Q&A and Resources

**VA Whole Health Systems June 13, 2019 Webinar**

Guest Presenters Kavitha Reddy, MD & Lauri Phillips, RDN, LD joined the ACIH Clinical, Education and Research Working Groups for a presentation and discussion about the successes and challenges of the VA’s Whole Health program. They were generous in their time, and provided additional resources following the webinar responding to people’s questions. Other participants also suggested resources, and those are included at the bottom of this document.

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For more information, visit the ACIH website: [https://integrativehealth.org](https://integrativehealth.org)

Q: The VA hiring process can be a bit challenging. Are there specific titles to use for any of the jobs that may be available for the Whole Health initiative and specifically, the CIH program?

- Health coaches (may be under social science program specialist)
- Whole health partners (may be under social services assistant)
- Yoga and Tai Chi instructors (may be under recreation assistant)
- Program managers may be under specific disciplines as we often post to many different types of providers (psychologist, nurse, dietitian, OT, PT, etc)

Q: Are all of the VA standards/protocols/job descriptions available online? Would love it if you could share for acupuncture, massage therapy, yoga, Tai Chi, other CIH professions.

They are available on our internal VA sharepoint. Actual position descriptions and functional statements for those outside of VA shared as links in this document.

Below are FS and position descriptions for many positions, not all.

**FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT GS 11 - Full Performance Grade Acupuncturist:**

Clinician

Acupuncture can go to gs 13 if supervisory and coordinating a whole program

**FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT Massage Therapist, GS-5 (Entry Level):**

Clinician
MASSAGE THERAPIST For Community Care

Massage therapy can be gs 5-9

Tai Chi and Qi Gong PD

Yoga

Whole health coach PD

This is actually a gs 7-9 PD, with hopes they would be certified by NBHWC by the gs 9 level.

Whole health partner PD (outreach and navigators in the whole health system, preference for Veterans to do this role, as well as Veteran volunteers)

Minimum standards: listed below and then cut/paste for acupuncture. These are the standards we are using for community care. They will be similar for internal, just a few tweaks.

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minimum standards:

- **Acupuncturist** (Board certified, receipt of a current and unrestricted license to practice acupuncture in the state where the provider is delivering services. This requirement is waived for those states and territories that do not provide state licensure for acupuncture.)

  - **Physician (MD, DO)**
    - Practitioner holds a valid, current, and unrestricted medical license in the state in which the provider is delivering services. Medical acupuncture must be allowed under the state’s scope of practice and physician must meet state board requirements to practice acupuncture. This requirement is waived for those states and territories that do not provide state licensure for acupuncture.
    - Practitioners must have completed a 120-hour training program given or approved by an accredited medical school or chiropractic school or the amount of hours required by the state’s licensing body, whichever is greater. Self-study is acceptable for this part.
    - Not identified on the List of Excluded Individuals and Entities by Health and Human Services.

- **Chiropractor** (Board certified, receipt of a current and unrestricted chiropractic license in the state in which the provider is delivering service. Chiropractic acupuncture must be allowed under the state’s scope of practice and chiropractor must meet state chiropractic board requirements to practice acupuncture.

  - Not identified on the List of Excluded Individuals and Entities by Health and Human Services.
Q: Where can we find information about the various certification programs?

We don't create our own internal standards for certification, we go with national standards. Minimum standards that we have for our VA clinicians available here:

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (Meditation) Standards
- Tai Chi and Qi Gong Instructor Standards
- Hypnotherapy Standards
- Biofeedback Standards

Q: If it’s at all possible to pass along any of the credentialing descriptions that were discussed, I’d greatly appreciate it.

Position descriptions and functional statements shared as links in this document.

Q: Can Acupuncturists offer biofeedback/neurofeedback to VA CCN patients? Would that have to be approved separately from acupuncture treatment?

All acupuncturists would need to check with their state licensing boards to see if they have scope to provide other CIH approaches. For CCN, they would have to be approved separately, as there are separate Standard episodes of care for each of these approaches and need separate approval.

Q: In conversations with various people I find that many are not aware of all this excellent work that the VA has undertaken with implementing CIH. What are you doing to get the word out? This is such a good example for others to follow.

Connecting with media and social media with flagships, looking for partnerships in the community; also working on national campaigns, public service announcements; any ideas you have are welcome. We are updating our external facing OPCC&CT website, and we would like to present on other organizations calls and at conferences.

Q: Are there specific legislative efforts that are currently being supported by the VA that our various organizations should be aware of?

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, Whole Veteran Act, Mission ACT (this is the biggest one right now).

Q: Do any of your whole person approaches include the Trauma-Informed approach?

Many of our CIH instructors are trained in trauma-informed curriculum and adaptive training
Q: Could you provide links to the Vetted Free Online CIH Resources?

   Here is the link:
   https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/Mobile_Apps_and_Online_Tools.asp

Q: What is the IHI Learning Collaborative that was mentioned during the presentation?

   The institute for healthcare improvement:
   http://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/IHIWhitePapers/TheBreakthroughSeriesIHIsCollaborativeModelforAchievingBreakthroughImprovement.aspx

   We used this collaborative model for bringing sites together to have shared learning, followed by action periods and virtual forums for learning as well.

Q: Some have found the VHA website difficult to navigate due to terminology. For those of us wanting to set up programs locally, it would be helpful to know:

   - job descriptions, fee schedule or salaries for complementary therapists. Cannot share fee schedules, however, will have that data after MISSION act takes effect.

   - policies/procedures addressing use of complementary therapies in inpatient and outpatient settings. We do not have specific policies for implementing CIH, other than the CIH directive.

   - some of the evidence maps are a few years old; are there plans to update them over time?

   Newer mindfulness evidence map just published, although it is 2017.

   We will ask our leadership about plans to update these maps over time. We certainly want to have the most updated.

   Hypnosis, biofeedback, and guided imagery just completed, but it is only available on the VA intranet right now.

   - our local healthcare system is introducing Epic EMR this year. Do you have advice for how integrative medicine can fit into this system? We are trying to transition to Cerner as the new EHR and asking for the system to be built to accommodate this model of care. I have used EPIC myself, and it is system set up to optimize billing, not necessarily pcc. I do know it allows you to set up personal templates, though. Is it possible to set up a system to do personal health planning? We are happy to share our template.

   Resources from slides

   Redesigning Health Care to Promote One’s Whole Health: An Overview of the Whole Health System

   Whole Health Comes to Life: An animated motion story depicting the Whole Health journey of Veterans.
The Pathway to Whole Health: A look at peers reaching out to Veterans across the country and the impact it has.

Skill Building to Promote Wellbeing: Hearing from Veterans, leaders and staff across VA, who benefit from skill building and support in their self-care.

The Whole Health Approach to Clinical Care: Clinicians and Veterans share how this approach to clinical care has impacted them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgNzmQBGeHU

Whole Health Library https://wholehealth.wisc.edu

https://www.hsrdr.easential.va.gov/publications/esp/reports.cfm

SEOC’s developed https://seoc.va.gov/

Whole Health – OPCC&CT Internet Site
https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/explore/about-whole-health.asp

Mobile Apps and Online Tools: https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/Mobile_Apps_and_Online_Tools.asp


Evidence reviews and maps have been completed in acupuncture, yoga, Tai Chi, mindfulness, and massage. For more information visit: http://www.hsrdr.easential.va.gov/publications/esp/reports.cfm

List of various Whole Health and CIH research articles/reports: https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/clinicians/research/evidence-based-research.asp

Integrative Health Coordinating Center: vhaopccitintegrativehealth@va.gov

Resources provided from participants:

Thought those that signed up might be interested in these two open access articles from the recent JACM Special Issue on Multimodal Approaches in Integrative Health: Whole Persons, Whole Practices, Whole Systems:

[COMMENTARY] Whole Health in the Whole System of the Veterans Administration: How Will We Know We Have Reached This Future State? (Tracy Gaudet, Benjamin Kligler)

[ORIGINAL RESEARCH] What Should Health Care Systems Consider When Implementing Complementary and Integrative Health: Lessons from Veterans Health Administration (Stephanie L. Taylor, Rendelle Bolton, Alexis Huynh, Kelly Dvorin, A. Rani Elwy, Barbara G. Bokhour, Allison Whitehead, and Benjamin Kligler)

The whole issue is here: https://www.liebertpub.com/toc/acm/25/S1
- From John Weeks

Other outreach resources: MOAA, VFW, American Legion, military family associations, and the hospital handbook project [www.thehospitalhandbook.com](http://www.thehospitalhandbook.com)

- From Megan Gale

Staffing handbook for the MTs at the VA

- From Niki Munk