



An Overview of the Office of Research and Development Re-Alignment – Part 1

July 21st, 2022



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Welcome to the ORD Organizational Alignment Field Webinar!

During today's meeting we will:

- Provide you with an overview of the VA Research Enterprise Transformation effort
- Review ORD's motivation for launching the Organizational Alignment initiative
- Review Field-specific information regarding the Organizational Alignment
- Address your pre-submitted questions and host a live Q&A session

Speakers



Grant Huang, MPH, PhD
Deputy CRADO
Enterprise Optimization



Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD
Chief Research and
Development Officer



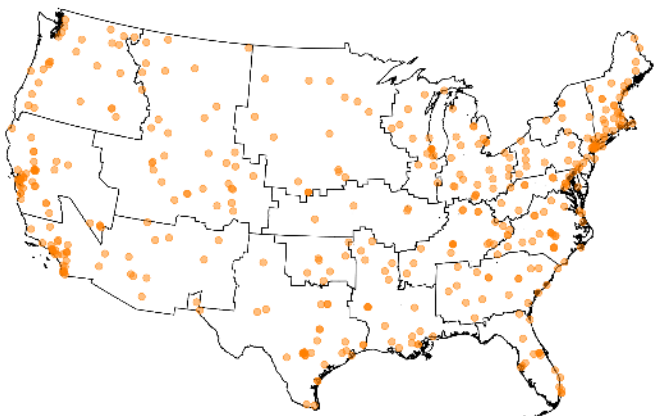
Molly Klote, MD
Deputy CRADO
Enterprise Support



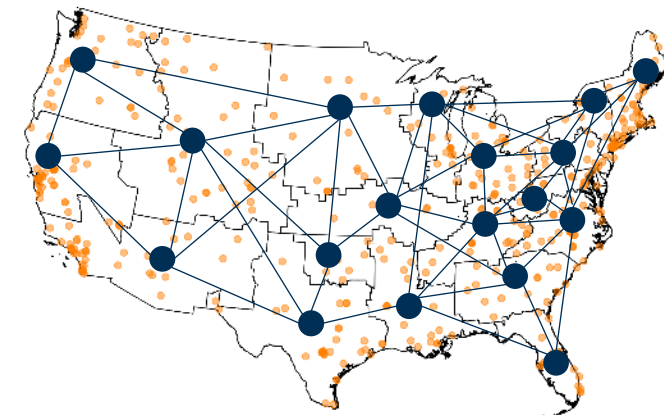
Chris Bever, MD, MBA
Director Biomedical
Lab R&D Service

We are enhancing the VA Research Enterprise because we can do the most good when we work together

What is the VA Research Enterprise?



A Research Enterprise is a system that more readily **supports common infrastructure** and the ability to more **efficiently and effectively** conduct our mission and the mission of the medical centers.

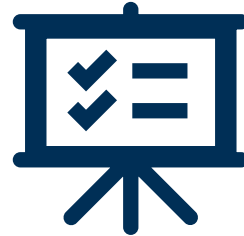


*Graphic for illustrative purposes only.
Linkages not representative of ongoing activities*

ORD met with staff in the Field to better understand challenges they face



In 2019, ORD leaders met with facility leadership, research office leadership, investigators and staff at 27 VA facilities



Our goal was to learn how ORD can best support successful research across the VA system.



We heard that needs/barriers involved:

- HR
- IT
- Training / webinars / guidance documents
- Harmonization of operations and policies across services

What are the benefits of operating as a Research Enterprise?



Improving Veteran well-being by more efficiently delivering discoveries that matter to them and expanding access to high-quality clinical studies across our system.



Enhanced ability to advocate for investigators' access to data, research resources, staff, and other support by speaking with a unified voice about what is required to conduct research that enhances the well-being of Veterans.



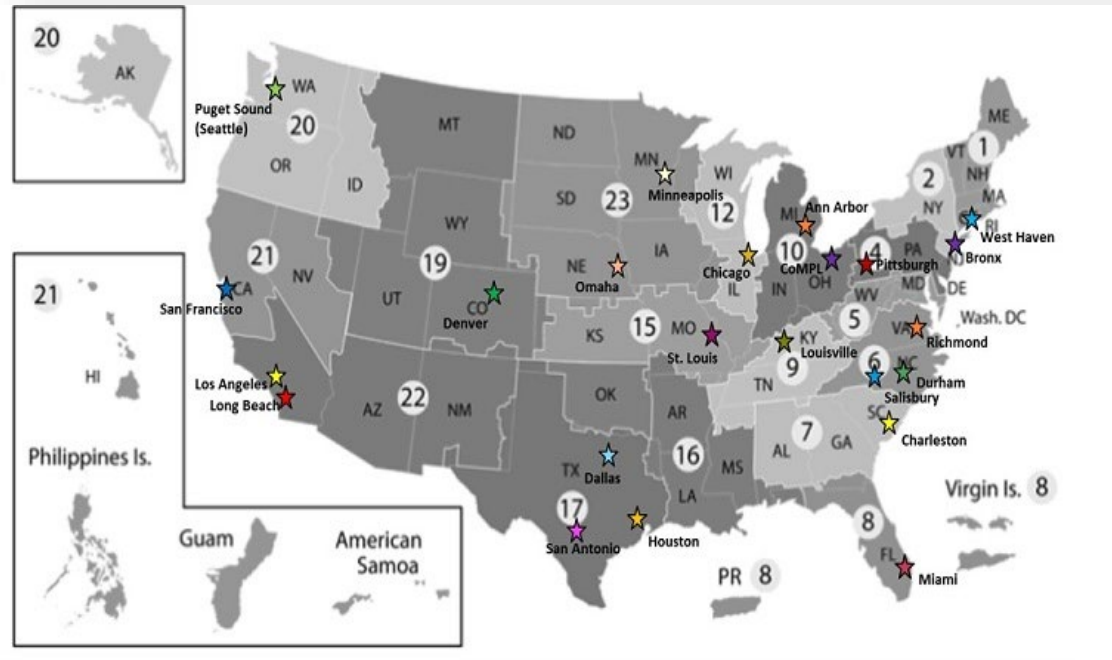
Making it easier for external organizations to partner with VA Research, which enhances our ability to bring in external resources to benefit our research programs and Veterans.



Greater visibility for VA Research contributions, which enhances our reputation and gives us greater leverage in terms of impact on Veterans' lives *and* requests for resources.

The Lung Precision Oncology Program (LPOP) demonstrates the incredible work VA Research can perform by working together

**Nationwide network of lung cancer sites.
Hub in every VISN, 85 total hub + spoke sites.**



- LPOP is a national network in lung cancer research and clinical care, including: lung cancer screening, smoking cessation, genomic testing, and clinical trials
- Strong clinical and operations support
- Clinicians and researchers working side-by-side to improve Veterans well-being
- Coordinating center at West Haven Cooperative Studies Program
- Serving as a model for additional research-clinical collaborations

ORD is updating its organizational structure to reflect its growth and success as a mature research institution



*ORD has seen a **55% budget increase** from 2011 to 2022.*

\$581M —→ **\$882M**
In 2011 In 2022

*ORD has not meaningfully changed its organizational structure since **2001**.*

How can we harness this growth to better deliver on our mission?



Choose VA

Please submit all questions using the WebEx “Q&A” feature and submit to “All Panelists”

VA



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ORD Realignment Goals & Process

Molly Klote

On April 26, 2022, we released a memo outlining how the Organizational Alignment will enable VA Research to operate more efficiently and effectively



Aligning ORD activities and functions to better serve the Field as funders of research




Serving as the strategic headquarters of a Veteran-focused biomedical research organization



Empowering local VA facilities to use centrally developed/managed tools and contracts



Through these efforts, ORD will fulfill its mission to become a more integral part of how VA sees and uses research in serving Veterans by producing high quality evidence, innovative scientific capabilities, and impactful findings in support of their care.

Aligning ORD's structure with its mission will enable us to more effectively serve our nation's Veterans



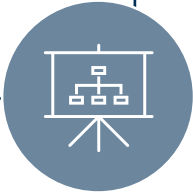
The service-based structures will be replaced with one focused on collaborative, goal-directed research to improve Veterans lives.

Over time, the structure for priority setting, solicitations, funding, funding decisions will shift to more actively managed portfolios.



The alignment will occur in phases and take place over 1-2 years.

There will be no changes to currently funded research, and the scientific submission and review process will remain the same until the service transition is complete.



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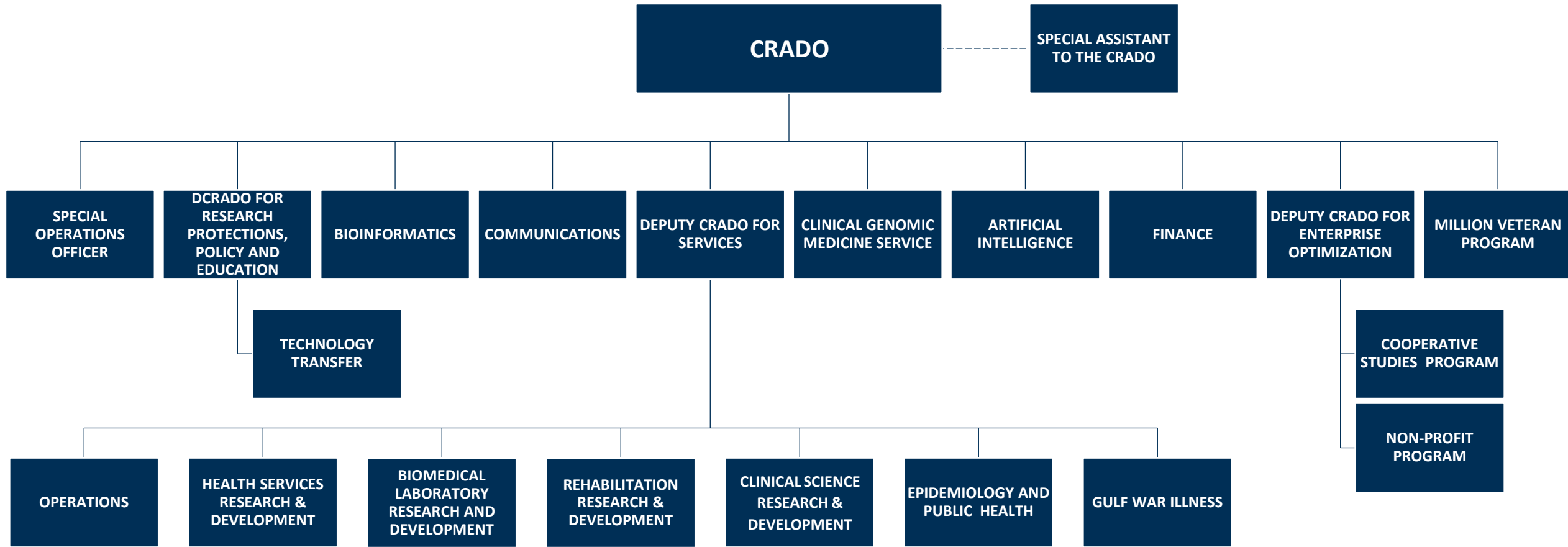
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ORD's current organization for soliciting, reviewing, and funding research is siloed



Each of the services has evolved its own policies, procedures, application requirements, and ways of managing its funds.

ORD's future foundational structure of will align our organization with its enterprise functions

L1



L2



*Note that titles of the work units in this layer may be updated.

Investigators, Scientific Review, and Management

Chris Bever

The current Service-based structure will be replaced with a with a structure that will make it easier for VA Research to collaborate to solicit, fund, and manage portfolios of research



Dr. Chris Bever
Deputy CRADO for Investigators,
Scientific Review, and Management



Solicit, support, and manage quality **science that addresses the specific needs of Veterans**, the VA Healthcare System, and the nation



Ensure a **diverse** pipeline of research and investigators.



Promote the VA Research Enterprise as a **“destination of choice.”**

Strong Research-Clinical collaboration is essential for achieving real-world impact in Veteran healthcare



➤ Communication

➤ Coordination

➤ Collaboration

Active Portfolio Management will increase the impact of Field research and improve Field operations



What are Actively Managed Portfolios?

*Portfolios of related research that prioritize **communication, coordination, and collaboration** between clinicians, researchers, and other stakeholders to solve specific questions regarding real-world health challenges faced by Veterans*

Impact of Actively Managed Portfolios on the Field



Expanded funding for collaborative research. Any funding for ongoing studies will continue as usual



Expanded reach of VA research through increased coordination within portfolios and between research, clinical operations, and external partners



End-to-end and centralized research support



Rapid review and funding of prioritized research studies



Enhanced utilization of data and analytical tools

Slow is smooth, smooth is fast



The alignment will occur in phases over the next 2 years; the final organizational form will reflect both experience and input.



Each phase will consist of data gathering, design/planning, implementation, and evaluation.



Over time, the structure for priority setting, solicitations, funding, funding decisions will shift to more actively managed portfolios.

The Services will otherwise operate as usual through at least FY23.

There will be no termination whatsoever of currently committed funding or funding that is committed to through process as a result of the transition.

Most of ORD's funding will remain investigator-initiated.



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PREVIEW OF NEW ORD DIVISIONS, OPERATIONS, & SUPPORT

Grant Huang

ORD's new organizational structure will not be arranged primarily according to scientific discipline



Dr. Chris Bever
Deputy CRADO for Investigators,
Scientific Review, and Management



Position to be filled
Deputy CRADO of Strategic Priorities,
Outcomes, and Communications



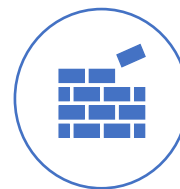
Solicit, support, and manage quality **science that addresses the specific needs of Veterans**, the VA Healthcare System, and the nation



Ensure a **diverse** pipeline of research and investigators.



Promote the VA research enterprise as a **“destination of choice”**



Develop forward-looking **strategies and governance** processes for establishing priorities and programs



Track **performance and success metrics** across ORD



Oversee internal and external **communications** for ORD and cultivate a unified, outwardly focused voice

ORD's new organizational structure will not be arranged primarily according to scientific discipline



Dr. Grant Huang
Deputy CRADO of Enterprise
Optimization



Facilitate innovative **scientific partnerships and development/use of scientific research enterprise resources**



Elevate and support Field **research enterprise leaders**



Implement **best practices and increase efficiency** within the VA Healthcare System and Research Enterprise



Dr. Molly Klote
Deputy CRADO for
Enterprise Support



Ensure **protection** of the public, research staff, all participants, and the VA's intellectual property in VA conducted research



Develop and manage research regulatory **policies, education, and training**



Manage enterprise-wide access to **central research repositories and digital research systems**



ORD's new organizational structure will not be arranged primarily according to scientific discipline



Matt Verna
Director of Finance



Responsible for the full range of **budget and finance activities** for both the Research and non-Research appropriation.



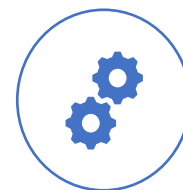
Ensure **compliance with VA financial policies, laws, regulations, and directives** of other government agencies.



Budget execution **planning and programming**



Dr. Wendy Tenhula
Deputy CRADO of Operations and
Workplace Culture



Manage the **day-to-day operations of ORD** and provide quality assurance to ORD's operations












Develop **employee engagement** and learning and development opportunities



Coordinate and oversee responses to **external requests and requirements**



ORD seems to be working to address internal challenges, are their other efforts going on to address challenges in the Field?

Initiative	Objective	Owner
 IT and Data Governance	Provide ORD staff and VA researchers with access to the tools, data, processes, and capabilities required to efficiently conduct and support research	Scott DuVall
 Actively Managed Portfolios	Provide research leaders with autonomy, flexibility, information, resources, and tools to make decisions needed to rapidly respond to research priorities focused on the health challenges faced by Veterans	Kenute Myrie
 Central Research HR Function	Enable researchers to quickly hire qualified staff for VA Research projects limiting research start-up and execution delays	Tony Laracuate
 Centralized Field Support Contract	Provide VA researchers with expedited access to a wide range of support resources (e.g., biostatisticians, study coordinators, home-visit nurses)	
 Alignment of ORD's Organization	Ensure alignment of organizational structure and roles with the desired enterprise functions to build capacity and better support researchers, Veterans, and the broader VA Enterprise	Molly Klote
 Staff Development and Mentoring	Implement effective leadership practices across ORD and help with career development for all staff	Eva-Marie Austin
 Finance Process	Ensure optimal and timely allocation of research funds and limit carryover by proactively reallocating unobligated funds to other research priorities throughout the fiscal year	Jason Berlow
 Partnered Research Program (PRP)	Implement tools, processes, and resources to improve the VA Research's ability to effectively cooperate with industry and enhance Veteran's access to high-quality clinical trials	Krissa Caroff
 ORD Governance and Success Measures	Ensure effective coordination, prioritization, and implementation of strategic Research Enterprise efforts	Wendy Tenhula

Central Research HR Function



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People with specialized expertise are needed to staff research projects



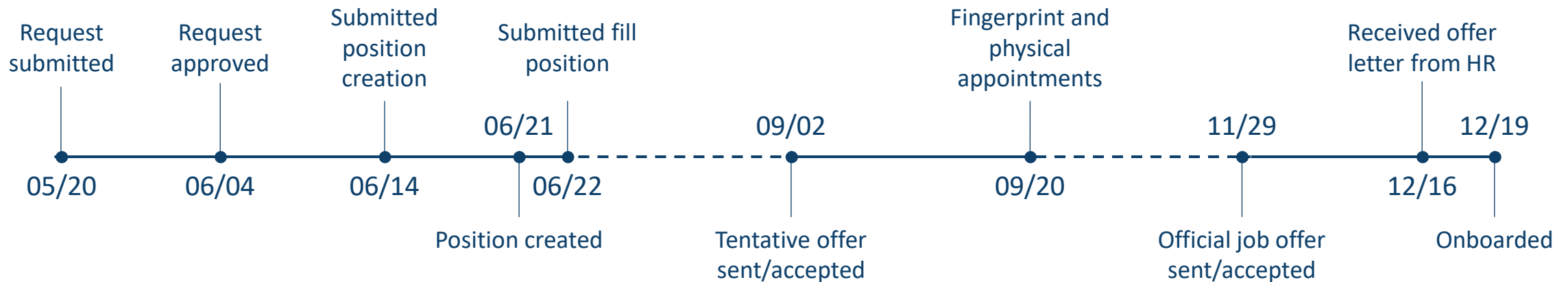
*Reducing the time-to-hire
is the #1 request of
our researcher community*



Research hiring is a major challenge across VA Research



- *Researcher needed a bio scientist to collect and analyze data*
- ***Total time to hire: 7 Months***



Implementing a Central Research HR Function will address Research HR challenges

**ORD will establish a Central Research HR Function within ORD.
A central staff of Research HR specialists**



The central HR staff will support VA Research hiring needs, understand research hiring needs, and reduce start-up times

Field Enterprise Research Support Services (FERSS)



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Access to short-term research study and program or administrative support delays VA Research activities



ORD-funded research teams often need short-term support to get projects through major milestones

However, many research teams lack access to resources or affiliate networks that can provide needed support

FERSS helps address access to short-term research study and program or administrative support

● FERSS enables research teams to tap into contracting support resources that extend beyond their existing affiliate or non-profit networks.



● Research Teams and Offices can request short-term support services for research administration activities.



● Research teams across the country are already leveraging FERSS support to support VA Research!



The link to the FERSS Request Site is: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAORPPE/CentralizedResearchContractRequest>

The Link to the March 3, 2022 Implementation and Webinar site is:

https://www.research.va.gov/programs/orppe/education/webinars/session_archive.cfm?RecordID=186488&Date03032022

Ongoing information about the Organizational Realignment will be communicated with the Field through senior staff and several other venues



Feedback Form (Anonymous):

<https://bit.ly/ResearchEnterpriseFeedback>



Feedback Email (Direct Response):

VHAORDResearchEntFb@va.gov



Learn more at our SharePoint [here](#)

Upcoming Field Engagement Opportunities

- **Office Hours:** Meet ORD leaders during office hours to share any questions or concerns about the organizational realignment.
- **More Field Webinars:** Stay tuned for information about the second in this series of Field webinars.
- **Organizational Alignment FAQ:** Find answers to questions anytime on the SharePoint.

Q&A Section



How will the Organizational Alignment help foster translation and engagement of scientists across branches?

Who was involved in the strategic planning and execution of the Organizational Alignment, who should I reach out to in my office with questions about the Alignment?

What impact will the Organizational Alignment have on future research funding?

While it makes sense for L2 leads to design the structure of their own unit, how will leads ensure they do not favor one unit over another? That is, are there preferences among L2 leads that may affect groups within their unit?

If one is interested in new positions that may be open, will the positions be posted, and will we be able to apply to the positions?

How will ORD connect bench to bedside – from basic science to translational, clinical, and implementation science, with consideration for implementation science and equity? Will they be somehow combined (which could dilute each component) or remain distinct but with opportunities for cross-talk/collaboration?

Open Q&A (Please type your questions in the chat)



Choose **VA**

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