ABOUT HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

- Health services researchers play a vital role in shaping the delivery of health care by studying access, cost, and quality. They seek to improve health care by coming up with ways to assess and improve how the system functions.

- Research on health care delivery examines new models of providing care to patients. This includes studying ways to share information with patients and health care providers, the interactions between patients and clinicians, and the economics of health care.

- Many VA researchers work with health care informatics, finding ways to use technology to benefit both science and communications, including looking at how the Internet can be used for patient communication and telehealth.

- Health services researchers also look at new ways to accomplish research itself, including reducing the time it takes to conduct research projects and have the results adopted into everyday care.

VA RESEARCH ON HEALTH CARE DELIVERY: OVERVIEW

- VA’s Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) works to identify and evaluate innovative strategies that lead to accessible, high quality, cost-effective care for Veterans and the nation. This work includes special centers and programs to promote innovative and collaborative research.

- VA investigators are involved in a number of initiatives focused on improving access to care for Veterans, as well as improving the quality of the care Veterans receive. These initiatives include implementing programs outside of hospitals and clinics, getting Veterans and providers involved in improving access to care, and identifying the best strategies for effective treatments.

- VA’s National Center for Patient Safety works to reduce and prevent inadvertent harm to Veterans as a result of their care. This center develops and provides practical tools to improve patient safety in areas such as teamwork and simulated training, safe patient handling and movement, and patient fall prevention and management.

- Patient Aligned Care Teams have transformed how primary care is delivered in VA. These integrated teams aim to deliver care that is patient-driven, team-based, comprehensive, and coordinated. Researchers have looked at how this transformation has been implemented in VA, and how PACTs have influenced Veterans’ health.

- VA researchers have led the way in exploring how care can be enhanced by the use of telephone, Internet, videoconferencing, email, and text messaging.

- VA is quickening the pace at which research is conducted and the results translated into everyday care. One new approach is point-of-care research, in which patients take part in studies as part of their usual care routine, without the need for special study visits.

- VA invests significant resources in supporting health care informatics and “big data” research. Among other goals, VA researchers hope to use population informatics to improve the diagnosis and care of cancer through automated surveillance and enhanced data access for clinical providers.

SELECTED MILESTONES AND MAJOR EVENTS

1960 – Opened VA’s first HSR&D center in Fort Howard, Md.


2008 – Created VINCI, a high-performance computing environment offering researchers access to comprehensive VHA data.
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