

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Health Equity

VHA Health Equity Action Plan FY2022 Operational Plan

VHA Office of Health Equity (12POP1)

October 18, 2021

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Aim 1: Awareness

Goal: Increase awareness of the significance of health disparities, their impact on the nation, and the actions necessary to improve health outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
Leadership	OHE provides leadership, education, and coordination for the HEC in advancing the HEAP in support of VA FY2018-2024 Strategic Plan, Goal 2—"Veterans receive highly reliable and integrated care and support and excellent customer service that emphasizes their well-being and independence throughout their life journey."	1. OHE, HEC, and OHE's partners will collaborate on the development of OHE's Awareness activities by co-authoring or contributing to at least one information brief and/or contributing to a Health Equity podcast episode each Fiscal Year and sharing at least one relevant publication (e.g. information briefs and newsletters) or trainings to be highlighted in OHE's publications and website, across their networks each Fiscal Year.	1. OHE (Korshak), CHERP (Pittsburgh), HEROIC (Charleston, SC), Health Equity QUERI (Greater LA), Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care (Puget Sound), et al.	1. OHE and partners will collaborate on one Awareness Product (information brief, podcast episode, Cyberseminar, contribution to monthly newsletter) each month.
Partnerships	Pursue strong strategic partnerships for implementing the HEAP with internal and external organizations.	1. Distribute monthly newsletters highlighting OHE accomplishments, disparities research highlights, and opportunities for trainings. 2. Host bi-monthly Cyberseminars on relevant and timely health equity topics.	1. OHE (Jordan) 2. OHE (Korshak)	1. Published NLT the 7 th of the month 2. Sessions are the 2 nd Wednesday of the month in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October (special session) • November • January • March • May

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Publish monthly information briefs highlighting disparities focused on monthly health observances 4. Host and promote a Health Equity podcast series highlighting equity research efforts and programmatic efforts across VHA and with external partners promoting Veteran health equity. 5. Develop TMS curriculum with EES, CHERP, and VISN 1 to allow all VA staff to learn about health equity and SDOH, use equity dashboards to reduce health disparities in VAMCs, and use ACORN to screen Veterans for and address health-related social risks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. OHE (Korshak) and CIDER 4. OHE (Korshak) and Patient Care Services Communications 5. OHE (Korshak/Hooker) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July • September <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Published NLT 5th of the month 4. Record at least 9 episodes with accompanying blogs during FY22. At least 1 episode is recorded at least every 1.5 months. 5. Curriculum plan developed by 6/30/2022; 50% of curriculum created by 9/30/2022; 2 permanent FTEs to support recruited by 9/30/2022
Comprehensive Communication Planning	Develop a comprehensive communication plan, reviewed at least annually, to address existing disparities and highlight interventions and other efforts to promote equity within VHA.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft initial FY22 Communications Plan and distribute to OHE Leadership for feedback and recommended edits. 2. Incorporate feedback and edits to draft final FY22 Communications Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE 2. OHE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10/1/21 2. 10/15/21

Aim 2: Leadership

Goal: Strengthen and broaden leadership for addressing health disparities at all levels.

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
Support VHA Leadership	Establish HEC presence on the National Leadership Council (NLC) or Leadership Governance Board via addition of Chair HEC/Executive Director OHE.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HEC members brief VHA leadership quarterly on equity, disparities, and diversity. Strengthen connection between OHE and National Academies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Plan two meetings New fellows selected 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> VHA leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> OHE Current NASEM fellows 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12/31/21, 3/31/22, 6/30/22, 9/30/22 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3/31/22, 9/30/22 3/31/22
Ensure Equity Resources	VHA Leadership, program offices, HEC and Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) commit resources (financial, human, information, etc.) to implement HEAP and health equity projects with outcome evaluation strategies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve VHA race/ethnicity coding <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance to problem VAMCs Guidance to all VAMCs Tracking process demonstrates improvement Recruit 6th FTE (MD) Develop and propose FY2023 spend plan to VHA leadership. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> OHE VHA leadership OHE OHE OHE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10/31/21 12/31/21 3/31/22 12/31/21 8/31/22
Promote Equity Training	Establish and expand access to leadership trainings to equip leaders with the capacity to engage all VHA members on activities for health prevention and equity work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Educate VHA leadership on equity, disparities, and diversity. Educate VHA leadership on Healthcare Equality Index <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understand results Promote participation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> VHA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion OHE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9/30/22 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3/31/22 9/30/22



Aim 3: Health Outcomes

Goal: Improve health and healthcare outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
Variation in Services	Help VA understand variations in use, preferences, and barriers to VHA care and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) benefits across different groups of Veterans to increase numbers of eligible Veterans of all groups receiving services.	Produce bundle of integrated products on Veterans health care and disparities across different groups of Veterans. a. Release 2 nd National Veterans Health Equity Report b. 2 other products	a. VA Greater Los Angeles b. OHE	a. 12/31/22 b. 6/30/22, 9/30/22
Equity Dashboard	Help VISNs and VA medical centers (VAMCs) identify best opportunities for improving outcomes with an Equity Guided Improvement Strategy (EGIS) and identify evidence-based treatments for identified opportunities.	1. Start Community of Practice for sharing HERO/EGIS best practices 2. Provide support to field (~\$750,000) for pilot and innovations projects that use and support HERO/EGIS	1. OHE (Jordan) 2. OHE (Moy)	1. First meeting of CoP by 3/31/2022; CoP SharePoint developed 9/30/2022 2. Proposals received and funds awarded by 3/31/2022; Final reports from awarded projects received by 9/30/2022 to support compendium of best practices

		3. Augment technical assistance capabilities	3. OHE/VA Pittsburgh	3. 3 permanent FTEs to support TA recruited by 9/30/2022
Social Determinants	Help VISNs and VAMCs identify social risks and match at-risk Veterans with appropriate social services.	1. Test use of ACORN screener by Social Work 2. Seek funding to add SDOH module to SHEP	1. Social Work / VA Providence 2. OHE	1. 9/30/22 2. 9/30/22
Support VHACO	Help VHA central offices understand variations in the services they support across different groups of Veterans.	Spread use of the Equity Quality Improvement Playbook and High Equity Reliability Organization framework	OHE	9/30/22
Community Care	Help Community Care access data on variations in the services purchased by their program across different groups of Veterans.	Veteran survey of satisfaction with community care a. Analyze data b. Produce report of findings	OHE	a. 3/31/22 b. 9/30/22

Aim 4: Cultural Competency and Diversity

Goal: Improve cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health-related workforce.

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
Workforce Engagement	Support and/or provide training and learning resources in the areas of health equity, cultural and linguistic competency, and shared decision-making tools for all levels of the workforce and Veterans.	Distribute training/learning resources for the workforce and Veterans via the monthly OHE newsletter and announcements, website, SharePoint, and TMS.	OHE (Jordan) OHE (Korshak) NVO ORMDI (Lee) LGBTQ+ Health HEC	OHE (with input from partners) will publish at least one newsletter and one announcement each month
Leadership	Partner and collaborate with appropriate program offices to incorporate cultural and linguistic competency into education activities and programs within and outside VA, new and established.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish and maintain partnerships that produce and/or incorporate health equity resources throughout VA and beyond. 2. Identify and translate OHE materials in Spanish or other languages to support Veteran care. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE (Jordan) CMV (May, Wright) VHA DEI LGBTQ+ Health HEI 2. VHA Comms (Schmidt) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE will collaborate with two organizations by 3/31/2021, five by 9/30/2022 2. Identify resources and schedule by 12/31/2021; translate resources by 7/31/2022
Partnerships	Promote best practices, share resources, and create programs for diversifying the clinical workforce.	Create a VA career diversity and health equity video series and market the series through the WHIHBCU and other partners to diversify the workforce while monitoring VA diversity data.	OHE (Jordan) VA/VHA Leadership WHI HBCU WMC (Peal) ORMDI (Lee) VHA Nursing (Mitchell)	OHE will produce a video series by 3/31/2022, distribute and carryout marketing campaign by 9/30/2022

<p>Cultural and Linguistic Competency Resource Development</p>	<p>Support and/or provide resources that address: the inequities and needs of specific Veteran populations (women; racial and ethnic minorities; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender; seniors; rural; etc.) health literacy, and language barriers in all forms of communication.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the OHE website and add additional social determinants of health (SDOH), population (popl), and podcast web pages and resources that address equity and competency needs. 2. Complete redesign of OHE website and maintain usage monitoring. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE (Jordan) VISN1 (Mitchell) 2. OHE 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish two new SDOH pages by 1/30/2022, five new SDOH by 9/30/2022; one new podcast page by 12/31/2021; one new population by 6/30/2022 2. Generate usage reports each month; Approve redesign by 6/30/2022, implement design by 9/30/2022
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Aim 5: Data, Research, and Evaluation

Goal: Improve data availability and coordination, utilization, and diffusion of research and evaluation outcomes.

FUNCTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MILESTONES	POINT OF CONTACT	DATE
Data Sources	Identify VA and non-VA data sources for health equity and related information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Automate collection and reporting of COVID-19 weekly reports and HVAC monthly report 2. Update and expand Veterans Geography of Opportunity Tool 3. Enhance quality of data on race/ethnicity collected by VA 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE (Jones) 2. OHE (Jones), George Mason University 3. OHE (Jones/Hooker) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify requirements and barriers to data reporting by 12/31/2021; Fully automated process by 6/30/2021 2. Identify data needs of vulnerable populations with 4 outreach calls to VA and non-VA offices by March 30, 2022; Update the tool with additional data source (e.g., how well do VAMC serve vulnerable Veterans in the community) 3. 3 term FTEs to support work with VAMCs to improve data collection recruited by 9/30/2022
Data Analysis	Conduct data analyses and maintain inventory of data, research, and evaluation activities occurring within and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a system to facilitate request for operational analyses and data availability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE (Jones, Moy); VAPSHCS (Littman); OHE-PEC (Washington); 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify 6 stakeholders from field and other program offices by 12/31/2021; Identify staff needs by

	outside of VA related to Veterans.		CHERP (Hausman)	March 30, 2022; Launch system no later than 9/30/2022
Data Reporting	Identify strategies for capturing data for vulnerable populations and social determinants of health and promote data collection, evaluation, and reporting for such populations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disseminate 2nd National Veterans Health Equity Report and communication resources 2. Special edition of National Veterans Health Equity Report or supplement to include FY20 PCHM and Community Care data for LGBTQ+ Veterans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OHE-PEC (Washington); OHE (Jones, Korshak, Jordan, Moy); Communications (Haskell) 2. OHE (Jones, Lambert); OHE-PEC (Washington); LGBTQ+ Health Program (Kauth, Shipperd); Performance Measurement (Kearney) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Publications to design and format report by 10/15/2021; Publish report by November 30, 2021; Cyberseminar on November 10, 2021; two podcast episodes no later than June 30, 2022 2. Secure data by October 15, 2021; Set up meeting with interested offices by 12/31/2021; first draft of report by May 15, 2022; Final report by September 30, 2022
Data Strategy	Develop strategy for prioritizing, monitoring, and tracking identified disparities.	Coordinate resources of race/ethnicity data for operational purposes	OHE (Jones, Moy); OHE-PEC (Washington); PERC (Combs); SMITREC (Shiner; Peltzman)	Discuss additional data needs to support operations and research partners by October 15, 2021; Update CDW DOEx table with declined race/ethnicity data by December 31, 2021; Develop DOEx table that uses an algorithm for selecting best

				race/ethnicity data and reduce missingness by May 31, 2022
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