Evaluation of Peer Specialists on VA Patient Aligned Care Teams

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Peers on PACT: Background

• **Mental health comorbidity is common** among Veterans in PACT and leads to higher cost and poor outcomes when Veterans do not receive the care they need.

• **Peer Specialists (PSs) are shown to improve consumer participation in care** (Goldberg et al 2013, Druss et al 2010; Chinman et al 2015), by:
  – Countering Veteran mistrust of care system
  – Modeling self-management
  – Talking with Veterans about sensitive behavioral issues (substance abuse, obesity)
  – Educating about and guiding Veterans through the medical system

• **Executive Action of August 26, 2014**
  – Called for placing 50 Specialists in 25 primary care sites

• **This project would evaluate:**
  – Impact of adding Peer Specialists on select primary care processes and outcomes
  – Impact of an implementation strategy used to deploy the Peer Specialists
Status Update: Peers Trained & Veteran Encounters

- **COHORT 1** (7 Sites):
  - 8 Peers Trained in Whole Health Coaching
  - 1st year:
    - 6,051 total encounters (2793 unique)

- **COHORT 2** (10 Sites):
  - 16 Peers Trained in Whole Health Coaching
  - 1st year:
    - 1,115 total encounters (321 unique)

- **COHORT 3** (8 Sites):
  - 7 Peers Trained in Whole Health Coaching
  - To date:
    - 295 total encounters (173 unique)
Sustainability

• Cohort One
  – 6 of the 7 sites continued into the second year
  – 5 anticipate continuing beyond study tenure

• Cohort Two
  – 8 of the 10 sites continued into the second year
  – 7 anticipate continuing beyond study tenure