



# CMC3 is Now CINCCCH

The HSR&D Center of Excellence (COE) formerly known as Center for Management of Complex Chronic Care (CMC3) has recently received funding to be one of 19 HSR&D Centers of Innovations (COINs). Our new name is the Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare (CINCCCH).

Our Center mission is to improve healthcare and outcomes for Veterans with complex chronic illnesses across the medical neighborhood. Veterans with complex needs include those with multiple chronic illnesses (e.g., patients with neurological conditions and secondary conditions) or those with one or more conditions who have complicated social situations and/or use multiple healthcare systems (e.g.,

Medicare and VA). To improve care and outcomes for Veterans with these needs, CINCCCH investigators will engage in activities that enhance the provision of patient-centered, evidence-based care and identify new effective models of healthcare delivery. CINCCCH's focused areas of research include:

- Patient-centered care (delivery, communication, decision making).
- Neurologic conditions (spinal cord injury and disorders (SCI&D), traumatic brain injury (TBI), Parkinson's disease (PD)).
- Value in care for patients with complex chronic care needs (specialty care, dual healthcare system use).



CINCCCH

Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare VA HSR&D COIN

## CINCCCH Goals

The CINCCCH Goals are the nucleus of our Center. Activities all revolve around our Goals.

### GOAL 1: Improving Patient Centeredness through New Models of Care.

The purpose of this goal is to identify and assess strategies employing technology, new systems of care, and innovative approaches to the provider-patient relationship for enhanced patient-centered outcomes.

**GOAL 2: Improving Care and Care Delivery for Veterans with Neurological Conditions.** The focus of this goal will be to improve management of secondary con-

ditions associated with neurological conditions; improve access to and coordination of care; and improve healthcare practice in prevention and control of infections.

### GOAL 3 TITLE: Innovative Research to Improve Specialty Care Delivery and Optimize Quality, Outcomes and Values for Patients with Complex Chronic Conditions.

Center investigators also conduct research aimed at improving specialty care delivery and optimizing quality, outcomes and value of care for Veterans with complex chronic conditions.

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### CINCCCH Partners

- Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT)
- SCI/D Service
- VISN 12
- VA-CASE, Veterans Engineering Resource Center, VISN 11
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service (PM&R)
- VHA Kidney Dialysis Program
- Telehealth Services

## Dr. Fran Weaver Receives Senior Research Career Scientist Award

**Dr. Fran Weaver**, Director of CINCCH, and Professor within the Public Health Sciences, Stritch School of Medicine, Loyola University, Chicago was recently awarded a Senior Level Research Career Scientist Award. This prestigious award comes with seven years of funding and is renewable indefinitely.

Dr. Weaver's major research interests include patient outcomes and quality of care with a particular interest in neurologic diseases. Her other primary interest relates to implementation of best practices to improve patient care.

Currently, Dr. Weaver is principal investigator of a study to develop and test a patient inventory that captures patient preferences and life circumstances that can affect health care decisions.

Senior level awards represent a very exclusive group within HSR&D. They recognize VA health services researchers who are international leaders in their field. Awards are for seven years and are renewable indefinitely.

She also is PI on a study to determine the long term costs of deep brain stimulation in Parkinson's disease. She leads a workgroup for the Veterans and Consumers Health Information Office (V/CHIO) to create a research infrastructure to define and facilitate researchers use of VA's personal health record called "My HealtheVet." awardees.

With over 135 publications and more than 91 funded grants in her career, Dr. Weaver serves as mentor to career development, post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. She serves on the editorial boards of Evaluation and the Health Professions and FORUM, and is a member of the steering committee for the RR&D COE on SCI and Secondary Conditions at the Bronx, NY VA.

## Dr. Charlesnika Evans and Dr. Bridget Smith to lead SCI QUERI

Drs. Charlesnika Evans and Bridget Smith were recently appointed Co-Directors of the Spinal Cord Injury Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (SCI QUERI) Center. Drs. Smith and Evans, both accomplished SCI QUERI investigators, bring tremendous research experience to this position.

SCI QUERI was previously led by Dr. Frances Weaver since the initial launch in 1998 as part of a system-wide transformation aimed at improving the quality of healthcare for Veterans. Dr. Weaver looks forward to re-

maining involved in SCI QUERI as an investigator and consultant.



Dr. Evans



Dr. Smith

SCI QUERI works closely with the Office of SCI/D Services and the SCI/D System of Care to improve the lives of Veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D). The central mission of SCI QUERI is to promote health, independence, functioning, quality of life, and productivity of Veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), through the implementation of evidence-based findings.

For more information, visit the SCI QUERI Website: <http://www.queri.research.va.gov/sci>

## Bharati Prasad, MD Receives Career Development Award

**Bharati Prasad, MD, MS**, a pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine staff physician at Jesse Brown VAMC, has been awarded a new Clinical Science Research and Development Career Development Award (CDA2) project. Dr. Prasad's academic appointment is an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her mentors are Frances M. Weaver PhD, David W. Carley, PhD, and Samuel T. Kuna, MD.

The title of her project is: Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) and hypertension are both common and severe problems in African American individuals. CPAP treatment of OSA is effective in controlling hypertension in patients with OSA, but has not been studied in African Americans, a high-risk population with potentially large health gains. This is an area of significance because poorly controlled hypertension leads to progression of CVD and morbidity in this population. By identifying CPAP treatment-

response and relevant moderators of this response in African Americans with hypertension and OSA, targeted treatment of OSA can be implemented, reducing the excess burden of CVD. This project will determine the relative magnitude of hypertension response to CPAP treatment in African American and European American Veterans with hypertension and newly diagnosed OSA (**specific aim 1**). Additionally, changes in pathogenic biomarkers that are responsive to CPAP treatment will also be quantified. Further, the role of excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS), a potentially important moderator of treatment response, will be examined in these two patient populations (**specific aim 2**). Finally, outcomes assessment will be adjusted for the anticipated biological heterogeneity among self-identified African Americans by measuring genetic ancestry (**exploratory aim**). This award will provide the foundation for the goals of this research program to reduce CVD disparity in diverse populations with targeted treatment of OSA.

## Dr. Karen Saban Elected as a Fellow of the American Heart Assn.

**Dr. Karen Saban** was recently elected as a Fellow of the American Heart Association (FAHA). Dr. Saban was elected to this prestigious fellowship by the American Heart Association (AHA) Council of Cardiovascular Nursing and Stroke in recognition of her outstanding contributions related to the prevention of cardiovascular disease and stroke in vulnerable populations. In addition to her exceptional research, she was recently appointed as Vice Chair of the International Stroke Nursing Conference Planning Committee and is an active member of the AHA Chicago Multicultural Committee.

Dr. Saban will be honored at the AHA Scientific Sessions taking place in Dallas in November.

## Dr. Sherri LaVela Nominated for Champion of Change Award

**Dr. Sherri L. LaVela** was recently nominated as a White House Champion of Change for Public Health and Prevention. In September 2013, Dr. LaVela received a letter of appreciation from Kathleen Sebelius, the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, thanking her for the critical role she plays as a public health and prevention leader. White House Champions of Change represent the nation's leaders in moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one that is focused on wellness and prevention. Dr. LaVela's work to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities in persons with disabilities and rehabilitation populations, in particular, was noted.

## Alex Malhiot the Artist who Created the New CINCCCH Logo



A newly approved COIN needed a new name and a new logo. In August the center held a logo contest for the new COIN logo design. Alex Malhiot submitted the logo to the above right to win the center wide contest.

A total of five logos were submitted. The selection of the winner involved a week long voting process of all of center employees. Alex's design was selected and



Alex Malhiot and Dr. Weaver

announced at the September All Staff Meeting (see picture). Alex says his design is, "Inspired by the Veterans, providers, and VA healthcare system, hence the three rings all connected and revolving around each other. I wanted to communicate that in a simple, clean, and colorful design. We congratulate Alex on his creativity!"

## Our New Post-Doctoral Fellows

**Sandra L Kletzel, PhD**, graduated from Loyola University Chicago in 2013 with a degree in neuroscience. A main focus of her graduate school research was on the development of an animal model of dopamine agonist medication-induced impulse control disorders in a rodent model of Parkinson's disease. This work has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (under the name of Sandra Rokosik). During her graduate school research, Dr. Kletzel gained an interest in clinical issues and treatment interventions for non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease, such as cognitive impairment. In her post-doctoral fellowship at CINCCCH, Dr. Kletzel is working with her mentors, Drs. Theresa Pape and Frances Weaver to develop a project to profile cognitive impairment in Veterans with Parkinson's disease and to investigate the neurobiological mechanisms that may be driving this cognitive impairment. Such knowledge will be informative to future research aimed at developing treatment intervention strategies for this non-motor symptom of Parkinson's disease.



Dr. Sandra Kletzel & Dr. Abigail Silva

**Abigail Silva, PhD**, received her doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. Her dissertation entitled "Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disparities along the Breast Cancer Treatment Continuum" contributes to our understanding of treatment disparities by providing insight into: 1) the role of treatment recommendation and acceptance; and 2) the influence of tumor, sociocultural, and institutional factors. The results were presented at two national conferences and are being prepared for publication. This work was supported by the NCI Cancer Education & Career Development Training Program (5R25 CA057699) and the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Post-Baccalaureate Training in Disparities Research Grant (KG111385). Dr. Silva's dissertation work ignited her interest in health services research and the delivery of evidence-based cancer care and treatment. She will be working with mentors Drs. Denise Hynes and Elizabeth Tarlov to assess disparities in cancer care, treatment, and outcomes in our Veteran population and examine patient, provider, and health system factors that explain these differences. Identifying factors that are amenable to interventions is critical to reducing health disparities.

## Amy Herrold, PhD Receives the NIDRR Switzer Award

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**Dr. Amy Herrold**, a recent PhD Post-doc Fellow at our center was recently awarded the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) Switzer Merit Fellowship Award. This is a peer reviewed competitive award and was established to provide support to qualified individuals to engage in scientific research relating to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

The Merit Fellowships are awarded to individuals who are in earlier stages of their research career, (less than seven years' experience), with advanced professional training or research experience in independent studies directly related to disability and rehabilitation.

The Fellowship covers a 12-month period, and provides a stipend for research-related expenses. Awards are made to individuals only and require a full-time commitment.

The purpose of Dr. Herrold's NIDRR Switzer Award is to examine repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation as a treatment for alcohol use disorder among people with co-occurring mild traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol use disorder.

*Dr. Herrold has developed projects which characterize alcohol craving and alcohol use outcomes among Veterans with co-occurring mild TBI, post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol use disorder.*

**We're on the web**  
[www.cmc3.research.va.gov](http://www.cmc3.research.va.gov)

## People Behind the Scenes— Our Wonderful Project People

**Lauren Bailey**, received a Mathematics BS from UC San Diego, Statistics MS from San Diego State University and is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Biostatistics PhD student at UI Chicago. Lauren is a Statistician investigating fracture in SCI patients, and Part D Medicare policy for Dr. Carbone, and Dr. Stroupe, respectively.

**Tiffany Drinkwater**, has her undergrad degree in Community Health-Health Administration and a Minor in Pre-Medicine from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She works with Dr. Sherri LaVela and is the Project Manager for the Center for the Evaluation of Practices and Experiences of Patient-Centered Care (CEPEP).

**Bella Etingen** received her BS/MA in psychology from Loyola University Chicago (LUC), and is currently working on her PhD in Applied Psychology at LUC. She serves as the Project Manager for Dr. Sherri LaVela, and coordinates efforts for multiple pro-

jects. Bella is also actively involved in the ongoing research for the Center for the Evaluation of Practices and Experiences of Patient-Centered Care (CEPEP), lead by Dr. LaVela [PCE 13 -002].

**Dolores Ippolito**, received her BS in biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her MPH in epidemiology from the University of Illinois-Chicago. She has been with the Center since 1994 and currently serves as the Administrative Coordinator for SCI QUERI and Project Manager for IIR 08-124 and RRP 12-561 assisting with IRB and administrative issues.

**Rachael Martinez**, received her BA in Psychology from the University of Michigan and her PhD in Applied Social Psychology from Loyola University Chicago. She currently serves as a project manager for various projects under Drs. Bridget Smith, Frances Weaver, Kevin Stroupe, and Neil Jordan. She also provides statistical analy-

sis expertise and qualitative data coding for research projects.

**Thea Rogers** has undergrad degrees in Biology and Sociology from Illinois Wesleyan University. She also has a Masters of Public Health from UIC in Epidemiology. Thea is the project manager for three of Marylou Guihan's projects, three of Bridget Smith's projects and one project for Kevin Stroupe. She also provides data analysis support for Drs Guihan, Smith and Stroupe.

### CENTER OF INNOVATION FOR COMPLEX CHRONIC HEALTHCARE

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