

# Collaborating with patients in recovery:

## Development of an Opioid Addiction and Recovery Veteran Engagement Board

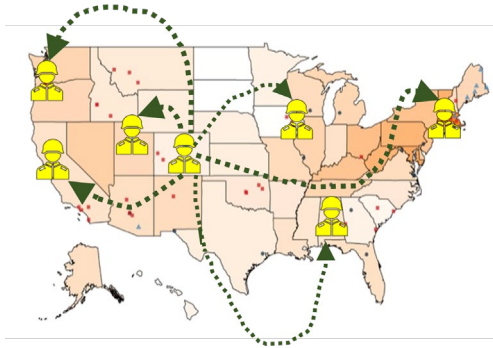
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### INTRODUCTION

The number of Veterans receiving treatment for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) nearly tripled from 2013 to 2017.<sup>i</sup>

The VA is addressing this increase by funding projects that increase treatments for OUD in a variety of settings.

The Opioid Addiction and Recovery Veteran Engagement Board (OAR-VEB) was developed to provide input to these pragmatic projects.



### METHOD

Our team worked with local contacts at six other VA locations to recruit potential members for OAR-VEB.

Recruitment strategies included:

- VA and non-VA outreach
- Advertisements
- Email blasts

Wyse, J.J., Gordon, A.J., Dobscha, S.K, Morasco, B.J., Tiffany, E., Drexler, K. (2018). *Substance Abuse*. 39(2) 139-144.

**Patient engagement boards can support pragmatic research by integrating the voices of patients in recovery. Local relationships are critical to identifying potential members.**

### RESULTS

- 22 Veterans expressed interest, 13 were invited to join
- Most (17) of the interested Veterans were identified through local VA outreach.
  - Recruitment took place over three months and COVID-19 impacted the kick-off plan.
  - The team reached out to recruits every two-weeks to update them on the process.
  - Orientation calls were held in May and June and the board began meeting with investigators in July.

### CONCLUSIONS

- Ads, email blasts, and reaching out to outside organizations did not yield a high response.
- Identifying local individuals to assist with outreach was key for recruitment.
- Ongoing communication in a method that the participants preferred (text messaging and phone calls) sustained engagement.

### DISCUSSION

- Patient engagement boards can be time-consuming to develop but can support pragmatic researchers who want to integrate patient voice but do not have the resources to hire patient consultants.

