

Evaluation of Peer Specialists on VA Patient Aligned Care Teams

Co-PIs: Mathew Chinman, Ph.D. & Richard Goldberg, Ph.D.

Co-Investigators and Key Study Personnel: Karin Daniels, Sharon McCarthy, Amanda Peeples, Natalie Kiddie, Lorrienne Kuykendall, Deb Medoff, Jeffery Smith, Andy Pomerantz, Dan O'Brien-Mazza, & others

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