



GRECCs: Clinical Innovations Benefitting Veterans of All Ages in All Settings

...what follows is a small sampling from over one hundred clinical innovations and demonstrations currently underway in VHA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs).

Cleveland GRECC's Geriatric Emergency Room: Older Veterans represent about 45% of the patients seen in VA emergency rooms and generate many revisits and admissions. "GERI-VET" adds a comprehensive geriatric evaluation (CGE) performed by "intermediate care technicians" (former military corpsmen) to ER visits for Veterans older than age 75. Follow-up to address issues identified through the CGE is intended to prevent ER revisits and hospital readmissions. Over 250 Veterans have participated in GERI-VET to date outcomes confirm the program's effectiveness in reducing rates of hospitalizations and ED re-visitations in this high-risk group.

Tennessee Valley GRECC Improves Care in Intensive Care Units through:

- Their ABCDE delirium prevention bundle results in less time on ventilators, 50% delirium reduction, 30% mortality reduction, more than a two-fold reduction in long term cognitive impairment, and reduced ICU and hospital lengths of stay. ABCDE achieves these impressive results by employing Awakening and Breathing trials through Coordinated efforts of nursing and respiratory therapy; Delirium surveillance, prevention, and treatment; and Early mobilization and ambulation.
- The THRIVE ICU Support Group: served ICU survivors and family members in 33 sessions offered October 2016 - July 2017. Of those surveyed, 93% felt emotionally supported, 91% learned from others, 77% now understand common situations related to prolonged ICU stay, 86% would strongly recommend group participation to a friend, and 42% expressed interest in volunteering to provide peer support to others
- ICU Diaries were kept by 29 staff in 2017. On a 100-point scale, diary knowledge increased from 38.8 to 71.85, belief that diaries are beneficial rose from 62.74 to 76, and comfort level with educating family from 44.4 to 78.46. Benefits noted included increased family engagement, enhanced communication, and an enriched frame of reference for hospitalization.

Puget Sound GRECC: Memory Support for Older Adults with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] (MSOAP) provided an outpatient PTSD group the means to enhance memory skills and PTSD self-management. Alterations of attention/memory are among the diagnostic criteria for PTSD, and is a risk factor for dementia in older Veterans. After participating in the groups, questionnaires assessed PTSD symptoms, cognitive complaints, sense of self-efficacy, satisfaction with the group experience and materials, feedback on group improvement and indices of quality of life. Analyses demonstrate overall satisfaction, decreased depressive symptoms, no increase in PTSD symptoms, and increased sense of self-efficacy.

GRECCs: VHA's Centers of Excellence focusing on vulnerable Veterans through the advancement and integration of research, education and clinical innovation in geriatrics and gerontology within the VA healthcare system. There are currently twenty GRECCs located nationwide with the common mission of improving the quality of care for older Veterans. For more information please visit us at <http://www.va.gov/grecc>.

BIRMINGHAM/ATLANTA GRECC CLINICAL DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

translate novel clinical initiatives into geriatric care with the major goal to improve clinical care for older Veterans, their families, and their caregivers.

TELEHEALTH INITIATIVES

✓ **GRECC Connect** – Provides geriatric consultation for rural Veterans and their providers in Alabama and Georgia through clinical video telehealth. GRECC Connect started in 2017 and continues in 2018 with support from the Bronx VAMC and the Office of Rural Health.

✓ **Geriatric Continence Consultation Services** – Provides geriatric continence consultation for evaluation and treatment of Veterans with bladder or bowel incontinence and their caregivers in Alabama and Georgia through clinical video telehealth and telephone visits. Program started in 2018.

✓ **Home Telehealth Programs** – Designed to develop a cost-effective method of successfully delivering an evidence-based pelvic floor muscle training program for Veterans to help them regain bladder control. Current models being tested include web-based home telehealth programs to reduce incontinence in men undergoing prostate cancer surgery and for women Veterans.

✓ **Stroke Rehabilitation Services for Rural Veterans** – Investigates feasibility and effectiveness of accessible tele-robotic stroke therapy provision to Veteran stroke survivors in rural underserved locations. This project was selected by the Office of Rural Health as a *VA Promising Practice*.

✓ **VA Tele-SAVVY - Dementia Caregiver Program** – Designed to provide education and support to Veterans with dementia and their caregivers. Currently, a clinical research study is ongoing to evaluate outcomes related to this novel home program.

For information about GRECC clinical demonstration programs contact:

Alayne Markland

alayne.markland@va.gov

Camille Vaughan

elizabeth.vaughan2@va.gov

