



## Clinical Science Research and Development

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Research & Development

# CSRD Newsletter

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## Miriam's Message

As you know, ORD has been undertaking an effort to transform the work we all do into a research enterprise model. We are accomplishing this through nine enterprise initiatives. One of these initiatives is to align the ORD organization with our enterprise functions.

On April 26, 2022, the planned organizational alignment process was announced at an ORD all staff meeting. Subsequently, the announcement included below was sent to all ACOS/R&D and Research AOs.

We will share future communications about this effort as it progresses.

## Announcement from the CRADO

- ORD is advancing an effort to transform the work we do into a research enterprise model. Therefore, we are undertaking some key transformational initiatives to better serve our Veterans and prepare the entire VA research community for future growth as a VA Research Enterprise.
- One of these key initiatives will involve the alignment of ORD into functional units to better coordinate and ensure that our research has a greater opportunity to impact Veteran care. It also aims to better support the field Research and Development offices and their work. We will replace the current Service-based structure with a new structure that will better enable collaborative, goal-directed, research that improves Veteran lives. This alignment will shift away from the Services based structure for priority setting, solicitations for funding, and funding decisions to actively managed portfolios (spanning all disciplines).

- This alignment effort will occur in phases with the first phase beginning in July as part of a transitional period over the next one to two years. During this transition, commitments to currently funded ORD research and activities will not change. ORD staffing levels will not decrease. The scientific submission and review process ORD uses to identify the best science for advancing our mission to Veterans will remain the same until the Service transition is complete.
- Goals of the ORD alignment initiative are to:
  - Allow VA to operate more efficiently and effectively as a research enterprise;
  - Align ORD activities and functions to better serve the field as funders of research;
  - Serve as the strategic headquarters of a Veteran-focused biomedical research organization within the nation's largest integrated healthcare system;
  - Empower local VA facilities to use centrally developed/managed tools and contracts; and
  - Overall, enable VA Research and its mission to be a more integral part of how VA sees and uses research in serving Veterans by producing high-quality evidence, innovative scientific capabilities, and impactful findings in support of their care.
- Organizational units within ORD will transition into six key divisions that will each have their respective purviews but also be working collectively and interactively to achieve ORD priorities. These are the names and leads of the future new units which will be directly reporting to the Chief Research and Development Officer:
  - Strategic Priorities, Outcomes, and Communications – lead: to be determined
  - Investigators, Scientific Review and Management – lead: Christopher Bever, MD, MBA
  - Enterprise Optimization – lead: Grant Huang, MPH, PhD
  - Protection, Policy, and Education – lead: Molly Klote, MD
  - Finance – lead: Matthew Verna
  - ORD Operations and Workplace Culture – lead: Wendy Tenhula, PhD
- During this time, ORD is committed to communicating plans and activities to the field.
  - An ORD webinar will be held in the upcoming months to provide more details about the goals of the realignment, scopes of the ORD units, and overall plans and implications. The time of this webinar will be announced broadly to the field.
  - Information will be provided on monthly ORD Field Calls (the next one is scheduled for May 16, 2022)

- The Field Research and Advisory Committee will also receive updates and be engaged for input (the next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2022).
- VA Research enterprise sessions are planned for the upcoming annual ACOS-R conference.
- ORD leaders will communicate efforts at various venues and meetings.
- A SharePoint site [tinyurl.com/RESharePoint](https://tinyurl.com/RESharePoint) has also been established to provide additional detailed documents about the Organizational Realignment Initiative along with other information related to the overall research enterprise transformation.
- ORD also welcomes feedback and questions. We have set up two ways for you to provide feedback and questions.
  - The central email address for all research enterprise activities is [VHAORDResearchEntFb@va.gov](mailto:VHAORDResearchEntFb@va.gov)
  - Anonymous comments or questions can be submitted via a form at <https://tinyurl.com/ResearchEnterpriseFeedback>
- Please help communicate this information by disseminating it to your local investigators, research employees, and other interested individuals.
- ORD looks forward to working with the VA research community as we seek to further build on the tradition and strengths it has in advancing the health and care of Veterans and the nation.

--Rachel B. Ramoni, DMC, ScD



This year's theme for National VA Research Week is "Science in Service of Veterans." The VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) encourages Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, VA employees, and other stakeholders to learn more about VA research's significant role in improving Veterans' health and well-being.

Planned resources and activities include:

- A new series of VA Research videos to share with internal and external stakeholders.
- A comprehensive toolkit for VA public affairs officers.
- A virtual symposium to feature presentations by award-winning VA researchers.

Internal stakeholders may access the Research Week toolkit on the [ORD share point site](#). External partners can access the Research Week materials on our [website](#).

**The virtual Research Week Symposium will be held on May 20, 2-4 pm ET on WebEx.** In observance of National VA Research Week, ORD is hosting a symposium to highlight the work of four groundbreaking VA investigators. Each has been recognized for outstanding research that has advanced knowledge in their fields and improved the lives of Veterans and others. VA Chief Research and Development Officer Dr. Rachel Ramoni will open the symposium. Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks will give brief welcoming remarks.

The awardees to be featured are Dr. Leigh Hochberg, VA Providence Health Care System; Dr. Louis Dell'Italia, Birmingham VA Health Care System; Dr. Donna Washington, Greater Los Angeles Health Care System; and Dr. Robert Bonomo, Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center.

You can [register for this event here](#).

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## Research Supplement RFAs Announced

The VA-ORD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group is excited to announce two research supplement RFAs:

1. A reissuance of the mentored research supplements, “ORD Research Supplements to promote Diversity (RD-22-029)”
2. And a new RFA, to support collaborative partnerships between VA Merit Award investigators and investigators at non-VA institutions, including, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions, “Research Supplements to Promote Collaborations to Enhance Diversity in VA Research (RD-22-030)”

Applications will be due **August 1, 2022**, through eRA commons. Both RFAs can be found at:

<https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm>

An informational webinar for both supplements will be held on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, from 2-3 p.m. EDT. For more information, please contact Carol Fowler, PhD, ([Carol.Fowler@va.gov](mailto:Carol.Fowler@va.gov)).

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## Dr. Roltsch selected as LVA Fellow

Scientific Portfolio Manager Mark Roltsch, PhD, has been selected as a 2022 Leadership (LVA) Fellow. For grades GS 13-15 & Title 38 equivalents, LVA is a one-year long program consisting of four one-week instructor-led in-person sessions with a focus on strategic leadership, leading change, unleashing talent, and leading VA. Congratulations, Mark, for being selected for this highly competitive and rewarding program.

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## How do I get funded?

### Second Annual Proposal Writing Workshop for Underrepresented VA Early Career Investigators Announced

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) is committed to excellence in health care discovery and innovation and to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce. ORD seeks to empower talented early career scientists from underrepresented backgrounds, to achieve their full potential at VA research facilities. The second annual ORD Proposal Writing Workshop will be held Wednesday, July 27, 2022, and Thursday, July 28, 2021, from approximately 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day.

This will be a two-day workshop focused on providing information and guidance for early-career scientists on submitting VA Merit and CDA applications. After the Workshop: Each workshop participant will be paired with a funded VA investigator advisor. While this advisor will not be a formal mentor, they will be available to answer questions about how to obtain VA funding, provide feedback and/or examples of successful applications. Advisors will be paired with potential applicants based on their area of expertise and ORD service of interest.

How can you help?

- Conducting workshop sessions on grantsmanship, accessing VA data, clinical trials, animal research, etc.
- Volunteer to become an advisor

For more information please contact Vetisha L. McClair, PhD ([Vetisha.mcclair@va.gov](mailto:Vetisha.mcclair@va.gov)).

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## Spring Review Round Questions?

With the start of the Spring Review Round, investigators are reminded any questions should be directed to the Scientific Review Manager, Michael Burgio, PhD. ([Michael.Burgio@va.gov](mailto:Michael.Burgio@va.gov)).

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## Meet and Greet Us

Given the increase in travel, CSRD attendance at meetings also is increasing. Please note the following where CSRD will be represented:

- Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting, April 28-30, New Orleans
- Conversation focused on advancing health and well-being outcomes for Veterans and their families regarding hurdles and concerns pertaining to advance of psychedelics treatment, sponsored by Bob Woodruff Foundation and the George W. Bush Institute, May 11, Dallas, TX
- The American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology (ASCP) 2022 Annual Meeting, May 31 - June 03, Scottsdale, AZ
- 45th Annual Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) Scientific Meeting, June 25 - 29, Orlando, FL

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## CSRD DMC Seeking Members

The CSRD Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) continues to seek new members as terms for current members expire. The DMC includes two panels -- Psychiatric, Behavioral Health and Neurologic Disorders (PBN) and Medical/Surgical -- and members are needed for both. The DMC panels provide data and safety monitoring for projects funded by CSRD. They are independent multidisciplinary groups, whose members have collectively – through research, education, training, experience, and expertise – the requisite knowledge pertinent to the subject areas to be reviewed. Qualifications for membership include funding history and clinical trial experience, academic position of associate professor or above, a solid publications record, and review experience. Members are needed from the following areas: cardiology, pulmonology, oncology, urology, neurology, internal medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and biostatistics. For more information, please contact DMC Manager Tamara Paine, DBA. ([Tamara.Paine@va.gov](mailto:Tamara.Paine@va.gov)).

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## Have a Newsletter Question?

If you have a question about this newsletter or its content, or if you know of someone who would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Lucindia Shouse ([Lucindia.Shouse@va.gov](mailto:Lucindia.Shouse@va.gov)).

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## CSRD Contact Information

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Scientific Portfolio/Program Managers: [BLR&D and CSR&D Contact Information \(va.gov\)](#)