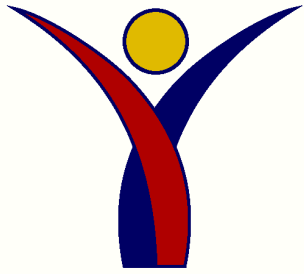


July 2021



Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome, New Team Members!



Sara Webb, MS
Group PT Project
Coordinator



Teri Malo, PhD
Function QUERI
Implementation
Scientist

Sara Webb will be the project coordinator for the Group Physical Therapy project. She is originally from Greenville, South Carolina and attended Clemson University for her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Previously, she has lived in Vietnam as a volunteer, served with Arkansas GardenCorps (a state AmeriCorps program), and studied in Germany. Sara's grandfather was a WWII Veteran, her uncle was a Vietnam Veteran, and her cousin served in Afghanistan; she is excited to be joining a team that will improve function and independence in Veterans across the nation.

Teri Malo joined Function QUERI's Implementation Core as an Implementation Scientist. She earned her PhD in public health from the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL and moved to Chapel Hill, NC to complete her postdoctoral training. Teri's father is a Vietnam Veteran, which inspired her to pursue this opportunity to work on projects aimed at improving Veterans' function and independence. Outside of work, Teri enjoys exploring North Carolina's historic sites and parks.

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Rapid Response
Evaluation of Veteran &
Employee COVID-19
Vaccine**

**STRIDE Launches First
Cohort**

**Caregivers FIRST Delivery
in Spanish**

Group PT Gearing Up

Rapid Response Evaluation of Veteran & Employee COVID-19 Vaccination

From January to June 2021, Function QUERI participated in a rapid evaluation of the Veteran and employee experience and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines. This project was a collaboration among the VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI), National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and three Rapid Response Teams (RRT-3) representing CARRIAGE, Function, and Bridge QUERI Programs. The Function QUERI Rapid Response Team has concluded data collection and analysis on an evaluation of staff attitudes, hesitancy, and responses to educational efforts around COVID-19 vaccination. We identified a spectrum of vaccination decision-making types amongst staff and made recommendations for future vaccination campaigns to activate staff toward vaccination. We are preparing a manuscript and final report for our partners on our findings, which we anticipate will inform future efforts.





STRIDE Launches First Cohort

STRIDE launched its first cohort on June 1st with enrollment of four sites: Tucson (VISN 22), Salt Lake City (VISN 19), Fargo (VISN 23), Sioux Falls (VISN 23). As a part of the launch process, these four sites participated in a Welcome Call to kick things off and had their first Monthly Office Hours Call where they were able to compare notes on their implementation journeys thus far. The Durham STRIDE team continues to work closely with stakeholders, such as Safe Patient Handling & Mobility and the Cerner Transition Group, to ensure STRIDE programming aligns with other early mobility initiatives and planned transitions across the enterprise as sites continue to enroll in Function QUERI to launch STRIDE programs.

We are currently offering rolling enrollment for sites interested in joining Function QUERI to implement a STRIDE program, and joining is easy: simply submit a participation agreement signed by a local point of contact and the facility's medical center director! Please reach out to Cassie Meyer and Ashley Choate at STRIDE@va.gov.



-  Implementation in-progress
-  Successfully implemented

Caregivers FIRST Delivery in Spanish

Three years ago, Function QUERI heard from many VA Caregiver Support Coordinators (CSC) that there was a need for more educational classes in Spanish. One CSC told the Function QUERI team, “we have not only parents but also caregivers who are monolingual, and they are thirsting for more information in Spanish to help them.”

Last year, the Caregivers FIRST team went to work with a federal language contractor to translate our revised curriculum into Spanish, including the class PowerPoint presentations, Facilitator’s Guide, Caregiver Workbook, and recorded optional topic presentations.

At the South Texas Veterans Health Care System, social worker and Function QUERI “1.0” partner, Claudia Ruiz Esparza, LCSW, volunteered to review the newly translated materials in advance of leading her facility’s first class completely in Spanish. Ms. Ruiz Esparza assisted in reviewing the translations and made refinements based on her expertise, not only as a clinician, but also as a previous class facilitator to a variety of family caregiver audiences in English.

Recently, the South Texas team offered the Caregivers FIRST classes virtually in Spanish. Seven caregivers enrolled with four attending all four core classes.

As one caregiver participant said, “The class was very informative and very educational, going over all the services that the VA offers to the caregivers is of great value to be better equipped and gives us more confidence to face daily challenges with our Veterans...Getting to know other caregivers was so refreshing and giving us a platform to share our stories was in many ways healing.”



Ms. Ruiz Esparza shared one key lesson learned from her experience, “facilitating a group in the Spanish language requires more time — it can be helpful to budget classes for two hours each to be able to cover all the content.” A BIG thank you to Ms. Ruiz Esparza and the South Texas team for their review and feedback! As a result, the Spanish curriculum is stronger than ever. Sites can access the Spanish Caregivers FIRST curriculum on our [SharePoint site](#).

Group PT Gearing Up!

Since April, the Group Physical Therapy for Knee Osteoarthritis (Group PT) program has onboarded two new staff members, including Project Coordinator Sara Webb, and an Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) fellow, **Dr. Zachary Rethorn, PT, DPT**, who will be providing clinical expertise!

Together, the team is gearing up to start recruiting sites in the fall, with the overall goal to enroll 16 sites as part of Function QUERI 2.0. If your site is interested in participating with Function QUERI to offer Group PT at your facility, please contact Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov.



Dr. Zachary Rethorn

INTERESTED IN ENROLLING ?

- **STRIDE** - inpatient supervised walking program
 - Enrolling now for Fall 2021
 - Contact STRIDE@va.gov
- **Caregivers FIRST** - caregiver skills training program
 - Will begin enrolling Spring 2022
 - Contact CaregiversFIRST@va.gov
- **Group PT** - group physical therapy program
 - Will begin enrolling in the Fall 2021
 - Contact Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS?

- STRIDE: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/the-stride-program>
- Caregivers FIRST: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/caregivers-first>
- Group PT: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/group-physical-therapy-for-knee-oa>

FOLLOW US!

Twitter: [@DurhamADAPT](https://twitter.com/DurhamADAPT)

Web: <https://durham.hsrp.research.va.gov>



Function QUERI
Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs