DEPARTMENT of VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVANCED FELLOWSHIPS in MENTAL ILLNESS RESEARCH and TREATMENT

South Central VA Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

North Little Rock, Arkansas

Call for Applications— VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment

Overview

Applications are currently being accepted for the SC MIRECC Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment located in Little Rock, Arkansas. Practitioners with a doctorate degree in their field including psychologists, pharmacists, nurses, and social workers are eligible to apply. This fellowship is a two-year research training program (75% time devoted to research and 25% to advanced clinical training). The SC MIRECC's mission is to promote equity in engagement, access, and quality of mental healthcare to Veterans facing barriers to care, especially rural Veterans. The purpose of the fellowship is to train health care professionals for future leadership roles in research, education, and clinical services, particularly in academic and medical care settings such as VA. Although many Fellows pursue careers focused predominantly on academic research and education in mental health, successful graduates of the program also pursue leadership careers that emphasize education and clinical contributions in mental health.

By the end of the fellowship program, fellows should be ready to pursue entry-level leadership roles, which integrate state-of-the-art research, education, and clinical approaches to mental health in the VA healthcare system and other settings. Fellows pursuing academic clinical-research careers should also be ready to submit applications for career development awards (such as VA Career Development Awards or NIH K-Awards) with the support of their mentors toward the end of their fellowship.

Research Mentoring

The Little Rock SC MIRECC Fellowship is founded upon a team mentoring approach where each fellow works with a primary mentor and a team of research and clinical advisors. Senior research faculty and interests include:

A view from the Bluffs of the North Little Rock campus

Robert Bossarte, PhD: Suicide prevention, mental health practice, predictive modeling, electronic health record data

Michael A. Cucciare, PhD: Implementation of evidence-based treatments, computer-based technology in mental health treatment, treatments for substance use disorders

Brandon Griffin, PhD: Moral injury, PTSD, structural equation modeling, meta-analysis, psychometrics

Kathleen Grubbs, PhD: PTSD, rural Veteran access to care, technology, shared decision making, eating disorders

Corey Hayes, PharmD, PhD, MPH: Substance use disorders, pharmacoepidemiology, secondary data analyses, technology-based interventions

Sara Landes, PhD: Implementation science, suicide prevention, dialectical behavior therapy

Jacob Painter, PharmD, MBA, PhD: Implementation science, cost effectiveness analysis, treating depression in persons with HIV, improving care for Veterans with complex behavioral health conditions

Jeffrey Pyne, MD: Telemedicine, PTSD, psychophysiological assessment, virtual reality, substance use disorders, cost-effectiveness analyses, mental health-clergy collaboration

Rajinder (Sonia) Singh, PhD: Implementation science, health equity, policy implementation, underserved Veterans

Marcela (Marci) Weber, PhD: PTSD, resilience, patient-centered care and Whole Health, rural, Hispanic/Latine, and other underserved populations, quantitative methods

Eva Woodward, PhD: Implementation science, health disparities and health equity, mental health evaluations in medical settings, community and patient engagement in research, implementation practice

Academic and Cultural Environment

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System is a large and complex VA Medical System, with two large medical facilities in the Little Rock metropolitan area of about 580,000 people. CAVHS also has community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) throughout the state of Arkansas to serve its large rural population of Veterans. In addition to the SC MIRECC, CAVHS hosts three other VA research centers: the HSR&D Center for Mental Healthcare and Outcomes Research (CeMHOR), the Behavioral Health Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (BH QUERI), and the Little Rock Geriatric, Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC). The academic affiliate is the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). Fellows receive an appointment as

Instructor and are involved in the academic activities of UAMS faculty in the Center for Health Services Research within the Department of Psychiatry.

Arkansas is a great place to live and complete your training. Arkansas has the third-lowest cost of living among all U.S. states. The average commute time in Little Rock is 18.6 minutes. Arkansas, "the Natural State," offers a multitude of scenic landscapes along with natural and cultural resources and programs. Little Rock, the state capitol, has many excellent restaurants, a thriving cultural community, museums, public golf courses, Pinnacle Mountain State Park, and the 17-mile Arkansas River Trail for walking, jogging, and cycling. Arkansas has a large state park system with campsites, hiking trails, mountain lodges, interpretive events, fall foliage programs, and activities for all seasons.

For those who are interested in art, downtown North Little Rock and Little Rock host art nights in which the local galleries open their doors for free to those who wish to enjoy the arts. Little Rock is home to the newly renovated Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. Little Rock is also home to several community theatres that regularly produce plays and musicals. The Robinson Center is a world-class concert and performing arts venue. The Robinson Center is where the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra regularly performs and where one can attend several touring Broadway productions and other plays.

Clinical Training Opportunities

Working with their mentoring team, Fellows will develop a set of practice experiences that best complement their research and career goals and accrue sufficient hours for licensure. Clinical supervisors include national VA training experts for evidence-based psychotherapies. Recent fellows have completed clinical rotations related to trauma recovery, anxiety and depression treatment, women's health, telemedicine, substance use disorder treatment, primary care mental health, and rehabilitation psychology.

Stipend and Benefits

- Full-time stipend of $52,662 (for the 1st year), beginning late summer or early fall 2026; stipend amount may change; small increase for second year
- Vacation (13 days per year) and Sick leave (13 days per year)
- Benefits as applicable including eligibility for health insurance and dental/vision insurance
- Authorized leave for professional conferences (limited travel funds usually available)
- Tuition support for courses at UAMS
- Access to intramural grant funding mechanisms

Requirements

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Eligible psychologist must have graduated from an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited doctoral program in clinical/counseling psychology and are enrolled or completed an APA or CPA-accredited internship
- For the eligibility requirements for other health care disciplines, please contact Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh (see below)
- Doctoral requirements must be completed before fellowship start date
- Fellowship preferred start date is flexible (usually between July 1 and September 15)
- Applications received by December 15, 2025 will be given priority; applications may be accepted until positions are filled
- Interested applications are encouraged to contact Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh (see below)

Application Procedure

Please submit the following by email or postal mail to Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh (email: Rajinder.Singh2@va.gov):

- Cover Letter describing
  - Area(s) of research interest and how this training will advance your career
  - Research training and goals
  - Clinical experience and goals
- Curriculum Vitae – including description of your internship rotations
- Three Letters of Recommendation addressed to Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh, Director of the SC MIRECC Fellowship (such as from training directors or research and clinical supervisors familiar with your work)
- Official graduate school transcripts (sent directly by your university)
- Two or three samples of scholarly writing, such as an executive summary of your dissertation, journal publication, or research manuscript

Specific information about by-invitation interviews will be sent to qualified applicants.

Note: VA fellows are subject to all employment rules applying to federal employees, including selective service registration if applicable. The United States Government does not discriminate in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability and genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factor.

This fellowship is currently not accredited by the American Psychological Association. The program is currently preparing the documentation required for accreditation consideration.

Contact Us

Please direct questions about the Advanced Fellowship Program at CAVHS and application process to Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh (Rajinder.Singh2@va.gov).

Submission of Materials:
Dr. Rajinder (Sonia) Singh
South Central MIRECC Fellowship Director
2200 Fort Roots Drive, 152/WLR
N. Little Rock, AR 72114-1706
Rajinder.Singh2@va.gov

Other Information

For more information about SC MIRECC Advanced Fellowship programs visit our website:
https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16/little-rock-fellowship.asp

For more information about the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Center for Health Services Research and faculty, please visit:
http://psychiatry.uams.edu/research-2/division-of-health-services-research/

CAVHS also hosts a one-year clinical fellowship program with emphasis areas in psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery and in PTSD. For information about the clinical fellowship, please visit the website:
http://www.littlerock.va.gov/careers/psychology/fellowship/Psychology_Fellowship_Prgram.asp