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100 plus VA medical centers implement electronic solution to streamline research

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Research and Development transitioned all its research sites nationwide and its Central Institutional Review Board, June 30, to the IRBNet platform that will streamline research on behalf of Veterans.

The move standardizes regulatory review across the nationwide system and is a major step in the evolution of VA research into an enterprise with uniform processes across all sites.

ORD transitioned the 105 VA medical centers with research programs, as well as the [VA Central IRB](#), to the IRBNet platform. The unified platform provides a cohesive system for all VAMC research operations. It generates one authoritative enterprise research dataset to give ORD a comprehensive overview of all nationwide activity at any point in time.

The switch to IRBNet also reduces regulatory risk, eases policy and education implementation, decreases the administrative workload for local research offices and increases transparency for research oversight committee members, researchers and other staff.

"This enterprise approach will decrease the need for national data calls and will enable the Office of Research and Development to have an 'air traffic control board' to see where studies, by topic, are happening across the system," said [Office of Research Protections, Policy and Education](#) Director Molly Klote, M.D. "Among other benefits this will enable improved implementation of multisite clinical trials."

Increasing Veterans' access to clinical trials is one of ORD's top [strategic goals](#). VA's Central IRB was established a few years back to enhance oversight of clinical trials that take place at multiple VAMCs. It has been a vital resource for VA research in support of this goal. The implementation of IRBNet is another milestone in this process.

In fiscal year 2020, more than 10,000 Veterans took part in clinical trials at more than 70 VAMCs. The topics ranged from COVID-19, cancer, diabetes and heart disease to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance use disorders. Funding for clinical trials in VA comes both from VA and from outside sources such as the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, nonprofits and industry. Learn more about [VA clinical trials](#) and [VA research](#).

IRBNet is a commercially available platform. The version being deployed in VA is known as the [VA Innovation and Research Review System](#).

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