

# OLDER VETERAN ENGAGEMENT TEAM

November 28, 2017

New Member  
Orientation  
Manual

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This manual was developed using materials from two sources:

- the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), published by the Department of Health & Human Services. [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov), and
- the Denver COIN/MIRECC Veteran Research Engagement Board.

## **Today's Agenda**

Item	Time	Team Leader
Welcome and gathering	9:00- 9:15	
Introductions	9:15- 9:45	Hope Adams
Orientation to the GRECC and OVET <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vision, Mission and Goals</li><li>• Meetings</li><li>• Discussion</li></ul>	9:45- 10:20	Kady Nearing and Dan Matlock
BREAK	10:20- 10:30	
Tips for being an Engaged Team Member	10:30- 11:10	Paige
Creating a Mission and Rules of Engagement	11:10-11:50	Paige
Establishing standing meeting time and location, orientation evaluation	11:50- 12	Kady

### **GRECC Team**

Daniel Matlock, MD, MPH – partner in creating OVET  
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Kathryn Nearing, PhD, MA – partner in creating OVET  
([kathryn.nearing@ucdenver.edu](mailto:kathryn.nearing@ucdenver.edu); 303-724-7186)

Paige Backlund, PhD – professional facilitator with experience facilitating other veteran engagement teams  
([BacklundP@coloradohealthinstitute.org](mailto:BacklundP@coloradohealthinstitute.org))

Hope Adams, MPHc – graduate assistant

## **Introduction to the GRECC Team**

*Team Activity: Introduce Your Neighbor!*

Take some time to talk with the person on your right. Ask him or her the following questions. Be ready to introduce him/her to the rest of the team!

**1. Name. Nickname?**

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**2. Veteran or Caregiver?**

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**3. Branch of the Military?**

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**4. Are you a microwave or a slow cooker?**

- **Microwaves:** Are you the type of person who likes to get things done quickly?
- **Slow Cookers:** Are you the type of person who likes to take the time to consider all of the information before forming an opinion and making a decision?

**5. A. What is one thing that you have done that you think that no one else in this room has done?**

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## **What the Heck is a GRECC?**

Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECCs) are United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) centers of excellence focused on aging. They were established by Congress in 1975 in order to improve the health and health care of older Veterans. They have three main missions:

**1. RESEARCH:** Build new knowledge through research

**2. EDUCATION:** Ensure that VA staff are educated about aging-related issues

**3. CLINICAL:** Improve healthcare through the development of new clinical programs

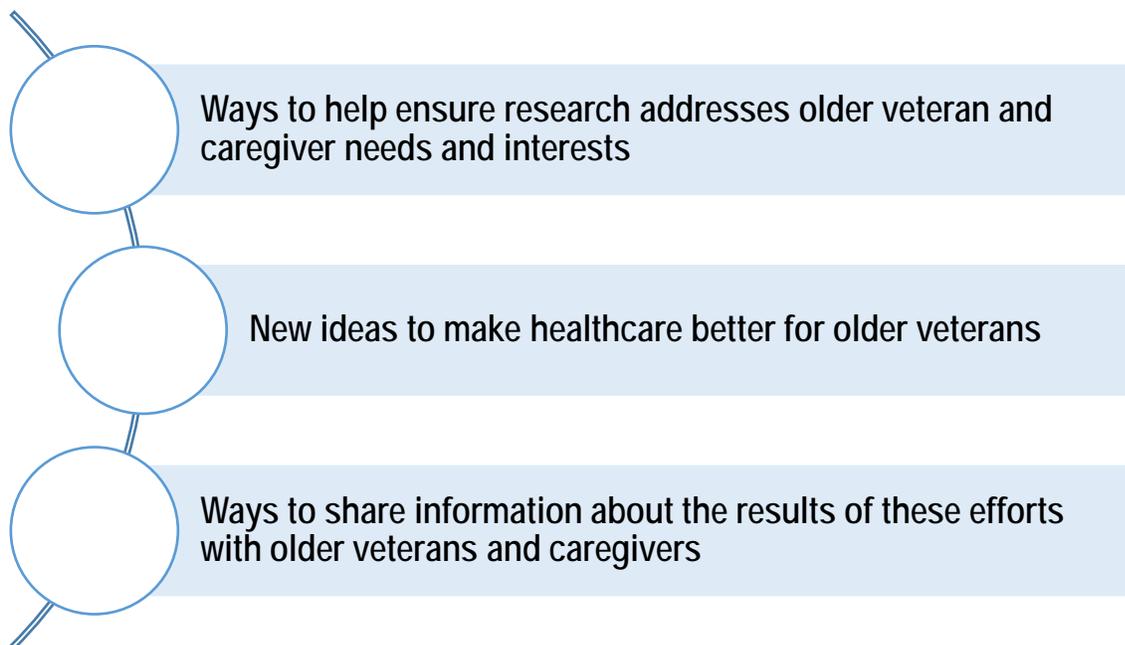
## **Our GRECC – the Eastern Colorado Health Care System GRECC**

We are a partnership between the Denver VA Medical Center and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. We were the first new GRECC in many years and received funding in 2014.

To ensure that the voice of those we hope to serve informs our work, we are forming an *Older Veteran Engagement Team (OVET)*. OVET members will be older veterans and caregivers of older veterans.

We hope to engage a very diverse group who can bring a variety of life and military experiences to bear on issues of importance to aging veterans and caregivers.

OVET will meet monthly to provide feedback and perspectives on:



## **What the Heck am I Committing To?**

### **Member Responsibilities & Expectations**

As members of the OVET, you are committing to:

- 
- **At least one year of service to the team, with the option to continue to serve as a member as long as you want;**
  - **Attend six meetings per year;**
  - **Spend time preparing for each meeting by reviewing materials, which will be sent at least one week before the next meeting; and,**
  - **Actively participate in meetings, which will be 2 hours each.**
- 

### **Compensation**

Your experiences, insights, perspectives, and time are valuable. These contributions are, in fact, priceless to us. They are attributes that you each bring that will help the GRECC do its work better so that we can more efficiently serve aging veterans and their caregivers.

Quite simply, we know that we could not do our work as well without you.

These are gifts that you have each said that you are willing to give freely as a volunteer. However, we wish to compensate each of you for your time and contributions. Compensation is important because it recognizes that you are giving something of enormous value.

We will compensate you \$100 for the first 5 meetings, and then \$99.99 for the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, for a total of \$599.99. “Meetings” include this orientation and a mid-year meeting to touch base about the process and any needed refinements.

## **Procedures: Handling Financial Information**

- In order to be reimbursed for your service as part of the Older Veteran Engagement Team, each member will need to complete the VA Vendor File Request form and a VA Payment Voucher Form.
- The completed VA Vendor File Request form and a voided check should be given to Karleen Stratton, Administrative Support Assistant for the Eastern Colorado Health Care System GRECC.
- Karleen will place all the forms and voided checks in a bag, which will be locked to keep materials secure.
- She will also fill out direct deposit information during an OVET meeting.
- Karleen can either return the voided checks to the veterans or shred them herself.
- All private information will be kept in a locked drawer. Once information is entered into the VA system, the paperwork will be shredded.
- After you have completed six meetings, Cynthia Drake will ask you to fill out a VA Payment Voucher form, which she will then pass onto Karleen Stratton.

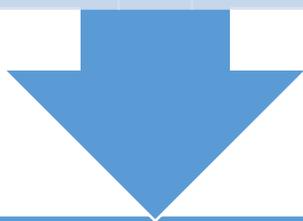
## OVET Meetings: What to Expect

### Before Each Meeting

You will be invited to join the next meeting via email or phone call 2-4 weeks prior to the meeting.

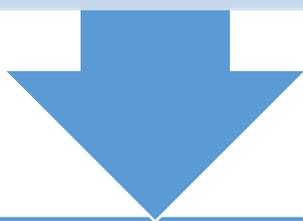
&

You will receive reading materials from the next meeting's presenter for review 1 week prior to the meeting.



### During Each Meeting

Actively participate in the meeting. Ask questions. Give ideas. Share thoughts.



### After Each Meeting

Provide your feedback on the preparatory materials, presentation, presenter  
& meeting process.

## **Sample OVET Meeting Agenda**

Each meeting will require about two hours. Our typical agenda will include the following

### **10- 10:20            Gathering and Review of Materials**

- Any business
- Review and discuss feedback from previous meeting
- Review materials for today's discussion

### **10:20- 11: 30        Presentation and Discussion with Guest**

### **11:30- 11:45        Final comments (big-picture thoughts) and evaluation**

### **11:45- 12:00        Informal sharing**

## Member Evaluation Form (to be completed after each presentation)

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How familiar were you with today's topic before our meeting?

- Very familiar       Somewhat familiar       Not at all familiar

2. How well was the project topic explained by the Presenter?

- Very well explained  
 Somewhat well explained  
 Neither explained well or poorly  
 Somewhat poorly explained  
 Very poorly explained

**Comments?**

3. How receptive was the Presenter to OVET members' ideas?

- Very receptive  
 Somewhat receptive  
 Neither receptive nor dismissive  
 Somewhat dismissive  
 Very dismissive

**Comments?**

4. How interesting did you find today's project topic?

- Very interesting  
 Somewhat interesting  
 Neither interesting nor uninteresting  
 Somewhat uninteresting  
 Very uninteresting

**Comments?**

## One-Week Presenter Follow-Up

**Investigator Name:**

**Date of meeting with the Older Veteran Engagement Team:**

**Title of Project:**

1) Please list the specific changes you made to your study based on interaction with, and recommendations received from, OVET:

2) If there was feedback the team gave that you are not acting on, please explain why.

3) On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being *not helpful* and 5 being *very helpful*, please rate how helpful you found the interaction with OVET.

Not at all helpful				Very helpful
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please explain your rating:

4) On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend the Older Veteran Engagement Team to a friend or colleague?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>										

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Can we use some time during each meeting for announcements about resources, events?**

We will use the first few minutes of each OVET meeting to share information with one another.

**What is the schedule of upcoming topics and presenters?** We will do our best to have the presenters/topics scheduled a few months in advance and to share the updated schedule at the beginning of each meeting and in communications between meetings. Topics will range from research to clinical services to educational initiatives.

**Is there is a set meeting time and location?** OVET will meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 10 to noon. Our regular meeting location for 2018 will be the Colorado State Veterans Home (1919 Quentin Street, Aurora, CO 80045).

**How many meetings can we attend?** We welcome your participation in as many meetings as you wish to be involved in. We ask that you commit to participating in at least six meetings over the course of the year, including the new member orientation and a mid-year review to let us know how we are doing with regard to fulfilling our commitments to your team.

**Does the group need more members? How can we help recruit?** We wish to expand OVET to include more women veterans, more caregivers (men and women), as well as veterans and caregivers who reside in rural areas of Colorado. We welcome your ideas and help in letting veterans and caregivers know about OVET.

**Will our recommendations be shared with, and implemented by, the VA?** One week following the OVET meeting, we will ask the presenter to complete a form to help us document what changes he/she makes in response to your insights, ideas and perspectives. If possible, we would also like to follow-up with each presenter after 6 months to learn about the impact of your feedback/input. We will report information about how your feedback is used during a subsequent meeting and/or in communications between meetings. In addition, Kady will report information about the benefits and outcomes associated with your work to the GRECC leadership, advisory committee, to our regional office, on national conference calls and in our annual report. Responses/reactions from leadership locally, regionally and nationally will be shared back with the team.

**Who do we notify if we have to miss a meeting?** Please let Kady know if you might need to miss a meeting: [Kathryn.nearing@ucdenver.edu](mailto:Kathryn.nearing@ucdenver.edu); 303-724-7186.

## **Tips for Being an Engaged Team Member**

### *Team Activity*

Below are six tips for being an engaged team member. Grab an OVET Buddy!

As you read each tip, make note of the things that you do well or what might be a growth opportunity for you. Discuss with your new OVET Buddy possible ways to improve on those areas that may be challenging. Above all, have confidence in your abilities and keep at it. Bring your sense of humor and expect the best from your experience.

### **Tip 1: Share Your Views**

You have been asked to be a team member because your ideas are valuable. We want to hear your ideas about how we can improve health care for older Veterans.

- **Focus on Problem Solving.** It is important to build on positive experiences. It is also helpful to share negative experiences. When you do, try to offer suggestions and possible solutions. Problem-solving is always appreciated.
- **Think carefully about the words you use.** Take a moment to think about what you want to say, and how you want to say it, so that it comes out the way you intend.
- **Respect privacy.** Feel free to share your experiences and the experiences of veterans or caregivers other than yourself. If you do share someone else's story, let the team know that this experience did not happen to you and avoid using the person's name. When speaking about experiences at the VA or CU Anschutz Medical Campus, do not use the names of staff members.
- **Step up/ step back.** If you are finding that you are talking more than other members of the team, take a moment to step back. Allow time for others to consider your points and ask questions. If you are finding that you aren't saying much, try to challenge yourself to step up. Be sure to ask the questions that you need to and give your opinion, too.

**I do this well:**

**This is a growth opportunity for me:**

## Tip 2: Draw on Your Communication Skills

As a team member, you will work with many types of people from different backgrounds. Good communication skills will help you explain your ideas clearly and develop good working relationships.

- **Keep an open mind.** Be willing to see past your own views and experiences. You will be working with doctors, hospital staff, and other OVET members who bring their own views. Different perspectives can lead to richer conversations, more opportunities to learn and better outcomes.
- **Listen well.** When someone is speaking, it is natural to think about what thoughts or opinions you might wish to share. However, it is important to give all of your attention to the person who is speaking and hear them out before you respond.
- **Make sure you understand what other people are saying.** One way to make sure you understand someone's point is to say, "*What I hear you saying is...*" and then repeat what you heard. This gives people a chance to clarify their points if needed.
- **Be aware of how you are sharing time with others when you are speaking.** If needed, make adjustments to give others time to express their ideas.

**I do this well:**

**This is a growth opportunity for me:**

## Tip 3: Ask Questions

There may have been a time when people around you used language or terms you did not understand. That can happen as a team member, too. If it does, speak up and ask people to explain what they mean.

- **Ask clarifying questions.** For example, *“Let me make sure I understand correctly. I heard you say ...”*
- **Ask for definitions of medical terms, abbreviations, or other terms.** For example, *“I’m not sure what HIPAA means. Would you please explain it to me?”*
- **Ask for more details.** For example, *“Can you walk me through this so I can picture it?”*

**I do this well:**

**This is a growth opportunity for me:**

## Tip 4: Be Ready for Disagreements

Disagreements are a natural part of working on a team. Expressing your views when they are different from the views of others can be challenging. However, your honest opinion can lead to greater understanding.

- **Describe your point of view in terms of your perception or opinion rather than as fact or the truth for all veterans or caregivers.** For example, *“I see it differently,” “I have a different priority,” or “That doesn’t work so well for me because ...”*
- **Ask for more background information when people say that a change is not possible.** For example, *“Help me understand why this change is not possible. What have you tried?”* Sometimes we are so used to the way things have been done that it’s hard for us to see other ways of doing things. Sometimes, there are things that really cannot be changed. In this case, we invite you to seek understanding about the reasons why.

**I do this well:**

**This is a growth opportunity for me:**

## Tip 5: Ask For Information to Help You Understand Your Commitments

When you agree to become an OVET member, make sure that you fully understand the commitment you are making and that you can keep that commitment.

- **Prepare for the meetings.** Please come meetings prepared to share your thoughts on the materials. Be on time for meetings and stay until the end.
- **Tell us if you can't make it to a meeting.** If you are not able to attend a meeting, please let us know as soon as possible.

**I do this well:**

**This is a growth opportunity for me:**

## **Building a Strong Team**

By sharing your perspectives and working with each other and presenters, you can make a real difference. The time and effort you invest in the team and can help us improve the care for older veterans and the support available to caregivers.

As a team member, there are things we will ask of you. There are also things we will make sure we are doing to ensure we are building a strong team with you.

### ***We promise to:***

- Provide training to prepare you for your new role
- Provide the resources and ongoing support you need to do your job well
- Be available to answer questions, provide information, and address your concerns
- Keep you informed about how your feedback is contributing to research and healthcare improvements
- Provide you with compensation for your time and efforts

### ***We ask that you:***

- Demonstrate a commitment to the Older Veteran Engagement Team by upholding the OVET mission, as well as the rules of engagement you will create together
- Listen respectfully to other team members and presenters
- Share opinions about experiences as an older veteran or caregiver
- Be committed to helping us improve healthcare and programs for all older veterans and their caregivers
- Respect the collaborative process and be willing to listen to differing views
- Encourage all team members to share ideas and viewpoints
- Respect confidentiality at all times

## **OVET Mission & Guidelines for Engagement**

### **OVET Mission Statement**

During the new member orientation on November 28, 2017, we began to create a mission statement together. Currently, this is a work in progress. We plan to continue to work on the mission statement when we have our mid-point review meeting in about 6 months.

Frame of reference: A mission statement should be short enough to fit on a coffee mug and address: *what is it we believe about the future when we do this work together.*

- Needs to be from veterans'/caregivers' perspective
- Statement needs to be clear on what it means
- Not too wordy, verbose

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“To promote veteran engagement and patient-centered care through research in/by collaboration with veterans, caregivers, and research findings ... For the benefit of Veterans”

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### *Team Activity*

What do you like about this mission statement?

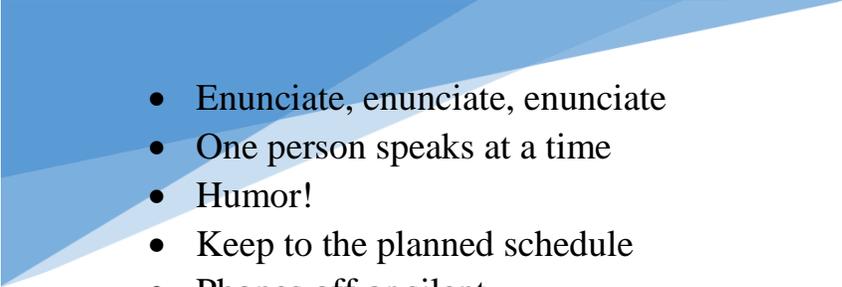
What don't you like?

What should we change?

## **OVET Guidelines for Engagement (created based on discussion during Orientation Meeting on 11.28.17)**

Guidelines for Engagement are the standards we will commit to uphold during our time together. These agreements allow us to create a comfortable environment for everyone. Guidelines for Engagement should be agreed upon by all team members.

### *Team Activity*

- 
- Enunciate, enunciate, enunciate
  - One person speaks at a time
  - Humor!
  - Keep to the planned schedule
  - Phones off or silent
  - Be respectful of our different backgrounds
  - Everyone has an opinion
  - Everyone participates and shares; no one dominates
    - Step up/Step back
    - **“Why Am I Talking?” WAIT.**
  - Keep conversations confidential

What do you like?

What don't you like?

What should we add or change?

## Confidentiality

As an OVET member, you may have access to confidential information presented during a meeting. A federal law called HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act) protects how health information can be used and shared.

Health information cannot be shared outside of a health care facility. It cannot be shared in any written, verbal,

or email communications

with friends, family, or anyone else unless specifically permitted.

This also applies to other personal information your fellow OVET members may share during the meeting.

**The easiest way to remember what HIPAA means is saying, “What happens at the OVET, stays at the OVET.”**

## Older Veteran Engagement Team – Volunteer Commitment Letter

November 28, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I agree to complete at least one year of service to the Older Veteran Engagement Team. I understand that I am committing to the following expectations:

1. To attend six OVET meetings, including the orientation and a mid-point team review;
2. Read meeting materials prior to each meeting;
3. Come to meetings prepared to talk about the presenter's topic and give my honest feedback; and,
4. Let staff know if I can't attend a meeting as soon as possible.

By signing this letter, I acknowledge my voluntary commitment to the Older Veteran Engagement Team, and that I understand the guidelines of engagement.

Sincerely,

---

Printed Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## Team Member Profile Forms

Name / Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: Home \_\_\_\_\_ preferred:

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ preferred:

E-mail address:

\_\_\_\_\_

May we share your email address in a participant roster?  Yes  No

Dietary restrictions/allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best way to communicate with you between meetings?

Email

Phone

Anything else you would like us to know about you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***New Member Orientation Evaluation Survey***

Please take a minute or two to provide feedback on the orientation today. Thank you for being here and for your interest in the Older Veteran Engagement Team.

### **1. How easy was the information to understand?**

Extremely difficult	2	Neither easy nor difficult	4	Extremely easy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **2. What part of the orientation did you find most helpful?**

### **3. What information did you expect to receive that was not included or was missing from our discussion today?**

### **4. What questions do you have at this time?**

### **5. Would you like us to follow up with you?**

no

yes → *If yes, please provide your name and we will follow up:*

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