



[The Optimizing Function and Independence QUERI](#), based at the Durham VA Center of Innovation to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Change (ADAPT), 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 2019 Edition

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Welcome to Function QUERI!

Cassie Meyer and Matthew Tucker have recently joined the Function QUERI team! They will be assisting with patient and staff data collection, and Cassie will be working on communications items as well. Welcome!

Cassie attended East Carolina University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Sociology. Her coursework focused on quantitative data collection and statistical analysis and she is currently learning how to code in SQL and R.

Matthew is a recent graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he received his Bachelor's degree in Public Policy and Anthropology. He is a Durham native, and happy to be back home!

STRIDE Site Graduations and Milestones

Congratulations on the following milestones for STRIDE!

- The first four STRIDE sites: Atlanta VA Health Care System, Central Iowa VA Health Care System in Des Moines, IA, Minneapolis VA Health Care System, and the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville, KY have all officially graduated from the Function QUERI program! Thanks so much for all your hard work and congratulations!
- The STRIDE Toolkit, a step by step guide on implementing STRIDE, is complete and ready to disseminate to new programs. Thank you to all who contributed. Please contact our Project Coordinator at Elizabeth.Mahanna@va.gov if you would like a copy.
- The national STRIDE Diffusion Network is live! The first two quarterly calls with 10-13 STRIDE teams across the country provided a forum for information sharing on best practices, tips, program troubleshooting, and community building. The next call will be in October. If you would like to join the calls, please contact Ashley.Choate@va.gov.
- The VHA Diffusion of Excellence Team from Washington, D.C. came to Durham on July 17 & 18 to meet with the Durham STRIDE team and others involved in our four Gold Status Practices in Durham:



From left: Ashley Choate (Function QUERI Implementation Specialist), Carl McCoy (Analyst VHA Diffusion of Excellence), Brandolyn White (HSR&D Project Coordinator), George Jackson (Function QUERI Co-Investigator), Nicki Hastings (Function QUERI Principal Investigator), Blake Henderson (Acting Director VHA Diffusion of Excellence), Katrina Young (Atlas Research), Heather King (HSR&D Investigator), Melissa Smigelsky (HSR&D Investigator), Dana Schmucker (Atlas Research), Crystal Zipperer (Atlas Research).

iHI-FIVES Updates

- iHI-FIVES and Group PT participated in the 2019 VHA Diffusion of Excellence Shark Tank competition and iHI-FIVES also participated in the VHA Innovation Ecosystem Diffusion Marketplace.
- We began the next round of iHI-FIVES caregiver training classes at the Durham VA Healthcare System in early July.
- The John J. Pershing VAMC in Poplar Bluff, MO deployed their innovative "stacked class" model of all four iHI-FIVES classes in a single day of caregiver training.
- The Phoenix VA Healthcare System is piloting the newly developed iHI-FIVES toolkit.
- The iHI-FIVES team at the Tennessee Valley VA Healthcare System in Nashville, TN was mentioned in the GRECC June 2019 newsletter.

Dole Foundation Event

Understanding the Caregiver's Journey

On July 9, 2019 Duke University hosted members of the Function QUERI team, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Durham VA leaders, caregivers, Veteran representatives, and VA Central Office executive staff to provide input on the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's [Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map](#). This event is part of an ongoing effort to document the military caregiver journey and its impact on caregiver psychological, financial, and social well-being.

After the event, some of our Function QUERI investigators met with Lisa Pape (VA Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officer, Care Management, Social Work, & Chaplain Services) to share highlights and progress with our Function QUERI project.



From left: Nathan Boucher (HSR&D researcher), George Jackson (Function QUERI co-investigator), Courtney Van Houtven (iHI-FIVES principal investigator), Mr. Paul Crews (Director, Durham VA), Dr. Christine Emler (Deputy Chief of Staff, Durham VA), Nina Sperber (Function QUERI co-investigator), Josh D'adolf (iHI-FIVES).

Presentations/Publications/Articles

A sampling from April 2019 – July 2019:

- Megan Shepherd-Banigan's paper "Adaptation and Implementation of a Family Caregiver Skills Training Program: from Single Site RCT to Multisite Pragmatic Intervention" was accepted in the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* on May 7, 2019.
- Nathan Boucher's abstract "Improving Caregiver Skills through Multi-Site Adaptation and Implementation of a Single-Site Randomized Controlled Trial" was accepted on May 10, 2019 for the National Association for Healthcare Quality Annual Meeting to be held from September 16-18, 2019 in Phoenix, Arizona.
- The Function QUERI team submitted a paper, "A Path to Achieving High Quality Team-Based Care for People with Serious Illness," about the use of CONNECT, a team-based intervention, and caregiving. The paper appeared in *Health Affairs* June 2019 issue and is available here: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05486>
- Courtney Van Houtven, Nicki Hastings, and Kelli Allen gave a briefing on Function QUERI programs to Ms. Lisa Pape, VA Deputy Chief of Patient Care Services Officer, and Care Management, Social Work, & Chaplain Services on July 9, 2019 in Durham, NC.
- Nicki Hastings highlighted Function QUERI during a July 31, 2019 presentation in Washington, D.C. on "Implementing Evidence-Based Practices & Programs" at the Cultivating Promising Geriatric Mental Health Practices in VHA conference sponsored by the Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention.
- Nina Sperber's paper "Implementing a Mandated Program Across a Regional Healthcare System: A Rapid Qualitative Assessment to Evaluate Early Implementation Strategies" was published in the July/September 2019 issue of *Quality Management in Healthcare*.

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

If you wish to be removed from this mailing, please contact: Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov.