

Function QUERI

Newsletter

January 2023 Edition



Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

Welcoming New Mentee, Dr. Lena Makaroun

Our Mentoring Core recruits outstanding, diverse fellows, and junior faculty to provide opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and experience in applying implementation science. We welcome our newest mentee, **Lena Makaroun, MD, MS**, a staff physician at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) who focuses on research around health-related social risk factors for older adults and elder abuse.

Dr. Makaroun completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania, MD at Weill Cornell Medical College, and MS in Health Services at the University of Washington School of Public Health. Following her residency and fellowship at the University of California San Francisco, she completed a VA Advanced Postdoctoral Fellowship in Health Services Research at the VA Puget Sound and the VAPHS. She joined the VA medical staff at VAPHS and the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 2019. Her first project on Function QUERI will be working with the Caregivers FIRST team to evaluate their implementation intensification approach and strategies.



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New paper published on
Caregivers FIRST

Congratulations to our STRIDE Graduating Sites!



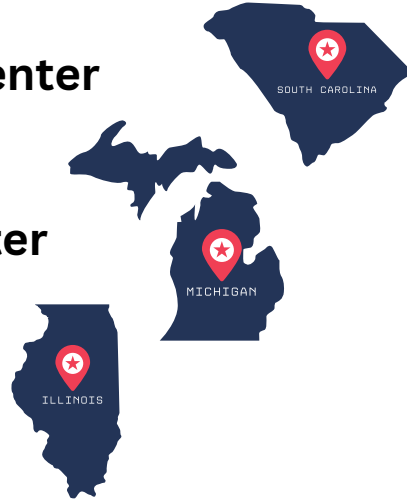
Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center
Charleston, South Carolina



John D. Dingell VA Medical Center
Detroit, Michigan



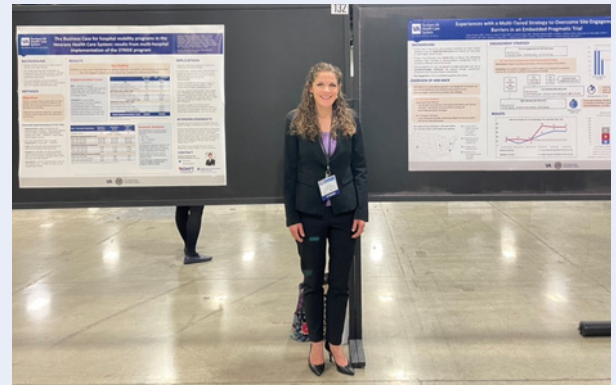
Illiana VA Health Care System
Danville, Illinois



Getting the word out about STRIDE

The STRIDE team has been on the road and spreading the word about the STRIDE program. Our presentations have included:

- Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting (November 2022): A Stepped Wedge Cluster Randomized Trial of the STRIDE Supervised Walking Program in VA hospitals; Dr. Nicki Hastings.
- Academy Health's Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health (December 2022): The Business Case for hospital mobility programs in the Veterans Health Care System: results from multi-hospital implementation of the STRIDE program; Ashley Choate (pictured, right).



Are you interested in bringing a STRIDE program to your facility? We have closed enrollment for participation in Function QUERI, but we do offer our resources to hospitals interested in a self-guided implementation. Reach out to Ashley Choate at ashley.choate@va.gov with questions or to request access to our SharePoint and documentation templates.

Caregivers FIRST Updates

Caregivers FIRST consists of 4 core modules, 6 optional topical videos/phone scripts, and 2 optional post-training "booster" sessions. Although the curriculum was originally delivered in-person, it was flexibly designed, allowing for adaptation and tailoring to increase fit to delivery staff and caregiver recipients. Many Caregivers FIRST sites continue to deliver the curriculum virtually post-COVID 19 because it allows for more participation of rural caregivers with long commutes to medical centers or other caregivers who have difficulty leaving the house.

At the December 2022 Caregivers FIRST Diffusion Network call, **Kasey Decosimo** and **Matthew Tucker** guided approximately 120 Caregiver Support Program field staff in an interactive gallery session to brainstorm ways to improve caregiver engagement in the core curriculum for ongoing virtual delivery. Field staff also provided feedback for overall curriculum updates and improvement.

Function QUERI will be going through the feedback and updating the curriculum this spring. If you have any suggestions for improving caregiver interaction or ideas for updating overall curriculum resources or activities, let us know! Our "suggestion box" is open - email us at CaregiversFIRST@va.gov.



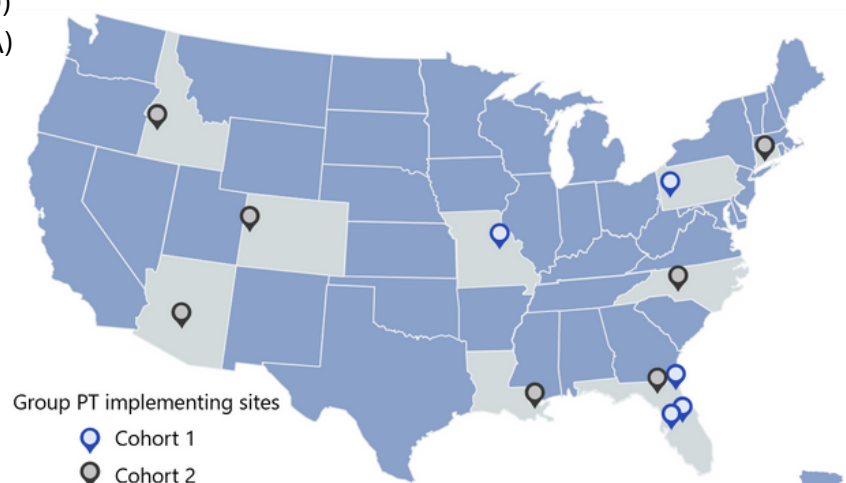
Group PT Welcomes Cohort 2!

Welcome to our 2nd cohort! We are excited to have 7 more sites implementing group physical therapy for Veterans with knee osteoarthritis (Group PT). We will work with these sites over a 12 month period to support their program implementation.

Our 2nd cohort includes:

- Connecticut VA HCS (West Haven & Newington, CT)
- North Florida/South Georgia VA HCS (Lake City, FL)
- Western Colorado VAMC (Grand Junction, CO)
- Southeast Louisiana VA HCS (New Orleans, LA)
- VISN 22 CRH (based in Phoenix, AZ)
- W.G. Hefner VAMC (Salisbury, NC)
- Boise VAMC (Boise, ID)

The map to the right includes all sites currently implementing Group PT. We are actively recruiting for our final cohort. **Are you interested in implementing Group PT at your facility?** Contact Caitlin Sullivan, at Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov.

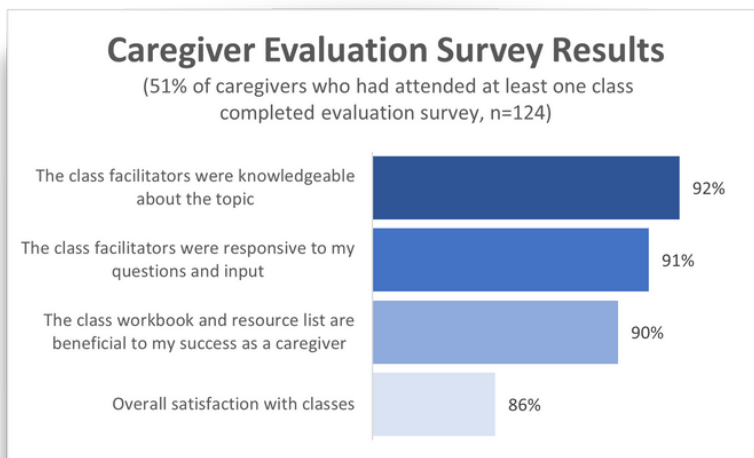


Noteworthy Publications

The 2018 RAISE Family Caregivers Act, which mandated the development of a national caregiver support strategy drawing from best practices, brought awareness to the need to implement accessible training and education for family caregivers.

In a recent article published by *The Gerontologist*, **Nina Sperber** and the Caregivers FIRST team describe how Function QUERI collaborated with VA Caregiver Support Program to explore caregivers' acceptance of the Caregivers FIRST training for national dissemination.

Link to article: <http://bit.ly/3UIt1QY>



INTERESTED IN ENROLLING ?

- Group PT - group physical therapy for knee OA program
 - Enrolling NOW for spring 2023!
 - Contact Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS?

- STRIDE: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/the-stride-program>
- Caregivers FIRST: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/caregivers-first>
- Group PT: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/group-physical-therapy-for-knee-oa>

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