

# ENGAGING VETERANS IN EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH

Emily R. Ashmore for the  
Seattle Epidemiologic Research and Information Center (ERIC)  
VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) Epidemiology Center  
Nicholas L. Smith, PhD, Director



Mary E. Grewe for the  
Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Center – Durham  
VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) Epidemiology Center  
Dawn Provenzale, MD, MS, Director

## Why Engage Veterans:

Engaging Veterans in research is a priority within the VA. Conducting research that is relevant to Veterans and informed by Veterans requires that we engage Veterans throughout the research process – from developing study aims to designing recruitment materials, to determining study protocols. Participant engagement in research can take many forms, including interviews or focus groups to obtain participant perspectives and feedback, consultation with stakeholders through advisory boards, and soliciting stakeholder involvement in designing, implementing, or presenting results of the study. This poster describes qualitative research activities that VA Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Centers have incorporated into their projects as one form of Veteran engagement.

## What We Learned:

### Compensation

~\$50 an hour for an in-person visit and a minimum of \$25 for completing a questionnaire at home was viewed as fair.

### Location

Veterans, including those who do not use the VA for their health care, indicated willingness to come to a VA facility for a study.

### Results

Veterans want to learn about impacts of the research they participate in. Plan to share information with them.

### Time Commitment

If an in-person visit of 2 hours or more is required, provide an agenda/itinerary so Veterans know their time will not be wasted.

### Recruitment

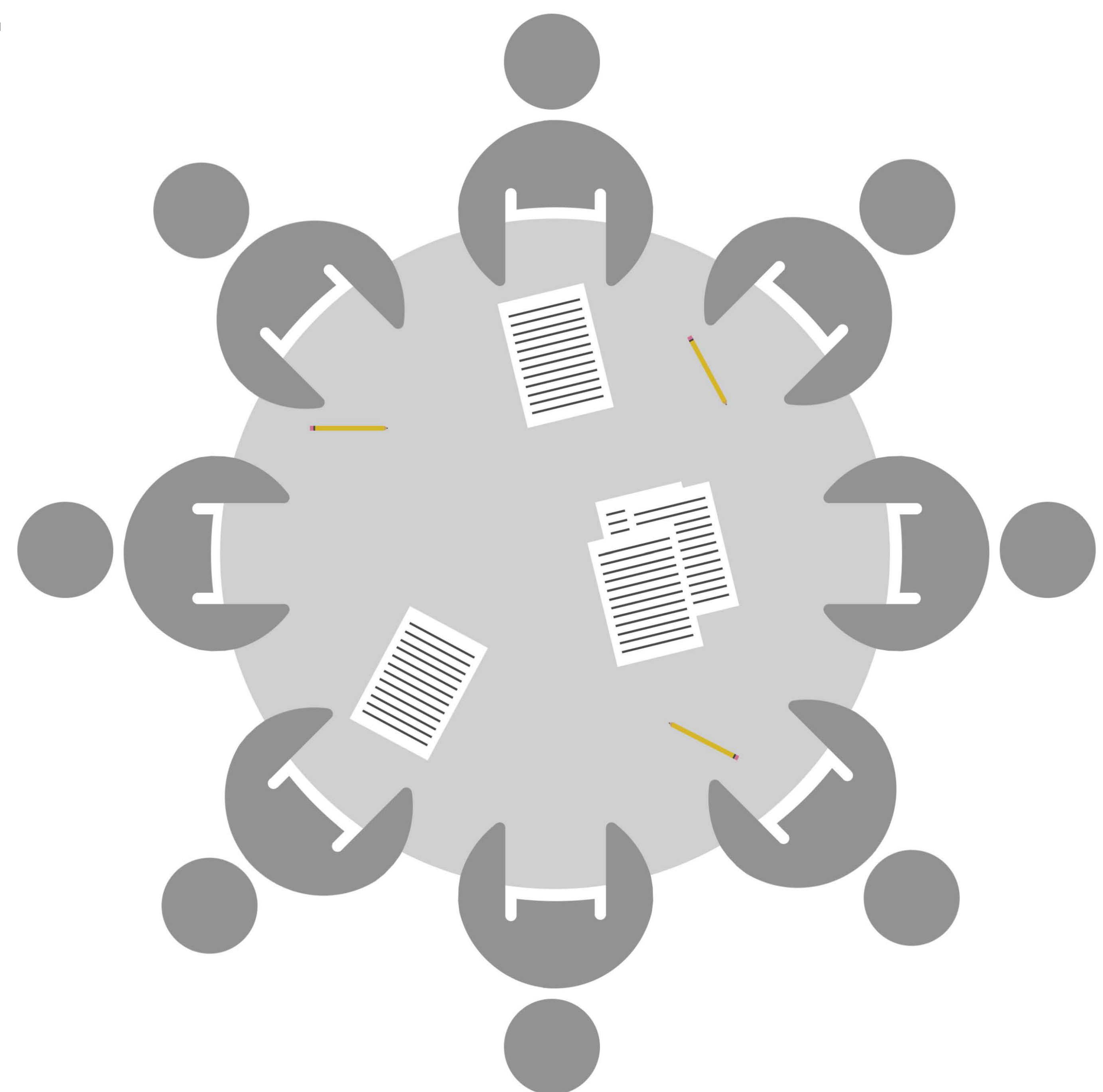
Veterans preferred being contacted first via a mailed letter followed by a phone call. They did not want to be contacted by email.

### Interface with VA Benefits

Veterans want assurance that the information that they provide in the research study will not affect their VA benefits.

## What We're Doing to Engage Veterans:

STUDY	METHOD	PURPOSE
<b>CSP #585: Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process Evaluation Interviews</li> <li>Focus Groups</li> <li>Interviews with subject matter experts</li> </ul>	Assess Gulf War Era Veterans' perspectives on this and other Gulf War Era research projects. Obtain feedback on research.
<b>SDR-15-236: Healthcare Utilization and Associated Costs for Gulf War I Era Veterans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phone Survey</li> <li>Focus Groups</li> </ul>	Learn firsthand about Veterans' experiences with VA and Non-VA care.
<b>CSP #595: Service and Health during the Iraq and Afghanistan Era (Pilot)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus Groups</li> </ul>	To better understand motivations and perceived barriers to participating in research.
<b>CSP #256: Vietnam-Era Twin (VET Registry)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus Groups</li> </ul>	To improve retention of participants in the VET registry.



## Future Goals:

- Work to engage all current and future cohorts of Veterans.
- Collaborate with VA Health Services Research & Development on their Veteran engagement initiatives.

