

A Message from the Acting Director, CSP

By: Grant D. Huang, M.P.H., Ph.D.

CSP continues to have several opportunities to ensure that we provide quality work and leadership in Veteran-focused research. To help with these efforts, I recently met with the CSPCC Health System Specialists (HSS) and individuals representing the CSPECs and NODES to prioritize CSP Central Office (CSPCO) activities and directions for the near future. These efforts are intended to enable CSPCO and the program to meet expanding roles as a clinical research resource for VA. Together we identified core areas of responsibility and corresponding projects for which each HSS will become the CSPCO lead.

In addition to completing urgent tasks, HSSs guide overall program directions by communicating the larger CSP vision, facilitating alignment and coordination of activities and leading initiatives.

Below is a list of the core areas, objectives and lead(s) for CSPCO-level actions.

Core Areas	Objectives	Lead(s)
Communications	Enhance/facilitate program-wide communications with internal and external stakeholders.	Melissa Middleton (ABQ) and Jonathan Franz (WH)
Administration	Coordinate CSPCO-specific administrative activities and assist on CSPCO personnel actions; ensure CSP staff well-being is promoted.	Chey Bosley-Somogyi (PA)
Human Subjects Protections and Engagements	Ensure quality and research activities prioritize Veteran participants.	Tara Burke (PP/B) and Alysia Maffucci (WH)
Data	Ensure that data-related activities and policies are standardized and consistent with larger VA/scientific community efforts.	Lauren Harris (BOS) and Jen Sporleder (SEA)
Portfolio/Project Management	Provide timely responses and oversight of CSP research activities.	Tammy Barnett (HIN) and Jonathan Franz (WH)
Strategic Collaboration	Facilitate CSPCO-level collaborations and related activities.	Tara Burke (PP/B) and Tammy Barnett (HIN)
Recruitment	Oversee and communicate NODES and related site-level activities.	Marcus Johnson (DUR)

Thank you in advance for collaborating with these individuals as we strive to be a standard of excellence and quality for VA clinical research. I encourage you to talk with them on a regular basis to learn about and understand CSPCO priorities and activities.



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CSP Study Updates & Highlights

UPDATES & HIGHLIGHTS

CSP #465F, "VA Diabetes Follow-up Study," held its quarterly Executive Committee meeting via conference call on October 18, 2016.

CSP #565, "Combination Angiotensin Receptor Blocker and Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitor for Treatment of Diabetic Nephropathy (VA NEPHRON-D Study)," had its final Data Monitoring Committee meeting on September 26, 2016.

CSP #589, "Veterans Individual Placement and Support Towards Advancing Recovery (VIP-STAR)," held its final DMC call on September 30, 2016.

CSP #2010, "RePOP," Planning Meeting was held in Boston, MA on October 24th, 2016.

CSP #1032, Phase 2, "Multi-Center Trial of AZD8529 for Smoking Cessation in Female Smokers," completed randomization of 214 female subjects on November 4, 2016. Follow-up should be completed on March 10, 2017. This is the first time an electronic data capture (eDC) system has been used for a NIDA trial. It is hoped that using eDC will greatly reduce the time from last subject follow-up to locking of database.

CSP #2003, "Exoskeletal-Assisted Walking in Persons with SCI: Impact on Quality Life," has successfully randomized nine patients.

CSP #2011, "Randomized Trial of Hemodialysis Hypertension Treated with Atenolol or Lisinopril," was assigned to West Haven CSPCC for planning in September 2016. The Principal Proponent is Rajiv Agarwal, MD, of the Richard L. Roudebush VAMC, Indianapolis, IN.

M A V E R I C



Dance-loving supporters watched MAVERIC Study Director Dr. John Hermos compete in "**Dancing with the Brookline Stars**." He raised awareness and money for the Brookline-Quezalguague Sister City Project in November while dancing a foxtrot to Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett's "Cheek to Cheek." Pictured (left to right) are MAVERIC staff Luis Selva, Sarah Leatherman, Ryan Ferguson, Lien Quach, professional dance partner Erin Strickland, John Hermos, Kelly Harrington, Colleen Shannon, HRC member George Chapman, Pat Woods, Natalie Morgenstern, and Erika Holmberg.



A group picture of **MVP staff** in Washington DC in October, celebrating the 500K milestone!

From left to right.

Top row: Lindsay Duchesneau, William Lance, Donald Humphries, Saiju Pyarajan, Stacey Whitbourne, Grant Huang, John Concato, Timothy O'Leary, J. Michael Gaziano, Sec. Robert McDonald, Under Sec. for Health David Shulkin, Jennifer Lee, Acting CRADO Dr. David Atkins, Ronald Przygodzki, Nancy Steward, Jennifer Moser, Kelly Cho, Debora Pfeffer.

Bottom row: Keri Hannagan, Derrick Morin, Nicole Usher, Mary Kelleher, Sumitra Muralidhar, Karen Anderson, Rene LaFleur, Jennifer Deen.

Hines

Hines Retreat

By: Dan Lippe

Hine CSPCC staffers broke free of their usual workstations for a two-day retreat to their future, as the entire staff examined our culture and positioned the Center for the best possible path to serving Veterans through clinical research.

The Hines CSP Center Retreat, held **October 26-27** off-site at the nearby VHA Administrative and Data Management Office, built on what the Center has learned from ISO and last January's Lean workshop held at Hines by the VA Center for Applied Systems Engineering (VA-CASE).

Alden Davis brought 30 years of experience in orchestrating large-scale institutional change to his role as facilitator for the Hines retreat. He helped Hines staffers examine the culture that has evolved over time and determine whether it is sufficient for achieving our purpose. We moved from significant events in the life of the Center to our track record of success to how we will continue to evolve.

Alden is the founder of MyValueTree.com, a consultancy that leads institutional change within business and social systems. For purposes of our discussion, he encouraged staffers to look at the Center as "Hines CSP Inc." and what a business needs.

Just embracing ISO doesn't mean we have improved our processes, Alden said. It just means we're documenting the processes better. We discussed the process lifecycle that leads to improvement and regeneration. The retreat included the "Ping Pong Factory," a fun activity in process improvement and teamwork.

From the world of Lean, Alden applied his expertise in kaizen, which seeks to foster continuous improvement. He warned the group about "not being so invested in the past that you can't see your way to a new future. Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at will change." We need to craft our own future and be victors instead of victims.

"We are only as good as the quality of our thinking," Alden said, pushing the group to practice "critical thinking." He warned of the traps that inhibit critical thinking (see box) and advised the group to check out www.criticalthinking.org. This is the Web site of the Foundation for

Critical Thinking, a non-profit organization that promotes change in education and society through "fair-minded critical thinking." The site explains that "Whereas society commonly promotes values laden with superficial, immediate 'benefits,' critical thinking cultivates substance and true intellectual discipline. It entails rigorous self-reflection and open-mindedness—the keys to significant changes."

The Hines staffers also went on a Strategic Safe-ari, a risk management technique that Alden has created. Safe-ari looks for lessons in nature to address the process of getting employees involved in eliminating risks to people and products. Learning from how wild animals on the African savanna behave, Safe-ari is meant to move the organization from "talking at" employees to "talking with" them. Safe-ari looks at how animals manage risk (e.g. one animal acting as a lookout to guard the group) as a metaphor for the human organization.

With the retreat providing the spark, the journey continues as the Hines CSPCC breaks free of a silo mentality and evolves from individuals to a group and then to a team with defined roles, common goals, and a clear mission. Staffers have already held a follow-up meeting, and committees are being formed to work on our 2017 goals of a Hines CSPCC strategic plan, portfolio of services, an open house to be held next spring, and a local clinical trials seminar.

Critical Thinking Traps:

- Anchoring – putting too much weight on the first piece of information received, the anchor, and then comparing other information to it.
- Assumption – accepting something as fact without proof.
- Framing – positioning information to get a desired result. Spinning how information is presented.
- Inference – drawing conclusions based on premises thought to be true.
- Sunk Cost – continuing down a flawed path because an investment in time or money has been made.

And an Emotional Trap: BeingStupid (BS)—poor judgment displayed when feelings overtake rational thoughts.



Hines retreat facilitator Alden Davis.

CSP Personnel Updates

Palo Alto

Congratulations to Aaron Alsleben, QA Nurse Specialist, who completed all eligibility requirements and passed the certification examination to become a Registered Quality Assurance Professional in Good Clinical Practice (RQAP-GCP) through the Society of Quality Assurance. This is an internationally recognized credential for professionals working in clinical research quality assurance, and it is valued by many top clinical research and biotechnology organizations such as Genentech. Aaron has an MSN in clinical research management, is board certified in cardiovascular nursing, maintains CCRP certification from SoCRA, and is certified in healthcare research compliance. Achieving the RQAP-GCP credential validates his expertise in clinical research QA, and demonstrates his continued dedication to quality and regulatory compliance in CSP studies.

Palo Alto CSPCC would like to welcome our new Project Coordinator, Jerry Rodgers. Jerry has an MPH with a specialty in Health Care Administration and Planning and an MS in Homeland Security where he specialized in Intelligence Methodology. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Asian History and Political Science. In 2010, he retired from the Coast Guard with 27 years of service as a Senior Chief Intelligence Specialist. Here he served for more than eight years in active duty and 19 in the Reserve force. Jerry has taught sixth grade history, seventh grade philosophy, and research methods in the ninth, 10th and 11th grades. Within the health care industry, Jerry is an experienced grant writer where he wrote grants for a health care organization operating as a consortium of non-profit clinics and providing political leadership locally, statewide and nationally, and additionally is an experienced program analyst. Previously, Jerry was a member of the Program Evaluation and Resource Center at the Veterans Health Administration, where he was employed as a Research Science Specialist. In this position, he was a co-leader of the Drug and Alcohol Program. Jerry's knowledge of Excel contributed to the quick submission and return of surveys to the field as well as the rapid turnaround of the surveys and the submission of data supporting program analysis.

Seattle ERIC

Several Seattle ERIC staff members have departed to explore new endeavors:

Hattie Stewart, Cleo Faraone, and Emily Ashmore. We wish them the best of luck!

Hines

Pam Gonzalez joined Hines CSPCC in October to fill the vacant role of Associate Director for Quality Assurance/QMS. Her experience includes Director of Quality and Research for the American Academy of Physical & Rehabilitative Medicine, and Associate Director for Quality and Education for the Office of Clinical Research at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Pam's name may sound familiar—she also worked at Hines from 2010-11 as our Quality Assurance Specialist. She has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and completed a biomedical clinical ethics fellowship focusing on research ethics from the University of Chicago.

Perry Point

Perry Point CSPCC would like to welcome Kelsey Alexovitz as our new NIDA Statistical Programmer.

Perry Point CSPCC would like to congratulate Karen Jones, Biostatistician, for her 25 years of federal service and Gary Frazier, Project Manager, for his 10 years of federal service.

We wish Christopher Isgrig, Project Manager, the best of luck on his new position at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

West Haven

Peter Daniel, Computer Programmer, left the West Haven CSPCC in September for a new position at Optum. Ratnakar Josyula, Associate Research Scientist, instrumental to the Quality Assurance group and ISO auditing, left the West Haven CSPCC in November and takes his knowledge to Pfizer where he will be working on quality initiatives. We wish them well.

Gary Johnson, Acting Director, is proud to announce the arrival of two grandsons (Luke in September and Samuel in October). Gary's father unfortunately passed away in late October (age 91), but was happy to have seen pictures of his great-grandsons.



D U R H A M

CSP #585: Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository Update

The CSP #585 (Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository) qualitative component is in full swing at the Durham CSPEC. The goal of this phase of the project is to hear from Veterans who served during 1990-91 (Gulf War Era) about their thoughts and preferences about research, specifically around barriers and facilitators to research participation, recruitment strategies and communication, and study processes and procedures. As of mid-November, the team had conducted nine Subject Matter Expert interviews, which are currently being transcribed, coded, and analyzed. They also held two focus group discussions in California and Florida, with a total of 16 Gulf War Era Veterans participating, and recruited 12 women Veterans for a November focus group in North Carolina. In addition, they will soon begin recruiting for Process Evaluation interviews, which will involve Veterans who participated in, opted out of, or didn't respond to an invitation to participate in the Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository pilot project. We hope the findings from this qualitative component can help improve many future research projects involving Gulf War Era Veterans.

In addition, the Durham CSPEC Data and Specimen Repository was recently approved by the Durham IRB. The CSPEC has already received a request to use CSP #585 data for a new research project; this request is currently under review. If you are interested in learning more about this repository or requesting data/specimens for research purposes, please contact MaryBeth Grewe at: mary.grewe@va.gov.

McNeil Farewell Letter

To my dear CSP colleagues,

I write with gratitude and affection to thank you for a wonderful seven years with you and the Cooperative Studies Program. I plan to leave the Durham CSPEC and my position there as Biostatistician and Computational Sciences Core Lead at the end of November to take a position with RTI in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park.

CSP has provided me with a rare environment in which to serve and grow. I found the strong focus on quality, the widespread recognition that process impacts results, and the integration of statisticians into project and Center leadership to be particularly aligned with my own perspectives. That said, it has been the kind and welcoming culture of CSP—yes, I'm talking about YOU, my brilliant, motivated, passionate colleagues—that kept me engaged through our obstacle course strewn with hurdles like data access delays, contractual battles, and IT challenges. Please never doubt your own personal power to spread kindness while supporting the VA/CSP mission!

I wish each of you the utmost in happiness and success, and would welcome the opportunity to keep in touch. Please don't hesitate to contact me via LinkedIn or email (biostatbecky@gmail.com). I also look forward to seeing you at conferences like the Joint Statistical Meetings or the meetings of the Society for Clinical Trials!

I will miss you all. May the wind always be at your back.

- Becky McNeil

Palo Alto

Clinical Research Nursing Recognized by ANA as a Specialty Practice

By: Aaron Asleben

On August 8, 2016, the International Association of Clinical Research Nurses (IACRN) announced that the American Nurses Association (ANA) formally recognized clinical research nursing (CRN) as a specialty nursing practice. The ANA also approved the CRN scope of practice statement and acknowledged the standards of practice for a five-year period. This achievement came after years of work and collaboration by clinical research nursing leaders in government, academic, hospital, and industry organizations. Specialty recognition paves the way for development of a clinical research nursing certification process.

According to the IACRN, "Clinical research nursing is the specialized practice of professional nursing focused on maintaining equilibrium between care of the research participant and fidelity to the research protocol. This specialty practice incorporates human subjects protection; care coordination and continuity; contribution to clinical science; clinical practice; and study management throughout a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and clinical specialties." Highly trained and experienced clinical research nurses play essential roles in participant safety, ethical research conduct, protocol compliance, and regulatory compliance. The CRN must understand both standard of care activities and protocol activities, recognize any differences, and balance the care of the participant with the requirements of the protocol. The CRN plays a vital role in the collection of complete and accurate data, including the identification, assessment, and reporting of adverse events.

Many VA nurses practice as clinical research nurses in a variety of roles that support CSP studies. Well-trained and highly qualified CRNs are essential to the success of clinical trials. It is important to distinguish between the roles of CRNs and the roles of non-licensed study staff such as research assistants. This distinction should be considered when making staffing and hiring decisions to facilitate the appropriate delegation of study tasks and to maximize the value of CRNs by allowing them to practice to the full extent of their training. The ANA-approved scope and standards of practice for the CRN specialty can serve as the basis for initiatives that may enhance site performance, improve quality and compliance, and ensure safe and ethical study conduct.

Palo Alto CSPCC Retreat

Palo Alto CSPCC had its annual Center Retreat in mid-October. The retreat was scheduled to be at a local park but was held at the Center due to the rainy weather. Dr. Jennifer Lee, Palo Alto's Chief Medical Officer, kicked off the retreat with a presentation about her research and medical interests, which focus on how we increase *health* span, not necessarily one's lifespan. The retreat also included a short thank you ceremony for our outgoing Center Director, Ying Lu, followed by four team-building games. We presented Ying with a thank you plaque and framed picture of the staff. We are extremely grateful for Ying's seven years at the helm and wish him well at Stanford.

For all games, the staff was separated into different teams. The first game was called "What's in the Bag?" where each team member was blindfolded and had to guess what item they grabbed out of a bag, followed by a round of Pictionary. The second game was a round of Jenga, but unlike the actual Jenga game, the objective was to build the tallest structure in 20 minutes. As one might notice in the picture below, some of the normal Jenga rules (like needing three planks for each added level) were relaxed for this competition. The third game was a CSP trivia game that was very similar to Jeopardy, but the teams had to guess some interesting facts about their co-workers. For example, did you know that Bob Edson worked one summer in Alaska as a correctional officer trainee? Not that many people at Palo Alto knew (or cared!), either. The fourth and final game was a round of putt-putt golf, where each team member had three chances to sink a hole in one.

In the end, everyone had a great time despite the bad weather. New staff got to know the tenured staff better and vice versa. Having a great work environment has really made the Palo Alto CSPCC more cohesive as a family. And what could be better than coming to a workplace where you enjoy the work and your fellow staff members?



Staff making models of what the next building the Center occupies should look like. Surprisingly, these are all more seismically safe than our former home in Building 205 at the Menlo Park campus of VA Palo Alto.

PCC

Congratulations to David Older, Acting Chief, Administrative Section and PCC COR, for graduating from the VISN 18 Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program. The overarching mission of the program is to develop effective, ethical, and resilient leaders who are poised to assume greater responsibilities in our VISN and VHA. This is an intensive nine-month program that includes a variety of experiences including didactic training, readings, and a VISN-level project, as well as assessments and other activities designed to help the participants grow and expand as leaders.

On November 1, PCC employees Shirley Madrid and Jolene Day coordinated an appetizer potluck and contests to celebrate an alternate version of Día de los Muertos. In some Latin American countries, the day is traditionally a celebration of the lives of deceased loved ones. Congratulations to LeeAnne Marquez for best skull design and Monique Trevino for best face paint.



The PCC Veterans Outreach Team coordinated donations of food, clothing, and toiletries to support Stand Down 2016. This event provides supplies, services, and referrals to assist local homeless Veterans. Jeff Huminik, Outreach Team member, noted that there were fewer Veterans at the event this year; we can optimistically hope that this is an indicator of less need in our community. Below, PCC employees sort the truckload of donated clothing, toiletries, and food.



PERRY POINT

Strengthening Employee Engagement and Retention

By: Suad El Burai Félix, MPH

Strong employee engagement and retention are essential to making an organization thrive. It is an investment to promote transparent dialogue and feedback. It is also a hidden opportunity to focus and understand your employee's aspirations, motivations, and barriers within the organization. I believe that the channel to make this happen is through consistent and trusting open lines of communication. [Brown et al \(2016\)](#) emphasized that employee engagement and retention translate into understanding an empowered workforce's desire for flexibility, creativity, and purpose. Thus, it is crucial to engage employees frequently with specific strategies and goals to reinforce a connection between their role and the agency's mission and values to enhance retention. Below are two important factors about employee engagement:

- Engaged employees feel involved with, and connected to, their work and the broader context of their organization ([Gallup, 2015](#)).
- Engaged employees are characterized for being involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work ([Gallup, 2016](#)).

According to the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#), some ideas to retain the workforce include:

- Demonstrating leadership commitment and accountability: organization leadership ensures that employees feel accepted, respected, and fairly treated.
- Hiring and training the right people: ensure that your organization is employing and fairly considering a diverse possible applicant pool.
- Improving advancement opportunities: provide employee career development and training opportunities for employees to reach their highest potential.

Even though employee retention strategies vary depending on the workplace environment, I firmly believe that, as the article "[Strategies for Retaining Employees and Minimizing Turnover](#)" accentuated, employees' retention is greatly influenced by 1) their sense of value and trust within the organization, 2) being mentored to develop solid and stronger relationships, 3) providing constructive feedback on both their efforts and achievements, and 4) making a priority for them to have opportunities to grow and advance in their careers and feel they belong in the organization culture.

CSP Publications & Presentations

Perry Point

Krystal JH, Pietrzak RH, Rosenheck RA, Cramer JA, Vessicchio J, Jones KM, Huang GD, Vertrees JE, Collins J, Krystal AD; Veterans Affairs Cooperative Study #504 Group. "Sleep Disturbance in Chronic Military-related PTSD: Clinical Impact and Response to Adjunctive Risperidone in the Veterans Affairs Cooperative Study #504." *Journal Clinical Psychiatry* 2016 Apr; 77(4):483-91.

CSP #535: Guihan, M, PhD; Sohn, M, PhD; Bauman, WA; Spungen, A; Powell-Cope, G; Thomason, S; Collins, JF; Bates-Jensen, B. "Difficulty in Identifying Factors Responsible for Pressure Ulcer Healing in Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury." *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, July 2016.

Hines

Zimering M, Knight J, Ge L, Bahn G, VADT Investigators. "Predictors of Cognitive Decline in Older Adult Type 2 Diabetes from the Veterans Affairs Diabetes Trial." *Frontiers in Endocrinology*. 2016 Sept 8; 7:123. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fendo.2016.00123>)

Olga Brawman-Mintzer, X. Charlene Tang, Marcel Bizien, Domenic Reda, Philip Harvey, David Arciniegas, Michael D. Horner, Hal Wortzel, Murray Raskind, Lisa Johnson-Greene, R. Jared Martineau, Mark Hamner, Mercedes Rodriguez-Suarez, Ricardo E. Jorge, Suzanne McGarity, Yongliang Wei, Tom Sindowski, Keaveny Donovan. "Rivastigmine Transdermal Patch Treatment for Moderate to Severe Cognitive Impairment in Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury: A Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Multicenter Study (RIVET Trial)." Poster accepted by American College of Neuropsychopharmacology 55th Annual Meeting, Hollywood, FL, December 4-8, 2016.

Seattle ERIC

Suri P, Boyko EJ, Jarvik JG, Williams FM, Jarvik GP, Goldberg J, Hunter DJ, Rainville J, Katz JN. "Modifiable Risk Factors for Chronic Back Pain: Insights Using the Co-Twin Control Design." *Spine J* (in press).

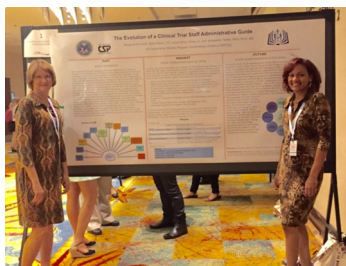
Suri P, Pearson AM, Zhao W, Lurie JD, Scherer EA, Morgan TS, Weinstein JN. "Pain Recurrence After Discectomy for Symptomatic Lumbar Disc Herniation." *Spine* (Phila Pa 1976). 2016 Aug 31.

Masri S, Garshick E, Coull B, Koutrakis P. "A Novel Calibration Approach Using Satellite and Visibility Observations to Estimate PM2.5 Exposures in Southwest Asia and Afghanistan." *Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association* (1995). 2016 Sep 20. (Epub ahead of print.)

Masri S, Garshick E, Hart J, Bouhamra W, Koutrakis P. "Use of Visual Range Measurements to Predict PM2.5 Exposures in Southwest Asia and Afghanistan." *Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association* (1995). 2016 Oct 4. (Epub ahead of print.)

WEST HAVEN

The VA Connecticut Healthcare System in November sponsored a **"2016 Exercise Challenge."** The goal was to complete a minimum of 150 minutes of self-tracking exercise per week for four weeks to receive a free healthy lunch from the Veterans Canteen Service. Blood pressure, pulse, and weight measurements were offered weekly on Wednesdays. Several CSPCC employees took the challenge. Way to get healthy!!



Project Managers Elizabeth Jobes, Denise Sayers, and Lynn Tommessilli, along with ADO Peggy Antonelli, attended the Society of Research Administrators (SRA) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX, October 22-26, 2016. Two CSP-related posters were presented: "Steering the Herd in the Right Direction" by Elizabeth Jobes, Denise Sayers, Lynn Tommessilli, and Margaret Antonelli, and "The Evolution of a Clinical Trial Staff Administrative Guide" by Margaret Antonelli (West Haven), Joyce Gilroy (Hines, missing from photo), and Jacqueline Teeter (Perry Point).

NODES

2016 NODES Leadership Meeting

The CSP Network of Dedicated Enrollment Sites (NODES) had its 2016 Leadership Meeting on November 8-9, 2016, at The Embassy Row Hotel (Washington, DC). In addition to having representation from NODES Directors and Managers at the nine Node sites (Dallas, Hines, Houston, Long Beach, Minneapolis, Palo Alto, Portland, Salt Lake City, and San Diego), the meeting was attended by representatives from the following groups: CSP Coordinating Centers (CSPCCs), CSP Epidemiology Centers (CSPECs), CSP Health System Specialists, CSP Biostatistics Subdomain, CSP Project Management Subdomain, VA Women's Health Practice-Based Research Network (WH-PBRN), and VA Central Office. Several breakout sessions were held at the meeting, and these focused on the following themes: 1) Delineation of roles/responsibilities of both NODES and CSPCCs to identify areas of overlap and make recommendations to decrease/eliminate overlap in roles and responsibilities across these groups, 2) Identification of new processes for strengthening communication and integration across the three core CSP groups (CSPCCs, CSPECs, NODES), and 3) Identification of new processes for strengthening and aligning communication of Good Clinical Practice (GCP)/Regulatory guidance to site study teams as provided by CSP in the role of study sponsor (CSPCCs, CSPECs, SMART, NODES, Study Chairs).

Meeting Objectives

Objective 1: Identify best practices for integration, e.g. workflow, resource allocation, communication, etc. between the three major components of the VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) – CSPCCs, CPSECs, and NODES. Outcome: Increased communication and integration of the aforementioned CSP core groups.

Objective 2: NODES personnel will provide CSPCCs/CSPECs with additional information on site-level barriers to conducting clinical trials and site-based epidemiologic studies in the VA healthcare system. Outcome: Creation and subsequent implementation of novel multi-site clinical research strategies in CSP to address site-level barriers to conducting site-based research in the VA healthcare system.

Objective 3: Determine potential collaborations and strategic alliances (both within VA and external to VA) that will support and advance the program mission, while also strengthening existing collaborations that also serve this purpose. Outcome: Improved healthcare delivery for Veterans.



CSP NEWSLETTER STAFF

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David Burnaska, **CSP VACO**

Diane Dannenfeldt, **CSPCC Hines**

Sandra Dixon, **CSPCC Perry Point**

Marcus Johnson, **CSPEC Durham**

Sara Kath, **Seattle ERIC**

Michael Klein, **CSPCC Hines**

William Lance, **CSPEC West Haven**

Dan Lippe, **CSPCC Hines**

Veronica Natividad, **CSPCRPCC**

Shirley Phillips, **CSPCC Hines**

Mary Smith, **CSPCC West Haven**

Chey Bosley-Somogyi, **CSPCC Palo Alto**

Jen Sporleder, **Seattle ERIC**

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