Drs. Saul Weiner and Alan Schwartz Book Receives PROSE Award

_Listening for What Matters: Avoiding Contextual Errors in Health Care_, a book authored by Dr. Saul Weiner and Dr. Alan Schwartz (Oxford University Press) has received the 2017 PROSE Award for Excellence in Biological and Life Sciences. The PROSE Awards are given by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) to recognize the best in scholarly publishing. 508 submissions from leading publication houses competed in five categories for the 2017 awards.

The book describes over a decade of research Dr. Weiner’s team has conducted, primarily with funding from HSR&D, exploring what happens when physicians get the science right (i.e. the care is “evidence based”) but the care plan wrong (e.g. prescribing a medication a patient can’t afford when a less costly alternative is available), a phenomenon he has termed “contextual error.” The work is based on sending actors on hundreds of unannounced standardized patient visits into clinical practices, and also on over a thousand visits in which real patients audio record their interactions with their physicians.

Since its release, Drs. Weiner and Schwartz have participated in 14 radio interviews, both on regional and national stations, including National Public Radio. The book is written for an educated lay audience.

Dr. Weiner continues the work detailed in _Listening for What Matters_ with current funding from VISN 12 and HSR&D through a quality improvement initiative and an implementation study to prevent contextual errors, across six VHA facilities in Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Cleveland and Los Angeles.

Dr. Neil Jordan Receives Deans Teaching Award

CINCCH investigator and Northwestern University faculty member Neil Jordan, PhD received the 2015-2016 Dean’s Teaching Award for the Health Sciences Integrated PhD Program (HSIP) in the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Based on voting from all HSIP students, Dr. Jordan was chosen for this award to acknowledge his contributions as the instructor for the doctoral colloquium for first-year HSIP students. “I am honored to have received the Dean’s Teaching Award. One of our goals for HSIP students is to gain critical skills via their coursework, and being chosen for this award suggests that my teaching style is having a favorable impact on the learning experience for HSIP students.” Dr. Jordan also directs HSIP, which began in 2012 and offers students concentrations in health services and outcomes research, healthcare quality and patient safety, health and biomedical informatics, and social sciences and health. Dr. Jordan is a health services researcher and health economist who has been a CINCCH investigator since 2005.
We are very pleased to announce that CINCCH Investigators are part of two DoD grants awarded.

**Title: Development of the Wheelchair in-Seat Activity Tracker (WiSAT)**

Stephen Springle, PhD, PT (PI), **Marylou Guihan, PhD, co-Investigator**

Pressure ulcers (PrUs) in Veterans with spinal cord injury (SCI) reflect tissue damage arising from lack of sensation and immobility. PrU prevention strategies emphasize regular offloading of pressure. Guidelines recommend that persons perform pressure reliefs for up to 30 seconds every 15-30 minutes. Data have shown that wheelchair users perform significantly fewer pressure reliefs than are recommended. The objective of this project is to develop and evaluate the WiSAT (Wheelchair in-Seat Activity Tracker), a system which provides real-time feedback to participants on their weight shifting and pressure relief via a smart phone app. We will evaluate the efficacy of passive (reports) vs. active (reminders) feedback on frequency of participants’ in-seat movement. In years 3&4 of the study, Drs. Guihan and Parachuri will recruit Veteran participants at Hines (n=38), who will be followed for 5 months (2-week baseline, 4-weeks passive feedback only and 3.5 months of passive vs. active feedback).

**Title: Perspectives and Preferences for Weight Management after Spinal Cord Injury**

Sherri LaVela PhD, PI

This is a three year grant awarded by the Department of Defense office of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. Individuals with SCI report that overweight/obesity impacts adjustment to disability, and limits function, participation, and quality of life. Because mobility limitations reduce daily energy expenditure, individuals with chronic SCI need to participate in weight management programs that include physical activity and nutrition management to treat and prevent obesity/overweight. Large proportions of people with SCI continue to experience barriers to weight management pointing to the need for development of tailored educational tools to facilitate weight management. Dr. LaVela’s study will enhance understanding of patients and caregivers needs and preferences for weight management strategies which is anticipated to improve patient health, well-being, comorbid conditions, function, and quality of life. Understanding the barriers, facilitators and preferences for weight management as perceived by persons with SCI and their caregivers will provide the knowledge to develop a person-centered educational tool.

VA Community Care

Congratulations to **Dr. Denise Hynes** on approval of her Concept Paper!

**Title: “Access, Costs and Effectiveness (ACE) Evaluation of Care in the Community Using a Multi-Methods Approach”,** focused on the Implementation and Evaluation of VA’s new national program to expand community care networks. The project will be led by Research Career Scientist, **Denise Hynes, PhD, RN** and coinvestigators **Howard Gordon, MD, Bridget Smith, PhD, Kevin Stroupe, PhD, Elizabeth Tarlov, PhD, RN, and Fran Weaver, PhD**, based at the Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare, and Maria Souden, PhD, based at the VA Information Resource Center. During this project Dr. Hynes’ team will be partnering with the VA national Office of Community Care to plan the implementation of the new program over 18 months. In addition, the team was selected to apply for the phase 2 evaluation funding.
CINCCH Investigators are part of two Innovation Awards that were selected through the seed-spark opportunity. Congratulations!

Title: **Improving Support for Informal Caregivers of Veterans on Home Dialysis**

**PI: Michael Fischer, MD**

Although home dialysis is the optimal way to deliver dialysis compared to in-center dialysis, it is largely underutilized. Informal caregivers play an essential role in patients’ adoption and sustainment of home dialysis. However, caregivers experience considerable challenges in assisting patients on home dialysis including time, financial burdens, and burnout. Little is known about strategies to address these concerns. The proposed innovation project aims to identify ways or interventions to support informal caregivers of Veterans with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) on home dialysis. To demonstrate which interventions are potentially effective and feasible to implement, we need to systematically solicit input from informal caregivers and patients on home dialysis as well as VA providers and leadership stakeholders.

Title: **E-DYNAMIC- Enhanced Dynamic Reminder System**

**PI: Nicholas Burge PharmD**

**Co-Investigators: Talar Markosian PhD, Holly Kramer MD, David Leehey MD, Ivan Pacold MD, Kevin Stroupe PhD**

The E-DYNAMIC- Enhanced Dynamic Reminder System will enhance the existing lipid management clinical reminder system (CRS) for primary care providers treating patients with non-dialysis dependent chronic kidney disease (CKD). The project will link the CRS with the existing VISN12 Data Warehouse PACT risk calculator, a dynamic VA web-site that tracks cardiovascular disease risk and statin use in clinic patients. E-DYNAMIC will not only alert providers to the current guideline-recommend risk score for determination of statin usage and dosage but also provide real-time feedback on adherence to therapy, something that has been shown to be sub-optimal in many patients receiving statin therapy. The Spark award will be used to develop the E-DYNAMIC system at Hines VA Hospital and to assess acceptability among selected providers. As a next step, funding will be sought to conduct a multi-site trial to assess the impact of the E-DYNAMIC system on medication adherence and outcomes.

**Dr. Sherri La Vela Appointed to the PVA Education Foundation Board of Directors**

Dr. Sherri LaVela has been appointed to the PVA Education Foundation Board of Directors. She was selected by the PVA Corporate Officers based on her experience and exceptional research work in the field of spinal cord injury. Dr. LaVela’s appointment is for three years, beginning with an annual meeting in Washington DC in April 2017.

The PVA Education Foundation was founded in 1986 to fund innovative educational projects that enhance the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injury or disease, and increase the effectiveness of health professionals working in this field.
Patients often have circumstances and behaviors impacting their ability to manage their health and health care. Previous studies have shown that incorporating these contextual factors into plans of care improve patient outcomes and costs. Grouping the types of contextual factors into a list of domains could help providers identify contextual factors. Investigators conducted focus groups with patients and interviews with providers at two VA medical centers and four CBOCs to validate a previously-published list of domains. Based on qualitative analysis of the focus groups and interviews, investigators validated and revised the list providing a new taxonomy for providers to consider when planning care.

Dr. Margaret Fitzpatrick, One of Five Finalists in SHEA Epi Competition

Dr. Margaret Fitzpatrick is currently an Advanced Fellow in Health Services Research & Development at CINCCH and was recently selected as one of five finalists for the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) Epi Competition. This national competition awards a small pilot grant to junior investigators in the fields of infection prevention and healthcare epidemiology. Dr. Fitzpatrick presented her proposal, “Antifungal Stewardship Strategies among Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America Research Network Facilities,” on March 30, 2017 at the SHEA Spring Conference in St. Louis, MO. Although she was not awarded the grant, the oral presentation session was very well-attended and Dr. Fitzpatrick received numerous compliments on her research proposal.

Carol Durczak Retires, a Sad Day for CINCCH

March 31, 2017 was a bittersweet day because it was Carol Durczak’s last day as Administrative Officer of CINCCH. Carol served as the AO for the Hines HSR&D Center for 28 years and was a VA employee for 38 years. Prior to being our AO, Carol had a number of colorful positions at Hines including Colon Cancer Screening Coordinator. A luncheon was planned in her honor a few days prior to her departure. More than 50 people gathered to wish Carol well in the next chapter of her life. Stories and laughter filled the room. An oversized card signed by staff with hopes and wishes for Carol’s happiness was presented to her along with a plaque signed by the Hospital Director thanking her for her service and dedication to VA. We will miss Carol greatly, she was the font of knowledge for what to do, how to do it and when to do it. We wish Carol Durczak the very best of everything in her retirement.
CINCCH Kudos Corner

Swetha Ramanathan has been accepted into the PhD program in Public Health and Epidemiology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Congratulations Swetha!

Our Recent Publications


