Non-prescription Drug Advisory Committee for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Dr. Wes Ely (Tennessee Valley GRECC) received the Master of Critical Care Medicine Award for lifetime contributions to clinical care, research, and teaching
- Dr. Maria Duggan (Tennessee Valley GRECC) was awarded the American Geriatric Society (AGS) Association of Directors of Geriatric Academic Programs Educational Innovation/Tool of the Year for 2021
- Dr. Eleanor McConnell (Durham GRECC) was named as the Senior Associate Editor for the Journal for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (JAMDA).

In FY 2021, GRECC staff were recognized locally for their contributions. They received numerous teaching awards, and awards for mentoring, research, scholarship, and humanitarian work.

## **KEY LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

### **External Organizations:**

GRECC faculty are recognized as nationally for their expertise in geriatric care and in FY 21 represented VA in numerous leadership roles.

- Board members for the American Geriatric Society (AGS)
- Chair, AGS Ethics Committee
- Chair, AGS Education Committee
- Co-Chair, AGS Intersection of Structural Racism and Ageism Writing Group
- Chair, Biological Sciences Section of Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
- Chair, National Center of Vision and Population Health Advisory Council
- Chair, the Advisory Council for the National Alzheimer's Project Act within the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)
- Chair, National Institute on Aging (NIA) Review Panel
- Chair, National Institute of Health (NIH) Review Panel

- President, American Aging Association
- Co-chair, Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AIM) Transition Competencies Taskforce
- Chair, World Obesity Federation
- Co-chair of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) Dissemination and Implementation Research
- Chair, ACRM Health Sciences Research Committee
- Chair, American Urological Association Science & Quality Council

Others were President of the Southern Society of General Internal Medicine, President of the Central Society of Clinical and Translational Research, President Elect for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, President of the International Endotoxin and Innate Immunity Society, Vice President of the American College of Sports Medicine, President of the Women in Academic Medicine Group, Senior Vice President of Population Health for Vanderbilt Health Affiliated Network, and President of the National Osteoporosis Foundation. GRECC faculty serve as leaders in many other national organizations focused on clinical care of older adults, medical subspecialty societies, education and research. They also serve on boards of directors for numerous community organizations.

#### VA Service:

GRECC staff led and participated in key national VA committees and initiatives, including the Geriatric Scholars Program and the Geriatric Emergency Department Task Force. GRECC staff chaired and co-chaired VISN level committees such as VISN Dementia Committees, Rehabilitation and Extended Care Integrated Clinical Community (REC-ICC) Committees, Age Friendly Steering Committees, Geriatric Committees, and Research Committees.

Locally, GRECC staff represent leaders in geriatrics by serving as Medical Directors for Community Living Centers or Directors of geriatric programs/clinics, leading REC ICC activities, supporting Residents, Fellows and HPTs through geriatric rotations, serving as section Chiefs or Associate Chiefs of Staff for geriatrics, palliative medicine, research and development (R&D), urology, quality and patient safety, geriatric mental health and neuropsychology and patient safety. GRECC staff also served as chairs or co-chairs for medical center committees for Quality, Safety and Value, Medication Reconciliation, Institutional Review Boards (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use, Access, Dementia and Dementia Education, Surgical Quality, Stroke, Strategic Planning, (R&D) Clinical Research Unit, Research Safety and Institutional Biosafety, and Ethics committees.

## RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



GRECCs are required by statute to conduct research on aging-related topics, including basic biomedical, applied clinical and health services research. GRECC primary core staffing is recommended to include 5.0 research Full Time Employee Equivalent (FTEE); and an average research effort of at least 40% time by all GRECC research staff is required and enforced as a performance monitor.

GRECC researchers served as principal investigators on more than **780** funded projects in FY 2021. The total annual research expenditures for projects with GRECC investigators were over \$162 million, of which 40% was VA-supported research (e.g., Merit, Cooperative Study, Career Development, etc.); 59% non-VA governmental and other peer-reviewed funding (e.g., National Institutes of Health (NIH), university support); and 1% private corporation, donated or proprietary funds.

GRECC research topics for 2021 included Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias, stem cell and tissue aging, Parkinson's Disease, cardiovascular functioning, osteoarthritis, cancers, stroke, PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and insulin resistance. In addition, GRECC investigators responded to the impact of COVID-19 on older Veterans by studying its effect on mobility, treatment, and the use of telehealth, identifying risk factors, and evaluating vaccination effectiveness. Research not only touched on disease and treatment, but it also studied health services which included Patient Priorities Care, Advance Care Planning, suicide risk, firearm safety, emergency department usage, caregivers, and exercise and mobility.

GRECC staff published more than **1,692** peer-reviewed publications in FY 2021, including some key breakthroughs in advancing the science of geriatrics. Many have direct relevance for the health of older adults. Some of the highlights are:

- Transition to Telehealth Group Exercise and Assessments in Response to COVID-19 (Ann Arbor)
- Revascularization for asymptomatic carotid artery stenosis improves balance and mobility (Baltimore)

- Characterizing the Spectrum of Bladder Health and Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms (LUTS) Among Women: Results from the CARDIA Study (Birmingham/Atlanta)
- A Geriatric ED Innovation Program with Cost Outcomes Among Medicare Beneficiaries (Bronx)
- Antibiotic Use Among Residents Receiving Skilled Nursing Care in 29 U.S. Nursing Homes (Cleveland)
- Impact of Reactogenicity After Doses of Zoster Vaccine (Durham)
- Portable Medical Orders (POLST) Is More Than a Code Status Order Form: Suggestions for Appropriate POLST Use in Long-term Care (Eastern Colorado)
- RESCUE Stroke Caregiver Websites in Spanish and English (Gainesville)
- Randomized controlled trial of an integrated approach to treating insomnia and improving the use of positive airway pressure therapy in veterans with comorbid insomnia disorder and obstructive sleep apnea (Greater LA)
- An Interdisciplinary Approach to Educating Medical Students About Dementia Assessment and Treatment Planning (Little Rock)
- An examination of a novel multi-panel of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) biomarkers in the Alzheimer's disease clinical and pathological continuum (Madison)
- Utilization and Outcomes of Palliative Care Consultation in Patients with Advanced Heart Failure (Miami)
- Subtle Changes in Medication-taking Are Associated with Incident Mild Cognitive Impairment (Minneapolis)
- Assessing What Matters Most in Older Adults with Multi-complexity New England)
- Converting a Geriatrics Clinic to Virtual Visits during COVID-19 (Palo Alto)
- Association Between Patient Frailty and Postoperative Mortality Across Multiple Noncardiac Surgical Specialties (Pittsburgh)
- Glia-specific Apolipoprotein E (APOE) epigenetic changes in the Alzheimer's disease brain. Brain Res (Puget Sound)
- Patient Centered Care and Electronic Health (Salt Lake City)  
Family Satisfaction: Differences Between Nursing Homes and Residential Care Facilities (San Antonio)
- Dexmedetomidine or Propofol for Sedation in Mechanically Ventilated Adults with Sepsis (Tennessee Valley)

GRECCs helped to ensure the high quality of scientific research in America, reviewing 972 grants and 3312 publications, serving on 411 editorial boards and leading local and national research societies. GRECC staff promoted the next generation of research investigators, with 329 research mentoring relationships (a GRECC investigator with a career development awardee).

## **EDUCATION AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**



The GRECCs are charged with a broad education mission: 1) to provide ongoing training in geriatrics for the host facility clinical staff, 2) to provide regional and national continuing medical education, 3) to train medical and health care professions students in geriatrics and gerontology and 4) to mentor junior faculty and post-doctoral researchers. All GRECCs have close ties to their affiliated medical school; many maintain close working relationships as well with other health professional programs (e.g., nursing, psychology, social work, pharmacy, rehabilitation therapies, audiology/speech pathology, dentistry, podiatry, and optometry) of the university affiliate and of other universities.

GRECCs carried out a number of innovative education projects in FY 2021, aimed at ensuring that VA's workforce has the skills and experience needed to provide high-quality care to aging Veterans. Some of the highlights are:

- GRECC Interdisciplinary Clinical Conference (ICC), encourages and evaluates true interdisciplinary input, team building, and complex case management. (Ann Arbor)
- The Integrative Medicine Residency is a two-week rotation for 3rd year Family Medicine Residents to participate in complimentary medicine/Whole Health. (Baltimore)
- Received Accreditation as the first geriatric Emergency Department in Georgia (Birmingham/Atlanta)
- Rural Intensive Team Trainings- (RITT) were offered virtually. (Bronx)
- The educational program Building A Resilient Workforce During Covid and Beyond, supported by rapid COVID funding, is still recruiting and enrolling. (Cleveland)
- Deprescribing information for patients. (Durham)
- Team Huddles to Support the Integration of Audiology Best Practices, including Timely Referral to Audiology (Eastern Colorado)
- Age-Friendly Health System and Patient Priorities Care CLC Implementation Guidebook (Gainesville)
- Developed education on virtual functional assessments to provide individualized exercise prescriptions for older Veteran (Greater LA)
- Developed a four-part in-service Palliative Care series. The series included: 1) Overview-Palliative Care versus Hospice 2) Palliative Care

- Consults 3) Overview- Palliative Care Symptom Management, and 4) the Bereaved Family Survey. (Little Rock)
- Collaborated with leaders in Advance Practice Nursing to develop a training module that covers the basics of decisional capacity assessments. (Madison)
  - FRAILITY Modules: an education series of seven cases of frailty. It uses 7 cases to demonstrate mild, moderate, and severe frailty. These cases also emphasize the presence of common conditions that often occur with and contribute to frailty. (Miami)
  - Initiated a national 6-session continuing education Webinar series on Age Friendly Health Systems. (Minnesota)
  - Hosted a half day dementia symposium titled "Dementia Caregiver Support: Resources & Virtual Care Models." (New England)
  - Led a Geriatrics Escape Room for geriatric medicine fellows and allied health trainees. This escape room functions as an introduction to different members and disciplines in the interdisciplinary team. (Palo Alto)
  - Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Pain (Literacy-Adapted): an 8-part enduring webinar series complete with CE credits for multiple professions. (Pittsburgh)
  - Organized the Northwest Geriatric Education Center lecture series through the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Project (GWEP), which reaches hundreds of learners across a five-state region. (Puget Sound)
  - Presentations of live broadcasts of monthly Geriatrics Grand Rounds and Geriatrics Research Update Conference for CME-supported medical education, in collaboration with University of Utah School of Medicine, Division of Geriatrics. (Salt Lake City)
  - Created and disseminated a COVID-19 booklet for patient education. (San Antonio)
  - Created a blueprint for assessment of, and early intervention for, the struggling trainee based on Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) based milestones. (Tennessee Valley)

GRECCs provided a total of **22,946 qualified person-hours** of educational activities in FY 2021. These were learning events focused on geriatrics for VA staff that included an evaluation process. This represents a substantial part of geriatrics-related education in VA. In addition, GRECC staff gave **2,209 lectures** in FY 2021. (Note: These two processes may have some overlap.) The GRECC supported Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) funded GWEP sites by providing lectures and organizational support. GRECCs were awarded 50 education and training grants in FY 2021, totaling approximately \$20 million.

GRECCs served as an institutional home for the Rural Intensive Team Training program, the GRECC-Community Based Outpatient Clinic (GRECC-Connect) initiatives and the Geriatric Scholars program. In FY 2021, the Geriatric Scholars Program (organized through the Greater Los Angeles GRECC) engaged 4,460 learners and a total of 1,215,350 person-hours of education/training and has

broadly enhanced VA’s capacity to care for older Veterans across treatment settings.

GRECCs provided medical students, medical residents, and fellows with valuable clinical experiences in geriatrics through a selection of inpatient and outpatient programs:

<b>Medical Discipline</b>	<b>Total Trainees FY 2021</b>
Internal Medicine Resident	689
Psychiatry Resident	38
Family Medicine Resident	43
Other Resident	125
Geriatric Medicine Fellow	128
Geriatric Psychiatry Fellow	13
Other Fellow	52
Medical Student	638
<b>Total Medical Trainees</b>	<b>1,729</b>

The GRECCs also supported a large number of affiliated health disciplines supported by the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), ensuring that they gain clinical experience in the care of older adults. GRECCs also accepted additional trainees from their university affiliates. Each “slot” in the table below represents a full-time position, which may be split across multiple trainees. See table on Page 13.

<b>Affiliated Health Discipline</b>	<b>OAA Slots</b>	<b>Non-OAA Slots</b>	<b># Taking VA Job</b>
Audiology/Speech Pathology	37	5	7
Chaplainry	10	6	0
Dietetics	9	2	0
Nurse Practitioner	44	6	4
Nursing	5	10	5
Occupational Therapy	22	8	1
Optometry	22	7	7
Other	1	0	0
Pharmacy	37	45	20
Physical Therapy	24	12	5
Psychology	33	17	16
Social Work	52	21	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>74</b>

Although it is difficult to track post-fellowship outcomes, the data collected for this report indicate that at minimum, 74 (25%) of the OAA-affiliated health trainees took jobs within the VA after completion of their program. This is an increase from FY 2019 and FY 2020 where 21% and 10% of GRECC Trainees took jobs within the VA, respectively. This suggests that the GRECCs serve a crucial role in developing geriatric trained clinicians for the VA.

**CLINICAL ACTIVITIES**



GRECCs are responsible for enhancing the clinical care of elderly Veterans through development, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative approaches to care. Numerous innovative approaches have been developed in GRECCs in the four decades since the inception of the program and many are now part of the mainstream VHA clinical portfolio. GRECCs have a mandate to conduct clinical demonstration programs, by developing, field-testing, evaluating, and disseminating novel models of care for older Veterans. The projects are supported by VISNs through memoranda of understanding. Each has a roughly five-year cycle. Not all clinical innovations will succeed, so there is no expectation that every project will be disseminated.

GRECC clinical innovation projects totaled 155 for FY 2021 with 64 in the evaluation stage and 35 disseminated. Innovations included medication safety, dementia care models, exercise, mobility, Age-Friendly initiatives, transition care, use of telehealth, and geriatric prevalence in Emergency Departments. GRECC Education for VA staff and trainees is extensive and included GRECC Connect at 9 locations providing geriatric E-consults for primary care providers and Geriatric Scholars providing geriatric education to Primary Care teams across the VA.

GRECC Site	Clinical Demonstration Projects
Ann Arbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerofit</li> <li>• Home-based Team Transitional Telecare to Optimize Mobility and Physical Activity in Recently Hospitalized Older Veterans</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Geriatrics Clinic with Behavioral Health and Neuropsychological Evaluation and Management</li> <li>• Long Term Follow-Up of Deprescribing Initiative at Rural CBOC</li> <li>• Optimizing Safe Medication Use in Older Adults via In-home Telepharmacy</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain Scores and Pain Medication in the Community Living Center</li> <li>• TeleGeriatrics Consultation/Co-Management for Rural Older Veterans</li> <li>• Understanding Falls in a Post-Acute Care Setting (CLC)</li> </ul>
Baltimore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Veteran &amp; Companion Dog Foster Program"</li> <li>• Early Renal Insufficiency Clinic (RISC)</li> <li>• Falls and Frailty Clinic</li> <li>• Gerofit</li> <li>• Home Exercise Program for Home Bound Older Veterans (HEX)</li> <li>• Tele-Gerofit</li> <li>• Telehealth Total joint Prehab demonstration project</li> <li>• Veterans Enrolled in Restorative Care Intervention</li> <li>• Whole Health(y) Aging with Gerofit</li> </ul>
Birmingham/ Atlanta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Friendly Health System Adoption</li> <li>• Continence Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT)</li> <li>• Expanding Enhancing Quality of Prescribing Practices for Veterans Discharged from the Emergency Department (EQUIPPED)</li> <li>• Expansion of IMPROVE in GeriPACT, enhancing Age Friendly Care</li> <li>• Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation at ATL VAMC</li> <li>• GeroFIT</li> <li>• GRECC Connect</li> <li>• Mentored Partnership to expand the IMPROVE medication management program</li> <li>• Telehealth: Geriatrics High Risk Diabetic Foot Education and Self-Management program</li> <li>• Tele-IMPROVE: Remote Integrated Management and Polypharmacy Review of Vulnerable Elders</li> </ul>
Bronx/New York Harbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRECC Connect</li> <li>• Hospital in Home</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary ALS Program</li> <li>• Patient Priorities Care</li> <li>• Patient Safety Center of Inquiry Deprescribing Collaborative</li> <li>• Rural Interdisciplinary Team Training</li> </ul>
Cleveland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geri-Vet</li> <li>• Hospice and Palliative Care: See Me Hear Me Comfort Me</li> <li>• Transitional Care Model (TCM)</li> </ul>
Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "COACH" Integrated Dementia Care Clinic</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia Warning Signs to Promote Dementia Detection in Primary Care</li> <li>• Falls Assessment of Medications in the Elderly</li> <li>• Gerofit Dissemination</li> <li>• GRECC CONNECT/VIRTUAL GERIATRICS</li> <li>• Improving Care of High-Risk Older Adults in the Emergency Department</li> <li>• Perioperative Optimization of Senior Health (POSH)</li> <li>• Renal Silver</li> <li>• STRIDE: Assisted Early Mobility for Hospitalized Older Veterans</li> <li>• VISN 6 Bone Health Service</li> </ul>
Eastern Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistive Listening Devices</li> <li>• ECHCS Fall Prevention Clinic (FPC)</li> <li>• ECHCS GRECC Connect</li> <li>• Gait Speed Screening Initiative</li> <li>• Improving physical rehabilitation for rural Veterans with complex care needs</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Mobility Program for Veterans in Skilled Nursing Facilities</li> <li>• Physical Function Trajectories After COVID-19</li> <li>• Promoting Hearing Aid Self-Sufficiency by Enhancing Skill Building, Access to Information and Caregiver Support</li> <li>• Targeted Audiologic Training for Associated Health Trainees and Geriatric Medicine Fellows</li> <li>• Tele-rehabilitation for Medically Complex Veterans During the COVID-19 Pandemic</li> </ul>
Gainesville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-friendly health system in VA CLC</li> <li>• Development of culturally relevant &amp; age-appropriate caregiver education and training in collaboration with VA Caregiver Support Program</li> <li>• Enhancing the Quality of Prescribing Practices for Older Adults from the Emergency Department</li> <li>• Implementing a post-ED follow-up clinic to reduce avoidable hospital admissions</li> <li>• Optimizing the electronic health record to improve nutritional care for Veterans</li> <li>• Phone SOAP to enhance infection control practices in a medical surgical nursing unit</li> <li>• Simulation education in dementia for Associated Health Professionals (AHPs)</li> </ul>
Greater Los Angeles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Physical Activity Home Coaching by Building Trust</li> <li>• Gerofit@UCLA Student Volunteers doing check-in Phone Calls (using the Doximity App) on Gerofit Participants NOT doing Virtual Gerofit during the Pandemic</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerofit@UCLA Student Volunteers survey of Gerofit Participants that participated in Virtual Gerofit Classes.</li> <li>• Pre Hab (Dissemination)</li> <li>• Prehab to Improve Outcomes in Elective Surgeries in Frail, Older Veterans</li> <li>• Rapid Transition to Telehealth Group Exercise and Functional Assessment in Response to COVID-19</li> <li>• Veteran PACE with collaboration with WelBeHealth PACE (Long Beach and Pasadena)</li> </ul>
Little Rock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Implementing Innovations in Rehabilitation to Promote More Rapid Goal Attainment 2.0"</li> <li>• Advance Care Planning via Group Visits (ACP-GV)</li> <li>• Gerofit Geriatric Walking Clinic</li> <li>• GRECC Connect</li> <li>• Stay Home Stay Fit</li> <li>• Supportive CTraC</li> <li>• Tai Chi Collaboration for Health and Recovery in Older Veterans Impacted by COVID-19</li> <li>• TeleGeriatrics Consultation/Co-Management for Older Veterans Impacted by COVID-19</li> <li>• Tele-memory Clinic</li> <li>• VA Connection Plans: A Whole Health Interventions to Promote Social Connections for Veterans</li> </ul>
Madison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming a Model Dementia Friendly Hospital within VHA</li> <li>• Cognitive Care Clinic</li> <li>• Elder Veterans Prevention Program</li> <li>• GRECC Connect/Virtual Geriatrics Enhancement Project</li> <li>• Supportive C-TraC Program</li> <li>• The VA Intensive Dysphagia Treatment Program</li> </ul>
Miami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia Prevention Telehealth Group Clinic</li> <li>• GEROFIT</li> <li>• Improving Access to Geriatric Care in Rural Areas: GRECC Connect</li> <li>• Needs Assessment of VISN 8 High Needs High Risk Veterans and their Caregivers</li> <li>• Otago Exercise Program for Timely Improvement of Mobility and Living (VA OPTIMAL).</li> <li>• VSAFE-SURG/Geriatric Surgery Verification Program</li> </ul>
Minneapolis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral Recovery Outreach Team (BROT)</li> <li>• Health Care Directives for Veterans with Dementia</li> <li>• PACT Dementia Care Model</li> <li>• Post-Operative Delirium</li> <li>• Power Assisted Walker</li> <li>• St. Louis University Mental State (SLUMS) exam</li> </ul>

New England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Friendly Health Systems Initiative (AFHS)</li> <li>• Assessing Circumstances and Offering Resources for Needs (ACORN)</li> <li>• Coordinated Transitions of Care (C-TraC) program</li> <li>• Coordinated Transitions of Care (C-TraC) program - Supportive</li> <li>• Enhanced Quality in Prescribing Practices for Older Veterans Discharged from the Emergency Department (EQUIPPED)</li> <li>• Geriatric Capacity Evaluation Clinic</li> <li>• Geriatric Cardiology Clinic</li> <li>• GeroFit</li> <li>• Hospital in Home</li> <li>• Later Adulthood Trauma Re-Engagement Group</li> <li>• Live Long Walk Strong</li> <li>• Live Long Walk Strong - Community Living Center</li> <li>• Neuropsychology Visit Experience Survey</li> <li>• Patient Priorities Care</li> <li>• Virtual Dementia Caregiver Support Programs</li> <li>• What Matters Most - Structured Interview</li> </ul>
Palo Alto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive Assessment Clinic</li> <li>• E-Consults for Behaviors in Dementia</li> <li>• Geri-Mobile Health</li> <li>• Tele-Dementia Care</li> <li>• VVC Balance, Exercise and Strength (VVC-BEST)</li> </ul>
Pittsburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging Backs Clinic</li> <li>• COMPASS (Care-COordination and eMpowerment of PATients in System-to-System) transitional care program.</li> <li>• Gerofit</li> <li>• Office of Rural Health (ORH), Promising Practice TeleDementia Clinic</li> </ul>
Puget Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Telemedicine, Adherence, and Geriatric Veterans: Improving Medication Compliance Using Mobile Technology (TAG-Vets)"</li> <li>• Healthy Aging Project – Brain (HAP-B)</li> <li>• Patient Priorities Care (PPC) in CLCs</li> <li>• Veteran Increased Access to Neuropsychological Services via TeleHealth (VIA TeleNP)</li> </ul>
Salt Lake City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of COVER to COVER through new models</li> <li>• GHELP-TC</li> <li>• Modeling Future Need for Long-Term Support Services</li> <li>• Rural Access Data Analysis Resource</li> <li>• VA Life-Sustaining Treatment Decision Initiative</li> <li>• Virtual Care Connect to Montana-GRECC Connect</li> </ul>
San Antonio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Life Sustaining Treatment Decisions Initiative (LSTDI)"</li> <li>• Age Friendly Health Initiative</li> <li>• COVID Cares Gerofit</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia Caregiver Support &amp; Education</li> <li>• DISE (Dementia Immersion Simulation Experience)</li> <li>• Former Prisoner of War Clinic (FPOW)</li> <li>• Geriatrics Medication Education at Discharge (GMED)</li> <li>• Gerofit</li> <li>• PPC: Implementation of VA Patient Priorities Care in Geriatrics Services</li> <li>• VIONE deprescribing initiative in GEM Clinic</li> <li>• VIRTUAL Geriatrics; Formerly Known as GRECC Connect</li> <li>• VISN 17 CLC Needs Assessment</li> </ul>
Tennessee Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A personalized provider-based intervention to improve adherence to initial consultation and decrease no-show rates in a GEC program specialty clinic.</li> <li>• MOV-ing FREE-ly (Multicomponent, Otago, video telehealth, fall reduction, exercise and education) Program</li> <li>• Implementation of a Geriatric Patient-Centered Medical Home: The Geriatric Patient – Aligned Care Team (GeriPACT)</li> <li>• TVHS GeriPACT Age Friendly Practice</li> <li>• Embedding Palliative Care in Clinic in Oncology (EPIC-O)</li> <li>• Aging Care Transformation through Whole Health Opportunities Leveraging Evaluation, Co-ordination, Allocation of Resources and Empowerment (ACT through WHOLE CARE)</li> <li>• The ICU Liberation Collaborative: Large Scale Implementation of the ABCDEF Bundle in ICUs Around the United States</li> <li>• GRECC faculty serve on the Tennessee Department of Health Civil Monetary Penalty Reinvestment Committee (CMP) grant related to COVID-19 prevention and infection control.</li> <li>• Reaching Out to Underserved and Rural Caregivers and Veterans with Advanced serious illness Veterans utilizing Video Connect (VVC) Video-Telehealth visits and e-consults</li> <li>• A Surgery quality metric Veterans Affairs Surgical Quality Improvement Program (VASQIP) based trigger to address “What Matters Most “for Veterans who are high risk candidates for surgical procedures.</li> </ul>

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The system of GRECC performance metrics was developed in 1996 to ensure that all GRECCs meet standardized performance expectations commensurate with a national program. The metrics underwent an extensive reassessment in 2005 and again in 2008, and since 2009 have been the focus of a standing committee (with rotating membership) that continuously monitors the metrics, GRECC performance and the need to modify them in response to changing VHA and GEC priorities. The measures are described in the table on the following two pages. With very few exceptions, all the GRECC sites accomplished all the

performance measures in FY 2021 (see below). The GRECC performance measures were reviewed extensively by the GRECC Performance Measure Committee during FY 2020-2021. The GRECC Performance Measures were updated to align with current priorities and will be introduced in FY 2022.

Performance Measure	Target	Ann Arbor	Baltimore	Birmingham Atlanta	Bronx/New York Harbor	Cleveland	Durham	Eastern Colorado	Gainesville	Greater Los Angeles	Little Rock
Timely Negotiated VISN/GRECC MOU	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Average # of aging-related research projects by research investigators	1+	4.6	2.4	7.1	1.9	9.4	3.7	3.6	2.6	12.2	2.5
Average research expenditures per GRECC	\$500K+	\$611k	\$525k	\$715k	\$1,1 mil	\$1.5 mil	\$834k	\$1.1 mil	\$236k	\$1.3 mil	\$1.4 mil
Average # of publications and papers-core staff	2+	6.8	4.7	2.1	5.3	10.6	4.8	8.3	3	3.3	2.1
Average # peer-reviewed papers by research investigators	3+	16.8	7.4	7.5	10.4	27.9	8.9	16.5	5.4	6.3	4.1
Total # papers for the GRECC	21+	88	91	43	106	149	83	108	44	50	43
Percentage of publications citing VA affiliation	95%+	100%	96%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%
Number of individuals mentored with a CDA	1+	14	3	40	21	4	14	33	2	17	1
Total education/training person-hours	1500+	5,654	24,630	36,760	83,649	6,252	4,668	2,928.5	6,273	3,385	4,436
Number of OAA-supported associated health disciplines	4+	5	5	6	3	6	5	4	6	5	3
Average # of educational presentations-core staff	2+	2.3	3.9	13.6	5	7.4	9.2	5	5.7	4.9	6.3
Number of clinical innovations	1+	6	10	10	6	4	10	10	7	7	10
Number of clinical innovations evaluated	1+	4	4	3	1	1	4	3	4	3	3
Number of clinical innovations disseminated	1+	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3
Percentage of time devoted to research	45%+	52%	73%	47%	60%	47%	57%	57%	36%	42%	64%
Percentage of time devoted to education/training	10%+	17%	10%	21%	24%	22%	11%	11%	14%	17%	16%
Percentage of time devoted to non-GRECC clinical activities	<20%	3%	2%	8%	2%	4%	1%	4%	3%	10%	1%

Performance Measure	Target	Madison	Miami	Minneapolis	New England	Palo Alto	Pittsburgh	Puget Sound	Salt Lake City	San Antonio	Tennessee Valley
Timely Negotiated VISN/GRECC MOU	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Average # of aging-related research projects by research investigators	1+	2.3	5.9	3.4	7.1	5	2	4.1	2.7	4.6	6
Average research expenditures per GRECC	\$500K+	\$291k	\$671k	\$841k	\$7.8 mil	\$660k	\$903k	\$982k	\$683k	\$1.9 mil	\$1.2 mil
Average # of publications and papers-core staff	2+	5.8	3.5	4.3	7.1	6.5	3.4	4.6	3.7	2.8	8.2
Average # peer-reviewed papers by research investigators	3+	10.7	7	6	22.3	12.9	6.2	5.5	3.1	5.3	21.5
Total # papers for the GRECC	21+	65	97	33	284	88	99	88	59	76	192
Percentage of publications citing VA affiliation	95%+	100%	95%	100%	96%	96%	95%	100%	97%	98%	100%
Number of individuals mentored with a CDA	1+	4	0	9	14	12	16	12	29	13	62
Total education/training person-hours	1500+	1,750	2,700	3,166	9,165	5,529	1,668	3,458	8,960	5,185	9,030
Number of OAA-supported associated health disciplines	4+	3	4	4	8	6	7	3	6	5	7
Average # of educational presentations-core staff	2+	6.8	3.8	5.3	4.3	10.5	5.3	7.3	5.2	6	11.7
Number of clinical innovations	1+	6	6	7	16	5	5	4	6	12	10
Number of clinical innovations evaluated	1+	3	4	2	9	3	3	2	1	2	3
Number of clinical innovations disseminated	1+	2	1	0	3	2	2	2	3	3	2
Percentage of time devoted to research	45%+	46%	53%	45%	65%	43%	69%	54%	60%	59%	64%
Percentage of time devoted to education/training	10%+	19%	13%	16%	13%	19%	14%	13%	13%	17%	18%
Percentage of time devoted to non-GRECC clinical activities	<20%	3%	11%	1%	2%	0%	0%	2%	4%	2%	3%



## **FUTURE OF THE GRECCS**

As evidenced by their legacy, ongoing accomplishments, current resources and institutional support, GRECCs are well poised to continue their success as VA's geriatric centers of excellence. The GGAC remains committed to and involved in the GRECCs and will offer valuable guidance both during site visits and biannual meetings.

To address pressing issues for health care in VA and more broadly in the United States, GEC will ask that GRECCs apply their attention and expertise to several issues. First, GRECCs have been and continue to be innovators in assisting VHA response to the global pandemic of COVID-19. GRECCs introduced VIRTUAL Geriatrics, which expands the reach of geriatric care providers to VA rural sites and led in rolling out telehealth management of the complex care needs of older Veterans. The GRECC program is committed to the expansion of virtual geriatric care. Second, GRECCs are key to ensuring that VHA's Whole Health transformation engages older adults, primarily through the implementation of Age Friendly principles of care. Third, GRECCs can further develop the next generation of the geriatric workforce, by providing training sites and helping recent graduates to find geriatric-related jobs in VA. In addition, GRECC sites can learn from each other's successes and use the GRECC network to ensure that effective interventions receive broad dissemination, thus increasing attention to GRECC collaborations in cross-cutting initiatives.

## **SEARCHABLE DATABASE** (for VA computer users)

The attached Access application includes all the GRECC staff interests, research studies, clinical demonstration projects, education initiatives and contributions. It can be searched by keyword or GRECC site. To access: click on the link to the GRECC SharePoint: [Home - GRECC SharePoint](#). If you don't have access to the GRECC SharePoint, request access. Once access has been granted, open a read-only version of the Search-A-GRECC Database and Save-As to download Search-A-GRECC on your government computer desktop.

## **GRECC SITES, STAFF AND FOCUS AREAS**

### **Ann Arbor, VISN 10**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Michigan  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: University of Michigan

Director: Neil Alexander, M.D. (since 10/3/2005)  
Associate Director for Research: Roger Albin, M.D. (since 9/1/2017)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Christine Cigolle, M.D. (since 8/10/2015)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Caroline Vitale, M.D. (since 7/7/2019)  
Administrative Officer: Ashley Guastella, B.A. (since 11/1/2019)

### **Areas of Research Focus**

Mobility and Physical Activity Assessment and Enhancement  
Infection Control in Long-term Care  
Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders

### **Baltimore, VISN 5**

Geriatric Affiliates: University of Maryland School of Medicine and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: University of Maryland School of Nursing and George Washington University School of Nursing

Director: Leslie Katzel, M.D./Ph.D. (since 5/23/2016)  
Associate Director for Research: Richard Macko, M.D. (since 7/1/2001)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Beth Hogans, M.D./Ph.D. (since 4/19/2019)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Jacob Blumenthal, M.D. (since 7/9/2018)  
Associate Director: John Sorkin, M.D./Ph.D.  
Administrative Officer: Tim Foley (since 12/30/2013)

### **Areas of Research Focus**

Exercise rehabilitation, weight loss, metabolism, and physical function in older Veterans with a focus on age-related chronic disease and disability conditions  
Functional genomics, genetics, molecular and cellular biomarkers of aging and chronic disease in Veterans, and how these factors influence outcomes in aging  
Chronic Pain

### **Birmingham/Atlanta, VISN 7**

Geriatric Academic Affiliates: University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine and Emory University School of Medicine  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing and School of Health Professions and Emory University School of Nursing

Director: Alayne Markland, D.O. (since 11/24/2019)  
Associate Director for Research: Lisa Zubkoff, Ph.D., (since 1/31/2021)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Katharina Echt, Ph.D. (since 6/26/2016)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Anna Mirk, M.D. (since 11/9/2020)  
Administrative Officer: Latricia Williams (since 10/28/2007)  
Atlanta Site Director: Elizabeth Vaughan, M.D. (since 4/15/2018)  
Associate Director: Molly Perkins, Ph.D. (since 5/20/2012)

**Areas of Research Focus**

Incontinence and related disorders  
Mobility  
Palliative care

**Bronx/New York Harbor, VISN 2**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Yale University School of Medicine  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing; Columbia University School of Nursing  
Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service; Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College; City University of New York - Lehman College; New York University Silver School of Social Work; James J Peters VAMC PGY-2 Geriatrics Pharmacy Residency Program

Director (Acting): Kenneth Boockvar, M.D. (since 7/1/2021)  
Associate Director for Research: Kenneth Boockvar, M.D. (since 10/1/2007)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Judith Howe, Ph.D. (since 4/1/2001)  
Associate Director for Clinical (Acting): William Hung, M.D. (since 1/2/2014)  
Administrative Officer: Valerie Menocal (since 12/12/2016)

**Areas of Research Focus**

Improving palliative care  
Prevention of functional disability  
Improving processes and outcomes between sites of care including VA/non-VA, rural/non-rural, home/medical center

**Cleveland, VISN 10**

Geriatric Academic Affiliates: Case Western Reserve School of Medicine and University Hospitals of Cleveland  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing and Northeast Ohio Medical University Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

Director: Robert Bonomo, M.D. (since 10/1/2008)  
Associate Director for Research: David Canaday, M.D. (since 9/1/2010)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Denise Kresevic, Ph.D. (since

10/1/2010)

Associate Director for Clinical: Muralidhar Pallaki, M.D. (since 6/19/2020)

Associate Director: Robin Jump, M.D./Ph.D. (since 6/1/2018)

Administrative Officer: Malva Rashid (since 7/1/2008)

**Areas of Research Focus**

Infection in the Elderly (HIV/HCV, SARS-CoV-2, Zoster, C. difficile, Resistant Gram-negatives, Bacterial pneumonia)

Antibiotic Stewardship, Infection Prevention and Control in Long Term Care

Neurodegeneration

**Durham, VISN 6**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: Duke University School of Medicine

Nursing Academic Affiliate: Duke University School of Nursing

Director: Kenneth Schmader, M.D. (since 3/1/2007)

Associate Director for Research: Miriam Morey, Ph.D. (since 10/1/2006)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Connie Bales, Ph.D. (since 7/7/1996)

Associate Director for Clinical: Christopher Bowling, M.D. (since 3/5/2019)

Administrative Officer: Harry Babwah, M.A. (since 10/5/2015)

**Areas of Research Focus**

Infection, immune function, vaccines; polypharmacy, medication management; osteoporosis, falls and fracture management

Innovative models of care delivery, transitions and caregiving

Optimizing fitness, mobility and nutrition, strategies for health promotion

**Eastern Colorado, VISN 19**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Colorado School of Medicine

Nursing Academic Affiliate: N/A

Anschutz School of Pharmacy and University of Colorado School of Social Work

Director: Robert Schwartz, M.D. (since 10/1/2014)

Associate Director for Research: Wendy Kohrt, Ph.D. (since 10/1/2014)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Kathryn Nearing, Ph.D. (since 8/19/2018)

Administrative Officer: Colleen Costello (since 4/1/2018)

Associate Director: Lauren Abbate, M.D. (since 7/1/2019)

**Areas of Research Focus**

Treatment and consequences of obesity in older Veterans (primary)

Gender differences in the health of Veterans (primary)

Intensive approaches to rehabilitation to improve function in older Veterans

**Gainesville, VISN 8**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Florida  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: University of Florida

Director: Ronald Shorr, M.D. (since 1/7/2007)  
Associate Director for Research (Acting): Constance Uphold, Ph.D. (since 1/1/2017)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Carmen Fernandez, Ph.D. (since 6/18/2012)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Rebecca Beyth, M.D. (since 7/1/2014)  
Administrative Officer: Corey Fields (since 7/6/2021)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Patient safety and healthcare quality  
Identification, management and prevention of age-related physical and cognitive disability

#### **Greater Los Angeles, VISN 22**

Geriatric Academic Affiliates: David Geffen School of Medicine at University of California at Los Angeles and University of Southern California  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: University of California at Los Angeles, California State University (CSU) Long Beach, CSU Northridge, CSU Los Angeles, CSU Dominguez Hills, University of Southern California and Drew University

Director: Cathy Alessi, M.D. (since 7/18/2011)  
Associate Director for Research: Jennifer Martin, Ph.D. (since 6/1/2017)  
Associate Director for Research: Gregory Cole, Ph.D. (since 1/1/1994)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Josea Kramer, Ph.D. (since 1/1/1993)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Steven Castle, M.D. (since 1/1/1995)  
Administrative Officer: Eliot Mitchell (since 9/6/2014)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Cognitive disorders  
Sleep  
Vulnerable elders

#### **Little Rock, VISN 17**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; University of Central Arkansas, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and Harding University

Director: Dennis Sullivan, M.D. (since 8/5/1998)  
Associate Director for Research (Acting): Kalpana Padala, M.D. (since 11/22/2019)  
Associate Director for Health Science Research (Acting): Ramona Rhodes, M.D.

(since 5/10/2020)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Lana Brown, Ph.D. (since 2/27/2020)

Associate Director for Clinical: Prasad Padala, M.D. (since 9/16/2011)

Associate Director: Lana Brown, Ph.D. (since 8/7/2017)

Administrative Officer: Julie Smith (since 3/10/2013)

### Areas of Research Focus

Basic and translational research in Alzheimer's dementia

Exercise Interventions with an emphasis on mechanisms of exercise adherence

Neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia

### **Madison, VISN 12**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Wisconsin (UW) School of Medicine and Public Health

Nursing Affiliates: UW School of Nursing

UW School of Social Work and UW School of Pharmacy

Director: Sanjay Asthana, M.D. (since 7/29/2001)

Associate Director for Research: Rozalyn Anderson, Ph.D. (since 4/1/2019)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Elizabeth Chapman, M.D. (since 4/1/2019)

Associate Director for Clinical: Steven Barczi, M.D. (since 4/1/2018)

Administrative Officer: Charity Frey (since 4/30/2017)

### Areas of Research Focus

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

Clinical and Rehabilitation Research including Care Transitions and Dysphagia

Biology of Aging

### **Miami, VISN 8**

Geriatric Academic Affiliates: University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine and Florida International University

Nursing Academic Affiliate: Florida International University (RN and PT)

Florida International University, Stempel College of Public Health Science

Director (Acting): Michael Mintzer, M.D. (since 5/23/2020)

Associate Director for Research (Acting): Stuti Dang, M.D. (since 10/1/2018)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Iriana Hammel, M.D. (since 9/27/2020)

Associate Director for Clinical: Jorge Ruiz, M.D. (since 10/1/2014)

Administrative Officer: (Acting) Mitscher Gajardo (since 6/24/2019)

### Areas of Research Focus

Frailty and reparative/regenerative therapies such as stem cells

High Need/High Risk Veterans and their caregivers

### **Minneapolis, VISN 23**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Minnesota

Nursing Academic Affiliate: University of Minnesota

Director: Howard Fink, M.D. (since 8/18/2019)

Associate Director for Research: Catherine Kotz, Ph.D. (since 11/15/2015)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Edward Ratner, M.D. (since 8/21/2017)

Associate Director for Clinical: J. Riley McCarten, M.D. (since 7/1/1996)

Administrative Officer: Ann Bolan, M.A. (since 3/8/2013)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Dementia evaluation and management, including remote sensing for early signs of cognitive impairment and neuromodulation for treatment of cognitive symptoms

Animal models investigating mechanisms of and therapies for neurodegeneration and metabolic aging

Systematic literature reviews on the efficacy and safety of interventions for chronic geriatric conditions

### **New England, VISN 1**

Geriatric Academic Affiliates: Harvard Medical School, Boston University School of Medicine

Nursing Academic Affiliate: Boston College, Connell School of Nursing

Tufts University, Department of Occupational Therapy

Director: Jonathan Bean, M.D. (since 4/19/2015)

Associate Director for Research: William Milberg, Ph.D. (since 1/4/2009)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Jennifer Moye, Ph.D. (8/1/2016)

Associate Director for Clinical: Jane Driver, M.D. (since 6/12/2016)

Administrative Officer: Myriame Wortham (since 4/18/2016)

Administrative Officer: Thomas Luciano, B.S. (12/22/2011)

Bedford Site Director: Lauren Moo, M.D.

Associate Director: Regina McGlinchey, Ph.D.

#### Areas of Research Focus

Innovative support and care coordination for aging Veterans

Risk Identification across the lifespan

Novel treatments to optimize wellbeing and independence

### **Palo Alto, VISN 21**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: Stanford University School of Medicine

Nursing Academic Affiliates:

Marshall B. Ketchum University of Southern California College of Optometry,

Pennsylvania College of Optometry, University of California Berkley School of

Optometry, University of Houston, Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry, Arcadia University, A T Still University, Boston University, Chapman University, and Duke University

Director: Manjula Tamura, M.D. (since 9/3/2017)  
Associate Director for Research: Salman Azhar, Ph.D. (since 8/1/2000)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Christine Gould, Ph.D. (since 3/19/2018)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Sowmya Iyer, M.D. (since 1/6/2020)  
Administrative Officer: Mary Westerman, MBA-HCM (since 2/3/2020)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Metabolic Aging  
Immune Aging  
Chronic Kidney Disease

#### **Pittsburgh, VISN 4**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Pittsburgh  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: Southern New Hampshire University, Wilkes University, American Sentinel College of Nursing & Health Science, Blue Field University, Carlow University, Chamberlain University, Waynesburg University, Ohio University College of Health Sciences and Professions, Ohio State University College of Nursing, Robert Morris University, Wheeling University, Clarion University, and Perdue University

Director: Steven Graham, M.D./Ph.D. (since 5/28/04)  
Associate Director for Research: Debra Weiner, M.D. (since 3/3/2021)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Jennifer Pruskowski, PharmD (since 5/1/2020)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Michelle Rossi, M.D. (since 10/25/2006)  
Administrative Officer: Dawn Fuhrer, B.A. (since 10/28/07)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Mechanisms of recovery and novel treatments/rehabilitation strategies for neurodegenerative disease, stroke and TBI  
Pharmacoepidemiology, drug safety, clinical and translational informatics to improve medication and patient safety in the long-term care setting  
Developing novel clinical care systems for chronic pain, frailty, dementia and long-term care

#### **Puget Sound, VISN 20**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Washington School of Medicine  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: University of Washington School of Nursing and School of Social Work

Director: Debby Tsuang, M.D. (since 9/25/2011)



Associate Director for Research: Brian Kraemer, Ph.D. (since 9/2/2018)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Emily Trittschuh, Ph.D. (since 9/12/2021)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Katherine Richey, D.O. (since 8/30/2020)  
Administrative Officer: Elizabeth Aigbe, M.S. (since 2/1/2009)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Aging, genetics, and environmental factors in neurodegeneration and dementia  
Brain pharmacodynamics and drug transport in normative aging, injury and dementia  
The endocrinology relating aging, body composition and cancer

#### **Salt Lake City, VISN 19**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Utah  
Nursing Academic Affiliate: University of Utah

Director (Acting): Randall Rupper, M.D.  
Associate Director for Research: Russell Richardson, Ph.D. (9/18/2007)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Jorie Butler, Ph.D. (10/14/2013)  
Associate Director for Clinical: Randall Rupper, M.D. (since 2/18/2010)  
Administrative Officer: Natalie Miya (since 12/22/2019)

#### Areas of Research Focus

Basic Biomedical: Investigations of the fundamental changes during aging that lead to a decline in brain function especially in the context of impaired immunity and inflammation  
Applied Clinical: The integrated assessment of vascular function, blood flow and metabolic regulation in both aging and diseased skeletal muscle and how this impacts function both at rest and in response to physical challenges  
Health Services: Studies that test interventions to improve outcomes, mainly focusing on medical informatics and computerized clinical systems with respect to decision support tools and collection of data for surveillance, analysis and program evaluation

#### **San Antonio, VISN 18**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio  
Nursing Academic Affiliates: University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio – School of Nursing and San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium

Director: Sara Espinoza, M.D. (since 8/11/2020)  
Associate Director for Research: Nicolas Musi, M.D. (since 3/29/2020)  
Associate Director for Education and Evaluation (Acting): Becky Powers, M.D. (since 10/1/2017)

Associate Director for Clinical: Vacant  
Administrative Officer: Sheva Allen (since 6/7/2020)

Areas of Research Focus

Geroscience Approach to Accelerate New Findings in Basic Aging Biology from the Bench to the Patient's Bedside

Lifestyle Interventions, Including Exercise, to Improve Physical and Metabolic Health in Older Adults

Trials of Age-Modulating Agents in Older Adults to Improve Physical Function, Frailty, Biologic Resilience, Sarcopenic Obesity, Immune Function, Cardiovascular Health and Cognition

**Tennessee Valley, VISN 9**

Geriatric Academic Affiliate: Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Nursing Academic Affiliate: Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

Director: Robert Dittus, M.D. (since 11/1/1999)

Associate Director for Research: Wes Ely, M.D. (since 7/16/2000)

Associate Director for Education and Evaluation: Sumathi Misra, M.D. (since 9/22/2013)

Associate Director for Clinical: James Powers, M.D. (since 11/1/1999)

Associate Director: Sandra Simmons, Ph.D. (since 5/1/2007)

Administrative Officer: Jeannie Helton (since 12/13/2015)

Areas of Research Focus

Cognitive Impairment

Quality and Safety of Care

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management