



GRECC Clinical Programs Offer Value to Veterans and Caregivers

...what follows is a small sampling of initiatives from among the many Clinical Activities currently underway in VHA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs).

Gainesville GRECC: Think Delirium is a program that began as a non-institutional long-term care nurse driven project to early identify and treat hospitalized patients at risk for delirium. An interdisciplinary Delirium Consult Team consisting of nursing, psychiatry, geriatrics, and pharmacy was developed and is currently active at Gainesville and Lake City, FL VA Medical Centers. In addition, an electronic Delirium Response Order set is fully operational in both locations thanks to the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 8 which funded the project. To date, over 898 consults were completed with an average of 5 new consults per day. Among Veterans in whom a consult was completed, 50% were discharged back to home and the 30-day re-admission rate was 22%. Most of the consult recommendations involved reducing polypharmacy and potential drug-drug interactions, using non-pharmacological approaches to delirium and addressing behavioral issues. For more information, please contact Rebecca Beyth by email at Rebecca.Beyth@va.gov or by phone at 352-548-6000 x. 6895.

Minneapolis GRECC: Improving the Diagnosis and Management of Neurocognitive Disorders (NCD) in Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) was initiated in 2014. The University of Minneapolis School of Nursing agreed to address this initiative as a QI project for students in their Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. In 2017, the SKY PACT, a pilot clinic for this new model, began collecting outcome data. They collected data on 39 specific parameters for Veterans with suspected cognitive impairment. In 2018, the student DNPs worked with the biostatistician and GRECC staff to refine process and outcome variables. Their focus is on the updated 2016 Dementia Management Quality Measures with special attention to Advance Care Planning and palliative care counseling; education and support of caregivers; and screening and management of behavioral symptoms. For more information, please contact Riley McCarten by email at Riley.McCarten@va.gov or by phone at 612-467-3314.

Palo Alto GRECC: E-Consults and Dementia is a new collaborative project, initiated in 2017, between the GRECC and the Palo Alto Health Care System Medical Service. Comprehensive E-consults involving chart review and phone evaluation are utilized to provide management of disruptive behaviors in Veterans with dementia who are physically or geographically otherwise unable to assess such expertise by other modalities. Providing the consult requires that the consulting geriatrician review the electronic chart and make telephone calls to family caregivers, or to both family and caregiving staff, to ascertain details about the Veteran's behaviors, triggers for the behaviors, management attempts, and other information. Developed plans include both behavioral and environmental management techniques and, if necessary, prescribing of medications. All medications are prescribed and reviewed by the consulting geriatrician. For more information, contact Joyce (Lisa) Tenover at Joyce.Tenover@va.gov or by phone at 650-849-0580.

Clinical Video Telehealth for Continence Care: An Innovative Clinic Expansion in Birmingham and Atlanta

With a FY18 award from the national GRECC office, the Birmingham/Atlanta GRECC team adapted our clinic-based continence care services for clinical video telehealth visits. This project builds upon the infrastructure created by the GRECC Connect telehealth program in Geriatrics that is funded by the Office of Rural Health. In Birmingham, we partnered with the Huntsville CBOC and our local telehealth office to launch these new clinics in May 2018. To date, we have seen a total of 15 Veterans during a half-day clinic per month. With this expansion, we now have the need to open an additional half-day clinic for a total of two half-days per month. This additional clinic will start in November 2018. In Atlanta, the first new patient continence telehealth consultation was completed with the Carrollton CBOC in September 2018. Telehealth visits are currently scheduled on Friday mornings. This new clinical video telehealth program involved training the telehealth staff in Huntsville and Carrollton to use a portable bladder ultrasound device that measures post void residual volume. Not only did we start a new clinic, we also now provide a new service and tool to measure bladder volume for Veterans at both CBOCs. This project meets key VA priority areas: Greater Choice, Modernize Systems, Focus Resources, and Improve Timeliness for our Veterans that we serve.



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