



VA National Quality Scholars Fellowship Program

Post-Residency/ Pre and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Positions

Advancing the Scholarship of Improving Health Care

Purpose

To develop the next generation of leaders in the research, teaching, and administration of health care quality improvement. An important goal of the program is to develop individuals who will be able to advance the scientific basis of health care improvement.

VA Quality Scholars (VAQS) will be able to:

- Design and lead efforts for quality improvement.
- Teach health professionals about health care improvement and quality.
- Design and conduct research or improvement projects and publish results in peer-reviewed literature.
- Develop new knowledge for the ongoing improvement of the quality and value of health care services.
- Apply quality improvement and health services and outcomes research methods.
- Learn successful approaches for grant writing and funding.

Program

Established in 1999, the VAQS Fellowship Program is comprised of 8 training sites throughout the United States and an affiliate site in Toronto, Canada. Each of the fellowship sites is located at a VA medical center and partnered with an academic medical center and university. Mentoring is a critical component of this two-year program which links individualized training at each site to a state-of-the-art curriculum developed by the VAQS Coordinating Center in Houston, Texas. Each year, three positions are available at each site. Stipends and fringe benefits are provided by the VA.

Curriculum Components

- Weekly interactive video conferences
- Participation in national practicum opportunities
- Fellow improvement projects
- Clinical and education activities
- National conference
- Course work (MPH or equivalent degree tuition covered at some sites)

Requirements

Physicians: Applicants must have completed ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship training, be board-eligible or board-certified, and have an active, unrestricted U.S. license to practice. International medical graduates must also fulfill visa and ECFMG requirements.

Nurses: Accepted into a DNP or PhD program at one of the five affiliated schools of nursing or completed DNP or PhD; active, unrestricted license to practice; and U. S. citizenship.

Contact Information

Physician Contact

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Nurse Contact

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Participating Institutions

Atlanta VAMC, Emory Univ. SOM and Morehouse SOM
Birmingham VAMC, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Iowa City VAMC, University of Iowa
San Francisco VAMC, University of California, San Francisco

Greater Los Angeles VAMC, Univ. of CA, Los Angeles
Cleveland VAMC, Case Western Reserve University
Nashville VAMC, Vanderbilt University
White River Junction VAMC, Dartmouth

Fellows' Prior Publications (partial list)

- Lee S, Lindquist K, Segal M, Covinsky K. Development and Validation of a Prognostic Index for 4-Year Mortality in Older Adults. JAMA 2006; 295: 801-8.
- Pierluissi E, Fischer M, Campbell A, Landefeld S. Discussion of Medical Errors in Morbidity and Mortality Conferences. JAMA 2003; 290:2838-42.
- Steinman M, Landefeld S, Gonzales R. Predictors of Broad-Spectrum Antibiotic Prescribing for Acute Respiratory Tract Infection in Adult Primary Care. JAMA. 2003; 289:719-725.
- Popescu I, Vaughan Sarrazin M, Rosenthal G. Certificate of need regulations and the use of coronary revascularization after acute myocardial infarction. JAMA. 2006; 295:2141-7.
- Caudill-Slosberg M, Weeks W. Case Study: Identifying Potential Problems at the Human/Technical Interface in Complex Clinical Systems. Am J Med Quality. 2005; 20(6): 353-7.
- Ogrinc G, Splaine M, Foster T, Regan-Smith M, Batalden P. Exploring and Embracing Complexity in a Distance-Learning Curriculum for Physicians. Acad Med. 2003; 78(3): 280-5.
- Kallianpur A, Poehling K, Dittus R. High Time for Actions. N Eng J Med. 2001; 344(1): 48-51.
- Wall R, Ely E, Elasy T, Dittus R, Foss J, Wilkerson K, Speroff T. Using Real Time Process measurements to Reduce Catheter Related Bloodstream Infections in the Intensive Care Unit. Quality and Safety in Health Care. 2005; 14:295-302.
- Roumie C, Grogan E, Falbe W, Awad J, Speroff T, Dittus R, Elasy T. A Three-part Intervention to Change the Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy in Response to new Evidence. Ann Intern Med. 2004; 141(2): 118-25.
- Palonen KP, Allison JJ, Heudebert GR, Willett LL, Kiefe CI, Wall TC, Houston TK. Measuring resident physicians' performance of preventive care. Comparing chart review with patient survey. J Gen Intern Med. 2006; 21:226-30.
- Boyd CM, Ritchie CS, Tipton EF, Studenski SA, Wieland D. From Bedside to Bench: summary from the AGS/National Institute on Aging Research Conference on Comorbidity and Multiple Morbidity in Older Adults. Aging Clin Exp Res. 2008; 20:181-8.
- Tomolo A, Caron A, Perz ML, Fultz T, Aron DC. The outcomes card. Development of a systems-based

practice educational tool. J Gen Intern Med. 2005; 20:769-71.

- Slavin L, Best MA, Aron DC. Gone but not forgotten: the search for the lost surgical specimens: application of quality improvement techniques in reducing medical error. Qual Manag Health Care. 2001; 10:45-53.

Fellow Improvement Project Topics

- "An Electronic Medical Record Intervention Increased Nursing Home Advance Directive Orders and Documentation"
- "Survey of Emergency Drug Kit (EDK) Use in Hospice Organizations"
- "Use of Novel Information Tools for Improving the Management of Chronic Diseases"
- "Preventive Services for Women: How is the Veterans Administration Doing?"
- "Lack of an Association Between Diabetes and an Increased Risk of In-Hospital Death Among Patients with Pneumonia"
- "Dispersion of Care and Cardiovascular Outcomes: Does More Matter?"
- "Clinical Inertia: A Common Barrier to Changing Provider Prescribing Behavior"
- "Improving Diabetic Hyperglycemia Using Integrated Disease Management"
- "Effectiveness of Assertive Community Treatment for Homeless Mental Illness"

Alumni

Graduates of the program have continued their outstanding work in advancing the scholarship of health care improvement in the following professional positions:

- VA HSR&D Career Development Awards
- Quality Management Officers in VA Networks
- White House Fellow
- Director of Quality Improvement for the Army
- Senior leaders in public health organizations
- Medical Directors (Nursing Home, Palliative Care Units, Hospital Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Outpatient Clinics)
- Faculty and fellowship positions at academic medical centers across the nation