

## **Speaker Bios and Background Materials**

In order of appearance

### **Day 1**

#### **Megan Lafferty, Ph.D.**

Qualitative Methodologist

Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care

VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR

Dr. Megan Lafferty is an anthropologist and Core Investigator at CIVIC where she specializes in qualitative research design, data collection, and analysis. She is trained in ethnography and uses multiple methods such as observation, focus groups, interviews, video reflexive ethnography, and DIPEX. Dr. Lafferty is currently supporting a variety of VA studies, including health experiences of Gulf War Veterans, prevention of firearm injuries among rural Veterans, and Veteran decision making around receiving VA or community care. She created and runs QualForum at CIVIC and helps advise and train colleagues in qualitative methods. Some of her research interests include ethnography, masculinities, intimacy, mobility, and rural health. She received a doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Melbourne, an MA in Political Science from San Diego State University, and a BS in Public Relations and Psychology from the University of Florida.

#### **Elizabeth Yano, Ph.D., MSPH**

National Director, VA Women's Health Research Network

Director, VA HSR Center for the Study of Healthcare

Innovation, Implementation & Policy

VA Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System

Dr. Elizabeth (Becky) Yano, PhD, MSPH is Adjunct Professor of Health Policy & Management at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the UCLA Geffen School of Medicine, and Director of the VA HSR&D Center for the Study of Healthcare Innovation, Implementation & Policy at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. Trained in health care epidemiology, biostatistics and health policy at UCLA and RAND, Dr. Yano has over 30 years' experience in health services research and program evaluation.

She has received the VA HSR&D Senior Research Career Scientist Award for her research leadership, impacts, mentorship and service (2007-present), the Veterans Health Administration Under Secretary for Health Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Health Services Research (2012), the Breslow Lifetime Achievement Award for the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Alumni Hall of Fame (2017), a Special Recognition Award from Disabled American Veterans for her research impacts on women Veterans' care (2018), recognition from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2023) for her research impacts, and was named a Woman of Impact in Health Care (2018). Dr. Yano's research expertise is in evaluating multilevel factors associated with quality and patient experience as well as the development and testing of evidence-based quality improvement (EBQI) approaches for implementing, tailoring and

spreading care models to improve system and practice-level quality and outcomes, with a focus on primary care and women's health.

She has been a national leader in developing the infrastructure, research-clinical partnerships, and research consortium needed to increase the scientific evidence needed to improve care for women Veterans in the VA healthcare system through a national VA Women's Health Research Network (WHRN). The Network provides education/training, mentorship, and technical support to increase researcher, clinician and policymaker knowledge, conduct, and application of women Veterans' research toward evidence-based practice and policy changes. She also co-led development of the VA Women's Health Practice-Based Research Network, including 76 VA medical centers and hundreds of community-based outpatient clinics, enabling greater inclusion of women in VA research.

Dr. Yano previously directed the Women Veterans' Healthcare CREATE Initiative, a 5-project program using research to accelerate implementation of comprehensive care for women Veterans in VA settings. Within the CREATE, she led a 12-site cluster randomized trial of an EBQI approach to tailoring medical homes to the needs of women Veterans, which led to national adoption of EBQI by the VA Office of Women's Health to support comprehensive care delivery. She also directs the VA PROVEN Coordinating Hub, a national consortium like WHRN but to accelerate development of electronic health record modernization (EHRM) research supporting VA's national transition to a commercial EHR. At UCLA, she teaches Evaluation of Health Services in the Executive MPH Program, where she has been twice awarded Professor of the Year. She is a Faculty Member in the VA Women's Health Fellowship Program, the National Clinician Scholars Program, the VA Health Services Research Fellowship Program, and the Los Angeles Area Health Services Research Learning Health System Fellowship Program. She mentors a wide array of VA and UCLA postdoctoral fellows, career development awardees, and other investigators. She has published over 285 peer-reviewed publications and delivered hundreds of conference presentations and briefings.

**Shakeria (Shay) Cohen, Ph.D.**

Co-Chair, DEI Work Group

VA Office of Research and Development

Dr. Cohen assists in managing the Gulf War Illness and Pulmonology portfolios while also supporting the Military Exposure Research Program. In addition, to her programmatic duties, Shay serves a co-chair of the ORD Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of South Carolina located in Columbia, SC. She completed her PhD in Biomedical Sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine, located in Atlanta, GA, where she investigated biomarkers for early detection of serous ovarian tumors. She completed her post-doctoral fellowship and master's in clinical research from the Cardiovascular Research Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. Her research focus included examining the association between food insecurity and cardiovascular disease outcomes among African Americans residing in Atlanta, GA.

Shay enjoys being out in nature. She is also passionate about helping others, spending time with friends and family, reading, traveling, live music, poetry and visiting art exhibits.

**Karen Goldstein, M.D., MSPH**

Co-Director, Evidence Synthesis Program

Co-Lead, Women's Health Research Network

Durham VA Health Care System, Durham NC

Karen Goldstein is a general internist and primary care provider at the Durham VA Health Care System and an Associate Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine at Duke University with a clinical focus on women's health and primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. She is also a core investigator with the Durham VA Center for Innovation to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation where she co-directs the Durham VA Evidence-synthesis program and the Durham VA Quality Scholars fellowship. Her research interests include peer support, cardiovascular disease prevention, women's health and telehealth access.

**Stacey B. Whitbourne, Ph.D.**

Director, Cohort Development and Management

Million Veteran Program Coordinating Center

VA Boston Healthcare System, Boston, MA

Dr. Whitbourne is the Director for the Million Veteran Program Cohort Development and Management at the MVP Boston Coordinating Center. She is also an Instructor of Medicine and Associate Epidemiologist at Mass General Brigham and Harvard Medical School, Division of Aging. Dr. Whitbourne's research focuses on activities conducted as part of the MVP core cohort development including cohort characterization. Her other research areas focus on adult development and aging, cognition, and physical activity.

**Maheen Mausoo Adamson, Ph.D., MHL**

Director for Research, Women's Operational Military

Exposure Network Center of Excellence (WOMEN CoE)

VA Palo Alto Healthcare System

After finishing undergraduate degrees in Biology and Women's Studies at UC Irvine, she went to complete a Ph.D. in neuroscience from the University of Southern California, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford School of Medicine. She has a Master's in Healthcare Leadership from Brown University and is a Faculty Fellow of Byers Biodesign at Stanford University.

Dr. Adamson has 20 years of experience directing large diverse teams to develop and implement several multi-site and longitudinal studies revolving around the complex problems faced by the Veteran population. For instance, she has employed advanced structural and functional imaging modalities and biomarker assessments for diagnostic and neuromodulation treatments such as repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) for patients with traumatic brain injury

(TBI), psychiatric problems, and Alzheimer's disease. She has been a leader in identifying sex differences in brain injury, particularly in the Veteran population. She is intricately involved in mentoring research postdoctoral fellows and clinical residents in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Psychiatry & Neurosurgery Departments at Stanford School of Medicine.

## Day 2

### **Stephen Hunt, M.D., M.P.H.**

Persian Gulf Registry Physician

VA Puget Sound Health Care System Seattle

Dr. Stephen Hunt, National Director of the Veterans Health Administration Post- Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, provides national leadership in support of integrated post-combat care clinics in VA medical centers. For over three decades he has provided care for and conducted clinical research on combat veterans from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War (Desert Shield/Desert Storm), and the Iraq and Afghanistan Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and New Dawn (OND) conflicts. His Gulf War Veterans Clinic at VA Puget Sound, established in 1994, was designated as the best practices approach to clinical care for Desert Shield/Desert Storm Veterans and was featured frequently in presentations to groups such as the Institute of Medicine, RAND Corporation, Research Advisory Committee, and various Congressional groups and committees. This clinic was later adapted and renamed the Deployment Health Clinic, to provide care and support for Veterans returning from the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts. Designated as best practices approach to post-deployment care, this model was rolled out in 2008 as the VA Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative. Within 18 months, 84% of VA facilities had integrated care platforms for Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Dr. Hunt is the Registry Physician at VA Puget Sound, providing evaluations and care for Veterans with exposures to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and other toxic environmental agents related to military service. He is involved in clinical care, research, education, and outreach related to health concerns of combat veterans locally, state-wide, and at the national level. Dr. Hunt is a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine in the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program.

### **Javad Razjouyan, Ph.D., MSc**

Assistant Professor of Medicine

Health Services Research

Michael E DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston TX

Dr. Javad Razjouyan is an Assistant Professor (tenure track) of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), specializing in Health Services Research and Clinical & Translational Research. He also serves as a health research scientist at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, where he co-directs the Big Data Scientist Training Enhancement Program (BD-STEP) at the Houston site. Dr. Razjouyan is the Director of the Artificial Intelligence in Health Lab at BCM, where his research focuses on integrating advanced AI, machine learning (ML), and natural language processing (NLP) techniques into healthcare. His work primarily aims to develop predictive models and tools that can be used in clinical settings to enhance patient outcomes,

particularly in areas such as sleep medicine, dementia, heart failure, and frailty. Dr. Razjouyan holds a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering and has been recognized with several awards for his contributions to digital biomarker development and EMR-based frailty indices using ML techniques. His extensive publication record includes more than 40 peer-reviewed journal articles and numerous conference proceedings. Additionally, he is actively involved in mentoring postdoctoral fellows in applying AI and ML to healthcare challenges. “

**Brian Walitt, M.D., MPH**

Supervisory Physician/Interoceptive Disorders Unit  
National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke (NINDS)  
Bethesda, MD

Dr. Walitt has been collaborating with the NINDS as a clinician with NINR since the launch of the NIH Director’s Initiative study Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in 2016, he officially joined the NINDS Clinical Neurosciences Program as a Staff Clinician in 2021 heading the Interoceptive Disorders Unit.

Dr. Walitt received his Medical Doctorate from the State University of New York Health Science Center at Syracuse and subsequently completed his residency and a Master’s in Public Health at George Washington University and his rheumatology fellowship at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Upon completion of his training, he practiced for over a decade at the Washington Hospital Center, serving as the Research Director and Associate Chairman of Rheumatology. He was recognized as an Associate Professor at Georgetown University for his fibromyalgia and rheumatoid arthritis research work. Since arriving at NIH in 2013, he has served as the Medical Officer of NINR, NIDCR, and the acting Clinical Director of NCCIH. His research protocols focus on deeply phenotyping persons with disorders characterized by aversive symptoms that develop after exposures, such as infection. Currently, he is working with patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Gulf War Illness (GWI), and Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC).

**Apostolos P Georgopoulos, M.D., Ph.D.**

Director, Brain Sciences Center  
Veterans Affairs Health Care System  
Minneapolis, MN

Dr. Georgopoulos is the director of the Brain Sciences Center at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. At the University of Minnesota, he is Regents Professor of Neuroscience, American Legion Family Brain Sciences Chair, and Presidential McKnight Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience. Dr. Georgopoulos pioneered the application of neuronal populations to decipher the brain mechanisms underlying planning of movement in space, laying the foundation for modern neuroprosthetics. He is an elected member of the US National Academy of Medicine, Academy of Athens, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is the recipient of the American Legion Distinguished Service Medal-2017, Immigrant of Distinction Award of the American Association of Immigration Lawyers-2017, Bernstein

International Prize for Motor Control-2015, Cozzarelli Prize of PNAS USA-2012, Foundation IPSEN Neuronal Plasticity Prize, France-2009, Krieg Cortical Discoverer Award, Cajal Club-2006, Santiago Grisolia Chair, Spain-2003, Carnegie Centenary Professorship, Scotland-2002, George Morgan Award for Creativity and Innovation in Interdisciplinary Education, Brown University-1997, King Solomon Israel Prize in Neuroethology-1996, and the Arturo Rosenbluth Professorship, Mexico-1991. He has given more than 250 invited lectures worldwide and has published more than 300 papers (>37,000 citations), H-index 84. Current research: Cognitive neuroscience; Magnetoencephalography; Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Human Leukocyte Antigen (immunology), Gulf War Illness, PTSD, neurological diseases (Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis), addiction and cancer. A special focus since 2010 has been healthy brain aging in women veterans and, currently, blood biomarkers for dementia and neurodegenerative disorders.

**Donna White, Ph.D., MPH** *Full bio not available/provided; Information copied from VA website.*

Investigator, Clinical Effectiveness & Population Health Program, IQuEst

Assistant Professor, Section of Health Services Research,

Department of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine

Dr. Donna L. White, PhD, MPH is a Senior Epidemiologist at the Houston VA Health Services Research Center of Innovations (IQuEst), with research faculty co-appointment at Baylor College of Medicine. She is a Delta Omega honors graduate from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health, with her neuroepidemiology doctoral research focused on veteran risk for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). She completed an NIH Career Development Award on genetic, molecular and environmental epidemiology of chronic liver and digestive diseases in veterans and has served as Co-Investigator and Principal Investigator on multiple VA, NIH, and Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) grants. These have included veteran-focused research in priority areas including cancer, liver cirrhosis and gut microbiome health and IBS, multiple infectious diseases including Hepatitis C, HIV and HPV; neurological conditions including Parkinson's disease and TBI, and more recently, 1990-1991 Gulf War veteran health risks and outcomes, including with COVID-19. She has co-authored 100 publications, and recently received grant funding notification for her new VA Merit Review Award study that will comprehensively evaluate contemporary burden and risks for seven priority neurological conditions including ALS, Parkinson's disease, dementia and brain cancer among Gulf War veterans.