

eAppendix 1 VA Staff Interview Guide

Interviewer Name:

Date:

Time Start:

Time End:

Hello [Mr./Ms./Dr. interview participant name],

My name is [interviewer name] and helping me today are/is [additional team member(s)]. We are conducting site visits and interviewing staff to learn about the VA's Community Nursing Home program at your VA. We are conducting site visits and interviews as part of a research study. This research study is being conducted by Dr. Cari Levy and Dr. Vincent Mor and the COMIRB protocol is #18-1186. What we learn from these interviews will be used to understand the Community Nursing Home referral process and how the VA and community nursing homes establish relationships (either through a contract or a Veteran Care Agreement) at your site, with hopes to make recommendations to improve upon current processes based on what we learn. Your responses are confidential and you will not be identified in any reports, presentations, or publications.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. **If you feel that participating in this interview impacts your work conditions negatively, please feel free to decline.** You can stop the interview at any time, and let me know if you would rather not answer a particular question.

Do you have any questions?

In order to make sure we capture all of the information you give us, we would like to record this call. The audio-file for the recording will be stored directly to restricted access file on the VA intranet. Is this okay with you? **[Hit record button.]**

Okay, to confirm, I'm starting the recording. Is this ok with you?

If this interview is being conducted over the phone: Okay to confirm, I'm starting the recording. Is this ok with you? By continuing with this interview, you acknowledge that the consent form has been read to you while you followed along with your own copy, that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and that you have provided verbal consent to participate in this study. Is this correct?

Grounded prompts: If responses are limited or require clarification, probes may be used to elicit more detailed responses. Probes should use words or phrases presented by the participant using one of the following formats:

- 1. What do you mean by _____?***
- 2. Tell me more about _____?***
- 3. Can you give me an example of _____?***

4. *Can you tell me about a time when _____?*
5. *Who _____?*
6. *When _____?*
7. *Where _____?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
<p>All Participants (Questions 1-6)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your role in the Community Nursing Home (CNH) program at your VA? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Probe: Tell me more about what that entails. a. How long have you worked at the VA? b. How long have you served in this role at the VA? c. How long have you worked in this field? 2. Tell me about the process of initiating a partnership with a community nursing home. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who is involved? b. How long does the process take? c. What does the process involve? 3. Now to get more specific, how do you select community nursing homes to be part of your VA's CNH program. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What factors come into play? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Probes: Quality? Star rating? Potential match with best treatment for Veteran's care needs? VA provider recommendation? 4. How do you feel about the process of establishing a partnership with a community nursing home at your VA? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What works well? b. What are some of the challenges? c. What changes would you like to see overall and related to your personal experience? 5. Tell me about the annual review process that a community nursing home in your CNH program undergoes to maintain its partnership with your VA. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What does the annual review involve? b. What works well in the review process? c. What are some of the challenges? d. What changes would you like to see? 6. What does a good relationship between a VAMC and the community nursing homes in its CNH program look like? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does this description align with your current working relationships with the nursing homes in your program? b. What has helped to improve working with community nursing homes? c. What has hindered your working relationship with community nursing homes?

For VA CNH Coordinators, Social Workers, and Nurses (Question 7)

7. Tell me about how you determine which facility in your CNH program a Veteran should be placed in.
 - a. What factors come into play?
 - b. Does the number of Veterans in a community nursing home impact your decision to place a Veteran in that facility? Why or why not?
 - c. Does the proximity of the community nursing home to the Veteran's home impact your placement decision? Why or why not?

For VA Social Workers and VA Nurses (Question 8 and 9 only):

8. Tell me about your role in coordinating care at the community nursing homes in your CNH program.
 - a. How often do you visit community nursing homes?
 - b. Tell me what a typical visit to a community nursing home looks like.
 - i. Probes: How many vets do you see per CNH? Where do you start (with the Veteran visit? reviewing charts? talking with staff?) Who do you communicate with at the nursing home (Veteran? Family? Staff? Administration? CNH program staff?)
 - c. Do you think Nursing Home Compare quality ratings reflect the care Veterans receive in community nursing homes?
 - d. Tell me about how you work with nursing home staff at CNHs to coordinate care for Veterans.
 - i. Probes: What works well? What are the challenges? Can you give me a specific example?

9. How do you feel about the care coordination you provide at the community nursing homes in your CNH program?
 - a. What works well?
 - b. What are the challenges in providing care coordination for the CNH program?
 - c. What would you like to see change in care coordination between community nursing homes and the VA?

All Participants (Questions -10-22)

10. Tell me about the community nursing homes that are currently part of your VA's CNH program and available to your Veterans.
 - i. Probes: A wide variety? Some with expertise in special areas? (dementia care, behavioral health needs? End of life care?) Serve rural Vets also? What type of quality?
11. Which, if any, additional community nursing homes would you like to see become part of your CNH program?
 - a. What would be beneficial about adding this/these nursing home(s)?
 - i. Probes: Provides high quality care? Serves a special population? Is in a geographic location that is underserved?
 - b. Why is/are that/those nursing home(s) not a part of your program?
 - c. Are any nursing homes in the process of joining your CNH program?
12. Tell me about how your VA handles issues with community nursing homes in your CNH program.
 - a. Can you think of a specific example?
 - b. Have you ever considered terminating a partnership with a community nursing home?
 - c. Have you ever considered placing a community nursing home on hold?

13. What have you heard about potential changes in how the VA partners with community nursing homes.
- What do you know about the possibility of using provider agreements with the community nursing homes?

Participants will be read the following sentences and then asked questions

Over the next year, the VA will change how it purchases community nursing home (CNH) care for Veterans by replacing the existing contracts with Veteran Care Agreements. Veteran Care Agreements will be agreements between community nursing homes and the VA to cover primarily long-stay care, but in some cases short-stay care, for Veterans. Veteran Care Agreements will eliminate many of the federal contracting rules, will be simpler than the existing contracts, will take less time to complete (weeks rather than many months) and will be shorter in terms of number of pages (around six pages long). Additionally, some nursing home staff at CNHs that establish Veteran Care Agreements may be asked to complete online trainings on opioid safety, military sexual trauma conditions, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and traumatic brain injury.

All Participants (Questions 14-22)

14. Tell me about your initial thoughts on this change to how the VA purchases community nursing home care.

- What do you think will work well?
- What do you think some of the challenges will be?

15. What impact do you think Veteran Care Agreements will have on your CNH team?

- How might Veteran Care Agreements impact your CNH team's responsibilities?
- How might Veteran Care Agreements impact your personal responsibilities?
- How might Veteran Care Agreements impact your working relationship with CNHs?

16. Tell me about how you and your CNH team/CNH coordinator have been informed of the shift from contracting to Veteran Care Agreements.

Probes: Who is informing? How is information shared? When was it shared? Was the information adequate?

- Tell me about whether you think your VA is prepared to shift to Veteran Care Agreements. Why or why not?

17. Tell me about how nursing home administrators at contracted community nursing homes are being informed of this shift from contracting to Veteran Care Agreements.

Probes: Who is informing? How is information shared? When was it shared?

- Tell me about whether you think community nursing homes in your program are prepared to shift to Veteran Care Agreements. Why or why not?

18. What will help facilitate the transition to Veteran Care Agreements?

- What might be some barriers to the transition to Veteran Care Agreements?

19. How does the description I provided about Veteran Care Agreements align with the information you have learned on the national CNH calls?

20. Under Veteran Care Agreements, you will be able to approach any community nursing home you want to be part of your CNH program without posting a solicitation. What do you think about this change?

- What do you see as potential benefits of this change?
- What do you see as potential drawbacks?
- How will this impact your nurse and social work staff currently visiting CNHs on a monthly basis?

21. What impact do you think Veteran Care Agreements will have on how you determine which facility in your CNH program a Veteran should be placed in?

- What factors do you think will come into play in the placement decision?

Probes: Number of Veterans at the facility, proximity to the Veterans' home, location

22. Would it be okay if we followed up with you in the future if we have other questions?

For VA CNH Coordinators and Contracting Only (Questions 23)

23. With this in mind, tell me about how you might select community nursing homes to be part of your program under Veteran Care Agreements?

- a. What factors might come into play in picking new community nursing homes?
Probes: Quality? Match with best treatment for Veteran's care needs? Expertise in special areas (dementia care, behavioral health needs)? Location? Proximity to where Veterans lives?
- b. How might you determine which community nursing homes with existing contracts you will keep in your program?
- c. How might you determine how many community nursing homes you need?

For VA Social Workers and Nurses Only (Question 24)

24. How do you think Veteran Care Agreements will impact your working relationship with community nursing homes?

- a. Tell me about how you think Veteran Care Agreements might impact your role in coordinating care for Veterans
- b. How do you think Veteran Care Agreements might impact your visits to community nursing homes?
Probes: Frequency?

All Participants (Question 25-26)

25. How do you feel about the use of Nursing Home Compare star ratings as a measure of nursing home quality?

- a. Do you think star ratings reflect the quality of care Veterans receive in community nursing homes?

26. What questions do you have for us, or is there anything else you would like to add about your VA's CNH program and/or working with community nursing homes?

Demographic Questions: We would like to ask you a couple of questions about yourself, like what your age is. You have the right to decline this step of the interview or to skip specific questions. Is it ok to begin?

27. What gender do you identify with?

28. What category best describes your race? (Can choose more than one)

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Other
- Declined

29. Which category best describes your ethnicity?

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic
- Declined

30. What is your age range?

- 18 – 29 years
- 30 – 39 years
- 40 – 49 years
- 50 – 59 years
- 60 – 69 years
- >/= 70 years
- Declined

31. What is the highest level of education you have completed?