



Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

The [Optimizing Function and Independence QUERI](#), at the Durham VA Health Services Research Center of Innovation, leverages scientifically-supported quality improvement methods to implement evidence-based practices rapidly into routine care and improve the timeliness, quality, and safety of care delivered to Veterans and caregivers. The three Function QUERI programs address gaps in current clinical care for Veterans at risk for functional decline and disability.

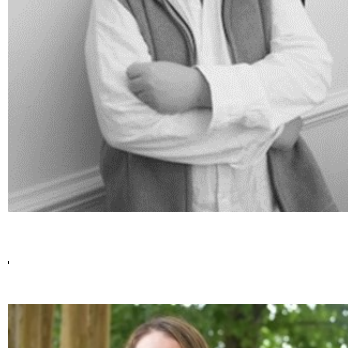
- STRIDE focuses on prevention of disability related to immobility during hospitalization through a supervised walking program.
- iHI-FIVES focuses on promoting functional ability and avoiding nursing home placement through caregiver training at the time of referral for home care services.
- Group Physical Therapy (PT) for Knee Osteoarthritis focuses on improving function in patients with symptomatic knee osteoarthritis through expanded access to PT in a group-based model.

July 2018 Edition:

- CONNECT Spotlight
- Upcoming Site Visits
- iHI-FIVES Caregiver Training: Input from National Program
- Launch of Function QUERI SharePoint
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CONNECT Spotlight

Meet the Function QUERI facilitators:



Josh D'adolf, MSW, LICSW

Josh is a Clinical Social Worker who has been with the VA since 1999. Josh joined the Function QUERI team from the Caregiver Support Program, in support of iHI-FIVES and other QUERI programs. He earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology from Rutgers University and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He is an Implementation Specialist and CONNECT facilitator on the team. Josh enjoys the beach and spending time with his family.



Kasey Decosimo, MPH

Kasey serves as the project coordinator for iHI-FIVES as well as one of the CONNECT facilitators. Kasey joined the Function QUERI team in August 2017, and has previously served in various practice and research roles in local and state public health. She earned a master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in environmental studies at the same institution. Kasey is a volunteer therapy dog handler with her corgi, Charlie, and they visit the Durham VA Community Living Center and hospice unit.



Katina Robinson, MS, CES

Katina leads the data collection efforts for both the STRIDE and iHI-FIVES projects, serves as the project coordinator of the implementation core, and is a CONNECT facilitator as well. Katina has been working at the Durham VA since July 2013. She earned her Master's degree in Exercise Science with a concentration in health promotion at California University of PA and her bachelor's degree from Marshall University in Huntington, WV (GO HERD). Katina enjoys spending time with her husband and 1-year old daughter, Paige. In her limited spare time, she enjoys playing in a women's flag football league.

CONNECT for STRIDE

CONNECT is a **bundle** of interaction oriented activities used to strengthen the lines of communication between staff as they roll out a new clinical program. The interactive session includes engaging role-plays and short stories that help depict real life scenarios where staff can be more mindful about how they communicate with other colleagues.

To date, the Function QUERI team has delivered CONNECT at 2 VAMCs: The Robley Rex VAMC in Louisville, KY and the Central Iowa VA health care system in Des Moines, IA. A total of 95 VA staff have matriculated through the CONNECT sessions. After participating in the in-person classes, Function QUERI staff provide follow-up sessions to help further engage staff in the use of the learned connection strategies.

CONNECT for iHI-FIVES

Since early spring, the Function QUERI CONNECT facilitators have been busy adapting the CONNECT materials for the iHI-FIVES program. Adaptations are now complete. An initial pilot session was conducted on June 27th with Function staff for feedback on session content. The team is excited to deploy the new material to the new iHI-FIVES CONNECT sites: John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, MO and Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Hines, IL.

CONNECT at a Glance

What is CONNECT training?

CONNECT is a 3-part training to improve daily communication and information flow between providers in healthcare teams during the rollout of a new clinical program.

CONNECT and Learn

All participants learn enhanced interaction strategies to assist with information flow


Individual Mapping

Front-line staff discuss improving communication among colleagues during mapping exercise


Group to Group Mapping

Managers discuss strategies to improve in department communication in mapping exercise


Benefits of CONNECT?



Improved **CONNECTIVITY** among staff



Improved **PATIENT** care



Promotes **COGNITIVE DIVERSITY** among staff

What CONNECT participants are saying...

“CONNECT has led to a cultural shift at our VA. Our staff are more connected.”

-VA CONNECT participant

Upcoming Site Visits

Site visits are scheduled for:

The iHI-FIVES team will visit the Puget Sound, WA VA including the American Lake and Seattle campus from August 13-15, and the Poplar Bluff, MO VA from September 24-26.

The STRIDE team will visit the Hines, IL VA from September 4-6, and the Philadelphia, PA VA from October 23-24.

Thank you to the sites for hosting us on our upcoming trips!

iHI-FIVES Caregiver Training: Input from National Program

A big Function QUERI "thank you!" to Michelle Stefanelli and her Peer Mentors!

Michelle Stefanelli, National Program Manager for the VA Caregiver Support Peer Mentoring Program, and her team of Caregiver Peer Mentors helped the iHI-FIVES team by reviewing our library of optional, narrated PowerPoint presentations. They provided feedback and suggestions, ensuring that the presentations are relevant and accessible to caregivers in need of additional information.

The iHI-FIVES curriculum includes six optional presentations that caregivers can view from home, at their leisure. The topics were selected through input from local caregivers based on interest or need for additional information. The Function QUERI team collaborated with providers from Mental Health, Primary Care, and GRECC at the Durham VA Medical Center to create and record:

- Managing Dementia Behaviors: ABC for Caregivers
- Improving Your Sleep
- Medication Management
- Planning for the Future
- Relaxation
- Understanding Anger

Also, a shout out to Kasey Decosimo on the Durham Function QUERI team! Kasey helped to facilitate the recording of these optional presentations by acquiring and learning the editing software, as well as orchestrating the session recordings with VA collaborators, and our own Josh D'adolf from Function QUERI.

Launch of Function QUERI SharePoint

Function QUERI recently launched a SharePoint site! STRIDE materials are now available to the sites: https://spsites.cdw.va.gov/sites/QUERI_FUNCTION/STRIDE/default.aspx.

Website access:

If you don't have access when you click on the link, you will be prompted to request access. Please list **STRIDE** and your **site name** in the request. If you are having issues accessing the site, please let Ashley.Choate@va.gov know or call 919-286-0411 (extension 175737).

Purpose of SharePoint:

- To disseminate program information to sites interested in implementing the STRIDE program.
- To provide STRIDE sites a platform to share key implementation strategies, best practices, and lessons learned.

Site Contents:

- [Program Overview & FAQ](#): information about the STRIDE program and FAQs.
- [Implementation](#): clinical package materials for implementing the STRIDE program.

Please contact Ashley.Choate@va.gov to review the Getting Started in SharePoint Flyer, or if you would like more information.

Presentations/Publications/Articles

A sampling from May 2018 – July 2018:

- The Function QUERI STRIDE mobility program was featured in the May 2018 issue of [QUERI: Veterans' Perspective](#).
- Courtney Van Houtven's article: "Bringing Invisible Partners in Care out of the Shadows: Employment effects of informal care provision in Europe and implications for the United States" was published in the Journal Health Services Research on May 8, 2018.
- Courtney Van Houtven met with The Elizabeth Dole Foundation Staff, VA Caregivers, VA providers, and Caregiver Support Coordinators at the Campaign for Inclusive Care Summit in Washington, DC on May 24, 2018.
- Courtney Van Houtven was the discussant of "Public Spending on Acute and Long-Term Care for Alzheimer's and Related Dementias" at the 7th Conference of the American Society of Health Economists in Atlanta, GA on June 13, 2018.
- Courtney Van Houtven gave a presentation on "Risk taking attitudes: role of scan results and level of cognitive impairment" at the 7th Conference of the American Society of Health Economists in Atlanta, GA on June 13, 2018.
- Courtney Van Houtven gave a workshop presentation on "Integrating Health Care and Social Services for People with Serious Illness (Caregiver Support)" at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine workshop on July 19, 2018.

We are currently recruiting sites for the Function QUERI iHI-FIVES Program-

Do you know of any VAs that would like to participate in caregiver training programs?

If interested in a caregiver training program contact:

Courtney Van Houtven: Courtney.VanHoutven@va.gov

Acknowledgements

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Please visit www.queri.research.va.gov for more information on the national QUERI program.

If you would like more information about Function QUERI, please contact the program coordinator: Elizabeth.Mahanna@va.gov