

JULY 2022 EDITION



Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Welcoming new Mentee, Brystana Kaufman!

The Function QUERI Mentoring Core accelerates the adoption of evidence-based practices in VA by recruiting outstanding, diverse fellows and junior faculty and providing opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills and experience in applying implementation science. Brystana Kaufman, PhD, is a health services researcher focused on improving the value of care for older adults, particularly those with multiple chronic conditions. She received her M.Sc. in Public Health and PhD in Health Policy and Management from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC, Chapel Hill. One of her activities during her two-year training is to lead an analysis and publication of a STRIDE 1.0 business case analysis.



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Caregivers FIRST a Semifinalist for VHA's Shark Tank Competition

Caregivers FIRST was recently named a 2022 VHA Shark Tank Competition Semifinalist! The VHA Shark Tank Competition identifies field-developed innovations that promote positive outcomes and improved experiences for Veterans and employees. The competition spotlights dedicated VHA employees who are addressing some of the toughest challenges across VHA and provides a platform to bring exposure from all levels of leadership.

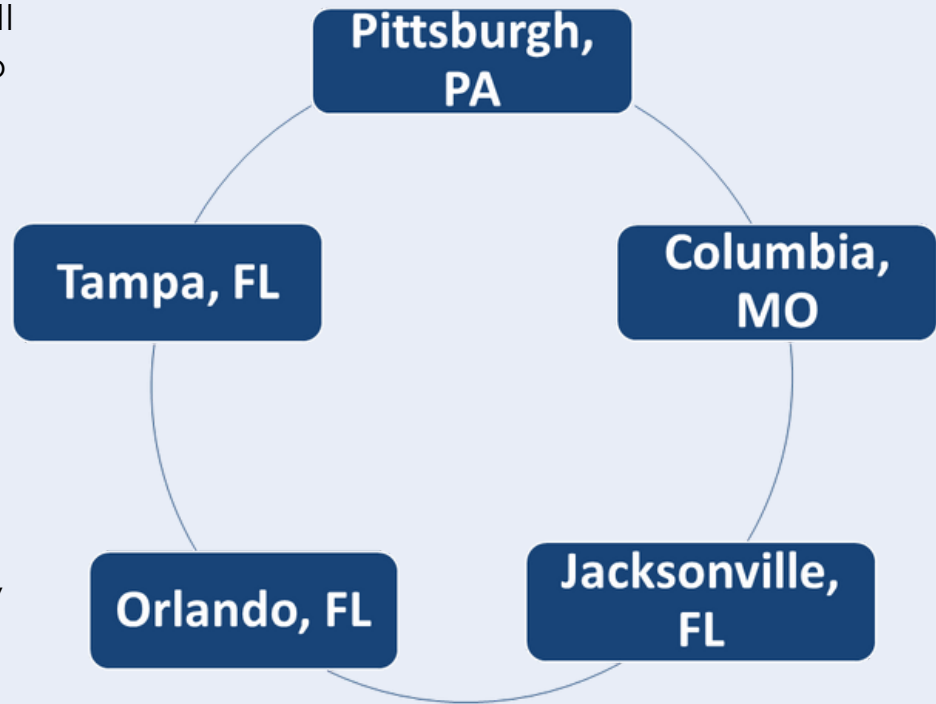
Caregivers FIRST is one of 87 Semifinalists who will undergo a second round of evaluation by Program Office leaders and the national Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) team. The Diffusion of Excellence leadership team will announce the Finalists who will pitch their practices in the Competition by mid-August. For more information and a list of semifinalists:

<https://marketplace.va.gov/competitions/shark-tank>.

Group Physical Therapy for Knee Osteoarthritis (Group PT) Launches First Cohort!



The first Group PT cohort has officially launched! Each site will modify the program so it is a best fit for their facility. For example, some sites are planning to deliver telehealth Group PT while other sites will delivery in-person classes only. We are excited to work with these five VAs over the next 12 months as they implement Group PT for Knee OA at their facilities.



You may be wondering what is expected of sites participating in the Group Physical Therapy for Knee Osteoarthritis (Group PT) program as part of Function QUERI. Over the course of 12 months, the Durham VA team will provide sites with resources, guidance, technical assistance, and opportunities for networking. In return, sites are expected to:

- ✓ Provide clinical staff for program delivery
- ✓ Participate in periodic surveys and interviews
- ✓ Use templates in the EHR to track patient progress
- ✓ Join monthly office hour calls with other participating sites

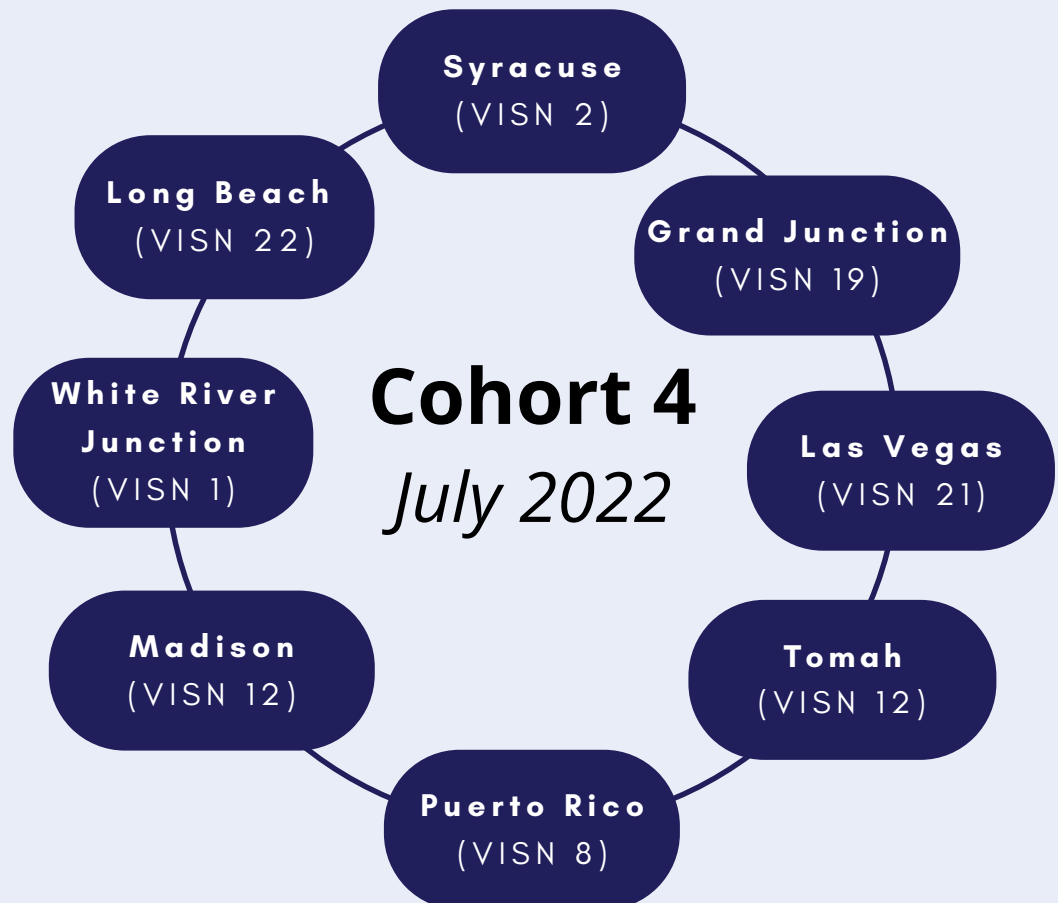
We are actively recruiting for our second cohort of sites to implement Group PT! Are you interested in implementing Group PT at your facility? Want to learn more? Do you have other questions? Contact **Caitlin Sullivan**, Implementation Specialist, at Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov, or the Group PT team at GroupPT@va.gov.

STRIDE's New Mobility Bundle Work

Function QUERI's Rapid Response Team has partnered with the **Office of Nursing Services (ONS)** and **Safe Patient Handling & Mobility (SPHM)** to conduct a formative assessment of mobility in the VA. This work aims to build a foundational understanding of inpatient mobility program offerings, target populations, and workflow across the enterprise, with an ultimate goal of developing a **Mobility Bundle**, or decision tool + documentation package in years to come. This assessment will be completed with contributions from teams at 10-12 selected VA facilities that have implemented STRIDE programs within the last several years. This could be you - keep an eye out for a survey or interview invitation in your inbox!

Welcome, New STRIDE Teams!

The Function QUERI team has welcomed 8 new STRIDE teams to the STRIDE family! These sites span multiple VISNs, complexity levels, and staffing models, but all have a uniform goal - to offer a hospital walking program to their Veterans! **Cohort 4** sites launched at the beginning of **July** and will continue to work with the Function QUERI team for **10 months** on their implementation journeys.



Are you interested in joining Function QUERI to implement STRIDE at your facility? We offer rolling enrollment for interested sites and joining is easy: simply submit a participation agreement (shared by the Function QUERI team) signed by your facility's medical center director.

Please reach out to **Caitlin Kappler** at caitlin.kappler@va.gov with questions or to request an informational call.

Operational Partner Q&A

Caregivers FIRST

What's unique about Function QUERI is that we have developed strong stakeholder partnerships for each of our evidence-based practices. Caregivers FIRST is no exception and we credit our ability to spread this program nationally to the relationship we have with the VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP).

Leah Christensen, LCSW (left in photo with Dr. Courtney Van Houtven), is the national lead for the Program of General Caregiver Supports and Services at CSP. She answered a few of our questions about collaborating with Function QUERI.



How did you first hear about the Caregivers FIRST program?

I first learned of Caregivers FIRST when I was a VISN Lead, and the program was in its early pilot phase. The Caregiver Support Program staff who piloted it in our VISN, absolutely raved about the program. They noted how easy it was to access and implement, how it was unique from other offerings we had in place and the positive feedback they were hearing directly from caregivers.

How do you think Caregivers FIRST can address caregiver needs for support and training?

We selected Caregivers FIRST as a minimum standard for PGCSS for several reasons. One being the ease of use. The grab-and-go curriculum and implementation support provided by the Function QUERI team made it easy to implement across VA. Secondly, by implementing Caregivers FIRST as a minimum standard, we have been able to increase the variety of services and support offered at every facility. And finally, hearing from caregivers how much they appreciate and enjoy the Caregivers FIRST program made selecting it as a minimum standard an easy decision.

As an operational partner collaborating on an implementation evaluation, what has been the most rewarding?

What is most rewarding is hearing what an impact Caregivers FIRST is having on caregivers and how it is making a difference in their lives.

In terms of the implementation evaluation, the opportunity to collaborate with the Function QUERI team and leverage their subject matter expertise has been incredible. I appreciate the real time feedback about our efforts so we can adjust and meet the needs of the facilities.

This collaboration has really stretched my thinking about implementation efforts not just with Caregivers FIRST, but with other services and support as well. So, the benefits of this collaboration are truly far reaching.

**Leah Christensen, LCSW
NATIONAL LEAD, PROGRAM
OF GENERAL CAREGIVER
SUPPORTS AND SERVICES**

Noteworthy Pubs & Presentations

As part of Function QUERI's Rapid Response Team, Nina Sperber, PhD recently presented at a VA Cyberseminar on rapid data collection and analysis related to the COVID 19 vaccine with Veterans and employees. Link to recording:

https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/archives/video_archive.cfm?SessionID=5177&Seriesid=91

Courtney Van Houtven, PhD and the Function QUERI Principal Investigators shared how an electronic health record driven approach can help with recruitment in research for health systems that lack systematic ways to identify family caregivers. The authors compare two approaches and share policy changes in this paper:

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17825>



INTERESTED IN ENROLLING ?

- **STRIDE** - inpatient supervised walking program
 - Enrolling for fall 2022
 - Contact Caitlin.Kappler@va.gov
- **Group PT** - group physical therapy for knee OA program
 - Enrolling NOW for fall 2022!
 - 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>

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