

CSRD March Newsletter

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**CLINICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT**

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

Terri Talks

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Message from the Director

Due to where we are in time and space, I wanted to send a note out this month, with a very simple message to all of the CSRD research community. In terms of What's Important Now:

(a) safety for investigators, research staff, and study participants is the very foremost priority. I know that everyone is flexing to the extreme in terms of doing the right thing for research - so **thank you** for doing all that you are being asked in this regard; and

(b) **we're here if you need us**. CSRD staff has been seamless in adjusting to the new order, and we are not only ready and standing by to help with questions, we are in fact delighted to hear from you and how you are managing.

Resources for you regarding research administration include the set of detailed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), as well as information from Central Office on the SharePoint site you can access through VA

networks: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacomm/admin/projects/covid19>

You may wish to spend a minute reading through the FAQs because they provide a lot of **practical information** including funding issues and what we are especially interested in hearing from you about. Of course, we will deal with funding issues together after we move through this time of administrative holds. This is especially true for our career development awardees and others who are being called upon to help in spectacularly unexpected ways and cannot continue to focus as usual on your research. **We'll be here for you** when we get to the point where we pick up the pace once again.

With respect to the management and completion of the **CSRD Spring 2020 round of review** for submitted applications, our staff has also continued to make arrangements so that we do not miss a step in terms of the integrity of the review and being able to make funding decisions on time as planned. We have made the decision to hold our Spring 2020 review meetings virtually, with all processes in place except having the in-person face-to-face discussion. I would ask at this time in particular, **if you are asked to serve as a scientific reviewer**, PLEASE consider helping because we need experts to make it all happen as planned. You can certainly reach out to our Scientific Program Managers to offer your time if that is something you could contribute in the May/June timeframe.

On another note - **science is bringing so much hope** to the world in terms of providing proven solutions around COVID-19. The number and type of clinical trials is truly amazing, and we will continue to work to coordinate any clinical trial activity at the national level. Additionally, while there

is an early call for clinically related short-term research projects on COVID-19 <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacomm/admin/projects/covid19/SitePages/Research-Opportunities.aspx>, we intend to publish a more detailed program of opportunities soon. So please keep the ideas and suggestions coming. Lastly, if there is local activity that is being started related to COVID-19 research, please do send an email to ORDCOVID19@va.gov to let us know about it. We all understand the national research portfolio on COVID-19 will be most valuable if everyone organizes this collaboratively.

We all wish you well,

Terri

New CDA1 Announced

CSRSD and BLRD are announcing a new opportunity for junior investigators at the CDA1 level who are interested in working with a mentor on suicide prevention. The CDA1 for suicide prevention will be announced with the Fall 2020 RFAs and will have an LOI due May 1. Please look for this new opportunity and spread the word that we continue to strongly support research on the topic of suicide prevention throughout our office.

Invitation for Mid-Level Scientists from HSRD – deadline approaching soon

Participants are being sought for a new training opportunity, the Society of General Internal Medicine's (SGIM) Partnered Research Curriculum, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs. SGIM's mission is to be the professional home for innovators and scholars in academic general internal medicine leading the way to better health for everyone. One of the key intersection points for both the VA and SGIM is to enhance the delivery of high-value healthcare to patient populations by supporting high quality researchers and research.

SGIM is offering a free curriculum for VA researchers to learn how best to partner with healthcare teams and systems. The curriculum will run from May 2020 through April 2021 and will include bi-monthly meetings over 12 months, consisting of 90-minute learning sessions on a series of key topics related to partnered research. Another core component of the curriculum will be the creation of mentor-mentee teams to enhance didactic material with active learning. The curriculum will kick-off in May 2020.

Curriculum participants who are currently or will be conducting VA research are being sought. Those with SGIM affiliation are encouraged to apply. The estimated required time effort is 2-4 hours each month for the term indicated above. This would include one-on-one sessions with mentors each month to discuss and review learning tasks (e.g., journal club, skill-building activities). Mentees will also participate in the bi-monthly 90-minute learning sessions to learn and engage in key curriculum topics including the theory and design of effective partnered research, communication strategies, and understanding the business model for organizational partners. A certificate will be presented at the 2021 Annual Meeting. Participants will receive support for registration, travel and lodging for the conference. Please log on to the [partnered](#)

[research submission form](#) to submit your application and CV by April 3rd. If you have questions, please contact Erika Baker at bakere@sgim.org.

Dr. Stephen Waxman profiled in National Geographic

The January issue of the National Geographic Magazine ran a feature article on Pain. Among scientists profiled in the article was our very own Dr. Stephen Waxman from the VA Medical Center in New Haven, Connecticut. The article highlighted his research on the Nav1.7 sodium channel, in which he used neuronal cultures to show the crucial role of this channel in transduction of nociceptive signals. This makes Nav1.7 an attractive target for development of new, non-addictive pain medications.