

VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment at the Capitol Health Care Network Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center

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

Fellowship Director: Melanie Bennett, PhD

Melanie.Bennett@va.gov; mbennett@som.umaryland.edu

The VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment at the Capitol Health Care Network (VISN 5) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) has two 2-year fellowship positions: one position for a **Physician Fellow** from psychiatry, neurology, radiology, internal medicine, or other areas of medicine and one position for a **Allied Health Fellow** from clinical psychology, counseling psychology, social work, nursing, or pharmacy.

Our program trains fellows to become successful researchers whose work increases access to effective mental health services for all Veterans who need them. People living with mental health conditions face stigma, discrimination, poverty, homelessness, lack of access to health care, and health disparities that are enormous barriers to recovery. We are clinician researchers who are committed to addressing this through innovative applied research and resource development. Our research program addresses some of the most important mental health services research priorities within VA: evaluating peer-delivered mental health services to support their implementation and dissemination; determining effective strategies for engaging Veterans in mental health services and ensuring that those services are personally meaningful; developing interventions that promote holistic and self-directed recovery and by addressing the intersections of gender, age, Veteran identity and other social identities with mental health and healthcare; actively involving Veterans who may benefit from specialized mental health services; and working towards reducing suicide through better identification of and engagement with those at highest risk.

Fellows develop **independent programs of research** that address these and other high priority areas. We actively mentor and support fellows in writing and obtaining mentored early career investigator awards including VA Career Development and NIH K Awards (6 awards in the last 7 years) in areas of great importance to VA and Veteran mental health. Fellows devote time to supervised delivery of mental health services, both to identify important clinical questions and to experience the challenges and successes related to **translating scientific findings into their practice**. Didactic offerings offer focused learning in biostatistical methods, health informatics, and grant writing alongside opportunities to develop and apply knowledge to support the **equity and empowerment of people living with mental health conditions**. Fellows spend approximately 65% of their time in research-related research and clinical activities, 25% in clinical service and training activities, and 10% in didactic and administrative activities. We are committed to supporting diversity and seek applications from candidates representing different geographic areas, ages, gender identities, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, disabilities, disciplines, and life experiences.

Established in 2003, we are part of the national VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment. Our Center is located at the Baltimore VA Medical Center and is affiliated with the University of Maryland School of Medicine, making it an outstanding collaborative and interdisciplinary setting. Detailed information can be found on the national MIRECC website at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/mirecc-fellowship.asp> and at the VISN 5 website at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn5/>.

Candidate Requirements. A successful candidate will have graduate training in applied research in mental health and recovery, will have actively participated in research with resultant presentations and publications, will demonstrate a commitment to the scientist-practitioner model, will have training in empirically supported treatments for mental illness, and will demonstrate a commitment to serving Veterans. We are especially interested in applicants who want to develop research in evidence-based service delivery for Veterans experiencing early episode psychosis; the intersection of mental illness and substance use disorders; mental illness and aging; stigma and treatment engagement; sleep, circadian science, and mental health recovery; and applications of measurement-based care to improve outcomes for Veterans living with mental illness.

Physician applicants must have completed ACGME-accredited training, be board eligible or board certified, and have an active, unrestricted U.S. license to practice. International medical graduates must also have a current visa and an ECFMG certificate that is valid indefinitely. Applicants on a J-1 visa must also have current ECFMG sponsorship. Eligible psychologists and allied health professionals must be U.S. citizens. Psychologist applicants must have graduated from an American Psychological Association (APA) or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited doctoral program in clinical or counseling psychology (or be on track to complete graduate training prior to beginning fellowship) and must have completed an APA- or CPA-accredited internship. For eligibility requirements for other Allied Health disciplines, contact Dr. Sherry Beaudreau at Sherry.Beaudreau@va.gov or Dr. Nathan Hantke at hantke@ohsu.edu.

Application Procedures. Applications are being accepted through December 1, 2024. We will review completed applications and extend interview invitations during late December 2024 and early January 2025. Offers will be extended in late January and early February 2025. All applicants should submit (1) A letter of interest that outlines career goals, research interests, and goodness of fit with our program; (2) A current curriculum vitae; (3) Official graduate transcripts; (4) A signed letter from your graduate program that lists date of dissertation proposal, anticipated or actual date of dissertation defense, and anticipated or actual date of graduation; (5) Three signed letters of recommendation, one of which must be from an internship supervisor. Psychologist applicants should submit these materials through the APPA CAS portal (<http://appic.org/AAP-APPA/APPA-Postdoc-Application-Information>). All other applicants should email these materials directly to Dr. Bennett. All questions and inquiries should be sent via email to Dr. Bennett at Melanie.Bennett@va.gov.