

The mission of the Center for Compassionate Care Innovation (CCI) is to explore emerging therapies that are safe and ethical to enhance Veteran physical and mental well-being when other treatments have not been successful.

CCI is a program within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)'s Office of Community Engagement (OCE) that supports innovations in health care that aim to help Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors. These innovations might include new types of treatments or therapies, or the use of a treatment for a different condition or symptom than it is typically used to treat.

CCI conducts a thorough and thoughtful review process to determine if a proposal is feasible and appropriate for implementation. Proposals shared with CCI should: be aligned with CCI's mission and guidelines; be developed with the fundamental principle to "Do No Harm"; be feasible to implement; and be innovative approaches that are not already available within the VHA network.



Veterans Health Administration Center for Compassionate Care Innovation

Serving Veterans Through
Innovative Strategic Partnerships

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Community Engagement
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

For more information contact:
communityengagement@va.gov,
or visit va.gov/healthpartnerships.

"I am humbled by the prospect of serving those who have borne the battle, those American men and women who have sacrificed so much."

—Robert Wilkie, Secretary of Veterans Affairs



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration



Woman wearing an LED headset, as used by some Veterans for TBI treatment.

CCI collaborates with VA providers across the country on clinical (non-research) initiatives such as:

- » **Light-emitting diode (LED) therapy for Veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI):** In 2018, CCI began collaborating with the VA Boston Healthcare System's TBI clinic on a home-based LED program. Evidence suggests that LED therapy promotes healing at the cellular level, due in part to increased blood flow. The treatment has been used successfully by more than 100 Veterans. Veterans who engaged in the treatment reported improvements in sleep, memory, mood, and attention.
- » **Stellate ganglion block (SGB) for Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** CCI has been working with the staff at the Long Beach VA Medical Center to learn how SGB might benefit Veterans with PTSD. SGB is typically used to treat chronic pain; there is growing evidence that SGB may help alleviate PTSD symptoms such as anxiety and feeling hyperalert. Some Veterans with PTSD who have received SGB have reported immediate relief of their anxiety and hyperalert symptoms.

CCI's major focus areas:

- » **Suicidality:** VA is working to reduce suicide rates among all Veterans, whether or not they are enrolled in VA health care.
- » **Traumatic brain injury (TBI):** an injury to the head that disrupts the normal functioning of the brain. TBI caused by exposure to explosions is common among Veterans.
- » **Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, such as combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault.
- » **Chronic pain:** pain that lasts more than several months (variously defined as three to six months, but longer than "normal healing").

CCI is developing and coordinating clinical demonstration projects for:

- » **Suicidality:** CCI is developing partnerships and working to create projects supporting positive social determinants of health (food security, housing, employment, and more) that reduce suicide risk.
- » **Chronic pain:** CCI is developing partnerships and working to create projects that support alternatives to opioids, including alternative treatments and holistic approaches to care.

To submit a proposal for an innovation, visit the submission portal at: tinyurl.com/cciportal.

Please note that submitting a proposal to CCI is not a substitute when other avenues of submission within VA are more appropriate, such as Research and Development Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or contracting. CCI does not award contracts, provide research grants, or offer other forms of financial support.

CCI is passionate about exploring safe and novel solutions that improve Veterans' health.

To contact CCI, please email: communityengagement@va.gov.

