

Appendix F:
Fellowship Brochure



**The VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment
at the VISN 5 Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center**

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn5/research/Fellowship.asp>

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Overview of Our Program

The VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment at the Capitol Health Care Network [Veteran Integrated Service Network 5 (VISN 5)] Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) offers a post-doctoral Fellowship in Clinical Psychology and a post-residency Fellowship in Psychiatry. The goal of these two-year Fellowships is to train psychologists and psychiatrists to become leading clinicians and clinical researchers in the area of serious mental illness.

Our Program provides Fellows an outstanding collaborative and interdisciplinary setting in which to pursue advanced research training in psychosocial intervention development and testing; comorbid conditions and health behavior change; dissemination and implementation of health services; special populations; and psychopharmacology and neurobiological bases of serious mental illness. Fellows receive intensive mentoring from MIRECC investigators and pursue their research interests while learning to apply advanced biostatistical methods and develop skills in manuscript submission and grant writing. Fellows gain advanced clinical training in the delivery of evidence-based practices for Veterans with serious mental illness in a range of service delivery settings.

Our Fellowship Program has clinical supervisors who work throughout the mental health and substance abuse programs offered at the VAMHCS; fellows can design clinical experience that fit in with their training needs. In line with our adherence to a scientist-practitioner model, Fellows integrate their clinical and research training and use research as an opportunity both to further develop their clinical skills as well as contribute to the evidence base of services for individuals with mental illness.

Our site is one of 25 Advanced Fellowship sites located at MIRECCs across the country that are linked via a Hub Site that coordinates activities electronically and by two-way interactive videoconference for learning and information sharing. The Hub Site provides educational opportunities and administrative support to our Fellows in all aspects of their training and career development over the course of their participation in the Fellowship.

VA Capitol Health Care Network (VISN 5)

VISN 5 serves Veterans from the entire state of Maryland, and portions of Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, as well as the District of Columbia. Fellows' offices and research activities are housed in the Baltimore VA Medical Center, located in downtown Baltimore and adjoining the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Medical Center.

Fellowship Goals & Objectives

The primary goal of the our Fellowship Program is to develop outstanding healthcare system and academic leaders who will be experts in evidence-based practice, research methods, and training in order to improve the lives of Veterans with serious mental illness. This goal is achieved by providing Fellows with advanced clinical and research training through supervised and mentored experiences and cutting-edge educational opportunities. Successful graduates of the program pursue careers in academic research and education in mental health, as well as leadership careers that emphasize education and clinical contributions in mental health in VA settings, local communities, and state run mental health systems. In particular, our Program aims to train Fellows for academic and leadership careers in within the VA Mental Health Service system.

Program Structure

There are three main components of the Fellowship program: research, educational, and clinical activities. Patient-oriented research and educational activities comprise the majority of the Fellowship training, while 25% of the training is devoted to supervised direct patient clinical care. These activities are outlined in detail below. The Fellowship Program contains a didactic component which provides key core content on the three main components of the Fellowship program. Fellows are linked to other sites by means of a monthly Video Teleconference (V-Tel) seminar hosted by the Hub Site. This seminar provides an in-depth overview of key topics in mental health research and clinical practice by experts in the field.

Training Experiences

Although Fellows establish individual goals and timelines in collaboration with their mentors at the beginning of the Fellowship program, there is a core set of clinical, research, and educational goals that should be achieved within the timeframe of the Fellowship Program. These expectations will be attained through the specific training experiences provided by the Fellowship program. Successful completion of these goals indicates that Fellows demonstrate competency in the research, educational, and clinical activities listed below. Mentors assess the progress of each Fellow at regular intervals. The specific training experiences and associated goals are as follows:

(1) Clinical Goals

- a. Receive supervised training in advanced clinical practice within the MIRECC's specialty area. Such training should include involvement in direct provision of care to patients. In most settings, it is expected that this care will be provided in an interprofessional team context, and that Fellows will receive training in concepts of interprofessional care, its applicability in mental health settings, and skills for becoming an effective interprofessional team member.
- b. Receive training in providing clinical supervision to more junior trainees in the Fellow's discipline; this training will include learning supervisory concepts, providing direct clinical supervision, and receiving supervision of that supervision.
- c. Use current clinical research findings to enhance patient care by incorporating evidence-based approaches into assessment, treatment planning, treatment implementation, and evaluation of treatment outcomes.
- d. Apply statistical methodologies to enhance clinical decision-making and receive supervision on use of such methodologies as applied to clinical decision-making with specific patients receiving care from the Fellow.
- e. Obtain training in complex ethical and legal issues regarding service provision within the MIRECC's specialty area and receive supervision on applying this knowledge to clinical decision-making with specific patients receiving care from the Fellow.
- f. Develop the ability to identify areas in their own clinical practice as part of the MIRECC Fellowship where the evidence-base is insufficient to guide clinical decision-making and develop the ability to generate research questions and methodologies that, if conducted, would have the potential to expand the relevant evidence base in the area of clinical service delivery.
- g. Obtain training in using advanced clinical technologies in mental health practice, such as teleconsultation.

Through the clinical component of their Fellowship Program, Fellows gain tools crucial to skilled mental health clinical care. Through specialized seminars and mentorship, Fellows increase their understanding of the legal and ethical issues involved in clinical practice in mental health. They also enhance their knowledge of advanced clinical approaches in mental health, such as telepsychiatric consultation, the use of cutting-edge neurochemical, neuroimaging, and the identification, evaluation, and selection of best clinical assessment measures. Additionally, they receive training in statistical

methods and procedures that enhance clinical decision-making. Fellows also gain: experience in providing clinical supervision and advice to trainees and increase their understanding of the principles of co-morbidity and how they affect clinical practice. Fellows also increase their ability to apply principles of evidence-based medicine to day-to-day clinical practice and to direct mental health research through their clinical experiences. The Fellowship program encourages clinical experiences that inform the Fellows' Research.

(2) Research Goals

- a. Review literature and define a specific research question within the MIRECC's specialty area.
- b. Design research project.
- c. Obtain IRB approval.
- d. Collect data.
- e. Analyze data.
- f. Write-up and present the findings of the research project.
- g. Submit a minimum of two publications and be first-author on one of these.
- h. Understand how project relates to obtaining subsequent funding.
- i. Complete a draft grant application.

In designing and conducting a clinical research project, Fellows gain knowledge and experience in advanced methodological and statistical approaches to mental health research; in-depth literature review; knowledge about effectively designing a research investigation; increased understanding of IRB roles and responsibilities; and increased understanding of the legal and ethical issues involved in human subject research. Fellows also gain knowledge about accessing and using VA and other mental health electronic databases for research purposes, increased skills in collecting empirical data, knowledge and experience in advanced statistical analyses of data, and experience in preparing and submitting a publication about research findings. Finally, Fellows will gain increased understanding about the relationship of research investigation to obtaining subsequent funding, increased knowledge of funding mechanisms and career development research awards, and experience in preparing grant applications.

(3) Educational Goals

- a. Observe experts who provide effective mental health education to colleagues, trainees, staff, patients, and families using state-of-the-art educational techniques.
- b. Teach/present to colleagues, staff, trainees, patients, families and members of the community about their research and other specific mental health topics.
- c. Receive supportive, constructive feedback on teaching strengths and areas for improvement.
- d. Identify and describe the most recent developments in translational research.
- e. Participate and receive feedback during the second year in mentoring first year Fellows in research, educational, and clinical activities.

- f. Assist with one of the video teleconference (V-Tel) seminars and associated module.
- g. Present research findings at a national meeting.
- h. Obtain an introduction to Telemedicine procedures in Mental Health (V-Tel seminar).
- i. Obtain an introduction to video streaming technology procedures (V-Tel seminar).

These educational training activities provide opportunities for Fellows to gain knowledge and experience related to all aspects of effective teaching and translational research. They acquire knowledge and skills in the most recent advances in education and teaching through observing and participating in mentored teaching activities using current technology at their respective MIRECC sites. Fellows are provided with opportunities to expand their experience in using the latest educational tools such as on-line lectures, video-presentations, and chat rooms. Fellows are introduced to and obtain experience in the procedures involved in telemedicine, the use of video streaming technology, and video conferencing. Additionally, Fellows increase their experience in the supervising and advising others in research, educational, and clinical activities. Through skills obtained in translational research and use of state-of-the-art educational tools, Fellows also enhance their abilities to disseminate research findings in a public forum and to a wide range of audiences effectively.

Requirements for Completion

By the end of the Fellowship Program, Fellows pursuing academic clinical research careers should be ready to submit applications for career development awards. In particular, Fellows should be ready to apply for a VA career development award, a NIH K-Award, or other appropriate clinical research grants. Additionally, Fellows ought to be ready to pursue entry-level leadership roles, which integrate state-of-the-art research, education, and clinical approaches to mental health in the VA healthcare system and other academic institutions.

Facility and Training Resources

The didactic component takes place over the 10 months of the academic year, from October, 1st through the end of June of the following year and starts up again in October. The didactic component provides key core information on the research, educational and clinical components of the Fellowship program. Fellows are encouraged to attend relevant seminars, presentations and courses that will facilitate their research, clinical and educational goals. This core content insures that all Fellows have a fundamental knowledge of key content areas essential for the pursuit of leadership roles in mental health. Additionally, key information is presented through monthly V-tel seminars. Additional information on these and other important topics also are provided on-line on the Fellowship website as videos or PowerPoint presentations. Thus, each key topic presented in the seminar series is accompanied by a module with

more specific details available on-line. Each site contributes to one or more of the V-Tel seminars, and the associated modules, in which they have significant expertise.

Administration Policies and Procedures

The term of the VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment is full-time for two years beginning on or about Labor Day and ending on or about that day two years later. There is funding available for these 2 full-time positions and the current stipend is \$45,961 per annum. State and Federal income tax and FICA are withheld from residents' checks. Annual and sick leave are accrued at the rate of 4 hours per pay period and the Fellows are entitled to 10 federal holidays per year. Five days of additional authorized absence may be approved for attendance at conferences, workshops, or other educational activities. Fellows may also apply for up to \$500 of tuition expenses for training or conference experiences consistent with their training goals. Fellows are eligible for federal health insurance but not life insurance or retirement programs. Procedures for due process in case of problematic performance are in place, as are grievance procedures, both for Fellows and psychology staff. A copy of these documents will be provided upon the start of Fellowship. Our privacy policy is clear: we will collect no personal information about you when you visit our website.

Statement of nondiscrimination

Equal opportunity laws and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations prohibit discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), age, sex, handicap or reprisal. This applies to all programs or activities conducted by VHA. This policy establishes a civil rights administrative complaint procedure to process allegations of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, LEP, age, sex, handicap, or reprisal. A combination of procedures are modified as outlined in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and VA Policy as outlined in Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Chapter 1, Parts 15, 18, and 38.

EEO, Diversity Statement

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity (EEO), promoting diversity and inclusion, and resolving workplace conflict constructively to maintain a high performing workforce in service to our Nation's Veterans. To that end, the Department will vigorously enforce all applicable Federal EEO laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and Management Directives to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace for all VA employees. For additional information, please consult the VA EEO Policy at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/statement.aspx> or contact the VAMHCS EEO office.

We are committed to ensuring a range of diversity among within our Fellowship and welcome applications from candidates representing different geographic areas, ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, disabilities, and life experiences.

Psychology Resident Applicants

Psychology Resident Applicants must have graduated from an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited doctoral program in clinical or counseling psychology (or be on track to complete their graduate program prior to beginning the Fellowship), must have completed an APA-accredited internship, and must be U.S. citizens. Successful applicants typically have substantial research and clinical experience in the area of adult serious mental illness and plan to pursue a career focused on research. Individuals who are interested in applying for the Fellowship should contact Melanie Bennett, PhD, at Melanie.Bennett@va.gov or (410) 637-1859. The current stipend rate is \$45,961 for first year Fellows.

Post-Residency Fellowship Applicants

Post-Residency Fellowship Applicants must have completed Accrediting Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) accredited residency training, must be either board certified or actively pursuing board certification, and specifically interested in pursuing a clinical research career focused on psychiatric disorders and associated conditions. Applicants must also have an active, unrestricted U.S. license to practice. International medical graduates must also have a current visa and an Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certificate that is valid indefinitely. Applicants on a J-1 visa must also have current ECFMG sponsorship. Those who are interested in applying for a Post-Residency Fellowship should contact Seth Himelhoch, M.D., MPH at Seth.Himehoch@va.gov. Stipends will be based on years of previously completed residency training accredited by the ACGME and index rates approved at the respective VA facility and affiliated university. More information about the VA Special Fellowship Program in Advanced Psychiatry and Psychology can be found on the national MIRECC website at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/mirecc-Fellowship.asp>.

Local Information

The VA Medical Center in downtown Baltimore is located on the West side of the city about 4 blocks from Camden Yards and Ravens Stadium. We are in walking distance to the Inner Harbor, the Hippodrome, the Walters Art Museum, and various historic landmarks. Baltimore has an active live music scene, interesting neighborhoods with unique shopping, and a vital downtown arts program (www.baltimore.org).

The surrounding area offers access to the Shenandoah Mountains, a variety of National and State Parks, and various historic sites. The Baltimore VAMC is a 40-minute drive from downtown Washington, DC