Epilepsy
Centers of Excellence

Improving the health and well being of Veteran patients with epilepsy and other seizure disorders through the integration of clinical care, outreach, research and education.

Epilepsy Centers of Excellence

VA Health Care
Defining Excellence in the 21st Century

www.epilepsy.va.gov
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MISSION

*Improve the health and well-being of Veteran patients with epilepsy and other seizure disorders through integration of clinical care, outreach, research, and education.*
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

To my colleagues in the VA Epilepsy Centers of Excellence:

FY 2014 serves as testimony to the strength of the successful network we have built over the past six years to provide epilepsy services to Veterans. As you know, we have faced major challenges this year, which I will summarize below. In spite of those challenges, we have continued to improve the services and programs for veterans with epilepsy, their caregivers, and their families. I am grateful to all of you for your contributions.

The original funding appropriation for the Epilepsy Centers was six million per year and was to expire at the end of FY13. In 2011 we submitted a request for extension at increased annual funding of eight million to expand our highly effective and growing epilepsy program. We had demonstrated that the epilepsy care provided within the ECoE was not only sustainable and cost-effective but cost saving to the VA. In early 2014 we were informed that the 2011 request had been approved, and eight million dollars in funding was distributed to the Epilepsy Centers. The additional two million in funding was budgeted to fund an ECoE site in San Antonio, information systems and database support for our nation-wide clinical template, longitudinal epilepsy surveillance and quality improvement measures, training for providers to start treating psychogenic non-epileptic spells in conjunction with National Telemental Health, and increased national support and coordination. In December at the American Epilepsy Society Meeting we made our roadmap to accomplish these goals.

In March of 2014 we unfortunately learned that the funding approval request had not been appropriately executed at the National VA, and we were required to return to VA Central Office the additional two million dollars. VA Central Office provided a new funding agreement that established permanent ongoing funding of 6.1 million dollars for future fiscal years.

The withdrawal of funding and protracted discussions with VA Central Office had a major impact on our programs and our planning. Much of our year was spent dealing with administrative and financial challenges that it created including an arduous ECoE program audit that required our full attention and a hiring freeze beginning in March of 2014. As the year progressed this was against the backdrop of major challenges faced by the VA system as a whole. Many of our goals and programs were placed on hold while we were tasked with these administrative duties.

It is now a new year! We have made significant progress with our budget challenges, and can now focus on the positive outcome of the past year, which is that the Epilepsy Centers now have stable and long term funding. We have set our FY15 goals high with the intent of recovering lost time and moving forward as we expand the VA ECoE Network of providers and work towards our goal of reaching all veterans with epilepsy regardless of their geographic location. We look forward to being able to hire into our vacant positions when the hiring freeze is relinquished.

Our strength is our integrated national network of committed VA employees, veteran stakeholders, and epilepsy advocacy groups who create a mission and vision that set the stage for excellence. All of us bring our individual strengths and each and every site has made significant contributions. Together we will continue to grow and expand even beyond what we had imagined possible when we began.

Over the last year we have said goodbye to Dr. Robert Ruff, the National Director of Neurology, Dr. Rick Hrachovey the Southwest Regional Director, and Ellen Matthiesen the Southwest Regional Administrative Director. We are grateful to them and their work. We await appointment of a new Director of Neurology.
and are indebted to Dr. Glenn Graham for his support of the program in his role as Deputy Director of Neurology.

Although the success of our program is a group effort, without the skill and steadfast devotion of Ryan Rieger, our National Administrative Director, we would not be where we are today. He has brought brilliance and outstanding reserve to the ECoE. Despite formidable obstacles, Ryan continues to provide steady and highly strategic navigation for our program. I am so grateful for his work.

This marks my last year serving as the National Director. My intent was to lead our program though the funding renewal necessary after the original five year appropriation. It is sublimely delightful to acknowledge that we are here and the time has come. I will be working closely with Dr. Paul Rutecki as he transitions to being our new National Director. It has been a privilege and an honor to lead our group and I am touched by the trust and faith you placed in me. I am extremely proud and aware of the creativity, collaboration, and hard work that went into creating the ECoE network. This is a beautiful piece of work we have done. We have created an integrated national epilepsy care network where there was none. We did it, yes we did!

Karen L. Parko, M.D.

Karen L. Parko, M.D.
INTRODUCTION

In 2008 under Public Law S. 2162, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) set upon its mission to revolutionize services for the Veterans afflicted by epilepsy and other seizure disorders. The VA founded the Epilepsy Centers of Excellence (ECoE), establishing 16 sites that are linked to form 4 regional centers. The ECoE seek to provide the best possible epilepsy care to Veterans throughout the United States with state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic services. Our goal is to deliver the highest quality of ongoing medical care to Veterans suffering from epilepsy. We also seek to promote outreach and educational efforts for both patients and their physicians in order to further the understanding of this chronic condition. The ECoE offers a range of services in both the outpatient and inpatient realms. The ECoE provides outpatient epilepsy clinics with a staff of neurology sub-specialists. From these clinics, patients can be directed to the most advanced testing methods for the evaluation of epilepsy, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), electroencephalography (EEG), and video monitoring. For those patients that require more intensive testing or attention, the ECoE also provide inpatient units for examining certain seizure types more closely, changing medications in a monitored setting, and presurgical evaluation. The epilepsy centers are also linked with the Polytrauma Centers to increase ability to mutually follow Veterans with moderate and severe traumatic brain injury that are at the greatest risk for post-traumatic epilepsy. The sites are developing protocols to identify Veterans with epilepsy and to develop referral networks to enable Veterans to obtain specialized treatment such as epilepsy surgery and advanced electro-diagnosis within the Veteran healthcare system.

If you are a Veteran with seizures and are interested in seeking services at one of the Epilepsy Centers, please inquire with your local VA primary care physician. This doctor will be able to determine if you might benefit from the services provided by ECoE and assist you with scheduling an appointment. You can also contact your local ECoE site directly for assistance in connecting to services. For more information please visit our website at www.epilepsy.va.gov.

NATIONAL ECoE PROGRAM GOALS

- Establishing a national system of care to all Veterans with Epilepsy, to function as a center of excellence in research, education, and clinical care activities in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy.
- Collaboratively develop a national consortium of providers with interest in treating epilepsy at VA healthcare facilities lacking an epilepsy center of excellence in order to ensure better access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, research, clinical care, and education for traumatic brain injury and epilepsy throughout the VA healthcare system.
- To collaborate with VA Polytrauma / TBI System of Care that provide research, education, and clinical care to Veteran patients with complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries.
- Utilizing national VA and other databases in order to inform providers and policy makers in VA Central Office about healthcare delivery and health policy decisions, conducting state-of-the-art research in Epilepsy, and implementing an informatics backbone to meet the above objectives.
- To ensure an affiliation with accredited medical schools, providing education and training in neurology, and the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy (including neurosurgery).
- Providing health professional education and training to nursing staff, medical students, house staff, fellows, and referring physicians, in order to deliver the highest quality of standard of care to Veterans with epilepsy.
FY14 NATIONAL GOALS

1) Outreach (increase Veterans reached)
   a. Patients - Regional Hub and Spoke further developed
   b. Providers - National VA Epilepsy Consortium

2) Database National Clinical implementation

3) Expand Telehealth, all modalities to all sites

4) Increase multidiscipline care and collaboration
   a. Mental Health, Nursing, EEG technologists, caregiver support

5) Administrative foundation building
   a. All sites have active AO involvement with regional lead
   b. By-laws

6) Promote multi-site collaborative research projects
FY15 NATIONAL GOALS

1) Clinical Care:
   a. Complete a white paper that assesses existing mental health epilepsy services that describes existing models of care across ECoE sites, gaps in care and offers recommendations for a potential health service intervention. **Steward: Hamid**
   b. Evaluate current safety/quality assurance ECoE and civilian EMU. **Stewards: Krumholz & Ozuna**
   c. Train individuals from each of the four regions in the CBT-informed therapy for PNES and establish formal psychotherapy clinics for patients with PNES and intractable epilepsy who are motivated to work with a therapist through the mentorship of Dr. LaFrance. **Steward: Hamid**
   d. Leverage technology to increase access to epilepsy/seizure specialized care with further development of Tele-epilepsy infrastructure, including Tele-EEG to increase reach within the VHA with an emphasis on the Southwest region to add more spoke sites and increase patient numbers while decreasing cost. **Stewards: Davis & Tran**
   e. Bringing Neuropace and Visualase into ECoE. **Steward: Rutecki**

2) Research:
   a. Facilitate collaboration in research through ECoE research workgroups and multi-site studies. **Steward: David**
   b. Change the EMU clinical database to research database repository. **Stewards: Towne & Benson**
   c. Develop and submit a letter of intent for a nationwide ECoE VA Cooperative Study ‘TBI and Psychogenic Seizures: Characterization and Treatment of a model Post-Traumatic Conversion Disorder’. **Stewards: Salinsky & LaFrance**

3) Education:
   a. Produce Practitioner DVD. **Steward: Rieger**
   b. Produce “my epilepsy story” patient DVD. **Steward: Rieger**
   d. Develop an advanced nurse epilepsy training curriculum. **Stewards: Ozuna**

4) Outreach:
   a. Assess potential clinically important interactions between AEDs and psychotropic drugs among Veterans with both epilepsy and mood disorders in an effort to identify potential interactions thereby reducing department cost and liability. **Stewards: Tran & Rehman**
   b. Review within the VHA epilepsy population on how psychotropic medication use may be affected by different AED’s. **Stewards: Tran & Rehman**
   c. Review national VHA data from past years in an effort to educate personnel on appropriate and frequent medication combinations. **Stewards: Tran & Rehman**

5) Program/Operational:
# CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

## Southwest
States Covered: California, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Hawaii, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Philippines
Linked Polytrauma Site: [Palo Alto](#) and [San Antonio](#)

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td><a href="#">San Francisco VAMC</a></td>
<td>(415) 379-5599</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Los Angeles</td>
<td><a href="#">Greater Los Angeles HCS</a></td>
<td>(310) 268-3595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td><a href="#">Michael E. DeBakey VAMC</a></td>
<td>(713) 794-8835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td><a href="#">Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital</a></td>
<td>(210) 617-5161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albuquerque</td>
<td><a href="#">New Mexico VAHCS</a></td>
<td>(505) 256-2752</td>
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## Northeast
States Covered: Virginia, W. Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maryland, and District of Columbia
Linked Polytrauma Site: [Richmond](#)

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<td>Baltimore</td>
<td><a href="#">VA Maryland HCS</a></td>
<td>(410) 605-7414</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td><a href="#">Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC</a></td>
<td>(804) 675-5000 x3734</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Haven</td>
<td><a href="#">VA Connecticut HCS</a></td>
<td>(203) 932-5711 x2420</td>
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## Northwest
Linked Polytrauma Site: [Minneapolis](#)

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<td>Madison</td>
<td><a href="#">William S. Middleton Memorial VA</a></td>
<td>(608) 256-1901 x17728</td>
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<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td><a href="#">Minneapolis VAMC</a></td>
<td>(612) 467-2047</td>
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<td>Portland</td>
<td><a href="#">Portland VAMC</a></td>
<td>(503) 220-8262 x58330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
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<td>(206) 277-4292</td>
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## Southeast
Linked Polytrauma Site: [Tampa](#)

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<td>Durham</td>
<td><a href="#">Durham VAMC</a></td>
<td>(919) 416-5982</td>
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<td>Miami</td>
<td><a href="#">Miami VAHCS</a></td>
<td>(305) 575-7000 x7008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td><a href="#">Malcom Randall VAMC</a></td>
<td>(352) 376-1611 x6818</td>
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<td>Tampa</td>
<td><a href="#">James A. Haley VAMC</a></td>
<td>(813) 972-2000 x5076</td>
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REGIONAL MAP

EPILEPSY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE REGIONAL MAP

NORTHWEST
1 MADISON
William S. Middleton
Memorial VA
2500 Overlook Tr.
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 256-1901 Ext. 17728

2 MINNEAPOLIS
Minneapolis VA HCS
One Veterans Dr.
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 467-4236

3 PORTLAND
Portland VAMC
3710 SW U.S. Veterans
Hospital Rd.
Portland, OR 97239
(503) 220-8262 Ext. 58330

4 SEATTLE
Puget Sound HCS
1660 S. Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108
(206) 277-4292

NORTHEAST
5 BALTIMORE
VA Maryland HCS
10 North Greene St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 605-7414

6 RICHMOND
Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC
1201 Broad Rock Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23249
(804) 755-5000 Ext. 3748

7 WEST HAVEN
VA Connecticut HCS
950 Campbell Ave.
West Haven, CT 06516
(203) 932-5711 Ext. 4724

SOUTHWEST
8 ALBUQUERQUE
New Mexico VA HCS
1501 San Pedro Dr. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
(505) 265-1711 Ext. 2752

9 HOUSTON
Michael E. DeBakey VAMC
2002 Holcombe Blvd.
Houston, TX 77030
(713) 794-8835

10 SAN ANTONIO
Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital
7400 Marcon Minter
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210) 617-5161

11 SAN FRANCISCO
San Francisco VAMC
4150 Clement St.
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 379-5599

12 WEST LOS ANGELES
VA Greater Los Angeles HCS
11301 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90073
(310) 268-3595

SOUTHEAST
13 DURHAM
Durham VAMC
508 Fulton St.
Durham, NC 27705
(919) 461-5982

14 GAINESVILLE
Malcolm Randall VAMC
1601 SW Archer Rd.
Gainesville, FL 32608
(352) 374-6082

15 MIAMI
Miami VA HCS
1201 NW 16th St.
Miami, FL 33125
(305) 575-7000 Ext. 7008

16 TAMPA
James A. Haley VAMC
10000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
(813) 972-7633

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DEFINITION OF CENTERS

ECoE sites and Regional Centers will be designated by the ECoE National Program as ECoE program sites or centers.

Each **ECoE** - referred to as an **ECoE site**

- Offers weekly specialty Clinics in Epilepsy (not seen within a general neurology clinic)
- Providers for these clinics are trained specifically in epilepsy care
- Meet criteria for a level IV NAEC designation OR are linked within their region and have a close working relationship with a level IV VA center
- Provide V-tel epilepsy consultation
- Provide epilepsy monitoring
- Have a single director (at least in name) that is an epileptologist
- Has a designated administrative support person (need not be full-time) that works within the ECoE and participates on a national level
- Participate in national ECoE initiatives and workgroups

Each **Region** - referred to as an **ECoE Regional Center**

- An established network covering all Veterans in their region with a specified pathway for referral of Veterans with epilepsy to a surgical center if needed
- Be able to see Veterans in a timely manner with EMU recording within 3 months of request
- Have at least one surgical center that is comparable to a NAEC level 4 center to include:
  1. Interdisciplinary and comprehensive diagnostic team approach
  2. Team to include epileptologists, neurosurgeon, neuropsychologists, nurse specialists, EEG technologists
  3. Offer complete evaluation for epilepsy surgery including Wada testing
  4. Offer neuropsychological and psychosocial treatment
  5. Offer specialized brain imaging
  6. Have fixed EMU beds that can provide VET to include: Intracranial electrode, functional cortical mapping, electrocorticography,
  7. Provide a broad range of surgical procedures for epilepsy
- Be involved in clinical trials
- Have a dedicated full time epilepsy AO who serves as part of the national team
- Has opportunities for specialized education in clinical epilepsy care

**Consortium Site**

- Applies to the National ECoE for site designation and is recognized locally and nationally as a ECoE consortium site
- Has a provider specifically trained in treating and managing epilepsy
- Is linked to the ECoE network and has established administrative pathway to refer patients to ECoE
- Provides ECoE epilepsy resources to Veterans
- Available to participate in collaborate research projects
- Participates in ECoE educational programs for clinical epilepsy care
- Can participate in national ECoE initiatives and workgroups
The National VA Epilepsy Consortium is a network of VA physicians, nurses, therapists, pharmacists, and other allied healthcare providers with interest and expertise in improving the health and well-being of Veteran patients with epilepsy and related seizure disorders through the integration of clinical care, education, and research across the VA healthcare system. All clinicians who serve Veterans with epilepsy and related seizure disorders (regardless of capacity) are invited and encouraged to register as a National VA Epilepsy Consortium Member. Membership is free and grants access to a variety of epilepsy educational resources and updates from the ECoE.
## INVENTORY OF SERVICES

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<td>Store &amp; Forward Remote EEG Reading</td>
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<td>On-site Therapy for PNES</td>
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<td>NTMHC Tele-NES Provided</td>
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</table>
**CLINIC WORKLOAD**

**Data Source: VSSC Encounter Cube**

Data collected using ECoE stop code 345 (in the primary or credit stop code position)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Outpatient Clinic</th>
<th>EEG</th>
<th>EMU</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unique Patients</td>
<td>Unduplicated Encounters</td>
<td>Unique Patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V01) (689) VA Connecticut HCS, CT</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V05) (512) Baltimore HCS, MD</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>155</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V06) (558) Durham, NC</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V06) (652) Richmond, VA</td>
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<td>744</td>
<td>328</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V08) (546) Miami, FL</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>445</td>
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<td>(V08) (573) Gainesville, FL</td>
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<td>700</td>
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<td>(V08) (673) Tampa, FL</td>
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<td>570</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V12) (607) Madison, WI</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>242</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V16) (580) Houston, TX</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1158</td>
<td>779</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V17) (671) San Antonio, TX</td>
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<td>849</td>
<td>557</td>
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<td>(V18) (501) Albuquerque, NM</td>
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<td>213</td>
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<td>(V20) (663) VA Puget Sound, WA</td>
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<td>602</td>
<td>121</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V22) (691) Greater Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td>596</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V23) (618) Minneapolis, MN</td>
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<td>475</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,016</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,216</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,280</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Unduplicated Encounters: a count of clinic stops made by patients where duplicates have been removed. A duplicate clinic stop occurs when a patient makes more than one of the same type of PRIMARY clinic stop at the same station on the same day. An encounter is a professional contact between a patient and a practitioner vested with primary responsibility for diagnosing, evaluating, and/or treating the patient's condition.

**Data Source: Self-Report**

Data collected locally at each ECoE site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>(V05) (512) Baltimore HCS, MD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V06) (558) Durham, NC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V06) (652) Richmond, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V08) (546) Miami, FL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V08) (573) Gainesville, FL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V08) (673) Tampa, FL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V12) (607) Madison, WI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V16) (580) Houston, TX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V17) (671) San Antonio, TX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V18) (501) Albuquerque, NM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V20) (648) Portland, OR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V20) (663) VA Puget Sound, WA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V21) (662) San Francisco, CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V22) (691) Greater Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td>(V23) (618) Minneapolis, MN</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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## TELEHEALTH CLINIC WORKLOAD

### Video TeleHealth Clinic Workload

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<th>Video TeleHealth Clinic Different Station</th>
<th>Telephone Clinic</th>
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<td>Unique Patients</td>
<td>Unduplicated Encounters</td>
<td>Unique Patients</td>
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<td>(V06) (558) Durham, NC</td>
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<td>(V06) (652) Richmond, VA</td>
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<td>(V08) (546) Miami, FL</td>
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<td>(V08) (573) Gainesville, FL</td>
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<td>(V16) (580) Houston, TX</td>
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<td><strong>548</strong></td>
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### eConsults, SCAN-ECHO, Store & Forward EEG Workload

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<th>eConsults</th>
<th>SCAN-ECHO</th>
<th>Store &amp; Forward EEG</th>
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<td>Unique Patients</td>
<td>Unduplicated Encounters</td>
<td>Unique Patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>(V01) (689) VA Connecticut HCS, CT</td>
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<td>(V08) (573) Gainesville, FL</td>
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<td>(V21) (662) San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>(V22) (691) Greater Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td><strong>188</strong></td>
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EMU DIAGNOSTIC DATABASE

Data Source: Self-Report, Data collected locally at each ECoE site

The aim of the FY14 EMU database capture was to assess elements of care and utilization provided across the network of ECoE’s. The Access database was updated from FY13 to reflect and separate all non-EMU long term monitoring provided through the ECoE’s. Each of the fourteen sites with EMU admissions collected information on the elements age, gender, & length of stay along with EMU classifications for each visit and cumulative visits (if appropriate) and primary and secondary diagnoses. The total number of epilepsy/seizure patient admissions was 705 with 646 being unique patient visits.

The median length of stay was 4-5 days with a minimum of 6 hours of EEG recording to a maximum of 21 days. Over all sites admissions totaled 3047 days with the 4-5 day stay most utilized.

Age groups ranged from 20-92 years with median ages from 50-59 and 87% of known gender patients being male.
Summary EMU classifications highlight the patterns most encountered over all EMUs. Classifications most observed were; localization related epilepsy with ictal EEG changes (19%), PNES (20%), and Inconclusive with no diagnostic events or IIEA but with subjective events (26%).

**EMU Cumulative Classifications**

Key classifications compared almost identically between years.

Discharges grouped to reflect general diagnostic categories show 25% of the admissions were found to have epileptiform activity. One-fifth of admissions were diagnosed with PNES. Inconclusive categories with no diagnostic events, w or w/o IIEA and/or subjective events with potential diagnostic value comprised 94% of that category with only 6% being uncategorized at the end of admission.

Non-EMU long term monitoring was categorized separately from the EMU admission data and represented on average, 18% of our long-term monitoring cases.

**Comparison of FY13 & FY14 EMU Classifications**

**Long-term Monitoring Cases both EMU and ICU**
VHA SEIZURE, EPILEPSY, OTHER EVENTS ENCOUNTERS

Unique Patients

Age Group Distributions

FY 12

11.9%

FY 13

12.5%

FY 14

13.2%

Gender Distributions

FY 12

6.8%

FY 13

7.0%

FY 14

7.4%

Algorithm: Data collected using ICD-09-CM codes: 345.xx Epilepsy, 780.3x Convulsion, 649.4x Epilepsy Complicating pregnancy, 780.02 Transient Alteration of Awareness, 780.09 Other Alteration of Consciousness

Data Source: VSSC Diagnosis Cube, VA inpatients or VA outpatients. Numbers rounded to the nearest one decimal digit for percentages. Uniques with unknown ages/genders are excluded from the analysis.
### VHA FY13 PATIENT COUNTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Epilepsy Patients, %</th>
<th>All VA Patients, %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Patients</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age &lt;45</td>
<td>10,112</td>
<td>968,167</td>
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<tr>
<td>45≤ Age&lt;65</td>
<td>36,331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age ≥ 65</td>
<td>34,995</td>
<td>2,803,705</td>
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<td>Males</td>
<td>75,525</td>
<td>5,269,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &lt;45</td>
<td>8,256</td>
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<td>45≤ Age&lt;65</td>
<td>32,964</td>
<td>1,780,525</td>
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<td>Age ≥ 65</td>
<td>34,305</td>
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<td>Females</td>
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<td>541,807</td>
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<td>Age &lt;45</td>
<td>1,856</td>
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<td>45≤ Age&lt;65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age ≥ 65</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>60,276</td>
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</table>

Epilepsy: Males 92.7%, Females 7.3%  
All VA: Males 90.7%, Females 9.3%

### OEF/OIF/OND PATIENT COUNTS

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<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>All Patients</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>131,324</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>4,108</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &lt;45</td>
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<td>407,534</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
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<td>45≤ Age&lt;65</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>116,496</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age ≥ 65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3,252</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>78,844</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age &lt;45</td>
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<td>80.9%</td>
</tr>
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<td>45≤ Age&lt;65</td>
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<td>14,828</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age ≥ 65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Epilepsy: Males 88.3%, Females 11.7%  
All VA: Males 87.0%, Females 13.0%

**Algorithm:** Patients prescribed at least thirty days of anti-epileptic drugs in FY13 cross matched with seizure diagnosis (ICD-09-CM 345.xx, 780.39) during FY11-FY13. Diagnoses data from EEG and LTM clinics were excluded. Estimated positive predictive value of 82.0% from chart review of 500 patients (95% confidence interval: 78.6% to 85.4%)  
**Data Sources:** Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW), VSSC Diagnosis Cube and Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM).  
**Numbers rounded to the nearest one decimal digit for percentages. Unknowns have been excluded from the analysis.**
Algorithm: Patients prescribed at least thirty days of anti-epileptic drugs in FY13 cross matched with seizure diagnosis (ICD-09-CM 345.xx, 780.39) during FY11-FY13. *Diagnoses data from EEG and LTM clinics were excluded. Estimated positive predictive value of 82.0% from chart review of 500 patients (95% confidence interval: 78.6% to 85.4%)* Data Sources: Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW), VSSC Diagnosis Cube and Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM). Numbers rounded to the nearest one decimal digit for percentages. *Unknowns have been excluded from the analysis.* 

*Rates based on counts less than 30 are statistically unstable.*
PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Beginning in December of 2012, ECoE released a nation-wide patient satisfaction survey in an effort to gauge the extent and ways in which our patients are satisfied by the outpatient clinical services provided by Epilepsy Center sites. Veterans were given the opportunity to anonymously complete the survey after clinical visits, in either a hard copy standard mail format or electronic online format.

This survey tested for several critical care components important to veterans: overall satisfaction, provider/patient communication, thorough explanation of condition and treatment, compassionate clinical experience, clinical availability, staff helpfulness, and promptly being seen upon arrival to clinic. Throughout FY14, 917 responses were received with West Haven bringing in nearly 20% of the survey results, while the Houston (15%), Seattle (14%), and Portland (9%) sites are also significantly represented. The response rate for FY14 rose by 41% compared to FY13 data. Using the 10,218 total unduplicated encounters in ECoE outpatient clinic as a denominator, the response rate is approximate 8.9%.

Provider Communication

Nearly 94% of veteran respondents felt their seizure providers treated them with compassion and understanding.

“Our experience with seizure clinic has been excellent. The doctors have been wonderful, competent, sensitive, and helpful.”

89.19% of respondents felt their epilepsy/seizure healthcare provider gave enough information on their condition and treatment.

Access and Promptness

Utilizing a patient-centered healthcare model, our ECoE sites continue to foster a trusting and collaborative relationship between providers and patients.

“The doctors and nurses were helpful, knowledgeable and answered all questions patiently.”

“This visit with Dr. was the BEST treatment I have ever received both from the VA since 1999 and the private sector. He took the time to actually review my chart which dates back to 1999. He asked questions I understood. He allowed me to describe my concerns without being cut off or being treated in a condescending manner.”
83.92% felt epilepsy center staff was helpful with setting up appointments, medication refills, or questions.

“I can’t imagine how I could have been better treated. Thank you!”

Overall Satisfaction

Q2 I am satisfied with the medical care I receive in epilepsy/seizure clinic.

Answered: 914

The most significant finding is the overall rate of patient satisfaction, reporting that nearly **ninety-three percent** of respondents are satisfied with their epilepsy healthcare across the sixteen ECoE sites. This represents a 1% increase from FY13 patient responses. Satisfied veterans are healthy veterans and this result only reinforces the advantages of providing the specialized healthcare offered by the Epilepsy Centers of Excellence.

“I am unable to think of any particular need for improvement in care because the Epilepsy Clinic has always provided professional medical service when I report for my appointments. I have noticed that the Epilepsy/Seizure Clinic continue to seek out ways to introduce technologies such as keeping informed of medications to allow patients to lead independent lives.”

“The care and assistance I receive each time I visit is nothing but excellent. I can’t recommend anything to improve. My experiences have been perfect.”

“I only wish all of the VA’s other clinics were as good as the epilepsy/seizure clinic. This clinic is FANTASTIC!”
SOUTHWEST REGION

James Chen, MD, Southwest ECoE Regional Director
Vacant, Southwest ECoE Regional Administrative Director

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Develop regional collaborative effort to create a uniformed program ACGME training site for Phase II brain mapping.
- Collaborate with local academic facilities to partner together to create increased opportunities for physician education.
- Develop opportunities for Telemedicine collaboration and expansion.
- Develop a regional selection committee to review candidates for the position of Administrative Officer.
- Organize regular Advisory committee meetings.
- Expand the consortium by actively recruiting more sites and members.
- Schedule monthly recurring conference call.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Formalized EMU caregiver accommodations agreement with medical center memorandum. This is pivotal in addressing largest challenge at our site since inception.
- Participated in root cause analysis committee to improve patient safety in the EMU.
- Delivered updated trainings for RNs and CNAs in the EMU, including competency checklist, training video, role-play and post-test on TMS.
- Implemented NTMHC tele-cognitive behavioral therapy program for non-epileptic seizures with patients at SF and Sacramento sites. Provider at Providence, RI site.
- Recruited and hired part-time social worker, and began outpatient epilepsy social work clinics for case management, counseling, and supportive therapy.
- Began epilepsy e-consult service
Continued monthly support groups for patients and bimonthly support groups for caregivers.

Expanded clinical video telehealth clinics to include Hawaii and Pacific Islands in FY14. Continued Vtel clinics at 6 existing sites: Eureka, Ukiah, Clearlake, Santa Rosa, Downtown SF and Fresno.

Implemented and sustained video-to-home clinical video telehealth program, including inter-facility patients.

Expanded epilepsy clinical pharmacist services to telephone clinic, in addition to existing face-to-face clinics.

Continued epilepsy provider to provider referral and education under the VA SCAN-ECHO program (Specialty Care Access Network- Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes). We have an integrated multidisciplinary team approach including neurology, psychiatry, and clinical pharmacy collaborators. We have continued to hold twice monthly sessions, and have connected with providers from over 25 sites across 10 VISNs.

Expanded SCAN-ECHO Epilepsy curriculum with 12 new educational topics in FY14.

Participated as site for Epilepsy Education Video Series, “Diagnosis of Epilepsy” in June 2014.

**Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:**

- Continue outreach to regional sites not yet involved in consortium.
- Increase pre-surgical evaluations and surgical volume. Application submitted to become both programming and implantation site for NeuroPace RNS.
- Expand patient video Telehealth to additional sites (Reno, Sacramento)
- Maintain current services without increased funding, having reached maximum manageable clinical volume with increasing administrative demands limiting patient care service expansion.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Setting up three new Epilepsy Monitoring Units (EMU) in a newly remodeled ward: Each unit is in a single bed room, with a private bathroom and a window view respectively to the ocean, mountain or the court.
- Changing the EMU video-EEG equipment from the Stellate system to the Nihon-Kohden (NK) System, with different size EEG channel counts (256/64/32) to meet the various clinical needs in video EEG monitoring; Each unit is equipped with a HD camera, with future expansion for a synchronized second camera in the same NK system.
- Complete EMU Nursing in service training for over 20+ new nurses in the new EMU ward.
- Continue to provide comprehensive outpatient epilepsy cares: seizure clinic, VNS programming, telemedicine clinic, e-consult, telephone clinic.
- Approved for expanding the epilepsy telemedicine clinic in Bakersfield
- Performed One left frontal lobe epilepsy resection surgery after phase II study and ECoG mapping which results in seizure freedom for the patient.
- Two VNS implantations were accomplished.
- Maintain a regular multi-discipline Epilepsy Surgical Conference for 2 meetings/month at the GLAVA.
- Featured in the Los Angeles ABC7 Eyewitness News TV for a special report for the 2013 Veterans day
- Coordinating with the Southern California Epilepsy Foundation to set up Veterans’ support group and Art therapy program
- Participate as a filming site for the ECOE Epilepsy Video Series

Los Angeles ECoE Staff

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• GLAVA ACGME accredited neuropharmacist training program includes the EMU and seizure clinic as a required rotation in the program.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
• Complete the setting up of the new EMU with server installation for remote access/monitoring.
• Setting up remote video-EEG monitoring in the ICU for epilepsy related cases, such as monitoring for status epilepticus.
• Increase the volume of EMU admission.
• Increase the volume of pre-surgical evaluation with intracranial electrodes implantation (phase II) and resection surgeries after the expected increase of EMU admissions.
• Setting up Visualase Laser ablation surgery for Epilepsy.
• Exploring setting up NeuroPace RNS service.
• Continue to expand telemedicine seizure clinic sites.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Continued to expand delivery of epilepsy care via telenursing to veterans in New Mexico, Southern Colorado, Eastern Arizona and West Texas.
- Hired a replacement Clinical Nurse Practitioner to replace the previous CNP (retired) who handled the majority of the telenursing workload caring for veterans with epilepsy (pending VACO approval).
- Have expanded our telenursing program to become one of the largest in the nation.
- Published an article on our telenursing experience.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Hire a 3/8 certified epileptologist. One excellent applicant chose to go elsewhere when the ECOE hiring freeze occurred.
- Develop an epilepsy education program via telenursing.
- Develop performance improvement initiatives to demonstrate that delivery of care to veterans via telenursing is equal to that delivered in our face-to-face clinics.
- Continue to expand the number of rural veterans with seizures that receive their follow-up care via telenursing.
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### FY14 Accomplishments:

- Successful implementation of the ECoE clinic Templates.
- Southwest Regional Administrative Officer position description classified (GS-11).
- Dr. David Chen presented a case discussion at SCAN-ECHO on 10/7/2013.
- AES (OEF/OIF) poster selected for top 10 Press Release, “Seizures and Epilepsy: A Significant Burden on Veterans”.

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- Dr. David Chen is training with Dr. W. Curt LaFrance to provide CBT to PNES patients.
- Approval locally to hire two EEG Technologists to allow 2 techs to be on duty during evenings & night shifts.
- Dr. David Chen named Medical Director of the Alvin Community College EEG Training Program June 2014.
- Telemental Health: Houston ECoE site began participating in National TeleMental Health Center program with Dr. W. Curt LaFrance. PNES patients receive CBT via V-TEL.
- Dr. Zulfi Haneef presented ECOE Provider Audio conference on 9/10/14 entitled “Epilepsy and Imaging”.
- Chen, David K. received Baylor College of Medicine Department of Neurology, Resident Teaching Award 2014.

**Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:**
- Identify new Houston site Director.
- Recruit and hire SW Regional Administrative Officer.
- Add ACGME Epilepsy Fellowship position (part-time).
- Apply for ABRET EEG laboratory certification.
- Expand tele-epilepsy to more CBOCs and across state and VISN lines, especially Louisiana.
- Enhance relationships with Consortium sites.
- Cross train techs (ECoG).
- Start a support group for patients with epileptic seizures.
- Expand CBT for PNES patients.
- Expand Tele-NES thru Dr. LaFrance.
- Establish e-Consults (seizure specific).
- Implement new IMED consent form for EMU patients.
- Develop Epilepsy specific consults and IFC consults at Houston site.
- Improve ECoE Patient Satisfaction Survey response rate.
ECoE Staff

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FY14 Accomplishments:
- Developed Patient Survey that will be fielded in FY15. This will validate measures of epilepsy patient activation/self-management that can be used in a clinical/ national quality assurance setting.
- Submitted a pre-proposal for DoD study examining the relationship between TBI severity and epilepsy in OEF/OIF Veterans which was approved for full proposal submission in FY15.
- Obtained funding for, organized, and conducted training for VA mental health professionals to provide care for Veterans with psychogenic nonepileptic seizures. Training was conducted by Drs. LaFrance, Hamid, and Chen on site in San Antonio and virtually via Lync for other facilities. Over 20 participants attended in classroom and 30 providers via Lync.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Conduct patient survey for epilepsy patient activation/ self-management and validate scale.
- Submit DoD Epilepsy epidemiology grant application.
- Begin broader survey of epilepsy patient activation/ self-management throughout VA.
- The clinical group needs funding at a level of an ECoE.
- Launch PNES Clinical Advisory Workgroup to advance clinical care, research, outreach, and education activities to support treatment of Veterans with PNES.
- Acquire ECoE-level funding for the Clinical Group.
NORTHEAST REGION

Allan Krumholz, MD, Northeast ECoE Regional Director
R. Andrew David, MS, MHSA Northeast ECoE Regional Administrative Director

FY14 Accomplishments:
• Hosted virtual regional advisory meeting.
• Increased number of referring sites within Northeast region.
• Hosted regional SCAN-ECHO sessions out of West Haven.
• Expanded services available to include ambulatory testing, intraoperative monitoring, neuro-volumetric studies, and increased number of EMU beds within region.
• Richmond & Baltimore sites participated in VACO-led national "Integrated Neurology Project".
• Partnered with local chapters of Epilepsy Foundation to provide patient outreach & education.
• Expanded telehealth programs, including tele-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and store-and-forward EEG services.
• Completed phase A of Epilepsy Home Automated Telemangement project in collaboration with MS Centers of Excellence.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
• Hold virtual advisory meeting & face-to-face advisory meeting.
• Expand SCAN-ECHO hosted out of Richmond for primary care & specialty care providers.
• Increase meaningful connections with consortium through telehealth services.
• Establish effective communication and patient recruitment with Medical Centers in Northeast.
• Implement virtual epilepsy conferences among NE sites.
• Partner with local Epilepsy Foundation to provide outreach & education for patients & clinicians.
FY14 Accomplishments:
- Expanded collaboration with Washington DC VAMC as a model for integration.
- Participated in the National VA Integrated Neurology Project.
- Epilepsy Home Automated Telemanagement (E-HAT) protocol was approved by IRB and Phase A completed.
- Co-sponsoring education symposium with Epilepsy Foundation.
- Held virtual Northeast advisory board meeting.
- Epilepsy surgery program operational for both cortical resections and VNS.
- Acquired two ambulatory EEG machines and are providing this service.
- Expanded seizure clinic from two times a month to four times a month.
- Recruited new VA epilepsy fellow, making this the third year with a VA fellow.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Establish effective communication and patient recruitment with sites in Northeast region, particularly with the Washington DC VA Medical Center.
- Open a second EMU bed.
- Establish mental health PhD fellowship, focusing on Epilepsy and Multiple Sclerosis CoEs.
- Continue E-HAT through Phase A close out and explore implementation options.
- Recruit social worker to help with referral coordination.
- Improve availability of clinic appointments and monitor patient satisfaction through survey.
- Expand telehealth offerings, including telehealth to home.
FY14 Accomplishments:
• EMU director hired.
• Epilepsy telehealth (CVT) established.
• Intraoperative Neurophysiologic Monitoring established.
• Neuro-volumetric studies begun.
• Completed Epilepsy Integrated Neurology Pilot Program.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
• Clinical Neurophysiology and Clinical Polytrauma/Epilepsy Fellowships.
• Increase referrals and expand CVT patient sites along with store and forward capabilities.
• Collaborate with VCU dense array providers.
• Establish local ECOE website.
• Initiate a support group.
• Organize Neuroradiology joint projects.
• Continue with Integrated Neurology Program.
• Hire dedicated EMU Tech.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Dr. Hamid received VISN-1 Career Development Award to explore ECOE health systems organization.
- Hired three additional part-time Epileptologists to cover Dr. Hamid’s time as well as unfilled position.
- Hired neurophysiology EEG.
- Two Bed EMU with fixed EEG units established.
- Expanded National Tele-Mental Health program for PNES to San Francisco and Houston.
- Began training mental health professionals throughout the ECOE network, in collaboration with Dr. William Curt LaFrance, to provide local services.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Increase outreach to and number of referrals from regional consortium sites.
- Begin admitting patients to the EMU with fixed EEG units.
- Increase number of sites for Tele-CVT PNES services nationally as well as local trainings.
NORTHWEST REGION

Paul Rutecki, MD, Northwest ECoE Regional Director
Amy Childers, Northwest ECoE Regional Administrative Officer

FY14 Accomplishments:
- Successful in serving the clinical needs of our veterans by ensuring each site has at least one epileptologist to provide specialized care and management.
- All sites have working and productive epilepsy monitoring units.
- Effectively using current technology to diagnose and manage patients with epilepsy by implementing electronic means of care for patients including eConsults, Tele-health and Tele-EEG.
- Grew our consortium membership to include 15 sites and 20 individuals that refer patients to us and interact with the EMU sites in a hub and spokes model.
- Averaged 80% of follow-up visits being seen within 7 days of desired date and new patient wait times averaged less than 30 days.
- Improved EMU safety with the help of an educational program developed in Seattle and the use of continuous observation by either cardiac telemetry monitors or dedicated EMU patient monitors.
- Have continued to be an educational resource with participation in national talks for providers, patients, and caregivers that are organized by the national ECoE educational work group and offering CMU credits at events in which providers are eligible to receive them.
- Seattle VA developed a video for nurses and others regarding safety in the EMU that is available through the Talent Management System (TMS).

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Increase our telehealth encounters.
- Stabilize our personnel, particularly EEG technologists.
- Seeing new patients within 30 days of desired date.
- Increase patient education efforts.
- Develop new collaborative research within the ECoE.
- Develop consortium interactions through SCAN ECHO.
- Increase interaction and support of Mental Health services with the ECoEs.
- Improve EEG access to providers when off site.
FY14 Accomplishments:
- Expansion of Telehealth clinics to all CBOCs and Tomah VAMC.
- Madison ECoE employed a Diversity Intern to provide outreach and collaborate with non-profit organizations.
  - Collaborated with the national Anita Kaufman Foundation.
  - Created health fair instructions for hospitals wanting to hold a fair.
  - Collaborated on Purple day kits for each ECoE.
  - Updated patient brochures.
- EEG Technologists attended the 2014 Annual ASET conference.
- EEG chair and AO held a live ECoE EEG Technologist workgroup meeting at ASET.
  - Included meet and greet for all ECoE staff and non-ECoE staff.
    - 15 attendees from ECoE VAs and non-ECoE VAs.
  - Developed goals and initiatives for fiscal year 15.
- Increased staff to include a Psychiatrist, Rise Futterer, to the ECoE team.
- Initiated application for EMU lab ABRET accreditation.
- Performed 3 surgeries.
- Participated in Regional SCAN-ECHO planning.
- Provided clinical and education training to a student studying EEG.
- Instituted 24/7 technologist coverage.
- Began doing ICU and other EEG monitoring.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Increase utilization of Telehealth and e-consults.
- ABRET accreditation for Long Term Monitoring.
- Develop integrated mental health and epilepsy clinic.
- Implement remote EEG access.
### FY14 Accomplishments:
- Hired another Nurse Practitioner.
- Hired an additional EEG Technologist.
- Relocated EMU to Step Down Unit.
- Trained New Nursing Staff.
- Hired and trained an additional Monitor Tech.
- Established a 24 hr. EMU Monitoring unit.
- Expanded Tele-Health clinic.
- Increased number of E-consults.

### Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Expand Epileptologist staff with an additional doctor.
- Increase Clinic Visits and Decrease Patient Wait Times.
- Increase Tele-Health and E-consult opportunities.
- Increase EMU Evaluations.
- Establish GS-10 Chief Technologist Position.
- Implement Off site EMU review system.
- Establish Employment Training Program with local Epilepsy Advocacy Group.
- Collaborate with local TBI/DVBIC Groups.

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**ECoE Staff**

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**FY14 Accomplishments:**
- Expansion of Telemedicine (Boise and Roseburg), Tele-EEG (Boise, Spokane, Walla Walla), telephone, e-consult, and outpatient clinics.
- Ongoing funded, multi-center research.
- Successful relocation of ECoE offices.
- Continuation of the quarterly patient education series.
- Completion of new EMU database entry and report system.
- Initiation of NW SCAN-ECHO provider education.
- Addition of Social Worker to staff.

**Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:**
- Recruitment of supervisory EEG technologist.
- Expansion of NW Epilepsy SCAN-ECHO provider education.
- Further access to care expansion via additional Telehealth and Tele-EEG offerings.
- Implement a patient epilepsy support group.
FY14 Accomplishments:
- Telehealth expanded to Yakima, WA; Lewiston, ID; Boardman, Enterprise and La Grande, OR.
- Created Agreement to have Cardiac Tele-monitor Techs monitor the LTM patients.
- EEG Lab:
  - Use of improved seizure detection software (Persyst).
  - Improved EEG database organization for data analysis/retrieval.
- New labeling conventions for fiscal year EEGs/EMU studies.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Train and implement the use of cardiac monitor techs to watch our EMU patients.
- Train and educate our ECoE nurse coordinator in EEG/LTM.
- Archive EEG/LTM studies to a server.
- Add a hard wired LTM unit to the MICU.
- Expand Telehealth to Anchorage, AK and Coastal Washington.
- Increase interaction and support of Mental Health services with the ECoE/CBT training to treat PNES.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Project Manager for Department of Veterans Affairs Epilepsy Manual.
- Project lead for VISN 6 Integrated Neurology pilot and completion of the first VA Central Office National approved Store and Forward EEG interim application.
- Equipment purchases at non–ECoE to improve access to EEG and epilepsy services.
- Project Manager for the National Anti-epileptic Drug pocket card.
- Partnered with The Epilepsy Foundation to produce pocket epilepsy calendars for the region.
- Collaborated with The Epilepsy Foundation to host a patient education symposium at the Miami VAMC.
- Dr. Aatif Husain selected as Editor –in-Chief of Journal of Clinical Neurophysiology.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Build upon the Durham VAMC/VISN 6 Store and Forward EEG infrastructure.
- Expand Store and Forward EEG to VISN 8.
- Leverage technology to increase outreach and access for seizure patients at non-ECoE sites.
- Pocket information booklet/pamphlet for primary care providers.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Following Central Office approval of VISN 6 Store and Forward EEG interim application, Durham EEG was the first site to implement Tele-EEG. Currently 2 clinics active (Asheville VAMC & Wilmington NC, CBOC).
- Since beginning of FY 14, Expanded CVT – Epilepsy from 2 sites to 14 sites.
- Additional support staff added to the ECoE in FY14 has been valuable in efforts to expand services and improve access. Key staff includes RN Coordinator, Clinical Psychologist and fee for service EEG technicians.
- Clinical Psychologist initiated CBT specific training for PNES patients.
- Participated and successfully met objectives and goals for Integrated Neurology pilot to improve access for neurology testing and services.
- Implemented CVT-Home for epilepsy to improve access to patients.
- Upgraded EEG equipment software.

**Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:**
- Expand CVT-Epilepsy to more sites.
- Expand SFT Tele-EEG to more sites.
- Complete CBT specific training and provide services to more patients as identified.
- Add CVT-Home for PNES patients as an access option.
- Expansion of services to include CEEG in ICU.
FY14 Accomplishments:

- Operated the EMU with two monitoring beds with remote viewing capability and averaged admitting 2 patients per week.
- Successfully operated 2 weekly epilepsy clinics in which the patients are evaluated by a team of epileptologists and neurology residents.
- We have monthly tele-health clinic that facilitates continuity of care with easier access for the patients.
- Initiated and implemented e-consults for the EMU patients.
- Successfully organized a day-long VA Patient symposium led by Dr. Lopez with presenters from across the community sharing with Veterans the various aspects of epilepsy care.
- Continued participation in monthly SE ECoE conference to discuss the treatment of complicated cases of epilepsy with experts across the region.
- Submitted a DOD grant proposal.
- Recruited and hired Fee based EEG techs.
- Increased the number of EMU admissions.
- Upgrade the lead EEG tech position to a GS9 level.
- Maintained an easy access to outpatient procedures and epilepsy clinic within 2 weeks of desired date.
- Became a site of training EEG techs register at Institute of health sciences EEG school.
- Participated in the National patient education audio conferences.
- Dr. Lopez was nominated as one of the top physician of the Miami VA healthcare system by the South Florida Hospital news and health care report, March 2014.
Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Implement continuous recording in the MICU with remote viewing capacity.
- Work in conjunction with Psychiatry and psychology services to implement cognitive behavioral therapy for the treatment on PNES.
- Continue to expand tele health services.
- Increase the number of IOM EEG procedures.
- Submit a QUERY pilot study investigating psychiatric comorbidities in epilepsy.
- Recruit a lead tech since the Senior tech is retiring.
- Establish a monthly conference with epileptologist of UM and fellow to discuss challenges cases.
- Increase education to our sitter in the EMU.
- Hire a new EEG tech position that can take care of the increase lead of CEA with IOM monitoring.
- Improve research in epilepsy and psychiatric comorbidities.
- Obtain continuous EEG recording at the MICU and remote reviewing.
FY14 Accomplishments:
- Initiated Clinical Neurophysiology Fellowship at Gainesville VAMC in collaboration with University of Florida.
- Initiated weekly ECoE Consult and ECoE Return Clinics with Clinical Neurophysiology Fellows.
- Initiated Neurophysiology Seminar.
- Initiated plans for TeleEEG with the following sites:
  - Jacksonville
  - Tallahassee
  - Viera
  - Lake City
- Quarterly Nurse Epilepsy Open House for inpatient nurses and staff.
- Quarterly UF/VA Lecture on Epilepsy to nursing students.
- Initiate planning on seizure first-aid video for veterans and caretakers.
- Continuation of epilepsy algorithm study.
- Investigate technical problems obtaining quality video in EMU.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Implement TeleEEG clinics at satellite sites.
- Complete first-aid video.
FY14 Accomplishments:
• Obtained two designated epilepsy monitoring beds on the new medical step-down unit to be officially opened in September 2014.
• Purchased and installed 2 new Natus EMU machines in the new step down unit.
• Upgraded software on all existing Natus machines.
• Hired a designated Program Assistant for the Tampa ECOE.
• Obtained Clinical Neurophysiology Fellow at VA for 2.5 days per week for epilepsy/EEG educational experiences.
• Converted one General Neurology clinic to an Epilepsy clinic (to help with workload capture).
• Re-classified Lead EEG Tech’s Grade/Step to ensure more competitive compensation (from 8/7->9/6). Junior tech at 9/5.
• Increased long term video EEG monitoring (both EMU and ICU studies).
• Participated in VA ECOE Audio Educational Series (Diagnosis and Management of Status Epilepticus).
• Conducted VNS educational sessions for medically refractory epilepsy patients.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
• Expand Telehealth program – Tele-Health clinics and Tele-EEG reading.
• Take identified patients through to epilepsy surgery in conjunction with surgical referral center in Durham.
• Expand education outreach: epilepsy awareness conferences for patients/caregivers.
• Improve education regarding EMU protocols among VA ECOE support staff (nurses, nurses’ aides/sitters).
• Utilize VA ECOE clinical template/database.
• Acquire remote EEG reading capabilities.
• Hire additional Epileptologist in order to meet the needs of the growing service.
• Create informational webpage for Tampa ECOE.
NATIONAL WORKGROUPS

CLINICAL PROCEDURES WORKGROUP

Stephen Holloway, MD, Chair
Amy Childers, Administrative Support

<table>
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<td>Elizabeth Barry, ECoE Baltimore Physician</td>
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<td>Amy Childers, ECoE NE Admin Officer</td>
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FY14 Accomplishments:
- Initiated EEG Tech classification survey.
- Initiated tele-CBT workload credit for PNES.
- Inpatient workload.
  - ECOE used as character code to represent inpatient ECoE workload.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- EEG Tech Classification.
  - Analyze the results of the survey sent to all sites.
  - Develop a plan to address the needs of each site.
- Developments of EEG remote reading with Telehealth workload credit.
- PAC system and clinical informatics issue: work on how to get programs that can read any MRI format on VA computers.
- Develop Seizure Monitoring Unit policy and guidelines in collaboration with Nursing group.
- Continue progress of tele-CBT workload credit.
WORKLOAD STANDARDIZATION WORKGROUP

Nina Garga, MD, Chair
R. Andrew David (temporary), SW regional AO after hire, Administrative Support

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FY14 Accomplishments:
- Workload capture - Process has been standardized and clinical workload is accurately being captured with minimal discrepancies for outpatient clinic, telehealth clinics, telephone clinics, SCAN ECHO and E-consult clinics, education clinics, EEG, and EMU. In FY14, expanded codes to include ICU/non-EMU prolonged video EEG monitoring, and awaiting approval of new CHAR4 code to capture tele-NES CBT clinic workload (application submitted in May 2014).
  - ICU/non-EMU VET stop codes—128 Primary, 345 Secondary, ECOE CHAR4 code.
  - TeleNES CBT Clinic stop codes—502 Primary, 544/545 Secondary, CHAR4 code pending.
    - Other secondary code options will exist if care delivered face-to-face.
    - 533 primary stop code permissible, but 502 is preferred.
    - New CHAR4 code will allow workload capture regardless of primary/secondary.
- Revised ICD-10 diagnostic code lists for national neurology and national epilepsy encounter forms in collaboration with HIMS. Rollout delayed due to national/CMS issues.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Implement TeleNES CBT clinic CHAR4 code once approved.
- Improve DSS mapping at each ECoE site.
  - Consider adapting Medicare RVU system for more accurate costing.
- PPT training module for rotators on coding visit type levels of complexity.
- Provide guidance to sites on inpatient consultation and attending workload capture for workload tracking purposes.
PHARMACY WORKGROUP

Aatif Husain, MD, Co-Chair
Kathy Tortorice, PharmD, BCPS, Co-Chair
Pamela Kelly, MBA, HCM, Administrative Support

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FY14 Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Sub - Workgroup completed physician pocket AED medication.
  - Guide expected to be a tool for neurologist and generalist.
  - Based on AAN and peer review recommendations.
  - Over 1000 distributed nationally.
  - Poster size version also available.
- Assist in the review of new molecular entities (NME) for inclusion on the VANF. Evaluate medications to determine the need for Criteria for Use (CFU) to ensure safe and effective use.
- Considered potential surveillance and research project opportunities.
  - Evaluation of prescribed AEDs to epilepsy patients.
  - Assessment of Potential association between Anti-depressants and Anti-Epileptic drugs among Veterans with epilepsy.
- Informed ECOE and others about major changes in availability of AED, i.e. Lack of availability of Carbatrol in the future.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Work with PMB on multiple surveillance projects and research.
- Assist in the review of new molecular entities (NME) for inclusion on the VANF. Evaluate medications to determine the need for Criteria for Use (CFU) to ensure safe and effective use.
CLINICAL RESEARCH WORKGROUP

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FY14 Accomplishments:
- Expanded use of National ECoE Epilepsy Monitoring Unit database.
- Developed Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (CENC) proposal.
- Developed protocol for post-traumatic epilepsy (PTE) and vagus nerve stimulation therapy (VNS) multi-site study.
- Provided VA epilepsy research update for NIH’s annual meeting of the Interagency Collaborative to Advance Research in Epilepsy (ICARE).
- Approved pre-proposal for DoD post-traumatic epilepsy grant.
- Co-PI of CENC Epidemiology project: Aim 3.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Develop and submit abstract from EMU database.
- Submit CENC proposal for multi-ECoE site study.
- Develop VA cooperative studies proposal for all ECoE sites, with Portland as lead.
- Roll out PTE and VNS multi-site study.
- Obtain funding for epidemiology study.
FY14 Highlights and Accomplishments:

- Successfully presented 11 lectures by different professionals to ECoE sites and non-ECoE sites across the nation.
- Basic Science Research Workgroup Presentations:
  - 06-11-2014, Maguire – “Basic Epilepsy Research Focus on Seizure Triggers”
  - 10-08-2014, Nygaard - “Epilepsy and AD”
  - 03-19-2014, Tang - “Frontiers Multibranch Integration”
  - 11-12-2014, Brook/Kayal – “JAK-SAT Inhibition to Prevent Epileptogenesis”
  - 07-09-2014, Kotloski – “Seizures Epilepsy and TrkB”
  - 08-13-2014, Buchanan – “State Dependent Mechanisms of Seizure Related Death”
  - 11-01-2013, Kalume – “Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy”
  - 02-12-2014, Rutecki – “Transient Group I Metabotropic Glutamate Receptor Activation”
  - 03-19-2014, Ransom – “Tuning the Tone of Extrasynaptic GABA Receptors”
- Continued utilizing SharePoint site to archive all lectures/presentations.

Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:

- Work with IRM and other staff to archive lecture audio files for review by all interested parties.
- Continue to invite guest speakers to discuss upcoming research topics.
- Invite consortium and non-consortium sites to monthly calls.
- Continue building collaborative research projects amongst ECoE basic scientists.
FY14 Highlights and Accomplishments:

- **Patient / Caregiver:**
  - National Patient Education Audio Conferences –
    - December 5, 2013 - Maria Lopez, MD, Miami VAMC - “Seizure Triggers, How To Deal With Them and Prevent Seizures”
    - February 6, 2014 - Mary Jo Pugh, PhD, San Antonio VAMC - “Quality of Epilepsy Care and What It Means To You”
    - April 3, 2014 - Tung Tran, MD, Durham VAMC - “Epilepsy Medication”
    - June 5, 2014 - Patricia Banks, RN, Cleveland VAMC - “Living Well With Epilepsy”
    - August 7, 2014 - Collette Evrard, NP, Portland VAMC - “Mental Health and Epilepsy”
  - Completed development of educational content on www.epilepsy.va.gov website.
  - Distribution of ECoE Patient Education QuickSeries Handbook.
  - Distributed National ECoE promotional materials, including brochure, business cards, logo stickers, lapel pins, seizure first aid postcard.
  - Continued partnership with Anita Kaufmann Foundation for “Heads Up for Veterans” initiative that included TBI and seizure first aid flyer, websites, and Purple Day Awareness campaign.
  - Filmed “Veterans and Epilepsy: Basic Training” at 5 ECoE site.
  - Support local/regional educational offering and collaborations with Epilepsy Foundation and University affiliates.

- **Healthcare Provider:**
  - National Provider CME Education Audio Conferences –
    - November 6, 2013 - Denise Riley, ARNP, Gainesville VAMC - “Treatment of Elderly with Epilepsy”
    - January 5, 2014 - Chris Sackellares, MD, Gainesville VAMC - “Qualitative EEG”
    - March 5, 2014 - Tom Frontera, MD, Tampa VAMC - “Diagnosis and Management of Status Epilepticus”
    - May 7, 2014 - Manu Hegde, MD, San Francisco VAMC - “Autoimmune Causes of Epilepsy”
    - July 9, 2014 - Allen Krumholz, MD, Baltimore VAMC - “Epilepsy and Driving”
    - September 10, 2014 - Zulfi Haneef, MD, Houston VAMC - “Epilepsy and Imaging”
  - “Statistics In Evidence Based Medicine” presented by Rizwana Rehman, PhD, Statistician, SE ECOE
    - August 4: Understanding Relative Risks and Odds Ratios
    - August 11: Marginal and Conditional Odds Ratios
    - August 18: Introduction to Logistic Regression
    - August 25: Special Cases of Logistic Models
    - September 8: Logistic Regression for Matched data
  - Completed, printed, and distributed VA Epilepsy Manual to ECoE and Consortium sites, total of 500 originally printed and distributed.
Created, printed, and distributed AED pocket card for VA providers
Filmed epilepsy healthcare provider video series in Portland featuring 12 topics targeted to primary care providers, neurologists, and epileptologists.
Continued to develop educational content on National ECoE SharePoint intranet portal for document sharing and calendar updates.

FY15 Goals and Initiatives:
- Complete "Veterans and Epilepsy: Basic Training" video series and post to YouTube and ECoE website.
- Complete epilepsy healthcare provider video series and make available for CME credit on the internet.
- Complete printing "Coping With Seizures" QuickSeries Handbook.
- Printing additional run of VA Epilepsy Manuals for distribution through TMS.
- Print additional run of AED pocket card for distribution to VA providers.
NURSING WORKGROUP
Judy Ozuna, NP, Chair
Stephanie Chen, MSN, MPH, NP-C, Administrative Support

Workgroup Members

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<tr>
<td>Trudy Burgess, San Antonio</td>
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<td>Karen Parko, San Francisco</td>
<td>Ellen Matthiesen, Houston</td>
<td>Natalya Kan, Los Angeles</td>
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FY14 Progress and Accomplishments
- Developed ECoE Health Professionals Counseling Guide to be printed in FY15.
- EMU Consent form now available on iMED consent in CPRS.
- Developed script, content, and assisted in production Patient Self-Management Video Filming to be completed in FY15.
- Assisted in production Epilepsy CME Video Series to be completed in FY15.

FY15 Goals and Initiatives:
- Evaluate current safety/quality assurance of ECoE vs. civilian EMUs.
- Start needs assessment survey (think about what questions to survey each site).
- Develop an advanced practice nurse (nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialist) epilepsy training curriculum.
- Collaborate with epilepsy nurse interest groups in AANN and AES with goals of enhancing communication among the groups, sharing resources, avoiding duplication of efforts.
- Include case presentations in monthly calls.
- Develop an Expert symposium in Epilepsy (Nursing workgroup would work on a curriculum and help coordinate an epilepsy expert symposium at each site).
- Create a PNES booklet for patients.
# EEG Technologists Workgroup

**Ronda Tschumper, R.EEG/EP T., CLTM, Chair**  
**Amy Childers, Administrative Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workgroup Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ryan Rieger, San Francisco</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amy Childers, Madison</strong></td>
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<td><strong>James Vera, West Haven</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Betty Calahan, Houston</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Phenita Groves, Houston</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Harold Walker, Houston</strong></td>
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## FY14 Highlights and Accomplishments:
- Worked with ECoE sites, consortium sites and non-consortium sites across the nation to educate on policy and procedures manuals according to ABRET.
  - Clinical Guidelines – American Clinical Neurophysiology Society
- Introduced ABRET standardization policy and procedures for the LTM across all sites.
- Initiated and completed several Medical Instrument Technicians functional statement and grading.
- Incorporated case studies with each call for continuing learning opportunities.
- Assisted Portland with effectively posting a new position for a MIT.
- Conducted a live meeting in conjunction with the 2014 annual ASET conference.
  - Interacted with 11 VA EEG Technologist sites
    - 3 non-ECoE sites

## Future Initiatives / FY15 Goals:
- Continued efforts to increase consortium and non-consortium site involvement.
- Standardizations, qualifications & salaries for EEG Technologists across all sites.
- ABRET policy and procedures for outpatient & LTM – continued knowledge and training.
- BENEFITS: Confidence, Knowledge, Competency, Awareness. Professionalism, Marketability, Encourages Continuing Education
- Conference Call - Discuss LTM case studies (De-identified) from various sites
# FELLOWSHIPS

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Albuquerque


Baltimore


Krumholz A, Hopp J. Epilepsy and Driving. UpToDate 2014 (web-published)


Cohen ML, Testa SM, Pritchard JM, Zhu J, Hopp JL. Overlap between dissociation and other psychological characteristics in patients with psychogenic nonepileptic seizures. Epilepsy Behav. 2014 May;34:47-9


Durham


Houston


Chu J, Majmudar S, Chen DK. Cardiac asystole associated with seizures of right hemispheric onset. Epilepsy Behav Case Reports. 2014. In Press.


Haneef Z and Chiang SC. Graph Theory Findings in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Seizure 2014 (accepted)


Chiang SC and Haneef Z. Graph Theory Findings in the Pathophysiology of Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Clinical Neurophysiology 2014

Haneef Z, Chen DK. Functional Neuro-Imaging as a Pre-Surgical Tool in Epilepsy. Annals of Indian Academy of Neurology 2014.


Potter, WB, Basu, T, O’Riordan, KJ, Kirchner, A, Rutecki, P, Burger, C, Roopra (2013) Reduced juvenile long term depression in tuberous sclerosis complex mitigated in adults by compensatory recruitment of mGlur5 and ERK signaling. Published 13 Aug 2013 PLOS Biology 10.1371/journal.pbio.1001627


Tortorice, K. and Rutecki, P. "Principles of Treatment" In Hussain, AM and Tran, TT (Eds.) Department of Veterans Affairs Epilepsy Manual, Epilepsy Centers of Excellence Department of Veterans Affairs, 121-7, 2014.

Minneapolis

Holloway, SF (2014) Epilepsy, Migraines, and Cognition; In Department of Veterans Affairs Epilepsy Manual; Editors Aatif Husain and Tung Train; Epilepsy Centers of Excellence Department of Veterans Affairs.

Portland

Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychogenic Seizures in Veterans. Salinsky M, Storzbach D, Goy E, Evrard C; J Head Trauma Rehabil; 2014; epub ahead of print


Richmond


Waterhouse, Elizabeth; Section Editor (Epilepsy), Current Treatment Options in Neurology, Volume 16, 2014 (in progress)


San Antonio


Lie OV, Cavazos JE. "Responsive neurostimulation in epilepsy therapy: some answers, lingering questions." Epilepsy Behav. 2014 May; 34:25-8. PMID: 24681381


San Francisco


Hixson JD, Van Bebber S, Bertko K. Interest in a Digital Health Tool in Veterans with Epilepsy: Results of a Phone Survey. Military Medicine. Accepted, in press.


Seattle

Tao, W., Higgs, M.H., Spain, W.J. and Ransom, C.R. Postsynaptic GABA\textsubscript{A} receptors enhance extrasynaptic GABA\textsubscript{A} receptor function in dentate gyrus granule cells. J. Neuroscience 33: 3738-43, 2013.


SouthEast Region


Kelly, P (pending publication) Multi-Factor Analyses for the Evaluation of Veteran Health Administration Epilepsy Centers of Excellence. Dissertation – University of Phoenix


Rehman, R., Kelly, P., Husain, A., & Tran, T. Demographic and Disease Frequencies. (Pending publication)


Tampa

Rong L, Frontera AT, Benbadis SR. Tobacco Smoking, Epilepsy and Seizures. Epilepsy Behav. 2014 Feb;31:210-8.

Book Chapters:


West Haven


ABSTRACTS / POSTERS / PRESENTATIONS

Baltimore

Kabir A, Aquino K, Sanchez A, Krumholz A. Lacosamide therapy for intractable nocturnal frontal lobe epilepsy. International League Against Epilepsy Annual Meeting, Montreal Canada 2013 and Published as an abstract in Epilepsia.

Krumholz A, Thomas D. Co-existing Epileptic and Psychogenic Seizures in an Epilepsy Monitoring Unit. Presented at International League Against Epilepsy Annual Meeting, Montreal Canada 2013 and Published as an abstract in Epilepsia.

Krumholz A, Ting T, Polli J. A prototypic model for comparison of brand name and generic antiepileptic drug pharmacokinetics and bioequivalence. International League Against Epilepsy Annual Meeting, Montreal Canada 2013 and Published as an abstract in Epilepsia.


Hopp J. “Vagus Nerve Stimulation in Adults” Society for Brain Mapping & Therapeutics Annual Congress, Baltimore, Maryland, 2013.


Sanchez A. “Epilepsy: What It Is and What We Do About It.” Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region, 2013.

Durham

Tung, Tran (2014) - Review of outpatient home Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) in epilepsy and pilot experience within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) – AES Abstract

Houston


Collins, R., Robinson, J.S., Plascencia, M., Franks, R, Chen DK. Perceived Competency and Quality of Life Deficits in Individuals Experiencing Psychogenic Non-epileptic Events. Poster Abstract for INS 2014


Chen, D: The Houston Neuropsychological Society Lecture Series, 7/31/14, at MEDVAMC Title:“Controversies and Quandaries in the Management of PNES".


Haneef, Z.: ECOE Provider Audio conference on 9/10/14 entitled “Epilepsy and Imaging”

Haneef, Z: Speaker at “Current Neurology 2013” organized by Baylor College of Medicine Neurology on “Neuroimaging in Epilepsy”. Houston, TX. 2013


Los Angeles

James Chen, Speaker on “Posttraumatic Epilepsy and Treatment”, 9th Annual Brain Injury Rehabilitation Conference

Madison

E. B. HUTCHINSON, S. OSTING, P. RUTECKI, T. SUTULA; Histological correlates of diffusion tensor imaging abnormalities in the dentate gyrus following TBI induced by controlled cortical impact in the temporo-parietal cortex of the rat. SFN 2013

P. A. RUTECKI, S. OSTING, T. LANGBERG, T. SUTULA; Therapeutic effects of 2DG at the time of injury on fear conditioning and fear context recall at long intervals after TBI in plasticity-susceptible rats. SFN 2013


Rutecki, P “Posttraumatic Epilepsy: A VA perspective” Geisel School of Medicine, Hanover NH, September 26, 2014

Kotloski, RJ, Liu, G, McNamara, JO. Antiseizure effects of TrkB kinase inhibition. Poster to be presented at American Epilepsy Society Meeting, 2014 Dec 5-9; Seattle, WA


Miami

Epilepsia partialis continua and palatal myoclonus. Poster accepted in the Florida neurological Society.

Poster submitted to 2013 AES regarding epidemiology of VA patients with epilepsy.

Portland


Richmond

Epilepsy Awareness Day: ECoE sponsored March 26, 2014

Hodges, H & Browning, K. “Teaching Epilepsy” Critical Care Nursing Courses, Richmond, VA March & July 2014


Hodges, H. “Nursing Roles in Epilepsy Care.” 42nd Annual Hans Berger Clinical Neurophysiologic Symposium presentation. Richmond, VA May 2014

Waterhouse, E. “Name that Pattern.” 42nd Annual Hans Berger Clinical Neurophysiologic Symposium presentation. Richmond, VA May 2014

Waterhouse, E. Panelist, Tips for Clinical Clerkships, sponsored by Women in Medicine & Science Organization, VCU School of Medicine, Richmond, VA May 2014

Waterhouse, E. Seizure Semiology and Classification, Department of Neurology, VCU Medical Center, Richmond, VA. July 2014

Waterhouse, E. Introduction to Electroencephalography, Department of Neurology, Clinical Neurophysiology Lecture Series, VCU Medical Center, Richmond, VA. July 2014

San Antonio


San Francisco


Poster: Singh RK, Hegde M, Dlugos DJ, on behalf of the HEP EEG Core and HEP Investigators. Title: Ictal EEG yield in newly-treated focal epilepsy: Interim findings from the Human Epilepsy Project (HEP). American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting 2014, Seattle, WA, USA.


Invited Speaker: Hixson JD. “The POEM Study: Final Results and Implications for Integrated Health Systems”. Doctors 2.0 Digital Health Conference, Paris, France


Invited Speaker: Hixson JD. Dameron Hospital Association Department of Medicine Grand Rounds, “Epilepsy management for the PCP”, Stockton, CA, 2014.
Seattle

Ransom, CB, Ye, ZC, Spain, WJ, Richerson, GB. Modulation of extrasynaptic GABA$_A$ receptors by anion channel and connexin hemichannel antagonists in hippocampal neurons. Society for Neuroscience, San Diego, CA. 11/2013.

Tao, W, Spain, WJ, Ransom, CB. GABA$_B$ receptors regulate trafficking of extrasynaptic GABA$_A$ receptors in dentate gyrus granule cells via PKA- and PKC-dependent signaling pathways. American Epilepsy Society Annual meeting, Seattle, WA. 12/2014.

SouthEast Region

Kelly, P, Rehman, P, & Husain, A. (2014) - Leveraging technology to improve access - Epilepsy Centers of Excellence (ECoE) capitalizes on the telemedicine opportunity – Selected AES abstract

Rehman, R, Kelly, P, & Husain, A. (2014) - Creation of an epilepsy registry in the Veterans Health Administration – selected AES abstract

Tampa

Rong L, Frontera AT, Benbadis SR. Effects of Tobacco Smoking on EEG. Presented at the American Clinical Neurophysiology Society Annual Meeting 2014.


Rong L, Frontera AT, Benbadis SR. Characteristics of Routine EEG Performed in Adults at a Typical Tertiary Academic EEG Laboratory. Presented at the American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting 2013.


West Haven

Yale Annual Epilepsy Course “Psychogenic Seizures” May 2013

“Mapping Epilepsy Subspecialty Care by Physician Networks” AES 2014

Television and radio presentation on Epilepsy Care of Veterans which was joint sponsored by CT Epilepsy Foundation July 2014/Sept 2014
RESEARCH

ECoE Collaborative Research Projects Funded (shown highlighted in table):

1) RECORD Quality (Mary Jo Pugh, PI)
2) Psychogenic Seizures (Martin Salinsky, PI)

### Baltimore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
<th>Grant/Study Title</th>
<th>Project Start Date</th>
<th>Project End Date</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tang, CM</td>
<td>NMDA receptor mediated feedforward memory</td>
<td>10/2013</td>
<td>09/2017</td>
<td>VA BLR&amp;D Merit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tang, CM</td>
<td>In vivo confocal imaging and photo-activation system</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>VA BLR&amp;D shared instrument grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Krumholz, Allan Co-Investigator; Hopp, Jennifer, Co-Investigator</td>
<td>“Psychosocial Status and Health Related Outcomes in Patients with Psychogenic Seizures Compared with Psychogenic Movement Disorders”</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Collaborative project involving University of Maryland Epilepsy Center and Movement Disorders Center, Department of Neurology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabir, Arif – Co – investigator</td>
<td>Pharmacokinetics Studies of Epileptic Drugs in Patients</td>
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<td>DHHS/FDA/OAGS/DCGM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabir, Arif</td>
<td>Epilepsy – Home Automated Telemanagement (E-HAT)</td>
<td>06/2012</td>
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### Houston

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<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chen, David K. and Collins, Robert Co-Principle Investigators</td>
<td>Targeted Research Initiative for Veterans with Non-Epileptic Seizures (NES)</td>
<td>Submitted</td>
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<td>Epilepsy Foundation of America (Research Grants Program)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haneef, Zulfi Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Patterns of Network Connectivity in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Baylor College of Medicine Junior Faculty Seed Funding Program Grant</td>
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<td>Haneef, Zulfi Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Lateralization of TLE using fcMRI and DTI</td>
<td>01/01/2012</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
<td>Epilepsy Foundation of America (Research Grants Program)</td>
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<td>Haneef, Zulfi Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Network Connectivity in Epilepsy</td>
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<td>NIH – K Award</td>
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<td>Memory fMRI in Epilepsy</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Moody Foundation</td>
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<td>Mission Connect Mild TBI Translational Research Consortium (DAMD W81XWH-08-2-014)</td>
<td>09/01/2008</td>
<td>08/31/2014</td>
<td>US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC), Office of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP)</td>
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<td>Infantile Spasms: Mechanisms and Consequences as Therapeutic Targets</td>
<td>2/1/2013</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<td><em>Multisensory Processing of Human Speech Measured with msec and mm Resolution</em></td>
<td>10/1/2014</td>
<td>9/30/2017</td>
<td>VA Merit Review Award</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Visual Form Perception Produced by Electrically Stimulating Human Visual Cortex</em>c</td>
<td>9/1/2013</td>
<td>8/31/2017</td>
<td>National Eye Institute National Institutes of Health</td>
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<td>Computational and Integrative Biomedical Research Center (CiBR)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Seed Grant Awards from Baylor College of Medicine</td>
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**Los Angeles**

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<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
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<th>Project End Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wasterlain, Claude,</td>
<td>Treatment of Status Epilepticus: a Translational Proposal</td>
<td>04/01/13</td>
<td>03/31/17</td>
<td>VA Merit Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wasterlain, Claude,</td>
<td>Rational polytherapy in the treatment of cholinergic seizures</td>
<td>09/15/2011</td>
<td>08/31/2016</td>
<td>NIH/NINDS, 1 UO1 NS074926-01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golshani, Peyman, PI</td>
<td>Hippocampal interneuron network dynamics after epileptogenesis</td>
<td>07/01/2012</td>
<td>06/30/2015</td>
<td>VA Merit Review</td>
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<td>Golshani, Peyman, PI</td>
<td>Alterations in inhibitory synaptic input during decision making in mice navigating a virtual reality task</td>
<td>07/01/2012</td>
<td>06/30/2015</td>
<td>Whitehall Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golshani, Peyman, PI</td>
<td>Optogenetic treatment of social behavior in autism</td>
<td>08/01/2013</td>
<td>07/31/2018</td>
<td>NIMH (RO1MH101198-1)</td>
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**Madison**

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<th>Grant/Study Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salinsky, M, Co-investigator Rutecki, P</td>
<td>Psychogenic Non-epileptic Seizures in U.S. Veterans</td>
<td>01/01/2013</td>
<td>12/30/2016</td>
<td>VA CSR&amp;D</td>
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<td>Rutecki, P</td>
<td>Mechanisms of 2DG Anti-epileptic Effects</td>
<td>07/01/2014</td>
<td>06/30/2017</td>
<td>VA BLR&amp;D</td>
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<td>Grant/Study Title</td>
<td>Project Start Date</td>
<td>Project End Date</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Portland</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salinsky, Marty</td>
<td>Psychogenic Seizures in US Veterans</td>
<td>02/01/2013</td>
<td>01/31/2017</td>
<td>VA Merit Review</td>
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<td><strong>Richmond</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Towne, Alan</td>
<td>Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (CENC) Award. Study 1. Longitudinal case-controlled cohort study of OEF-OIF Veterans to evaluate for the late effects of combat-related mTBI.</td>
<td>10/1/14</td>
<td>10/1/19</td>
<td>DOD</td>
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<td>Towne, Alan</td>
<td>A post market, long-term, prospective, observational, multi-site outcome study to follow the clinical course and seizure reduction of patients with drug-resistant, post-traumatic epilepsy who are being treated with adjunctive VNS therapy.</td>
<td>10/1/14</td>
<td>9/30/17</td>
<td>Cyberonics</td>
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<td><strong>San Antonio</strong></td>
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<td>Pugh, Mary Jo</td>
<td>Restructuring Epilepsy Care: Organizational Dynamics and Quality: RECORD Quality</td>
<td>05/01/2012</td>
<td>04/31/2016</td>
<td>VA HSR&amp;D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pugh, Mary Jo</td>
<td>Penetrating Traumatic Brain Injury and Epilepsy in OEF/OIF Veterans</td>
<td>11/01/2013</td>
<td>04/01/2014</td>
<td>Frankel Foundation</td>
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<td><strong>San Francisco</strong></td>
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<td>Hixson, John D</td>
<td>The POEM study: Policy for Optimized Epilepsy Management</td>
<td>03/01/2012</td>
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<td>UCB Pharma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mueller, Susanne</td>
<td>Improved non-invasive Focus Lateralization in Partial Epilepsy with DSASL MRI</td>
<td>1/1/2013</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
<td>UCSF REAC (Research Evaluation and Allocation Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mueller, Susanne</td>
<td>SUDEP Imaging Project</td>
<td>09/01/2014</td>
<td>08/31/2015</td>
<td>Epilepsy Foundation</td>
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<td>Mueller, Susanne</td>
<td>Neurite Orientation Dispersion and Density Imaging (NODDI)</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>Unfunded pilot study</td>
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<td>Parko, Karen (site PI)</td>
<td>Psychogenic Non-epileptic seizures in U.S. Veterans (Co-investigator and site PI)</td>
<td>08/12/2012</td>
<td>08/12/2016</td>
<td>Merit Review Award: Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
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<td>Spain, William</td>
<td>Mechanisms of synaptic integration in central neurons</td>
<td>11/1/2013</td>
<td>10/30/2017</td>
<td>Veterans Administration Merit Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain, William (PI on sub-contract; R.C. Foehring PI on overall project)</td>
<td>Slowly inactivating K+ channels in neocortical pyramidal neurons</td>
<td>07/01/2012</td>
<td>06/30/2017</td>
<td>NIH-NINDS RO1</td>
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<td>Ransom, Christopher</td>
<td>GABA transporter type 1 (GAT1) function in epilepsy</td>
<td>01/01/2012</td>
<td>12/31/2014</td>
<td>Veterans Administration Career Development Award</td>
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**Seattle**

**West Haven**

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<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hamid, Hamada</td>
<td>Psychogenic Nonepileptic Seizures in the VA Healthcare System</td>
<td>07/01/2014</td>
<td>06/30/2015</td>
<td>Veterans Health Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamid, Hamada</td>
<td>Neurocircuitry of Depression in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy</td>
<td>07/01/2012</td>
<td>12/30/2014</td>
<td>Epilepsy Foundation</td>
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<td>Hamid, Hamada</td>
<td>Evaluating VA Subspecialty Traumatic Brain Injury Services</td>
<td>04/01/2012</td>
<td>03/30/2013</td>
<td>Veterans Health Administration</td>
</tr>
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NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The National Advisory Committee is an important part of the ECoE overall team. The National Advisory Committee is responsible for providing guidance and direction to the ECoEs. It will assist in the planning phases of the ECoE to maximize cooperation between the facilities and enhance referral patterns across the VA healthcare system. The National Advisory Committee will also assist in the collaboration between VA sites and affiliate universities. It will establish performance measures with an emphasis on measurable outcomes for the ECoE and will provide oversight of all clinical, educational, and research related activities within the ECoE.

Marc Dichter, MD, PhD, University of Pennsylvania, ECoE Advisory Committee Chair
Michael Amery, Legislative Counsel, American Academy of Neurology
Susan Axelrod, C.U.R.E.
John Booss, MD, American Academy of Neurology
David Cifu, VA Poly-Trauma Centers Director
Tony Coelho, Epilepsy Foundation
Ramon Diaz-Arrastia, MD, Uniformed Service University
LCDR Mill Etienne, MD, MPH, MC, USN, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
Sandy Finucane, Executive Vice President, Epilepsy Foundation
Glenn Graham, MD, VA Deputy Director of Neurology
Leonard Pogach, MD, VA Acting Director of Neurology
COL Jamie B Grimes, MD, MC, USA, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center National Director
Patty Horan, Military Officers Association of America
David Labiner, MD, University of Arizona, National Association of Epilepsy Centers
Richard Mattson, MD, Yale Epilepsy Program
Shane McNamee, MD, VA Poly-Trauma Centers
Angela Ostrom, Government Relations, Epilepsy Foundation
Jack Pellock, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University
Robert Ruff, MD, VA Director of Neurology - Retired
Rawn Sahai, Air Force Veteran
Brien Smith, MD, Spectrum Health Medical Group, Michigan State University
William Theodore, MD, Chief of the Clinical Epilepsy Section, NINDS
Kathy Tortorice, Clinical Pharmacist, VA Pharmacy Benefits Management
CAPT Will Watson, MD, PhD, MC, USN, Vice Chair of Neurology, Uniformed Services University
Michael Flowers, LTCOL, USMC (Retired)
Ann Marie Bezuyten, Director of Special Projects, Anita Kaufmann Foundation
Robert J. Gummit, MD, National Association of Epilepsy Centers President
Phil Gattone, CEO, Epilepsy Foundation
Jan Buelow, VP of Programs & Research, Epilepsy Foundation
Princess Katana, Senior Director for Programs, Epilepsy Foundation
Report of the third meeting of the VA Epilepsy Centers of Excellence (ECoE) National Advisory Board (NAB) on December 6, 2013

The meeting lasted from 9AM to 1PM.

1. Attending:
   Marc Dichter (Chair), Robert Ruff, Brien Smith, Ramon Diaz-Arrastia, Kathy Tortorice, Sandy Finucane, David Labiner, Jack Labiner.

2. The NAB met in a closed session to review the written report and discuss accomplishments and any possible problems. The NAB also reviewed its “mission” with regard to the Epilepsy Centers of Excellence, which was originally outlined at the first advisory meeting in 2011. The committee’s role is to help evaluate the progress made by the ECoEs and help to integrate the program on a national level. The NAB helps to identify those areas most successful and encourage the adoption of these by all of the ECoEs. The NAB also helps identify problem areas that could be remedied and could serve as important cautionary learning exercises for other ECoE sites. The NAB also serves in an advocacy role for individuals with epilepsy and seizures or at risk for those conditions within the VA system.

3. The Advisory Committee felt the new ECoEs were providing an excellent new service for our injured Veterans in multiple dimensions. First, the extent of the problem of epilepsy in our Veterans has been much more clearly defined and quantitated. In addition, multiple gaps in the care of our wounded Veterans with epilepsy were also identified and mechanisms are being formulated for eliminating many of those impediments. With the limited resources made available for these efforts, a “hub and spoke” model of progressively more intense diagnostic and therapeutic interventions was established and the flow of patients with intractable epilepsy through the system was facilitated. Each of the “hubs” was associated with a regional polytrauma center to optimize the ability to reach Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) returning from the Gulf wars who were at major risk for developing posttraumatic epilepsy, a potential lifelong disabling consequence of their injuries. It is estimated that the VA takes care of more than 100,000 Veterans living with epilepsy each year, and it is expected that that number will increase significantly in the next five years. Many of these individuals are not able to have their seizures controlled with available medications and many others in this population might be able to achieve seizure control if they had access to optimal treatments. There is clear evidence from the medical literature that complete, and not merely partial, seizure control is associated with a much higher incidence of return to full time employment and a significantly reduced likelihood of death from seizures, or the syndrome known as sudden unexplained death in epilepsy (SUDEP). The main mission of the new ECoEs is to improve the health and well-being of these Veterans with epilepsy and related disorders. Based on our evaluation, the details of which are below, the successes already accomplished, including the improved care for Veterans, and the potential cost savings derived from reduced medication requirements, reduced emergency room visits, reduced hospitalizations, and even reduced lifetime disability benefits, clearly indicate that the return on investment of the relatively small amount of support this national program receives will likely surpass the costs of the program.

4. Specific accomplishments of the ECoEs in the first five years of their existence include:

   A. Increased the ability of the existing inpatient epilepsy monitoring units to offer state of the art diagnostic evaluations for Veterans with intractable epilepsy or other forms of seizure-like events.
   B. Streamlined the referral of patients in need of these highly specialized services.
   C. Reduced the number of out-of-the-system (contracted) referrals for Veterans with epilepsy or seizure-like spells, thereby saving significant amounts of money for the VA.
   D. Negotiated the “red tape” involved in the transfer of Veterans from their home bases to the centralized facilities.
   E. Improved the care of Veterans with epilepsy in the “spokes” by new educational programs directed at multiple levels – to neurologists, general physicians, physician extenders, and the Veterans and their families.
   F. Developed unique telemedicine programs to reach Veterans in outlying areas that normally would not have access to epilepsy expertise at their local VA facilities.
   G. Developed new VA fellowships to train more specialists in this area.
   H. Developed a new epilepsy patient intake component of the VA’s Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) which will standardize record development for all VA patients with epilepsy, make the intake procedure more efficient, and capture all the relevant information about the VA epilepsy patients. The information captured will be
stored in a database that can be used for both improving Veteran care and also for important clinical research into the causes of the epilepsies and the most effective treatments. This has been a major undertaking. There is no comparable patient intake mechanism/epilepsy database used commonly in the civilian population and the one that has been developed by the VA ECoEs may serve as a national model for this endeavor.

I. Developed several critical clinical research programs (independent of the dedicated clinical funding in the original budget). One such program is differentiating between epilepsy and seizure-like events of other origin that can be disabling components of PTSD, one of the other major illnesses experienced by our Veterans with TBI returning from the Gulf wars. A second is beginning to determine metrics that can be applied to Veterans with epilepsy utilizing CPRS to determine, in real time, where treatments are succeeding and where Veterans are in need of more intense interventions.

J. Each of these activities, and more that I don’t have space to discuss, are occurring in the context of a national collaborative effort among the 16 ECoEs and the many other VA facilities associated with each of those, as well as with the associated polytrauma centers. All of this adds up to significantly improved care for Veterans with traumatic brain injury, PTSD, and epilepsy.

K. Finally, the institution of the new ECoEs has apparently already begun to save money for VA. It has been estimated that, since the establishment of the ECoE, inpatient costs for Veterans with epilepsy may have dropped by more than $14 million, non-VA care costs by more than $5.5 million, and in addition, the ability to make proper diagnoses of non-epileptic events may save the VA $2.6 million in health care costs per year.

5. All of the areas highlighted above have made significant strides, and there is much still to be done. These projects are works in progress, and all need continued support and development. Better outreach to Veterans who are seen outside ECoE sites can improve overall quality of care in VA. Closer interaction with the polytrauma centers and Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) needs fostering. The national consortium needs improved communication and coordination of efforts. More education, especially for the Veterans and their families, needs development and distribution. Connections between the VA efforts and those in the private sector need to be established, with support from VA and potentially third-party grants. These connections should utilize the goals enumerated in the newly released Institute of Medicine report on “Epilepsy Across the Spectrum: Promoting Health and Understanding.” Significant increases in patient oriented research into epilepsy prevention after traumatic brain injury, the older population, and optimization of epilepsy care are critical needs. Finally, the ECoEs need to continue to document both the improvement in Veterans’ care and the cost savings associated with these new efforts, with specific emphasis on the use of non-face-to-face care. ECoEs should continue to identify any “holes” in the system that are preventing optimal care for the greater than 100,000 Veterans with epilepsy currently being treated by the VA.

6. Specific efforts that the NAB would like to see the ECoEs undertake during the next year are outlined below:

A. Productivity measures need further attention to ensure that all sites have processes in place to record workload & productivity and are accurately capturing work performed. Information on standardized best practices that conform to VA policy and accurately capture ECoE workload should be created and distributed.

B. The ECoE’s are beginning to integrate behavioral health into ECoE network, and this needs to be continued and emphasized. Information on what services are available and what percentage of Veterans is able to access is requested.

C. An EMU Diagnosis Database has been established and is operational. The NAB believes consideration should be given to revising the current classification of diagnostic subgroups to better reflect what is being accomplished and the actual determinations made.

D. As outlined above, CPRS template usage has started, and next year the NAB would like to see information on where it is being used, how frequently it is used and any barriers to implementation.

E. ECoEs have implemented a national patient satisfaction survey, which the NAB commends. Patient satisfaction survey results are high and the NAB supports this as a good measure. In the future, other information on satisfaction might be useful. For example, how do these ECoE satisfaction results compare to Neurology or other VA programs and what is current patient wait time to appointment?

F. Family travel support and arrangements for family staying with a patient during EMU stays is an important issue to explore and emphasize at the various ECoE sites. There are third party charities that may be able to help, and some hotel chains have programs to donate “frequent user points.”

G. The NAB also discussed how it might best aid the ECoE and VA by informing and educating others in the professional community, the public, and VA leadership on the ECoE’s substantial successes and accomplishments despite its relatively short operation and limited funding. The NAB regards the ECoE as something that is helping national healthcare and could in some ways serve as a model for healthcare. One way
suggested to inform others of the ECoE’s accomplishments might be for NAB members to distribute copies of the ECoE Annual Report(s).

7. I would be remiss if I did not specifically mention once again the National Advisory Committee’s recognition of the outstanding jobs done first by Dr. Robert Ruff, the National Director for Neurology, in organizing this entire effort, despite his not being himself an epilepsy expert, and the excellent leadership demonstrated by Dr. Karen Parko, who serves as the National Director, elected by her peers, Mr. Ryan Rieger, the National Administrative Director, and each of the regional ECoE Directors.
SOUTHWEST REGION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Dan Lowenstein, UCSF Director of Epilepsy
Dr. Robert Fisher, Stanford Director of Epilepsy
Butch Bottimore, Veteran (Redding, CA)
Michael Scott, Epilepsy Foundation Director
Dr. Kolar Murthy, LA Clinical Neurology
Dr. Raman Sankar, UCLA Professor of Neurology
Dr. Jerome Engel, UCLA Professor of Neurology
James Althouse, Veteran (Sonora, CA)
Susan Pietsch, Epilepsy Foundation Director
Dr. Eli Mizrahi, Baylor Chairman of Neurology Dept
James Zapata, Veteran (Houston, TX)
Donna Stahlhut, Epilepsy Foundation Director
Dr. Kameel Karkar, UTHSC Professor of Neurology
Timothy Tilt, Veteran (San Antonio, TX)
Sindi Rosales, Epilepsy Foundation Director

NORTHEAST REGION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Marshall Balish, DCVAMC
Christopher Bever, VAMS Center of Excellence; VA Maryland HCS; University of Maryland
John Booss, Yale; CA Connecticut HCS
William Culpepper, University of Maryland; VA MS Center of Excellence
Paul Fishman, VA Maryland HCS; University of MD
Lee Ann Kingham, Abilities Network/Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region
Richard Mattson, Yale
Jack Pellock, Virginia Commonwealth University
Marc Testa, Lifebridge Health
Georgette Wertz, Veteran
Mary Wontrop, Abilities Network/Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region
Marshall Balish, DCVAMC

SOUTHEAST REGION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Stephen Nadeau, MD Chief of Neurology, Gainesville – University of Florida Medical Center (Professor of Neurology)
Mohamad Mikati, MD Pediatric Epileptologist, Duke University Medical Center (Professor of Pediatrics and Neurobiology)
Angel Colon-Molero, MD Deputy Chief of Staff, Orlando VA – University of Central Florida College of Medicine
Charles Brock, MD Chief of Neurology, Tampa – University of South Florida College of Medicine (Associate Professor)
Patricia Gibson, MSSW, ACSW President, Epilepsy Foundation of N.C. – Wake Forest University School of Medicine

NORTHWEST REGION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bruce Hermann, University of Wisconsin – Department of Neurology
Brent Hermann, NW Epilepsy Foundation
Llo E. Leppik, University of Minnesota
Vicki Kopplin, Epilepsy Foundation – Minnesota
Dennis Smith, Portland, OR
John Lahman, Veteran
PUBLIC LAW S. 2162

One Hundred Tenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Thursday, the third day of January, two thousand and eight

An Act

To improve the treatment and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Sec. 404. Epilepsy Centers of Excellence.

(a) In General.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 is amended by adding at the end following new section:

'S 7330A. Epilepsy centers of excellence

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—

(1) Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the Veterans’ Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008, the Secretary shall designate at least four but not more than six Department health care facilities as locations for epilepsy centers of excellence for the Department.

(2) Of the facilities designated under paragraph (1), not less than two shall be centers designated under section 7327 of this title.

(3) Of the facilities designated under paragraph (1), not less than two shall be facilities that are not centers designated under section 7327 of this title.

(4) Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary shall establish and operate an epilepsy center of excellence at each location designated under paragraph (1).

(b) DESIGNATION OF FACILITIES.—

(1) In designating locations for epilepsy centers of excellence under subsection (a), the Secretary shall solicit proposals from Department health care facilities seeking designation as a location for an epilepsy center of excellence.

(2) The Secretary may not designate a facility as a location for an epilepsy center of excellence under subsection (a) unless the peer review panel established under subsection (c) has determined under that subsection that the proposal submitted by such facility seeking designation as a location for an epilepsy center of excellence is among those proposals that meet the highest competitive standards of scientific and clinical merit.

(3) In choosing from among the facilities meeting the requirements of paragraph (2), the Secretary shall also consider appropriate geographic distribution when designating the epilepsy centers of excellence under subsection (a).

(c) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—

(1) The Under Secretary for Health shall establish a peer review panel to assess the scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are submitted to the Secretary S. 2162—18 for the designation of epilepsy centers of excellence under this section.
(A) The membership of the peer review panel shall consist of experts on epilepsy, including post-traumatic epilepsy.

(B) Members of the peer review panel shall serve for a period of no longer than two years, except as specified in subparagraph (C).

(C) Of the members first appointed to the panel, one half shall be appointed for a period of three years and one half shall be appointed for a period of two years, as designated by the Under Secretary at the time of appointment.

(3) The peer review panel shall review each proposal submitted to the panel by the Under Secretary for Health and shall submit its views on the relative scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal to the Under Secretary.

(4) The peer review panel shall, in conjunction with the national coordinator designated under subsection (e), conduct regular evaluations of each epilepsy center of excellence established and operated under subsection (a) to ensure compliance with the requirements of this section.

(5) The peer review panel shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

(d) EPILEPSY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE DEFINED.—

In this section, the term 'epilepsy center of excellence' means a health care facility that has (or in the foreseeable future can develop) the necessary capacity to function as a center of excellence in research, education, and clinical care activities in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy and has (or may reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

(1) An affiliation with an accredited medical school that provides education and training in neurology, including an arrangement with such school under which medical residents receive education and training in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy (including neurosurgery).

(2) The ability to attract the participation of scientists who are capable of ingenuity and creativity in health care research efforts.

(3) An advisory committee composed of Veterans an appropriate health care and research representatives of the facility and of the affiliated school or schools to advise the directors of such facility and such center on policy matters pertaining to the activities of the center during the period of the operation of such center.

(4) The capability to conduct effectively evaluations of the activities of such center.

(5) The capability to assist in the expansion of the Department’s use of information systems and databases to improve the quality and delivery of care for Veterans enrolled within the Department’s health care system.

(6) The capability to assist in the expansion of the Department telehealth program to develop, transmit, monitor, and review neurological diagnostic tests.

(7) The ability to perform epilepsy research, education, and clinical care activities in collaboration with Department medical facilities that have centers for research, education, and clinical care activities on complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries established under section 7327 of this title.

(e) NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR EPILEPSY PROGRAMS.—

(1) To assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health in carrying out this section, the Secretary shall designate an individual in the Veterans Health Administration to act as a national coordinator for epilepsy programs of the Veterans Health Administration.

(2) The duties of the national coordinator for epilepsy programs shall include the following:
(A) To supervise the operation of the centers established pursuant to this section.

(B) To coordinate and support the national consortium of providers with interest in treating epilepsy at Department health care facilities lacking such centers in order to ensure better access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, research, clinical care, and education for traumatic brain injury and epilepsy throughout the health care system of the Department.

(C) To conduct, in conjunction with the peer review panel established under subsection (c), regular evaluations of the epilepsy centers of excellence to ensure compliance with the requirements of this section.

(D) To coordinate (as part of an integrated national system) education, clinical care, and research activities within all facilities with an epilepsy center of excellence.

(E) To develop jointly a national consortium of providers with interest in treating epilepsy at Department health care facilities lacking an epilepsy center of excellence in order to ensure better access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, research, clinical care, and education for traumatic brain injury and epilepsy throughout the health care system of the Department. Such consortium should include a designated epilepsy referral clinic in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(3) In carrying out duties under this subsection, the national coordinator for epilepsy programs shall report to the official of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for neurology.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) There are authorized to be appropriated $6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013 for the support of the clinical care, research, and education activities of the epilepsy centers of excellence established and operated pursuant to subsection (a)(2).

(2) There are authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year after fiscal year 2013 such sums as may be necessary for the support of the clinical care, research, and education activities of the epilepsy centers of excellence established and operated pursuant to subsection (a)(2).

(3) The Secretary shall ensure that funds for such centers are designated for the first three years of operation as a special purpose program for which funds are not allocated through the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system.

(4) In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated under paragraphs (1) and (2) for a fiscal year, the Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from other funds appropriated generally for the Department medical services account and medical and prosthetics research account, as appropriate, such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate.

(5) In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated under paragraphs (1) and (2) for a fiscal year, there are authorized to S. 2162—20 be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to fund the national coordinator established by subsection (e)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 73 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7330 the following new item: “7330A. Epilepsy centers of excellence.”