



Clinical Science Research and Development

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

Terri Talks

Vol. 2, No. 7, 2020.10.26

Message from the Director

It is almost incomprehensible that we are already almost through OCTOBER in this year of pandemic. Our CSRD investigators, local facility research staff and study teams have persevered by continuing to do remarkable work and contribute high levels of service despite the collective challenges we face. Within CSRD, we have seen folks step into expert review roles on special emphasis panels for priority topics including COVID-19 and as consultants for new initiatives also related to the pandemic. Additionally local research offices have been working so hard to keep the trains moving with “normal” business functions as well as the additional requests related to new research. Described below is exciting news that our 2020 Barnwell awardee has been confirmed! We thank you and applaud everything you do to positively impact our program. It's really exciting to stand up a new Community of Science effort (see below), and we will definitely share progress and reports as they are available.

Please take care, Terri

CSRD Announces New Senior Program Manager for Precision Oncology



Clinical Science Research and Development Service (CSRD) is delighted to announce the new appointment of Dr. Kenute Myrie to the position of Senior Program Manager for Precision Oncology.

Ken has been an amazing asset in the past as Scientific Portfolio Manager and Career Development Program Manager for Biomedical Laboratory and Clinical Science Services. His stellar career and leadership include the establishment of highly engaged career development annual symposium as well as stewardship for oncology for both Services. More recently he was detailed to the Office of the Secretary's Center for Strategic Partnership. In this detail, he developed and expanded a critical partnership with the Prostate Cancer Foundation as well as other important VHA program offices. All of this contributed to his leading the VA's newly defined priority for Precision Oncology. We will look forward to his coordinating this priority research work across the Office of Research & Development for the Department and beyond, ensuring that significant advances result in the best ultimate care and treatment of our Veterans with cancer.

Ken became official in his new position as of October 12, and obviously will continue to work on the transition from his current role over the next few months. Congratulations to Ken and specific thanks for taking on this critically important role for VA.

It is anticipated CSRD will post an announcement soon for Ken's replacement as Portfolio Manager. This information will be shared as soon as it is available.

Barnwell Award Recipient Named



David W. Olsin, M.D. is the recipient of the 2020 John B. Barnwell Award, CSRD's highest honor for outstanding achievement in clinical science research. The award recognizes Dr. Oslin's exemplary record in involvement in, and service, to the VA and to clinical science, as well as for his ground-breaking contributions to clinical management of Veterans suffering from mental illness, and his research that has focused on two main threads: a) development and implementation of measurement-based care practices; and b) the study and implementation of precision mental health care through the application of genetics to clinical care.

Both areas are highly relevant to the care of Veterans and the mental health field overall, and his work has had considerable impact on the delivery of care within the VA. His research contributions to integrated mental care were a major original contribution, as were his application of pharmacogenetics to pharmacologic treatment of alcohol use disorder and his pioneering ongoing multisite study of the usefulness of pharmacogenetics in a precision medicine approach to optimal antidepressant medication use. His CV is impressive in terms of the number, quality and breadth of publications; his grant funded support; and his national reputation. Dr. David Oslin is among the top 10 clinical

investigators both within and outside of VA nationally. He is a major asset for the VA and the Veterans we serve.

Dr. Oslin's scientific leadership and his commitment to improving health care for Veterans are clearly reflected in his outcomes based clinical trials that have changed clinical practice for millions of patients.

To honor Dr. Oslin, CSRD will publish an announcement in a prestigious scientific journal. He will receive \$50,000 per year for 3 years in research support. He also will receive a cash award of \$5,000 and an inscribed plaque commemorating his scientific achievements. The Corporal Michal J. Crescenz VA Medical Center in Philadelphia also will receive a plaque honoring Dr. Oslin.

COVID-19 Studies in Progress

- The HITCH trial of Degarelix has 14 sites enrolling patients with great thanks to local site investigators and staff to make enrollment successful.
- The VA CURES-1 trial of convalescent plasma has 25 sites being set up to go. As of this writing the only step left is to open the first recruitment sites when biospecimen supplies are received. Great thanks to Pathology Services in the administration of plasma for this important study.
- A new announcement is being developed to consider under the VA CURES platform, which will allow new clinical trials to be evaluated for potential fit within the VA CURES "therapeutic lanes," prophylaxis/COVID19 exposed, outpatient/COVID19+, inpatient/COVID19+. The announcement is expected to be disseminated within the next few weeks, and the intent will be to generate as many study ideas as possible so that a ranking process can be conducted to set a priority order.

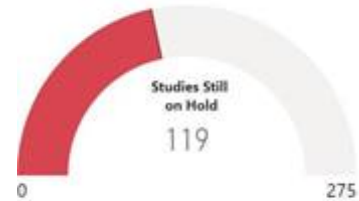
Administrative Hold Update



The number of studies funded by CSRD that were placed on any administrative hold (full or partial) as a result of COVID-19 was 275. Of that number, 156 have restarted and 119 remain on hold as of October 23, 2020.

A project on full hold did not continue any activities, whereas a project on partial hold could continue writing manuscripts, or switch office visits to telemedicine. For example, some projects that were on full hold commented, "All research halted." On the other hand, projects on partial hold commented, "Research impacted: in-person visits halted. Research that continued: data analysis of previously collected/existing data; telephone recruitment and screening; writing of manuscripts."

As a reminder, as individual study holds are lifted, the station needs to inform CSRD. Please email us at vhablrd-csrd@va.gov as these lifts occur.



Fall 2020 Merit Review Round has Begun

The Fall Round of meetings started last week. In CSRD, due to the high priority focus on new treatments for precision oncology and COVID-19, meetings were set up to start last week with the goal of considering the evaluations of merit to allow for quicker start up if trials are highly rated.

Letter of Intent Deadline is November 1

For investigators interested in submitting an application for the Spring 2021 review round that requires a letter of intent (LOI), the deadline is November 1, 2020. These include LOIs for clinical trials, career development awards, and multiple BLRD opportunities. Please read instructions closely and submit via the appropriate mechanisms. Guidance is located here: https://www.research.va.gov/services/shared_docs/resources.cfm#4.

ORD Diversity Equity and Inclusion Working Group states Mission

The ORD Diversity Work Group is now named the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group. It is committed to leveraging and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion to deliver outstanding public services to our nation's Veterans, and to their families and beneficiaries. DEI will achieve this mission by:

- Developing a diverse scientific workforce through training and funding opportunities.
- Stimulating research focused on minority health and reducing health disparities.
- Promoting a culture of inclusion in ORD workplace that will enhance the quality of our work and increase its relevance to the Veterans, the scientific research and the clinical communities we serve.

- Promoting equity in scientific activities including the management of scientific review stakeholders so that they are an accurate reflection of the VA communities that we serve.

Community of Science Meeting Convened

CSRSD convened a new **Community of Science** effort on October 26 with investigators supported from its COVID19 rapid response proposals. The intent of the meeting was for CSRSD PIs to share summaries of the objectives of their COVID studies and any progress to date. In addition, information was provided on available resources, including the phenotype library, biorepository, and strategic initiatives from the Office for Research Policy, Protections, and Education. Breakout sessions provided opportunities for awardees discuss plans for advancing COVID research. This was the first time bringing together all CSRSD investigators working on COVID research and we were excited to bring this new scientific community together. Outcomes will also be shared. BLRD COVID-19 awardees were invited to listen in on the meeting. A total of 23 CSRSD PIs and 34 BLRD PIs was anticipated to participate.

Please Meet and Greet Us

Until we are able to travel, CSRSD staff members will be attending virtual meetings:

- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Annual Meeting, November 4-14
- American College of Neuropsychopharmacology Annual Meeting December 8 (NIH Institute Director's session including focus on VA's diversity and inclusion efforts with Q&A and an update on VA COVID activity with Q&A, followed by a networking session for additional questions)

CSRSD Contact Information

General Mailbox: VHABLRD-CSRSD@va.gov

Just in Time: <https://vaww.gateway.research.va.gov/jit/Default.asp?>

Career Development: VHACADEReview@va.gov

Instructions for Accessing JIT

When trying to connect to Just-In-Time Document Manager (JIT), the error messages on Internet Explorer and Chrome reflect a failure of the browsers to recognize that the JIT website is safe.

To move past the error messages and access JIT, take the following steps:

In Internet Explorer, click on the "More Information" button then click "Go on to the webpage (not recommended)."

This site is not secure

This might mean that someone's trying to fool you or steal any info you send to the server. You should close this site immediately.

 Close this tab

 More information

The website's security certificate is not yet valid or has expired.

Error Code: DLG_FLAGS_SEC_CERT_DATE_INVALID

 Go on to the webpage (not recommended)

In Chrome, Click on the "Advanced" button and then click "Proceed to vaww.gateway.research.va.gov (unsafe)."



Your connection is not private

Attackers might be trying to steal your information from vaww.gateway.research.va.gov (for example, passwords, messages, or credit cards). [Learn more](#)

NET-ERR_CERT_COMMON_NAME_INVALID

Hide advanced

Back to safety

This server could not prove that it is vaww.gateway.research.va.gov; its security certificate does not specify Subject Alternative Names. This may be caused by a misconfiguration or an attacker intercepting your connection.

Proceed to vaww.gateway.research.va.gov (unsafe)

Questions? Contact Cheena Ugwu at Chinagozi.Ugwu@va.gov.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

