The mission of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to improve the abilities of people with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community, and also to expand society’s capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities.
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NIDILRR Mission

The mission of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to improve the abilities of people with disabilities to participate in community activities of their choice, and also to enhance society’s capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities. NIDILRR funds comprehensive and coordinated programs of research and related activities to assist in the achievement of the full inclusion, social integration, employment, and independent living of individuals of all ages, with all types and degrees of disability including low-incidence disability.

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in July 2014, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) was renamed to the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and moved from the Department of Education to the Administration for Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services.

This edition of the NIDILRR Program Directory lists all projects funded by NIDILRR during the 2018 fiscal year.

NIDILRR's Research Programs/Funding Mechanisms

NIDILRR is committed to maintaining its focus on research and development; knowledge translation; and capacity building as strategic areas to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. Under the 2013-2017 Long Range Plan, NIDILRR supports a wide range of research, development, and other related activities aimed at improving long-term outcomes in health and function, employment, and community living and participation, NIDILRR’s Long-Range Plan for 2013-2017 was published in the Federal Register in April 2013. To download a copy, go to https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-07879.

The majority of NIDILRR grantees are universities or organizations of rehabilitation or related services. NIDILRR makes awards through several program mechanisms including ADA National Network Projects, Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects, Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects, Mary E. Switzer Research Fellowships, Model Systems, NIDILRR Contracts, Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers, Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers, and Small Business Innovation Research. Program descriptions are provided below.

ADA National Network Projects

NIDILRR funds the ADA National Network to provide information, training, and technical assistance related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to any persons or entities that have rights and responsibilities under the ADA, as well as conducting ADA-related research. Presently, ten ADA regional centers and one ADA collaborative research center are funded under this program. Beginning in 2011, NIDILRR also funded an ADA Network Knowledge Translation (ADA KT) Center to support knowledge translation activities of all ADA National Network centers.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects

The Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Program provides research training and experience at an advanced level to individuals with doctorates, or similar advanced degrees, who have clinical or other relevant experience. ARRT projects provide training to rehabilitation researchers, including researchers with disabilities, with particular attention to research areas that support the implementation and objectives of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act), and improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Act.

Grants are made to institutions to recruit qualified persons who will receive a training program that includes didactic and classroom instruction, is multidisciplinary, emphasizes scientific research methodology, and may involve collaboration among institutions.

Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects

The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) program funds projects that include a range of activities including research, demonstration, training, knowledge translation, technical assistance, and related activities, including international activities. These projects may develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology to assist in achieving the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most significant disabilities, or to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act.

Mary E. Switzer Research Fellowships

The Research Fellowships Program builds research capacity by providing one-year support to highly qualified individuals, including those who are individuals with disabilities, to conduct original research in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. The program provides two categories of research fellowships: Merit Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships. Merit Fellowships are awarded to individuals who are in the earlier stages of their career in research and have either advanced professional training or experience in independent study in an area which is directly pertinent to disability and rehabilitation. Distinguished Fellowships are awarded to individuals who have seven or more years of research experience in subject areas, methods, or techniques relevant to research on rehabilitation, independent living, and other experiences and outcomes of individuals with disabilities, and must have a doctorate, other terminal degree, or comparable academic qualifications. Institutions are not eligible to be recipients of Switzer research fellowships.

Model Systems

NIDILRR administers Model Systems programs for persons with burn injuries (BI), spinal cord injuries (SCI), and traumatic brain injuries (TBI). The Model Systems establish innovative projects for the delivery, demonstration, and evaluation of comprehensive medical, vocational, and other rehabilitation services in those three injury areas. The work of the Model Systems begins at the point of injury and ends with successful re-entry into full community life. These projects collect and contribute longitudinal data on the individuals’ demographics, diagnoses, causes of injury, interventions, outcomes, and costs,
to the Model Systems National Databases housed at the NIDILRR-funded Burn, SCI, and TBI National Data and Statistical Centers. The Model Systems projects also conduct research, both independently and collaboratively with other Model System centers as well as coordinate research efforts with other related grant recipients. Beginning in 2006, NIDILRR funded a Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) to support knowledge translation activities of all three Model Systems.

**NIDILRR Contracts**

Through its contracts, NIDILRR seeks improved methods, systems, products, and practices to enhance its work. The contracts are for specific activities related to management, research, evaluation, and information dissemination.

**Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers**

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) engage in the systematic application of engineering sciences to design, develop, adapt, test, evaluate, apply, and distribute technological solutions to problems confronted by individuals with disabilities in functional areas such as mobility, communications, hearing, vision, and cognition, and in activities associated with employment, independent living, education, and integration into the community. RERCs may focus their efforts at the individual level such as developing assistive technology devices that enhance the physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities of individuals with disabilities. RERCs may also focus on the systems level such as mitigating or eliminating barriers found in large social systems in the areas of public transportation, telecommunications, information technology, and the built environment. RERCs conduct research and development that lead to the transfer of technology into commercialized or non-commercialized products that can be readily accessed and used to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. Since 2008, NIDILRR has funded the Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer (KT4TT) Center to assist RERC grantees in their technology transfer efforts.

**Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers**

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) programs conduct coordinated, integrated, and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination in topical areas that are specified by NIDILRR. RRTCs conduct research to improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems; improve health and functioning; and promote employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. They also provide training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to assist rehabilitation personnel to more effectively provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. RRTCs serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for providers and for individuals with disabilities and their representatives.
Small Business Innovation Research

The purpose of NIDILRR’s Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) program is to help support the development of new ideas and projects that are useful to persons with disabilities by inviting the participation of small business firms with strong research capabilities in science, engineering, or educational technology. Small businesses must meet certain criteria to participate: The company must be American-owned and independently operated, for-profit, employ no more than 500 employees, and the principal researcher must be employed by the business. NIDILRR supports Phase I and Phase II projects. During Phase I, NIDILRR funds firms to conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of an idea. During Phase II, NIDILRR-funded firms expand on the results of Phase I to pursue further development and to begin to explore the potential for commercialization.

Grant Numbers

Active grants originally awarded before October 2014 will include grant numbers as assigned by both the Department of Education and the Administration for Community Living. Grants awarded after October 2014 will only have the ACL-assigned grant number.

NARIC and the NIDILRR Program Directory

The Program Directory is compiled by the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC). NARIC functions as a specialized library, providing the public with disability- and rehabilitation-related information and services to help locate those materials and resources. Since 1977, NARIC has been the primary source of rehabilitation and disability information about, and information generated by, NIDILRR-funded projects.

NARIC also produces REHABDATA, an index of disability and rehabilitation literature produced by NIDILRR grantees as well as commercial publishers. Grantees submit copies of NIDILRR-supported research products to NARIC and they are added to the reference collection and REHABDATA database. Information about holdings is available online at http://www.naric.com.

Neither NARIC nor NIDILRR assumes liability for the Directory’s contents or the use thereof. NARIC does not evaluate or certify the programs or products of the organizations listed in the Directory.

This Directory is not intended for use as a fiscal document to show how NIDILRR funds are allocated; its purpose is to display the range of programs that NIDILRR supports. This listing is current as of December 29, 2018. The directory includes some projects that will be officially complete by the directory’s publication date.

NARIC operates under Administration for Community Living contract GS-06F-0726Z.
Employment

Employment and earnings are essential to independence, self-determination, and contribution to society. NIDILRR’s employment research focuses on the lifelong challenges to and opportunities presented by transitions into employment, experienced by people with disabilities. Employment research addresses methods to integrate the unique needs of employers and disability populations to improve employment outcomes across the life span. NIDILRR supports centers and projects that address unemployment, underemployment, and unnecessary dependence on public benefits. The research and development activities in this domain examine employment policies and practices, vocational rehabilitation services, and technologies and accommodations that contribute to improved employment and career outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Research Training Center (RRTC) on Employment for People with Physical Disabilities

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)
355 East Erie Street, Suite 14S
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
aheinemann@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90RTEM0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to promote job retention by persons with physical disabilities. Toward this goal, this center conducts a randomized control trial comparing an evidence-based, telehealth pain self-management intervention, adapted to address risk and protective factors for employment disability, to a waitlist control in adults who are employed; assesses employer-, client-, job-, and environment-related barriers and facilitators of job retention after vocational rehabilitation; evaluates an implementation science approach to employment interventions in people with Parkinson’s disease; and evaluates job accommodation strategies and assistive technology resources for rural and low resource environments. Outcomes include producing empirical evidence to support a telehealth pain self-management program; developing a deeper appreciation of barriers to and facilitators of job retention, and strategies to surmount them; identifying strategies to and interventions that support employment for people with progressive neurological disorders; developing accommodation strategies and assistive technology resources that are suitable for rural and low resource environments; and promoting knowledge translation that enhances employment outcomes for persons with physical disabilities and the professionals who work with them. Project partners include Northwestern University, the University of Washington, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and two regional ADA Centers.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Maryland

RRTC on VR Practices for Youth and Young Adults

TransCen, Inc.
12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Suite 350
Rockville, MD 20852
lowens@transcen.org
vrpracticesandyouth.org

Principal Investigator: Laura Owens, PhD (TransCen, Inc.); Ellen Fabian, PhD (University of Maryland); Todd Honeycutt, PhD (Mathematica Policy Research)

Public Contact: 301/424-2002 (Owens); 301/405-2872 (Fabian); 609/945-3397 (Honeycutt); Fax: 301/251-3762

Project Number: 90RT5034 (Formerly H133B140043)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000

Abstract: The RRTC on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Practices for Youth and Young Adults provides a comprehensive, balanced, and rigorous view of the strategies, methodologies, and models of VR service for youth and young adults (Y&YA) with disabilities in the United States. The Center’s activities provide knowledge for ongoing academic analysis, policy development, and in-the-field practice by: (1) analyzing the association between individual and agency level factors and outcomes of transition-age youth seeking VR services; (2) designing, implementing, and testing a data analytic system to support VR agency learning and continuous improvement of service delivery to transitioning youth; (3) evaluating the efficacy and utility of a comprehensive VR-led transition program; (4) identifying characteristics and strategies used by highly effective VR staff in order to develop and test a training resource for promoting highly effective performance; (5) analyzing the role and impact of VR services in inclusive higher education for students with significant disabilities; (6) producing robust and extensive publications of research findings; (7) compiling, creating, and disseminating information on the Center’s research that is accessible and useful to interested stakeholders; and (8) providing training and technical assistance in order to address gaps in knowledge and practice. The Center is a partnership of TransCen, Inc.; University of Maryland-College Park; Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; and the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, as well as the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and other relevant stakeholders to provide a deeper understanding of the knowledge, policies, and practices that enable Y&YA to transition to successful employment and productive careers.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

University of Massachusetts Boston
The Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
john.butterworth@umb.edu
thinkwork.org/rrtc
twitter.com/ThinkWorkICI
www.facebook.com/ThinkWorkICI

Principal Investigator: John Butterworth, PhD; Allison Hall, PhD
Public Contact: 617/287-4357 (Butterworth); 480/264-7215 (Hall); Fax: 617/287-4352

Project Number: 90RT5028 (Formerly H133B140026)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $874,999; FY 18 $874,999

Abstract: The goal of this RRTC is to address the elements needed to bring integrated employment to scale for all adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Research suggests that bringing individual and local successes in employment to scale requires an integrated approach that engages all stakeholders in addressing: individual and family expectations and knowledge; employment consultants’ ability to provide high quality individual employment services and supports; community rehabilitation providers’ effectiveness to rebalance resources and transform their organizations to a focus on integrated employment; and states’ effectiveness at implementing policies and practices that establish employment as the first priority across all service systems including vocational rehabilitation, education, and I/DD. The Center: (1) develops and tests a comprehensive information, outreach, and support framework for individuals and families; (2) assesses a cost-effective strategy for improving the implementation of employment support practices by integrating online training, data-based performance feedback, and facilitated peer supports; (3) develops and tests an evidence-based intervention to support organizational transformation and rebalancing across networks of community rehabilitation providers; and (4) analyzes state employment systems policies and practices and their relationship to individual outcomes at a multi-agency level and defines policies and practices of high-performing state employment systems.

This project includes a cross-stakeholder network of advisors and seven organizational dissemination partners to extend the effectiveness and utilization of project findings and resources. Project partners include The Arc of the United States, the University of Minnesota, the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, SABE, and APSE. Participation of a cross-stakeholder network of advisors and eight organizational dissemination partners extend the effectiveness and use of project findings and resources.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Trustees of Boston University
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1203
erogers@bu.edu
mfarkas@bu.edu
cpr.bu.edu/research/current-research/rrtc-2014-2019

Principal Investigator: Marianne Farkas, ScD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90RT5029 (Formerly H133B140028)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,596; FY 15 $574,991; FY 16 $574,956; FY 17 $574,959; FY 18 $574,965
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve employment outcomes through the development and testing of Thinking Skills for Work, a tablet application to extend a work-focused cognitive remediation intervention; research to predict employment outcomes with client and program characteristics, work environment, and community characteristics; a randomized clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of the peer-run Vocational Empowerment PhotoVoice (VEP) program; development and testing of Opening Doors, a career education and career development project; and a study of the impact of federal and state government policies and practices on employment outcomes for people with psychiatric disabilities. To achieve this goal, this project develops a National Resource Center (NRC) on Employment and Vocational Recovery to provide technical assistance, conduct training, and develop and disseminate resources. Technical assistance is provided to organizations delivering employment and vocational recovery services and to support state-level SAMHSA grantees in providing high-fidelity, evidence-based supported employment. Training includes two programs: Advanced Practitioner and Peer Specialist Skills (APPS): Building Partnerships for Employment and Vocational Recovery Through Distance Learning and Moving Along to Employment: Exposure Training to Inspire Networks of Support. Development and dissemination projects include the National Resource Center on Employment and Vocational Recovery Online and “Let’s Talk Employment”, a family toolkit for educating families about employment and vocational recovery. This project is a collaboration between the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Westat, and other organizations from around the nation.
The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

University of Massachusetts Medical School
Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC)
Department of Psychiatry
222 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
maryann.davis@umassmed.edu
www.umassmed.edu/transitionsacr
www.facebook.com/TransitionsACR
voices4hope.net
www.youtube.com/user/TransitionsACR
twitter.com/transitionsACR

Principal Investigator: Maryann Davis, PhD
Public Contact: 508/856-8718; Fax: 508/856-8700

Project Number: 90RT5031 (Formerly H133B140040)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,596; FY 15 $499,593; FY 16 $499,595; FY 17 $499,593; FY 18 $499,593
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: This project focuses on school-to-work transitions with an integrated research program examining this developmental stage for transition-age youth and young adults (Y&YAs) with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs). The Center develops and translates knowledge from state-of-the-art rigorous research on education and work in 14-30-year-olds with SMHCs. Research is conducted in real-world settings in partnership with Y&YAs with lived experience and informed by family input to address three critical areas: (1) identifying the range of paths in the transition to employment and the factors that contribute to the variability in educational and working success of Y&YAs with SMHCs; (2) continuing to develop and test interventions with preliminary evidence of efficacy; and (3) continuing to examine the ways in which state vocational rehabilitation, child mental health, and adult mental health agencies can improve employment success within subpopulations of those vulnerable to poor transitions to employment (i.e., young parents and individuals with justice-system involvement). This fundamental research increases capacity-building for service providers, and the movement of findings into practice and policy. The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center provides national leadership in this area and shares developing knowledge with key stakeholders including youth and young adults, their families, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Mississippi

Employment for Individuals with Blindness or Other Visual Impairments

Mississippi State University
The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC)
PO Box 6189
108 Herbert South, Room 150
IED Building
Mississippi State, MS 39762
m.mcdonnall@msstate.edu
www.blind.msstate.edu
www.facebook.com/msu.nrtc
twitter.com/MSU_NRTC
www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu

Principal Investigator: Michele C. McDonnall, PhD; Karla Antonelli; Jennifer Cmar; Adele Crudden, PhD; BJ LeJeune
Public Contact: 662/325-2001

Project Number: 90RT5040
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $874,947; FY 16 $874,807; FY 17 $874,881; FY 18 $875,853; FY 19 $874,801

Abstract: This project conducts research that generates new knowledge about the efficacy of rehabilitation services and technology used to support employment outcomes for individuals who are blind or visually impaired (B/VI), utilizing multiple stages of research. Research and related training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities contribute to improving competitive employment outcomes for individuals who are B/VI, including subpopulations such as youth, persons who are deaf-blind (DB), and persons with combined traumatic brain injury (TBI) and B/VI. Project 1 is an intervention development project to create an app for parents of youth who are B/VI or DB and youth who are B/VI to help them focus on the steps they need to take, starting early in the youth’s life, to obtain employment upon completion of their education, including a checklist of age-appropriate activities that should be accomplished to aid in the transition process. Project 2 is an intervention efficacy project that involves adding a guided job search component to an existing summer work experience program conducted by a vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency with youth in their local community. This modification is supported by research that indicates finding a job independently is associated with better employment outcomes later, whereas sponsored work activities are not beneficial. Project 3 evaluates the effectiveness of different approaches to a first meeting between a VR representative and an employer. This intervention efficacy project evaluates the ability of four different approaches to change attitudes and intent to hire. Project 4 implements and evaluates the effectiveness of an evidence-based approach to VR counselor training.
on working with businesses. Project 5 is an exploratory study, surveying with individuals with B/VI to identify factors that helped them retain their jobs and a survey with VR agencies to explore policies for job retention cases. Analyses with RSA-911 and survey data explore job retention cases nationally and evaluates the impact of agency policies on consumer employment outcomes. Case studies provide more in-depth information. Project 6 is an exploratory study utilizing two large secondary databases to increase our knowledge about subpopulations (youth and adults who are DB, persons with combined TBI and B/VI) and the impacts on employment outcomes of changes associated with WIOA legislation.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
New Hampshire

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement

University of New Hampshire
Institute on Disability
10 West Edge Drive, Suite 101
Durham, NH 03824-2620
debra.brucker@unh.edu
researchondisability.org/epm-rrtc

Principal Investigator: Debra L. Brucker, PhD 603/862-4320
Public Contact: Matthew Gianino 603/862-2300; Fax: 603/862-0555

Project Number: 90RT5037
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement (EPM-RRTC) supports the disability and policy communities as they take on important policy issues, generating and translating new knowledge about disability employment policy and ways to measure the labor market experiences of people with disabilities. The Center conducts 11 research projects and 12 knowledge translation projects that involve a range of dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities. These research projects support the disability and policy communities in three priority areas by generating new knowledge about the interactions of public programs, assessing the potential impact of SSDI policy reform options, and developing and disseminating innovative, valid, and reliable methods of measuring employment outcomes. Dissemination projects promote access to timely and relevant information through monthly reports that track employment trends in a timely manner, a compendium of state-level policy variables, policy briefs, compiling journal volume research findings around a unified theme, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and the Center website. Training projects improve the utilization of evidence-based information by increasing the capacity of end users to effectively utilize disability employment policy research and data through monthly webcasts designed to facilitate knowledge translation to practitioners, policy makers, and people with disabilities; a State-of-the-Science conference; presentations at scientific conferences; and a junior researcher training program. Lastly, technical assistance projects further build and cement the utilization of evidence-based information by providing technical assistance to policy and program stakeholders and information/referral services.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Virginia

Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) on Employer Practices Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities

Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1314 West Main Street
PO Box 842011
Richmond, VA 23284-2011
pwehman@vcu.org
ep.vcurrtc.org

Principal Investigator: Paul Wehman, PhD
Public Contact: 804/828-1852

Project Number: 90RT5041
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $874,220; FY 17 $873,973; FY 18 $874,877; FY 19 $874,397; FY 20 $874,408

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employer Practices Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities provides needed information in employer practices that are associated with better employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The cornerstone of this research is a series of studies embedded in businesses to examine the business practices that facilitate the hiring and advancement of individuals with disabilities. These studies examine the complex interactions between a wide range of variables that directly impact the employment outcomes of people with disabilities. The researchers actively involve business professionals, including human resource professionals, hiring managers, and coworkers, in the design and implementation of the research, and resulting knowledge translation activities. Studies examine, in real time, the decision-making processes that frontline supervisors go through when deciding to hire, retain, or promote individuals with disabilities, to understand the factors that influence these important decisions. Employers share their diversity policies, employer practices, accommodation process, and factors that influence businesses to employ and retain workers with disabilities, as well as the characteristics of the businesses that employ individuals with significant disabilities. The VCU-RRTC works collaboratively with stakeholders in the design and implementation of the research by establishing a Business Advisory Board. Some of the key activities for the VCU-RRTC include establishing a National Resource Center that is related to the employment of people with disabilities and providing informational and technical assistance to stakeholder groups. This research is conducted in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Bon Secours Virginia Health System.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Virginia

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment of Individuals with Physical Disabilities

Virginia Commonwealth University
1314 West Main Street
PO Box 842011
Richmond, VA 23284-2011
kinge@vcu.edu
www.vcurrtc.org

Principal Investigator: Paul Wehman, PhD
Public Contact: Katherine Inge, PhD, OTR 804/828-1851; Fax: 804/828-2193

Project Number: 90RT5035 (Formerly H133B130011)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $873,811; FY 14 $862,741; FY 15 $871,087; FY 16 $874,918; FY 17 $871,129; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project is developing and implementing five research studies that directly impact the employment outcomes of individuals with physical disabilities. These studies focus on: (1) technology that improves employment outcomes for individuals with physical disabilities; (2) individual and environmental factors associated with improved employment outcomes; (3) interventions that contribute to improved employment outcomes; (4) effects of government practices, policies, and programs on employment outcomes; and (5) practices and policies that contribute to the improved outcomes for transition-aged youth and young adults with physical disabilities. The activities of this project include: (1) conducting a mixed-method, quasi-experimental study to identify the barriers and facilitators of employment for individuals with physical disabilities and testing the effectiveness of specific knowledge translation strategies used by individuals with physical disabilities to promote the use of employment disability research findings; (2) conducting research on customized employment to identify evidence-based practices that will facilitate the employment of transition-age youth with physical disabilities; (3) conducting research on the employment of veterans with amputation conditions; (4) conducting research to evaluate demand-side employment and a toolkit for use by rehabilitation professionals; (5) studying successful employment and quality of work life after severe disability for individuals with multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury; and (6) establishing and maintaining a National Resource Center for individuals with physical disabilities and their families that is guided by Rehabilitation Research and Training Center research. This project is a collaboration of Virginia Commonwealth University, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Georgia

DRRP on Universal Design Practices to Enhance Work Outcomes

Georgia Institute of Technology
Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA)
512 Means Street, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30318
jon.sanford@design.gatech.edu
catea.gatech.edu/accessible-workplace-drrp

Principal Investigator: Jon Sanford
Public Contact: 404/894-1413; Fax: 404/894-9320

Project Number: 90DP0049 (Formerly H133A120120)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $499,962; FY 13 $499,875; FY 14 $499,928; FY 15 $499,972; FY 16 $499,954; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to increase knowledge about, availability of, and access to universal design (UD) accommodations to enable employees with disabilities to participate fully in the workplace, enjoy enhanced employment outcomes, and have equal opportunities for advancement. To accomplish this goal, the specific aims of the research activities are to develop new tools to measure UD accommodation practices and workplace participation; utilize these tools to establish an evidence base for UD accommodations to improve work outcomes; and translate that evidence into practice. To accomplish these aims, the project: (1) develops and validates the Workplace Accommodation Rating System and Standards (WARSS), a set of standards and a new rating system for UD accommodations based on the Commercial Building Standards developed by IDEA Center for the Global Universal Design; (2) expands the scope of the Work RERC Workplace Participation Survey, originally developed and validated for workers who use wheelchairs in an office setting, to include workers with all types of limitations, including vision, hearing, mobility, dexterity, speech, and cognition in multiple work settings; (3) describes the relationship between employer accommodation practices and work outcomes; (4) identifies the salient UD accommodation practices that are associated with positive work outcomes for employees with disabilities; and (5) identifies needs and opportunities to develop and disseminate materials about accommodation policies and practices. The DRRP produces new tools for employers and rehabilitation professionals to measure UD and participation in a workplace, including standards for measuring UD in the workplace; an evidence base for UD accommodation practices; and educational and outreach materials in formats that are useful to and usable by employers, industry organizations, rehabilitation professionals, policymakers, and organizations that influence policy including employer practice guidelines, articles in industry trade journals, and evidence-based policy recommendations for policymakers.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
Georgia

Workplace Accommodation Expert Support System (Work ACCESS)

Georgia Tech Research Corporation  
Centers for Inclusive Design Innovation (CIDI)  
512 Means Street, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
karen.milchus@design.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Karen Milchus  
Public Contact: 404/894-0393; Fax: 404/894-9320

Project Number: 90DPEM0001  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $474,999; FY 19 $474,997; FY 20 $474,998; FY 21 $474,997; FY 22 $474,996

Abstract: This project develops Work ACCESS, an online tool and mobile application to help employers assess the workplace accommodation needs of their employees with disabilities to improve the provision of accommodations that increase workplace performance and participation, while providing a user-friendly tool that employers and employees can use together to make informed, evidence-based decisions. Project objectives are to: (1) develop, with the help of crowd sourcing, an expert system that uses decision trees and information about personal, task, and environmental factors to determine potential solutions; (2) incorporate workplace accommodation best practices from published and new research, and from feedback from system users on accommodation effectiveness; (3) provide resource links to facilitate accommodation implementation; (4) optimize the website/app’s content and usability; (5) evaluate how employers and employees utilize the system in the field; and (6) disseminate Work ACCESS through employment and disability employment networks. Project outcomes include employers and employees using the tool to explore accommodations that better fit their employees’ needs, which that are also more cost-effective and likely to be used.
Evaluating the Impact of a School-to-Work Collaborative on the Employment Outcomes of Transition-Aged Youth

The Trustees of Indiana University
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana University Center for Excellence
Indiana University
1905 North Range Road
Bloomington, IN 47408-9801
tgrossi@indiana.edu
www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/indiana-school-to-work-collaborative

Principal Investigator: Teresa Grossi, PhD 812/855-4070
Public Contact: 812/855-6508; Fax: 812/855-9630

Project Number: 90DP0057 (Formerly H133A130028)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $471,327; FY 14 $474,403; FY 15 $474,678; FY 16 $474,314; FY 17 $474,729; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project collaborates with state and local partners and the Indiana University’s Center on Community Living and Careers at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community to evaluate the effects of a school-to-work collaborative on the employment outcomes of transition-age youth with disabilities. The goal of the Collaborative is to provide employment opportunities for transition-age youth by embedding employment resources into the school to focus on employment outcomes and reduce or eliminate duplication of services; specifically, a provider employment specialist who serves as a single point-of-contact representing a coalition of providers serving the Collaborative while overlapping supports with schools to ensure a coordinated and seamless system of transition. Five sites for the study are selected to implement the local collaborative and five additional sites are selected as the control group. Key elements of the local Collaborative include: a single point of contact, development of student personal profiles, self-determination/soft skill training, immersed internship, family training, and benefits counseling with asset development/financial literacy training. Each local Collaborative includes key stakeholders: local vocational rehabilitation counselors or supervisors, community employment/rehabilitation providers, school districts representatives, INSOURCE parent representative, and other representatives that are locally determined. Results from this study provide data for a replicable model both within Indiana and across the country enhancing the employment outcomes for transition-age youth.
Integrated Scaling Approach: A Model for Large Scale Implementation of Effective Interventions for Employment

Trustees of Boston University
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1203
mfarkas@bu.edu

Principal Investigator: Marianne Farkas, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549

Project Number: 90DP0096
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,984; FY 17 $499,412; FY 18 $499,799; FY 19 $499,844; FY 20 $499,765

Abstract: The goal of this project is to more efficiently expand delivery of effective employment interventions, by developing a comprehensive, integrated approach that increases the demand for and the supply of such practices, through interactive technology and personal contact. “Scaling up” evidence-based employment practices (EBP) involves increasing access to effective programs in order to benefit more people over time. Despite having effective employment practices for people with psychiatric disabilities, widespread implementation remains difficult due to factors such as the resource intensive methods traditionally used, negative stakeholder attitudes towards work for people with psychiatric disabilities and lack of knowledge about existing EBPs. This project focuses on two Development Stages (Proof of Concept and Proof of Product) through four objectives: (1) establishing the conceptual elements of an innovative approach for scaling up employment interventions, designed for people with psychiatric disabilities (Integrated Scaling Approach: ISA); (2) testing a working prototype for ISA; (3) evaluating the resulting product; and (4) transferring the technique for others to use in scaling up future effective employment interventions. Outcomes of this project include: a better understanding of large scale implementation of new employment practices; more providers with increased skills in new employment practices across several states and more agencies with the capacity to embed such practices. Project products include: a systematic review of the scaling literature; scaling up of the two practices; a certificate program; two toolkits to promote positive messages about work for people with psychiatric disabilities; an ISA Handbook; and an evaluation of the approach itself and the application of these learnings to other sites, states, providers and stakeholders.
helping youth on the path to employment (hype):
creating economic self-sufficiency

university of massachusetts medical school
systems and psychosocial advances research center (sparc)
department of psychiatry
222 maple avenue
shrewsbury, ma 01545
hype@umassmed.edu
www.umassmed.edu/hype

principal investigator: michelle g. mullen-gonzalez
public contact: 857/540-9344

project number: 90dpge0008
start date: september 30, 2018
length: 60 months
nidilrr officer: leslie j. caplan, PhD

nidilrr funding: fy 18 $474,980; fy 19 $474,991; fy 20 $474,990; fy 21 $474,998; fy 22 $474,995

abstract: the goal of this project is to create a career development program, helping youth on the path to employment (hype), to improve the negative education and employment outcomes of young adults with mental health conditions (MHC). The HYPE program aims to minimize disruptions of post-secondary education and promote degree completion to drive competitive employment in meaningful careers and financial self-sufficiency. Project activities include: (1) conducting a fully-powered randomized trial testing HYPE’s efficacy; (2) establishing implementation sites meeting HYPE fidelity standards; (3) providing high quality HYPE-coordinated postsecondary education and employment services; (4) recruiting and retaining college students; (5) and collecting and analyzing data on HYPE recipients and an active control group of college students over two years related to academic progression and performance, and employment in benefitted jobs. Project outcomes include developing HYPE data and products in preparation for wider implementation, and scale-up testing and adoption. Dissemination products include a mobile application on accommodations; peer-reviewed publications, policy white paper, and cost-analysis; informational tip sheets, webinars, presentations; and HYPE webpage.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
New Hampshire

Development Center to Enhance Evidence-Based Supportive Employment with a Technology-Based Management System

Trustees of Dartmouth College
Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
Rivermill Commercial Center, Suite B4-1
Lebanon, NH 03766
sarah.e.lord@dartmouth.edu
www.dartmouthhips.org/about-the-center/current-projects-new/
development-center-to-enhance-evidence-based-supported-employment-with-a-technology-based-management-system

Principal Investigator: Sarah E. Lord, PhD
Public Contact: 603/448-0263

Project Number: 90DP0052 (Formerly H133A120164)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $496,422; FY 13 $499,576; FY 14 $499,107; FY 15 $499,412; FY 16 $498,886; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 2/28/2019)

Abstract: This project develops a range of technology-based products as part of an overall platform, called the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Management System, to enhance the availability, consumer-centeredness, service quality, expansion, effectiveness, and efficiency of vocational services for people with serious mental illness on a national scale. The IPS model of supported employment is firmly established as the most effective practice to help people with serious mental illness become employed and succeed as steady workers. The IPS Management System builds on existing technology and evidence-based components that are not yet computerized. It includes a variety of tools to help consumers, families, vocational rehabilitation counselors, employers, employment specialists, mental health teams, supervisors, and administrators. The tools are iteratively developed and tested for acceptability and usability using methods that have been empirically proven in the development of treatment technology. Examples of these tools include: consumer-empowering software to enable consumers to build their own career profiles and job plans, information on disability benefits and employment for families, IPS training for vocational rehabilitation counselors, information for employers on the advantages of hiring IPS participants, job development tracking systems for employment specialists, IPS training for mental health teams, and management systems for supervisors and administrators.
The Diversity Partners Intervention: Moving the Disability Employment Needle Through Value Added Relationships Between Talent Acquisition Providers and the Business Community

Cornell University
Office of Sponsored Programs
201 Dolgen Hall, Room 203
Ithaca, NY 14853
ws283@cornell.edu
www.buildingdiversitypartners.org

Principal Investigator: Wendy Strobel Gower, Project Director
Public Contact: 607/255-6751; Fax: 607/255-2763

Project Number: 90DP0065 (Formerly H133A140011)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,999; FY 15 $499,999; FY 16 $499,999; FY 17 $499,999; FY 18 $499,999

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the Diversity Partners Intervention (DPI) to augment the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of general placement professionals (GPPs) and disability placement professionals (DPPs) with the purpose of improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. DPI prepares GPP and DPP provider organizations in the development of organizational practices and policies which support meaningful relationships with employers and aids in the development and testing of intervention tools designed to provide on-going support to placement professionals in their daily practice. The DPI enables placement professionals to build relationships with employers by adding value to employers’ efforts to hire and fully include employees with disabilities. Placement professionals improve their knowledge of best practice around all aspects of employing people with disabilities; strengthening their ability to engage employers around hiring and retaining employees with disabilities; and helping employers to build disability-inclusive organizational cultures and practices that support their on-going recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities. The project also creates systems and tools to support national dissemination and broad adoption of these tools in provider organizations within the context of their work and their local communities.
Translate and Adapt VR Assessment Tools into ASL

Wright State University
Boonshoft School of Medicine
PO Box 927
Dayton, OH 45410-0927
josephine.wilson@wright.edu

Principal Investigator: Josephine F. Wilson, DDS, PhD
Public Contact: 937/775-1484

Project Number: 90DP0067 (Formerly H133A140053)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $489,988; FY 15 $489,999; FY 16 $489,998; FY 17 $489,995; FY 18 $489,956

Abstract: This goal of this project is to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and enhance employment outcomes for individuals who are Deaf. The project: (1) translates and adapts widely used VR instruments into American Sign Language (ASL) and validates these assessment tools for use with VR consumers who are Deaf; (2) develops a vocational assessment instrument in ASL designed specifically for use with Deaf VR consumers; (3) develops online access to these ASL-based VR assessment instruments for Deaf consumers; (4) evaluates the feasibility, usability, and adoption of online assessment resources by VR counselors and consumers who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing; and (5) promotes utilization of DRRP-developed ASL resources to state and territorial VR agencies with a targeted knowledge translation strategy.
Project CAREER: Development of an Interprofessional Demonstration to Support the Transition of Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries from Postsecondary Education to Employment

Kent State University
Center for Disability Studies
414 White Hall
PO Box 5190
Kent, OH 44242
prumrill@kent.edu
www.kent.edu/ehhs/ldes/rhab/project-career

Principal Investigator: Phillip D. Rumrill, Jr., PhD, CRC
Public Contact: 330/672-2294

Project Number: 90DP0062 (Formerly H133A130066)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $474,945; FY 14 $474,917; FY 15 $474,968; FY 16 $474,947; FY 17 $474,945; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2019)

Abstract: Project Career is an inter-professional development project to improve the employment success of undergraduate college and university students with traumatic brain injury (TBI). This project develops, tests, and implements a technology-driven, long-term, and resource-rich individualized support program by merging assistive technology (AT) for cognition (e.g., Cognitive Support Technology [CST]) and a collection of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and supports to improve career readiness and employment outcomes of civilian and veteran students with TBI participating in and graduating from postsecondary two- and four-year colleges and universities. In a collaborative venture, Kent State University, JBS International, Inc., West Virginia University, and Boston University implement this project, providing services and supports to a minimum of 150 civilian and veteran students with TBI at all stages of postsecondary education. iPads, provided to each participating student, are used as a CST device and as a virtual platform to provide coaching, education, counseling, and career mentoring services. Additional services include field-based internship placements, and support for post-graduation job placement. Guided by stakeholders including people with TBI, those in the allied health and rehabilitation professions, employers, and CST experts, the following full range of services and supports are included: (1) Comprehensive assessment and planning of (a) students’ needs, readiness, and preferences for CSTs to compensate for cognitive limitations, and (b) students’ vocational goals and preferences; (2) individualized CSTs targeted toward the needs and capabilities of each student; (3) training in the use of the iPad and the specific CSTs; (4) an electronic-mentoring (e-mentoring) program based on a peer support model; (5) individualized vocational case management services provided by Certified Rehabilitation Counselors; (6) assistance in securing field-based internships; (7) a resource-directed job placement and accommodation planning seminar focused on technology transfer, self-advocacy, and professional networking; and (8) post-graduation follow-along employment support provided by Certified Rehabilitation Counselors.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
South Carolina

Successful Employment and Quality Work Life
After Severe Disability Due to Spinal Cord Injury

Medical University of South Carolina
College of Health Professions
Department of Health Science and
77 President Street, Suite C101
MSC 700
Charleston, SC 29425
swayngim@musc.edu
academicdepartments.musc.edu/chp/Health_Employment_Longevity_Project
/Beyond90Days/funded_projects/successful_employment/index.htm
www.sciandtbiresearch.blogspot.com
www.facebook.com/longevityafterinjuryproject
www.linkedin.com/groups/MUSC-Longevity-after-Injury-Project-5043886?trk=mysg_ugrp_ovr

Principal Investigator: James S. Krause, PhD 843/792-1337
Public Contact: Karla Swayngim Reed 843/792-7051; Fax: 843/792-5649

Project Number: 90DP0050 (Formerly H133A120122)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $499,805; FY 13 $499,412; FY 14 $498,646; FY 15 $499,195; FY 16
$499,790; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: The purpose of this project is to perform a state-of-the-art study of employment after spinal
cord injury (SCI) to identify factors related to successful employment throughout the life cycle. Re-
search and service delivery models of employment after disability typically focus heavily on transition
or return to work, rather than a focus on maintaining employment, advancing in career, and maximizing
earning potential. This is a two-stage research study beginning with a qualitative component that elicits
factors related to successful employment from the perspective of stakeholders with SCI, including those
who have had highly successful careers. A large-scale, quantitative study, incorporating the qualita-
tive findings and input from advisory panels is used to develop econometric models of participation in
employment and quality employment outcomes throughout the work life cycle. The project includes an
integrated program of dissemination, training, and technical assistance to ensure the new knowledge
generated may be translated into policy and practice.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
Virginia

**VR-ROI Project: Estimating Return on Investment in State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs**

University of Richmond  
Robins School of Business  
28 Westhampton Way  
Richmond, VA 23173  
rschmidt@richmond.edu  
vrooi.org

**Principal Investigator:** Robert Schmidt, PhD; Joseph M. Ashley, RhD, CRC  
**Public Contact:** 804/662-7624

**Project Number:** 90DP0070 (Formerly H133A140095)  
**Start Date:** October 01, 2014  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Hugh Berry, EdD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 14 $499,856; FY 15 $499,902; FY 16 $499,530; FY 17 $499,819; FY 18 $499,771

**Abstract:** This project examines the return on investment (ROI) in eight state vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs. ROI information for the state-federal VR program is increasingly seen as a way to demonstrate the effectiveness of VR. Recent years have seen substantial growth in the numbers of ROI studies of state VR programs. However, the analytic methods, time periods covered, and data used in existing VR ROI studies have varied widely. Most recent analyses have serious shortcomings that limit the credibility and utility of their results. This project refines and tests existing ROI models using a more heterogeneous set of state agencies and a more recent cohort of applicants for VR services. The project also tests a “turnkey” approach to ROI analysis that can generate rigorous and credible estimates for any size agency, for individuals with virtually any type of disability, and for different types of VR services. The project includes development of a user-friendly, web-based “ROI Estimator” to allow state agencies to simulate the impact of different VR services on the employment outcomes of VR clients, and to develop ROI estimates for the entire state program. Project activities include VR ROI estimates for specific populations, including youth in transition, individuals with several low-incidence disabilities, and individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds; development and dissemination of training materials for state VR agencies interested in conducting ROI analyses; and training in effective use of both the project’s methodological framework and the agency-specific results produced by the ROI Estimator. This project is a collaboration of the University of Richmond, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and George Washington University.
Effects of Customized Employment on the Employment Outcomes of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities: A Randomized Clinical Trial

Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1314 West Main Street
PO Box 842011
Richmond, VA 23284-2011
kinge@vcu.edu
pwehman@vcu.org
drrp.vcurrtc.org

Principal Investigator: Katherine Inge, PhD, OTR; Paul Wehman, PhD
Public Contact: 804/828-5956 (Inge); 804/828-1852 (Wehman)

Project Number: 90DP0085
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,932; FY 17 $499,945; FY 18 $499,983; FY 19 $499,881; FY 20 $499,902

Abstract: This project researches the use of customized employment (CE) as an intervention to assist individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to achieve integrated employment outcomes. Project activities include: (1) operationalizing the term customized employment as an evidence-based practice for individuals with ID/ASD; (2) evaluating and comparing the employment outcomes of individuals with ID/ASD who receive the CE intervention to those who receive “services as usual; “ and (3) conducting knowledge translation activities (e.g., training, technical assistance, utilization, and dissemination) to facilitate vocational rehabilitation professionals’ and other stakeholders’ implementation of customized employment as an evidence-based practice. Outcomes include: (1) improving the employment outcomes of individuals with ID/ASD in careers of their choice, (2) maximizing their full inclusion and integration into community employment, and (3) enhancing vocational rehabilitation professionals and other stakeholders’ capacity to provide customized employment services to these individuals. Dissemination activities include: (1) providing training activities such as webcasts, an online course on customized employment, participation in national, state, and local conferences, and face-to-face training as requested; (2) disseminating research findings through a project website and other means including use of social media, scholarly articles and articles in popular media, research briefs, fact sheets, and a project replication manual; and (3) providing technical assistance through an online rapid response database and through other traditional means (e.g. telephone, TDD, e-mail, etc.) as requested. This project is a collaboration of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in partnership with TransCen, Inc.; the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (VA/DARS), the state’s general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency; and Griffin-Hammis, Inc.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Alaska

Customized Employment for Individuals with Serious Psychiatric Disabilities

University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508-4614
karenw@alaskachd.org

Principal Investigator: Karen Ward
Public Contact: 907/272-8270

Project Number: 90IF0118
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $197,844; FY 17 $201,242; FY 18 $197,378

Abstract: This project is researching a customized employment (CE) model with individuals with serious psychiatric disabilities (SPD) in four states (Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota). The objective is to determine the feasibility and outcomes of CE, when implemented with fidelity, as a strategy for increasing job acquisition and sustained integrated competitive employment. To fulfill the project’s objective, researchers deliver CE training to 18 employment specialists, support these employment specialists in implementing CE with individuals with SPDs, assess the feasibility of the CE model, create a CE fidelity scale and assess CE implementation integrity, evaluate CE for effects on employment outcomes, compare the results to vocational rehabilitation data and the supported employment literature, and disseminate findings to inform future research.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Georgia

Assistive Software Knowledgebase for Computers and Mobile Devices

Georgia Institute of Technology
Centers for Inclusive Design Innovation (CIDI)
512 Means Street, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30318
karen.milchus@design.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Karen Milchus
Public Contact: 404/894-0393; Fax: 404/894-9320

Project Number: 90IF0125
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000

Abstract: This project develops the Assistive Software Knowledgebase, a centralized resource for information about computer software/apps that enable an employee with a disability to use a computer or perform other work tasks. The project goal is to improve the provision of workplace accommodations by providing a tool that employees with disabilities, employers, and rehabilitation professionals can use to make informed choices about selecting, acquiring, and using assistive software. The site includes searchable information about features, usage tips, compatibility, and user experiences with a variety of software, such as screen readers or scheduling apps. Project objectives are to: (1) create a database of product descriptions, leveraging Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access’ (CATEA) Assistivetech.net/ATWiki, Tools for Life’s Our Favorite Apps, and Raising the Floor’s Unified Listing and Marketplace; (2) engage stakeholders through social networking and crowd sourcing to post tips and reviews; (3) optimize the site and mobile app for usability; (4) provide training on mobile apps as work accommodations; and (5) disseminate the tool through Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA), state Assistive Technology Act projects, and employer, disability, and rehabilitation provider networks. Stakeholders can explore accommodations that better fit their needs, are more likely to be used, and may be cheaper. Products of this three-year project are the Assistive Software Knowledgebase, a mobile app version, and trainings on workplace apps. CIDI is a consortium of the CATEA and AMAC Accessibility / Tools for Life (Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Project). Partners include Raising the Floor and ATIA.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Georgia

Field Initiated Project (Research) on Contingent Employment of Individuals with Disabilities (FIP-CE)

Georgia Tech Research Corporation
Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP)
500 Tenth Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
nathan.moon@cacp.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Nathan W. Moon, PhD; Frances H. Harris, PhD
Public Contact: 404/894-8845

Project Number: 90IFRE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $198,376; FY 18 $198,343; FY 19 $198,281

Abstract: This project produces empirical evidence about the participation, practices, and characteristics of people with disabilities engaged in contingent work, as well as their rationales, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences in contingent work arrangements. Millions of American workers, including people with disabilities, have contingent work arrangements that differ from standard work arrangements characterized by permanent jobs with traditional employer-employee relationships. Contingent workers include agency-placed and direct-hire temporary employees (temps), contract company workers, independent contractors, on-call workers, and day laborers. The recent emergence of online-based or mobile app-based employment opportunities has further contributed to the redefinition of employment and the labor market. Researchers interview individuals with disabilities engaged in various forms of contingent employment, including the so-called “gig economy.” Findings from this qualitative research are used to develop, test, and administer a Survey on Contingent Employment Practices by People with Disabilities. Research instruments and evidence-based findings from the survey may be used by researchers on employment statistics and measures, disability and employment policymakers, and employer groups that rely on contingent employment arrangements.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Illinois

PRIDE (Partners of Refugees in Illinois Disability Employment)

The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Disability and Human Development
1640 West Roosevelt Road, MC 231
Chicago, IL 60608
roosheyh@uic.edu
pride.ahslabs.uic.edu

Principal Investigator: Rooshey Hasnain, EdD; Mansha Parven Mirza, PhD 312/413-0416 (Hasnain);
312/355-5427 (Mirza)
Public Contact: Rooshey Hasnain, EdD 312/413-0416

Project Number: 90IF0110
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,495; FY 17 $196,262; FY 18 $196,623
Abstract: The Partners of Refugees in Illinois Disability Employment (PRIDE) project develops innovative strategies and tools to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) access and employment outcomes for refugees with disabilities. The PRIDE project has four goals: (1) building organizational capacity among refugee service providers; (2) providing comprehensive training interventions and supports to promote competitive and self-employment; (3) improving connectivity between refugees with disabilities, VR providers, and potential employers by developing and field testing an information technology application; and (4) disseminating PRIDE’s outputs and products in culturally relevant ways. The PRIDE project offers culturally tailored employment training to 50 job-seeking refugees with disabilities. Concurrent with the training sessions, participants receive personalized case management services from staff of partner agencies, peer mentoring, and personal consultation with a business consultant. By facilitating new connections between the state VR systems, refugee-serving agencies, and employers, the PRIDE project assists in building economic self-sufficiency of refugees who have disabilities, while shaping future VR and employment policies and practices pertaining to this underserved group.
Developing and Validating a Measure of Career Advancement for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities: A Field Initiated Research Grant

Trustees of Boston University
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1203
umillner@bu.edu

Principal Investigator: Uma Chandrika Millner, PhD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549

Project Number: 90IFRE0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,946; FY 18 $199,242; FY 19 $199,856

Abstract: This project develops a standardized measure of career advancement for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Increased attention is being paid to the career development of individuals with psychiatric disabilities, particularly for young adults. However, little is known about the concept of career development for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Assessment of career advancement is a critical first step in understanding the vocational trajectory of individuals with psychiatric disabilities and determining the longer-term impact of employment services. The goals of this project are to: (1) Develop a theoretical framework for a measure of career advancement for use with adults with psychiatric disabilities, especially young adults; (2) conduct rigorous psychometric testing of the instrument and assess its utility in practice; and (3) disseminate the scale widely to key stakeholders, including consumers, researchers, and evaluators in the mental health and rehabilitation fields, using a variety of mechanisms.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Massachusetts

Progressive Employment for
Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

University of Massachusetts Boston
The Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
susan.foley@umb.edu

Principal Investigator: Susan M. Foley, PhD
Public Contact: 617/287-4317

Project Number: 90IFRE0009
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,932; FY 18 $199,880; FY 19 $199,943

Abstract: This field-initiated project is researching the progressive employment (PE) model for individuals with the most significant disabilities served by state vocational rehabilitation agencies and community rehabilitation providers. The PE model is a dual-customer strategy that uses work-based learning strategies to meet the needs of both the business and the jobseeker with a disability while minimizing the risks for both parties. Fidelity to the model is measured in the key areas of: (1) dual-customer design; (2) team approach; (3) focus on high-risk or difficult to place consumers; (4) emphasis on rapid engagement; (5) mechanism for set asides or training offsets for work experience pay; (6) liability and workers’ compensation insurance for trainees; and (7) data tracking tools for PE. The objective of this project is to determine the impact of PE, when implemented with fidelity, as a strategy for improving competitive employment outcomes for people with barriers to employment. To meet this objective, researchers conduct systematic data collection and secondary analysis of progressive employment implementation data and vocational rehabilitation case file data recorded in four states; create a PE fidelity of implementation scale and measure PE model implementation integrity; compare employment outcomes for groups receiving PE and not receiving PE services in a three-to-four year period; and disseminate research findings to inform future randomized control trials of PE.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of CareProfiler Post-Hire System for Staff Supporting People with Disabilities and Age-Related Needs: Cluster Randomized

Regents of the University of Minnesota
The Institute for Community Inclusion
200 Oak Street, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2009
abery001@umn.edu
tich0018@umn.edu

Principal Investigator: Brian Abery, PhD; Tichá, Renáta, PhD
Public Contact: 612/625-5592 (Abery); 612/624-5776 (Tichá)

Project Number: 90IF0109
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $196,778; FY 17 $196,778; FY 18 $199,271
Abstract: This project is based on a conceptual framework for the delivery of supports for employees with disabilities and their employers. The research for this project is designed to validate the CareProfiler Post-Hire system, which is designed to maximize the effectiveness of supports provided to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and age-related support needs (ARSN). This system builds the capacity of supervisors to serve as more effective leaders, increase job retention, and maximize the impact of organization training on staff skills and competencies by maximizing engagement with clients and one’s job. The Institute on Community Integration (ICI) at the University of Minnesota serves as an evaluator of the effectiveness of the CareProfiler Post-Hire System. The evaluation is designed as a cluster randomized control trial of the three components of the Post-Hire System on supervisor competencies and direct support staff engagement, skills, competencies, and retention on the job supporting people with IDD and ARSN.
Career Self-Management Through Job Crafting for People with Physical and Mild Cognitive Disabilities: A Mixed Methods Study

University of New Hampshire
Institute on Disability
Hewitt Hall, 4 Library Way
Durham, NH 03824-2620
vidya.sundar@unh.edu

Principal Investigator: Vidya Sundar, PhD, OTR/L; Debra L. Brucker, PhD
Public Contact: 603/862-0284

Project Number: 90IFRE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,934; FY 18 $199,995; FY 19 $199,997

Abstract: The overarching goal of this project is to develop and test an intervention program to improve job retention and facilitate job growth among people with physical and mild cognitive disabilities by using career self-management strategies. The project is a mixed methods study to develop and test a career self-management intervention based on job crafting. Job crafting is an informal, idiosyncratic, strengths-based approach where employees are constantly redefining and renegotiating their daily job tasks. Job crafting includes modifying the physical (how and where the task is performed), cognitive (meaning attached to the job task), and relational (social interactions) boundaries inherent in the job task. Anticipated outcomes for study participants include: (1) improving occupational self-efficacy and work engagement, and (2) an understanding of how the job crafting approach can be used over the long-term to problem-solve barriers and to seize opportunities for career growth.
Connecting Practices to Outcomes: Lessons from the Federal Sector

Cornell University
Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability
201 Dolgen Hall, Room 303B
Ithaca, NY 14853
sv282@cornell.edu

Principal Investigator: Sarah von Schrader, PhD
Public Contact: 607/254-8088

Project Number: 90IFRE0014
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project uses federal sector secondary data and qualitative focus groups to assess the impact of employer practice adoption on the retention, advancement, separation, and the workplace experience of individuals with disabilities. Further, it promotes the adoption of effective diversity practices with federal and private employers. The goal of the project is to increase capacity among employers to create an equitable and inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. Project objectives supporting goal achievement are to: (1) develop a thorough knowledge base of how diversity practice adoption impacts outcomes, such as disability representation, hiring, and advancement; (2) reveal whether diversity practice adoption moderates differential employee experiences and attitudes of individuals with disabilities and whether employee experiences and attitudes explain relationships between practice adoption and outcomes; (3) enhance understanding of findings and increase relevance to a target audience of employers through focus groups of employer representatives and employees; and (4) broadly share findings with the community. Outcomes for employers and other stakeholders include: (1) increased access to rigorous research on effective employer practices; (2) improved understanding of how to improve workplace practices; and (3) increased adoption and implementation of effective practices.
Efficacy of a Community College Transition Program for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
TEACHH Autism Program
CB# 7180 UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
laura_klinger@med.unc.edu
teacch.com/research

Principal Investigator: Laura Klinger, PhD
Public Contact: 919/966-8183

Project Number: 90IFRE0019
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000
Abstract: The goal of this project is to assess the feasibility, social validity, and efficacy of the TEACHH School Transition to Employment and Postsecondary Education (T-STEP) intervention for 17-21 year old community college students with ASD. T-STEP is a transition program for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) created by the University of North Carolina TEACHH Autism Program in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and North Carolina Community Colleges. The program targets pivotal college and employment skills that address the specific challenges faced by young adults with ASD. The objectives of this study are: (1) to conduct a pilot study including key stakeholder feedback to refine the T-STEP to ensure social validity and feasibility in a community college setting; (2) to examine the efficacy of the T-STEP with 60 young adults with ASD receiving the intervention and 60 young adults in a waitlist control group; (3) to examine characteristics of adults who most benefit from the program; and (4) to describe employment and college outcomes four months after program completion.
Reclaiming Employment: Self-Employment Resources for Mental Health Service Users

Live & Learn, Inc.
785 Quintana Road, Suite 219
Morro Bay, CA 93442
laysha@livelearninc.net
www.livelearninc.net/entrepreneurship

Principal Investigator: Laysha Ostrow, PhD
Public Contact: 213/373-3850

Project Number: 90BISA0011
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $100,000

Abstract: This project designs and develops, Reclaiming Employment, an online capacity-building program for individuals with psychiatric disabilities that aims to improve self-sufficiency and empowerment through entrepreneurship. The product targets employment outcomes at two stages of self-employment: increased competencies for individuals with psychiatric disabilities who wish to become self-employed; and measurable, positive changes in the ability to sustain and grow for those already operating small businesses. Phase I of this project includes development of a high-fidelity prototype and determination of the feasibility of Reclaiming Employment. Project objectives are to design the must-have features and content strategy for Reclaiming Employment, to build a high-fidelity prototype, and to conduct user experience and usability testing.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I  
Oregon

**Person-Centered Planning ToolKit: Development of an Application to Improve Workforce Participation Through Team Collaboration and Customized Employment Discovery Technology**

Assistech Systems, LLC  
99 West Tenth Avenue, Suite 325  
Eugene, OR 97401  
tkeating@cognitopia.com  
www.cognitopia.com

**Principal Investigator:** Thomas Keating, PhD 541/912-4329  
**Public Contact:** 866/573-3658

**Project Number:** 90BISA0019  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018  
**Length:** 6 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Hugh Berry, EdD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $99,986

**Abstract:** This project evaluates the usability and feasibility of a Person-Centered Planning Toolkit to address the need for increased opportunities for customized employment for individuals with cognitive disabilities. The Toolkit enhances implementation of person-centered planning (PCP), often limited by lack of follow-through on action items, and a lack of tools to match career preferences to specific customized employment opportunities. The goal of the project is to create two applications for self-direction of PCP implementation by transition students with significant cognitive disabilities and their PCP or Individual Education Program (IEP) team members. The first application, the Team Assignments, Collaboration, and Task Tracking tool (TACT) enables users to understand action items and due dates, systematically remind participants of commitments, and track completion in ways that clearly identify who is responsible and when items are completed. A second component, the Community Assets Mapping application (CAM) supports the employment discovery process by crowd-sourcing identification of community businesses, associations, mentors, and professionals who can be resources in exploring career discovery. Results are detailed on a mapping interface similar to Google Maps and will be interoperable with the TACT. The toolkit will be evaluated for usability and feasibility by transition students aged 18-22 from a secondary school district program, their teachers, and six PCP facilitators and parents.
NIDILRR is committed to improving the opportunities and abilities of individuals with disabilities to live as integrated members of their communities and to participate in community activities of their choice. NIDILRR supports centers and projects to increase community living and participation through improvements in policy, services and support delivery, assistive technologies, environmental modifications, and person-centered planning and therapeutic interventions. Activities funded in this area are consistent with the underlying principles of the independent living programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
California

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on
Community Living Policy

University of California, San Francisco
Institute for Health and Aging
3333 California Street, Suite 340
San Francisco, CA 94118-0612
steve.kaye@ucsf.edu
www.communitylivingpolicy.org

Principal Investigator: H. Stephen Kaye, PhD 415/502-7266
Public Contact: Mel Neri, Center Coordinator 415/476-5164

Project Number: 90RT5026 (Formerly H133B130034)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Phillip Beatty, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $875,000; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The Community Living Policy Center (CLPC) at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) aims to identify methods of improving the long-term services and support (LTSS) system in the states, improve data collection on community living policy, and develop a strategic plan for community living research. Research focuses on the following areas: (1) Identification of promising practices in state LTSS systems, focusing especially on managed LTSS and on streamlining the LTSS system; (2) investigation of quality and outcome measurement in LTSS and development of methods for improved monitoring of progress in state LTSS systems; (3) collecting and disseminating information on state LTSS policies, practices, and programs, including policies related to access to home- and community-based services (HCBS), data on HCBS participants and expenditures, information on worker registries and consumer-worker matching services, data on worker wages and benefits, and information on worker training standards and their development; (4) conducting evaluations of managed LTSS systems in California and Illinois; (5) analysis of national survey datasets on selected topics in community living, including trends in family caregiving and state variation in community participation among people with disabilities; and (6) developing a strategic plan for community living research. CLPC training activities include the College of Personal Assistance and Caregiving (CPAC), an online training curriculum for both paid home care workers and family caregivers, with an emphasis on person-centered, consumer-directed services that support independent living in the home and community. This project includes partnership with the following organizations: Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, National Council on Aging and the Disability and Aging Collaborative, Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago, PHI (formerly the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute), Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, and the Sibling Leadership Network.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Family Support

The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Disability and Human Development
1640 West Roosevelt Road, MC 626
Chicago, IL 60608
maganas@uic.edu
fsrtc.ahslabs.uic.edu

Principal Investigator: Sandra M. Magaña, PhD; Tamar Heller, PhD; Joseph Caldwell, PhD (National Council on Aging)
Public Contact: 312/355-4537

Project Number: 90RT5032 (Formerly H13B140046)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $874,999; FY 15 $874,999; FY 16 $874,995; FY 17 $874,983; FY 18 $874,989

Abstract: The goal of the RRTC on Family Support is to bridge aging and disability research, practice, and policies to generate new knowledge in family supports which contributes to improvements in community living, participation, health and function, and other outcomes for individuals with disabilities from different racial and ethnic backgrounds who are supported by family members. The Center conducts six research projects: (1) Development of a Strategic Plan for Family Support uses a participatory approach to generate and prioritize research topics and questions, an expert panel to design research strategies, and secondary analysis of national data to answer identified questions; (2) Identifying Promising Practices in Family Support Services uses a participatory approach with stakeholders to nominate, investigate, and synthesize promising local and state family support practices that can be disseminated and used more widely; (3) Family Member Roles and Well-Being in Self-Directed Waiver Programs examines the relationship between self-directed waiver program components, family environment, and caregiver well-being; (4) Understanding Experiences, Trends, and Needs in Self-Directed Support Programs uses mixed methods to investigate national trends in self-directed support, and the experience and satisfaction of caregivers in self-directed support programs; (5) Family Support in Managed Care investigates the impact of transitioning from fee-for-service to managed care on families and individuals who receive services; and (6) Parents Taking Action: A Parent Training Program for Latino Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) tests the efficacy of an intervention that engages parents of children with ASD in providing education and training to other parents. The Center partners with the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University, the National Resource Center for Participant-Directed Services at Boston College, the RTC on Community Living at the University of Minnesota, and the National Council on Aging as well as various organizational partners.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Community Living and Participation

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Kansas

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions for Community Living (RRTC/PICL)

The University of Kansas
The Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies
1000 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 4089
Lawrence, KS 66045
rtcil@ku.edu
rtcil.org
rtcil.org/picl

Principal Investigator: Glen W. White, PhD
Public Contact: 785/864-4095; Fax: 785/864-5063

Project Number: 90RT5043
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions for Community Living (RRTC/PICL) promotes community participation outcomes for adults with physical and multiple co-occurring disabilities, living in the community or transitioning from nursing facilities to the community. The objectives of this Center are to use a person-environment fit model to investigate evidence-based, multifaceted interventions that target change in individual characteristics and environmental factors to support enhanced community participation. The Center’s research begins with a systematic literature review on multifaceted community-based interventions and progresses to a single research project that involves three studies: (1) development and refinement of the Out and About Intervention, teaching problem solving and goal setting to support community participation; (2) an efficacy study that utilizes a randomized control trial to study the impact of the Home Base intervention to empower consumers to self-assess their home environment and to provide support to enhance their home usability, resulting in a guide for assessing home usability; and (3) a second efficacy study that investigates the impact on the community participation of consumers that receive both interventions. Outcomes are measured quantitatively and qualitatively, including increased usability of consumers’ homes, increased health and reduction of secondary health conditions, personal goal achievement, and increased participation in the community. Dissemination activities include systematic reviews, webinars, publications, and a National Community Living Resource Center.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

Community Living Policy Center

Brandeis University
Heller School for Social Policy and Management
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2728
mmitra@brandeis.edu

Principal Investigator: Monika Mitra, PhD; H. Stephen Kaye, PhD; Joseph Caldwell, PhD
Public Contact: 781/736-3807

Project Number: 90RTCP0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This Community Living Policy Center (CLPC) aims to improve policies and practices that promote community living outcomes for individuals with disabilities through a program of seven broad research projects in three priority areas: (1) Policies and Programs Related to Provision of Home and Community Based Services; (2) Policy Barriers and Facilitators of Community Living and Participation Outcomes; and (3) Rapid, Timely Data and Policy Analyses to Inform Policies and Programs that Promote Community Living and Participation Outcomes. The center also conducts knowledge translation activities, including dissemination, training, and technical assistance targeted to needs of stakeholders. An online CLPC portal, a key component of knowledge translation activities, serves as a national resource for research-based community living policy. Individuals with disabilities are integrally involved in and advise all research and knowledge translation activities through the Disability and Aging Collaborative, a coalition of 40 national organizations. Project partners include: University of California San Francisco, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Disability Policy Consortium, Centene Corporation, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, Human Services Research Institute, Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, and national policy expert Henry Claypool.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Minnesota

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Home and Community-Based Services Outcomes Measurement

Regents of the University of Minnesota
The Institute for Community Inclusion
111 Pattee Hall
150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0223
abery001@umn.edu
rtcom.umn.edu

Principal Investigator: Brian Abery, PhD
Public Contact: 612/625-5592; Fax: 612/624-9344

Project Number: 90RT5039
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Home and Community-Based Services Outcomes Measurement (RRTC/OM) conducts research, training, and technical assistance activities to promote quality outcome measurement in home and community-based services (HCBS), working in close alignment with the National Quality Forum (NQF), the Administration for Community Living, and other stakeholders. Research activities identify and prioritize HCBS outcome domains, identify measure gaps and evolve new measures, catalog existing measures and evaluate these for validity and appropriateness, select the best measures for each outcome domain/topic area, test measures for reliability and validity, and assess measures using prioritized risk adjusters. Focus is on cross-disability measures at the individual HCBS recipient, organization, and systems levels gathered directly from people with disabilities or through program administrative and encounter data. Each measure is prepared and submitted for approval by the NQF. In addition to identifying and testing measures, the RRTC/OM investigates methodological issues with regard to outcome measurement by working with numerous outcome measurement programs to identify existing data collection/reporting methods, evaluate their rigor, and evolve recommendations for preferred data collection and reporting. The RRTC/OM also provides training and technical assistance to federal agencies, states, organizations, and other stakeholders on HCBS quality outcome measurement and systems. These activities include but are not limited to: training on how to use an online searchable database of HCBS measures by domain area, development and implementation of webinars regarding HCBS measurement, and participation in conferences and other coordinated dissemination activities.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Minnesota

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC)
on Community Living and Participation

Regents of the University of Minnesota
204 Pattee Hall
150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0223
hewit005@umn.edu
c.i.ici.umn.edu

Principal Investigator: Amy K. Hewitt, PhD; Kelly Nye-Lengerman, PhD; Renáta Tichá, PhD; Sheryl Larson, PhD; Brian Abery, PhD; Roger Stancliffe, PhD; 612/625-1098
Public Contact: Jerry Smith 612/624-6300; Fax: 612/625-6619

Project Number: 90RTCP0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This center conducts advanced research, training, and technical assistance and dissemination activities focused on community living and participation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The center includes seven studies relevant to community living interventions, policy and outcomes. Studies include: analyses of National Health Interview Survey data to identify characteristics and needs of persons with I/DD; policy and outcome analyses using National Core Indicators (NCI), a random sample of 18,000 adults with I/DD from 46 states, and a longitudinal study using NCI data from Pennsylvania in years 2000-2022; intervention studies related on the direct support workforce, social inclusion for older adults, employment; and technology use in community living settings. The center also provides a comprehensive training program that continues to develop new generations of competent and skilled disability researchers and professionals.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities

University of Montana
The University of Montana Rural Institute:
A Center for Excellence in Disability Research, Education, and Services
52 Corbin Hall
Missoula, MT 59812
rural@ruralinstitute.umt.edu
rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu
www.facebook.com/rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu
twitter.com/RTC_Rural

Principal Investigator: Craig Ravesloot, PhD 406/243-2992
Public Contact: Tracy Boehm-Barrett, MPH 888/268-2743 (V); 406/243-5467 (V); 406/243-4200; Fax: 406/243-2349

Project Number: 90RT5025 (Formerly H133B130028)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $875,000; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities (RTC:Rural) at the University of Montana advances the science of rural disability and rehabilitation by finding solutions to rural issues experienced by people with disabilities (PWD) in the areas of health, employment, and community living. Current research and development projects include: Geography of Rural Disability, which uses GIS and national data sources (i.e. American Community Survey and Public Use Microdata Samples) to examine the distribution of PWDs and availability of services in rural communities; Ecology of Rural Disability, which uses longitudinal data to examine how personal and environmental factors impact community participation; Resilience in Community Participation, which studies factors that contribute to active community participation among PWDs; Person-Environment Fit in Rural Communities, which uses real-time assessment data to predict community participation; Measuring Opportunity in Rural Events, which creates a validated measure for assessing the accessibility of rural community events; Rural Contracted Employment Services, which develops recommendations for increasing employment support providers in rural communities by examining variations in provider payments structures; Social Media for Employment, which aims to improve use of online job search and social media strategies to improve rural employment opportunities; Rural Self-Employment Opportunities, which evaluates a process for increasing the skills of vocational rehabilitation counselors in the area of self-employment; Community Accessibility of Rural Environments, which demonstrates how community accessibility data can be used to advocate for community improvement; and Rural Mobile Health Promotion Intervention, which develops a mobile device application to addresses common secondary health conditions.
The RTC: Rural Knowledge Translation activities communicate research findings to a broad audience through dissemination, training, and technical assistance (TA). Dissemination includes publications, conference presentations, print and electronic mailings, websites, and social media. Specific training efforts include a state of the science conference series, development of a rural rehabilitation and disability curricula, mentoring student researchers, a rural policy series, and continued training on established projects. TA includes rapid research response to stakeholder requests and supporting the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living National Training and TA in rural policy issues.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Montana

Place-based Solutions for Rural Community Participation, Health, and Employment

University of Montana
The University of Montana Rural Institute:
A Center for Excellence in Disability Research, Education and Services
52 Corbin Hall
Missoula, MT 59812-7056
tracy.boehm@mso.umt.edu

Principal Investigator: Catherine Ipsen, PhD 406/243-4562
Public Contact: Tracy Boehm-Barret, MPH 406/243-5741; Fax: 406/243-2349

Project Number: 90RTCP0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: The goal of this RRTC is to conduct research and knowledge translation (KT) activities across health, community living, and employment domains to explore, develop, and test strategies to improve the quality of life for rural people with disabilities. To achieve this goal, this project fully engages people with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders in all aspects of research and KT activities, utilizes national service systems as research and KT partners to improve the reach and uptake of effective solutions, and evaluates the RRTC’s research and delivery sites for better understanding of how strategies and available community resources align to maximize impacts. This project conducts eight research projects and three additional KT projects, along with dissemination, training, and technical assistance (TA) activities. Research projects include: R1. Expanding the Availability and Quality of Rural Data, a collaboration with the RRTC on Disability Statistics to develop a rural addendum to the annual Disabilities Statistics Compendium; R2: Exploring the Rural Disability Penalty, a longitudinal data study using secondary panel data sources to investigate how health and disability evolve differently over the lifecycle for people living in rural and urban places; R3: Rural Access to Health Insurance and Health Care, a collaboration with the NIDILRR-funded Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living, to extend the reach of their national longitudinal National Health Reform and Disability Survey to allow for rural and urban comparisons about health insurance access and coverage related to changes in the Affordable Care Act; R4: Rural Resource Analysis, focusing on understanding contextual differences across place to provide contextual understanding for intervention development work in R5-R8 research projects; R5: Building Networks to Expand Living Well Delivery, promotes healthy rural community living through scale-up of the Living Well in the Community program in rural hospitals; R6: Rural Personal Assistance Services partners with consumers and providers of rural home- and community-based services to identify how personal assistance services (PAS) are secured, delivered, and consumed in rural places. The project examines aspects of care that increase health and community participation and use this information to translate existing PAS training for application and evaluation in rural places;
R7: Rural Transportation Options, uses survey and informant interviews to explore how different transportation options impact community living outcomes for rural people with disabilities to inform rural transportation policy and development; and lastly, R8: Rural Self-Employment Builds Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and American Indian VR Service (AIVRS) explores capacity to support consumers who express an interest in self-employment by refining and evaluating materials that are responsive, appropriate, and prepared for intervention efficacy research.
Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures: Building Self-Determination and Community Living and Participation

Portland State University
Regional Research Institute for Human Services
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
rtcpubs@pdx.edu
www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu
twitter.com/pathwaysrtc
www.facebook.com/pathwaysrtc

Principal Investigator: Janet Walker, PhD 503/725-8236
Public Contact: Donna Fleming 503/725-8313; Fax: 503/725-4180

Project Number: 90RT5030 (Formerly H133B140039)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,600; FY 15 $499,600; FY 16 $499,600; FY 17 $499,600; FY 18 $499,600
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: This Center conducts research, training, and dissemination activities focused on building self-determination and enhancing community living and participation outcomes in young people with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs). The Center conducts six intervention-based projects: FUTURES tests an approach to improving college retention and success, as well as community participation and self-determination, among first-year college students with SMHCs who are, or have been, in foster care. EASA Connections tests a web-based psychoeducation and decision-aid intervention designed to increase the extent to which young people who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis are engaged and self-determined with regard to their treatment. A third project, Mentee-Nominated Mentoring, is a developmental investigation of a cutting-edge approach to helping young people who have been living in psychiatric inpatient facilities transition back to the community and build social and cultural capital. Two additional projects develop and evaluate interventions designed to increase providers’ skill in working with youth and young adults with SMHCs to increase their self-determination and enhance their community living and participation: Technology-Enhanced Coaching for Positive Development focuses on professional providers and their supervisors, while AMP+: Developing the Young Adult Peer Support Workforce works with young adult peer support providers and their supervisors and agency administrators. Both of these projects employ new technology to improve training, coaching, and supervision. Finally, System/Policy Analysis and Change is focused on understanding key system issues and policy challenges that impede or support accessible and effective services for young adults with SMHCs. This project also examines examples of young adult-led policy change and the challenges young adult advocacy organizations face when they enter the policy arena. Additionally, this RRTC assesses the...
utilization of Promoting Positive Pathways to Adulthood, a series of online training modules designed for service providers who work with youth and young adults with SMHCs. Collaborations with young people and other stakeholders, including providers, researchers and family members, ensure that interventions are practical and feasible, and that training and dissemination are relevant and useful. This project is also supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
Temple University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Living and Participation of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Temple University
Department of Rehabilitation Sciences
1700 North Broad Street, Suite 313
Philadelphia, PA 19122
mark.salzer@temple.edu
www.tucollaborative.org
twitter.com/TUCollab
www.youtube.com/channel/UCt3kzmXsMzeaJ5HYhzSdpHA

Principal Investigator: Mark Salzer, PhD
Public Contact: 215/204-7879; Fax: 215/204-3700

Project Number: 90RT5021 (Formerly H133B130014)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $875,000; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project advances the development of interventions that maximize community living and participation of individuals with psychiatric disabilities through research and knowledge translation activities in partnership with consumers and other key stakeholders. This project conducts seven research studies in the areas of technology, individual and environmental factors, and interventions, and includes transition-aged youth. The research includes randomized, controlled designs; cross-sectional studies where structural equation modeling and geographic information systems technology are utilized; and epidemiological methods. This project also conducts three technical assistance, three training, and two dissemination projects.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Pennsylvania

Temple University RRTC on Community Living and Participation of People with Serious Mental Illness

Principal Investigator: Mark Salzer, PhD
Public Contact: 215/204-7879; Fax: 215/204-3700

Project Number: 90RTCP0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,999; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This project advances the development of interventions that maximize community living and participation of individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) through research and knowledge translation activities in partnership with consumers and other key stakeholders, and serves as a national resource center for people with SMI, their families, service and support providers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders through knowledge translation activities based in state-of-the-art translational practices. This project conducts seven research studies resulting in new knowledge about the effectiveness of interventions in enhancing community mobility, using eHealth in promoting community participation, increasing parenting outcomes through family leisure, and advancing college student success using Photovoice. Additional studies identify new research and interventions, examine modifiable cognitive factors associated with community participation, highlight promising initiatives under taken by First Episode Psychosis programs, and elicit stakeholder-driven research priorities for promoting community participation within rural areas. Research data and project activities result in new knowledge that drives the next generation of policies, programs, and practices that directly impact the lives of people with SMI. The RRTC products include trainings for mainstream organizations, rights advocates, and providers; technical assistance that is responsive to the needs of key stakeholders; and dissemination through social media and podcasts to translate and transmit information leading to a real-world impact.
Financial Engagements as a Gateway to Community Participation:
A Multi-Level Intervention Study

National Disability Institute
1667 K Street NW, Suite 480
Washington, DC 20006
rsalon@ndi-inc.org
www.realeconomicimpact.org
www.ablenrc.org

Principal Investigator: Rebecca S. Salon, PhD 202/296-1339
Public Contact: 202/296-2040

Project Number: 90DPCP0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $499,998; FY 19 $499,999; FY 20 $499,998; FY 21 $499,974; FY 22 $499,985

Abstract: This project examines the promise of ABLE accounts in increasing community participation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and cognitive disabilities. The ABLE Act of 2014 allows an estimated seven million individuals with significant disabilities to establish tax advantaged saving accounts exempt from means-tested requirements for federal public benefits (SSI, Medicaid, and SNAP), and prohibits reduction of public resources when an account is established. Individuals who contribute to ABLE accounts are able to build financial independence and set goals for the future. This research represents the first empirical longitudinal study of the impact of ABLE implementation. The project goal is to enhance understanding of the benefits of financial health trainings to improve outcomes. A randomized controlled trial study examines impact of (1) an ABLE account and (2) the joint impact of an ABLE account and Future Savers training program on community participation. Objectives include evaluation of self-directed engagement in ABLE accounts, evaluation of facilitated engagement in ABLE accounts, and a comprehensive training program that assists in planning for the future and managing finances to reach goals. Outcomes include community participation and its related and antecedent outcomes: self-determination, financial capability, life satisfaction, and quality of life. Deliverables include evidence regarding interventions that improve economic self-sufficiency and community participation, and knowledge translation strategies to replicate interventions nationwide.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Kansas

Online and Applied Systems for Intervention Skills (OASIS)
Parent Training Program: Translating Research to Practice

University of Kansas Medical Center
Center for Child Health and Development
3901 Rainbow Boulevard, MSN 4003
Kansas City, KS 66160-2937
lhpowell@ku.edu
www.lsi.ku.edu/project/online-and-applied-systems-for-intervention-skills-oasis-parent-training-program

Principal Investigator: Linda S. Heitzman-Powell, PhD; Jay Buzhardt, PhD
Public Contact: 913/945-6604

Project Number: 90DP0097
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $149,940; FY 17 $149,938; FY 18 $149,993
Abstract: The overall goal of this project is to create the infrastructure necessary for the dissemination and uptake of Online and Applied Systems Intervention Skills (OASIS), a training system developed through NIDILRR’s development and research field-initiated programs. This project seeks to improve access to services for families, specifically those families that otherwise would not have access to services. The objectives of this project are to: (1) collaborate with key health-care partners to create the infrastructure needed to enable service providers to receive compensation for implementation of OASIS; (2) to develop the processes necessary to disseminate OASIS to the behavioral health care community to include appropriate, timely, and cost-effective training on the use of OASIS; and (3) train service providers from key agencies to implement OASIS.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Kansas

I-CONNECT PLUS: Enhancing Community Participation for Adolescents and Adults with ASD Using Online Instruction, Coaching, and Accessible Self-Management Technologies

University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc.
Juniper Gardens Children’s Project
2385 Irving Hill Road
Lawrence, KS 66045-7552
hpwills@ku.edu

Principal Investigator: Howard Wills, PhD
Public Contact: 913/321-3143

Project Number: 90DP0058 (Formerly H133A130032)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $458,224; FY 14 $474,772; FY 15 $467,313; FY 16 $462,543; FY 17 $473,103; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project develops I-CONNECT PLUS, a technology-supported instructional system to teach social competence, problem-solving skills, and organizational/self-monitoring skills for adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The project provides remote tele-coaching by community providers, peers, and family members for promoting generalized use; and focuses on the use of self-management and monitoring of outcomes to promote independence and full engagement across settings. This project includes five objectives: (1) developing instructional technology including use of mobile applications (e.g., I-CONNECT PLUS) to teach social competence, problem solving, and organization/self-monitoring skills for adolescents and young adults with ASD; (2) developing tele-coaching materials to generalize skills to community settings; (3) adapting a self-management system to include applicable system features (e.g., skill task analysis, link to instructional modules) for I-CONNECT PLUS; (4) conducting initial pilot trial of the entire I-CONNECT PLUS program; and (5) assessing the feasibility of I-CONNECT PLUS program.
Measurement of Community Participation Using a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) in Persons with Burn Injuries (PWB)

Principal Investigator: Alan M. Jette, PhD, PT; Lewis E. Kazis, ScD
Public Contact: Lewis E. Kazis, ScD 617/414-1418

Project Number: 90DP0055 (Formerly H133A130023)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $475,000; FY 14 $475,000; FY 15 $475,000; FY 16 $475,000; FY 17 $474,999; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2019)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates a computerized adaptive test (CAT) metric for assessing outcomes in adults with burn injuries for purposes of assessing community participation during ambulatory outpatient rehabilitation. The Burn Injury Computer Adaptive Test (BI-CAT) is developed by focusing on three domains: social interaction, work re-integration, and sexual function, with the goal of improving long-term community participation and functioning of individuals with burn injuries. A demonstration of BI-CAT provides an evaluation of reliability and validity in outpatients with burn injury. Comparisons are made between well-established legacy measures and BI-CAT at two different time periods. This project builds on the resources of the BH-BIMS, Boston University School of Public Health, MGH Burn Care Unit and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, the National Phoenix Society, American Burn Association, and World Burn Congress.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
Massachusetts

Enhancing the Community Living and Participation of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Trustees of Boston University  
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation  
940 Commonwealth Avenue West  
Boston, MA 02215-1203  
zlatka@bu.edu  
cpr.bu.edu/research/current-research/enhancing-community-living

Principal Investigator: Zlatka Russinova, PhD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90DP0066 (Formerly H133A140032)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $494,906; FY 15 $494,829; FY 16 $494,721; FY 17 $494,502; FY 18 $494,474

Abstract: This project includes several studies targeting the development of a new measure of community living and participation for individuals with psychiatric disabilities and the development and effectiveness testing of an innovative peer-led intervention promoting community living and participation in this population, titled “Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice.” These development activities are informed by a comprehensive exploratory study examining the barriers and facilitators to the community engagement of individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Finally, this project provides training and technical assistance in the use of the Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice and widely disseminates the intervention manuals, the new Multi-Dimensional Assessment of Community Participation (MDACP) instrument, and findings from related exploratory research activities.
Parents Empowering Parents: National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families

Brandeis University
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2728
mmitra@brandeis.edu
heller.brandeis.edu/parents-with-disabilities
www.facebook.com/nrcpd
twitter.com/NatRCPD

Principal Investigator: Monika Mitra, PhD
Public Contact: 781/736-3928

Project Number: 90DPGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $500,000; FY 17 $499,999; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000; FY 20 $500,000

Abstract: This project addresses the knowledge gaps regarding parents with disabilities and their families through: (1) population-based research and analysis of national datasets to inform policy and practice; and (2) the systematic analysis of state legislation and child welfare policies to identify facilitators and barriers to systemic change. Researchers are developing, adapting, testing, and scaling-up interventions that include: (1) a parent peer specialist model for parents with psychiatric disabilities; (2) a virtual peer support intervention for Deaf parents; (3) a parent-centered planning intervention for parents with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities; and (4) a targeted, informed legal services model for parents with diverse disabilities. Resources, tools, and training and intervention materials are made available through the accessible online Parents Empowering Parents Portal and its sister site, Padres Apoderando a Padres. The project is also building on the Disabled Parenting Project web site, where parents and family members currently interact, share knowledge, and empower each other.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Missouri

Building Capacity to Improve Community Participation for People Aging with Long-Term Disability Through Evidence-Based Strategies

Washington University in St. Louis
School of Medicine
660 South Euclid Avenue
Campus Box 8505
Saint Louis, MO 63110-1010
mkeglovits@wustl.edu

Principal Investigator: Susan L. Stark, PhD; Kerri Morgan, PhD; Michelle Putnam, PhD; 314/273-4114
Public Contact: Marian Keglovits 314/273-4118

Project Number: 90DPCP0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $497,342; FY 18 $493,489; FY 19 $497,204; FY 20 $496,635; FY 21 $497,343

Abstract: This project identifies and addresses barriers to successful community participation for people aging with long-term physical disability. People in this group are living longer and experiencing the challenges of aging, including the onset of secondary and age-related chronic health conditions, leaving them at high risk of diminished functional abilities and compromised participation. Goals and activities of this project include: (1) developing a community-based research network (CBRN), including long-term supportive services, to serve as a platform for continued intervention development and refinement and for the future implementation and dissemination of evidence-based practices; (2) identifying the barriers and supports to community participation for people aging with long-term physical disabilities to inform service delivery through an ongoing cohort survey; (3) translating and adapting an existing evidence-based intervention to enhance community participation for individuals aging with long-term disabilities; and (4) evaluating the feasibility, fidelity, and preliminary efficacy of the adapted intervention for the new target population.
The Community for All Project to Develop a Series of Six Online Toolkits to Improve Community Living and Participation for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Syracuse University
Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education
Center on Human Policy
150 Huntington Hall
Syracuse, NY 13244
razubal@syr.edu
www.community4all.net

Principal Investigator: Alan Foley, PhD; Katherine McDonald, PhD; 315/443-5087 (Foley); 315/443-5313 (McDonald)
Public Contact: Rachael Zubal-Ruggieri 315/443-3851; Fax: 315/443-4338

Project Number: 90DP0068 (Formerly H133A140063)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $420,139; FY 15 $484,055; FY 16 $499,972; FY 17 $495,699; FY 18 $404,305

Abstract: This project develops a six-part toolkit for self-advocates, families, professionals, and policymakers designed to improve community living and participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The toolkits are based on the 2004 Community for All: Resources for Supporting Community Living. The six components are entitled Deinstitutionalization for All (an update of the 2004 toolkit); Self-Advocacy and Choices for All; Community Participation for All; Lifelong Learning for All; Family for All; and Digital Communities for All. Each toolkit consists of downloadable materials, a website, and an app. Development and modification of the toolkits are based on literature, suggestions from participants in Policy Institutes for each toolkit topic area, and recommendations from a technology conference for self-advocates. Annual Design Institutes advise the project regarding universal design and accessibility, and the development of basic computer instruction videos. Each toolkit prototype is field tested in New York with final versions tested nationally. Technical assistance is available throughout the project and there are four planned toolkit trainings. This project is a collaboration between the Center of Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies; Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education; the University of Delaware; and the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SA-NYS).
Understanding and Increasing Supported Decision-Making’s Positive Impact on Community Living and Participation Outcomes

Syracuse University
Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education
Burton Blatt Institute
900 South Crouse Avenue
Crouse-Hinds Hall 300
Syracuse, NY 13244
pblanck@syr.edu
bbi.syr.edu/projects/Community_Living_DRRP/index.html

Principal Investigator: Peter D. Blanck, PhD, JD
Public Contact: 315/443-9703

Project Number: 90DP0076
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $498,978; FY 16 $498,140; FY 17 $499,318; FY 18 $497,152; FY 19 $499,023

Abstract: This project creates and tests an intervention using a randomized control trial approach examining whether training individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and support networks to use Supported Decision Making (SDM) approach improves life satisfaction and integration in community living and daily life outcomes. In Study 1, researchers use valid and reliable measures to survey study participants in order to determine their decision-making methods, level of self-determination, and life satisfaction outcomes, including community integration. This study investigates decision-making methods that lead to greater self-determination, life satisfaction outcomes, and community integration; and demographic variables, including legal decision-making status, that are associated with self-determination, quality of life outcomes, and community integration. Study 2 is a field-based intervention examining variables to determine the extent in which training in SDM leads to improvements on community participation. Project findings are used to recommend changes in policy and practice with the target population across the life course (i.e., youth in transition, working-age adults, aging population). Knowledge translation activities target policymakers, service providers, persons with disabilities and their families, and supporters, focusing on the impact and benefits of SDM. Materials and technical assistance are customized to target audience learner needs and preferences. This project is a collaboration between the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University, the Beach Center/Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities, and Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Washington

Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living

Washington State University
Department of Health Policy and Administration
PO Box 643140
Pullman, WA 99164-3140
jjkennedy@wsu.edu
www.chril.org

Principal Investigator: James J. Kennedy, PhD
Public Contact: 509/368-6971; Fax: 509/358-7984

Project Number: 90DP0075
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $499,342; FY 16 $499,803; FY 17 $497,472; FY 18 $499,803; FY 19 $497,472

Abstract: The objective of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living (CHRIL) is to provide disability stakeholders with accurate, current, and actionable information on how recent changes in health policy directly or indirectly impact the community living and participation of working-age adults with disabilities. The CHRIL brings together disability advocates and researchers from four institutions (Washington State University, the University of Kansas, George Mason University, and the Independent Living Research Utilization program at TIRR Memorial Hermann Hospital) to systematically investigate and disseminate essential findings about how the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) implementation effects adults with disabilities. Specific CHRIL research activities include: (1) Documenting the experiences of working-age adults with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining health insurance, and identifying the impact of insurance on their access, health, and function through phone interviews, internet surveys, and analysis of the Health Reform Monitoring Survey (HRMS); (2) assessing the health insurance information, training, and technical assistance needs of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other disability stakeholders through internet surveys, phone interviews of CIL directors, and town-hall meetings at national independent living conferences; (3) analyzing post-reform insurance coverage trends among working-age adults with disabilities using the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS); (4) identifying gaps in coverage and potential areas of undue cost-burden for people with disabilities by analyzing health care expenditures, including premium costs, deductibles, and co-pays using the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS); and (5) assessing the impact of the ACA on disability program enrollment and workforce participation by testing how the Medicaid expansion influences SSI activity using the American Community Survey (ACS). The CHRIL engages in knowledge translation activities including: Presenting research findings at professional and scientific meetings; submitting manuscripts for inclusion in scientific and professional journals; offering webinars and creating self-paced tutorials on various aspects of health care policy, organization, and financing; and developing and maintaining the CHRIL website that includes access to all publications and presentations in accessible formats.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Alabama

CrossingPoints High Tide

The University of Alabama
Tom Barnes Education Center, Room 1060
260 Kilgore Lane
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
kmutua@ua.edu
crossingpoints.ua.edu

Principal Investigator: Kagendo Mutua, PhD; George Mugoya, PhD
Public Contact: 205/348-2609

Project Number: 90IFDV0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,964; FY 19 $199,974; FY 20 $199,970
Abstract: The goal of the CrossingPoints High Tide project is to develop, test, and refine a model of off-campus integrated community living and participation for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) attending the CrossingPoints postsecondary program at The University of Alabama. Drawing upon a pilot study involving summer on-campus dorm living, the objectives are to: (1) develop a replicable model of integrated off-campus community living and participation for students with ID; (2) develop a model of integrated peer living involving college students with and without ID; (3) develop partnerships with community residential providers to support integrated community living by college students with ID; (4) foster skills for independent college living and integrated community participation by students with ID; and (5) assess the impact of integrated off-campus community living and participation on both peer mentors and students with ID resulting from participating in the CrossingPoints High Tide Program. Outcomes include: (1) a framework for colleges and universities with programs serving students with ID to provide integrated independent living and community participation; (b) peer mentors and college students with ID living and participating in integrated off-campus community settings; (c) community partners and other residential stakeholders supporting integrating off-campus student housing for students with and without ID; (d) students with ID demonstrating skills and competencies critical for successful independent living and participation in an integrated community; and (e) peer mentors demonstrating social role valorization while those with ID demonstrate increased self-determination and improved desired postsecondary transition outcomes.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Montana

Effort Capacity and Choice:
Investigating a Dynamic Model of Participation

University of Montana
The University of Montana Rural Institute:
A Center for Excellence in Disability Research, Education and Services
52 Corbin Hall
Missoula, MT 59812
cravesloot@ruralinstitute.umt.edu

Principal Investigator: Craig Ravesloot, PhD
Public Contact: 406/243-2992

Project Number: 90IF0111
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,935; FY 17 $199,989; FY 18 $199,924

Abstract: This collaborative project is investigating the behavioral economics of effort and participation by randomly assigning study participants into either a physical activity intervention to increase personal effort capacity, an environmental intervention to decrease the effort-cost required for bathing, or a control group. Ecological momentary assessment (EMA) is used to measure in situ effort and participation before and after the interventions. The project is also studying how effort is associated with a broader range of personal factors (PF), environmental factors (EF), and choices to participate. This project is helping to build an economic model of disability and participation that begins to specify the relationship between effort capacity, effort cost, and participation choices. Further development of this model helps to further rehabilitation and community living research and practice by providing a framework for helping individuals with disabilities and providers choose interventions that can improve participation outcomes.
ACT Together: Using Technology to Facilitate Service Integration for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Trustees of Dartmouth College
Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
Rivermill Commercial Center, Suite B4-1
Lebanon, NH 03766
sarah.e.lord@dartmouth.edu

Principal Investigator: Sarah E. Lord, PhD
Public Contact: 603/448-0263

Project Number: 90IFDV0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,877; FY 19 $199,581; FY 20 $199,952

Abstract: The goal of this project is to leverage successful technologies developed in previous projects to create ACT Together, a technology platform for enhanced Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) service delivery for consumers with serious psychiatric disability. ACT is an evidence-based, team-delivered intensive care management model that supports comprehensive integrated community-based care for individuals with severe psychiatric disability to promote community living and participation. ACT emphasizes recovery, shared decision-making, and active consumer-driven treatment planning. It is resource intensive and requires ongoing coordination between team members, consumers, and community services and supports. Project activities are organized to meet the following objectives: (1) identify areas of adaptation and expansion of existing technologies through focus groups and interviews with consumers and ACT providers; (2) iteratively develop ACT Together using state-of-the-art, state-of-the-science, and industry standard user-centered processes that involve continuous input from consumers and provider team stakeholders, and (3) evaluate acceptance and feasibility of the ACT technology with four ACT teams in a 6-month implementation trial. The project assesses the impact of use of ACT Together on the following outcomes: implementation process, client service engagement, ACT provider job satisfaction, and consumer client empowerment and satisfaction with ACT care.
Field Initiated Research Project on Optimizing Accessible Public Transportation

The Research Foundations of SUNY on behalf University at Buffalo
The UB Commons
4508 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14228-2567
jlmaisel@buffalo.edu

Principal Investigator: Jordana Maisel, PhD; Brittany Perez
Public Contact: 716/829-5902

Project Number: 90IFRE0010
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,968; FY 18 $199,968; FY 19 $199,743

Abstract: Accessible public transportation provides individuals with disabilities access to work sites, educational programs, health care facilities, and social and recreational activities. This Field Initiated Research Project focuses on a critical component of accessible public transportation—wheeled mobility device securement systems. Existing research and experience in practice has identified the need for innovation in securement. The four-point tiedown is the predominant form of securement in transit buses and paratransit vehicles in the US. But, it poses usability challenges and safety risks for both wheeled mobility device users and bus operators. New technologies are being introduced, but there is no research to evaluate their efficacy on large accessible transit vehicles in fixed-route service, their value to transit providers, or their usability in other transit vehicle types. This research project evaluates the strengths and limitations of two innovative wheelchair securement systems in actual service: a three-point, fully-integrated forward-facing system (Q’Pod) and a fully automated rear-facing securement system (Quantum). Both systems have previously been evaluated in a laboratory setting and demonstrate significant benefits over the conventional four-point tiedown securement approach. Collaborating with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Q’Straint, the industry leader in wheeled mobility device securement, this project verifies the findings of the laboratory research in service conditions, quantifies the usability benefits for riders and the performance improvements for operators, and identifies the need for future design improvements to increase adoption of these systems. Phase I evaluates the use of both systems in large accessible transit vehicles in fixed-route service. Phase II evaluates the Quantum in a paratransit vehicle. Phase III explores the ramifications of introducing automated securement in autonomous transit vehicles. The project outputs include peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and recommendations for transit providers to guide them in their securement purchasing decisions.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Ohio

Improving Outcomes Using Aided Augmentative and Alternative Communication for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Children’s Hospital Medical Center
3333 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229
jareen.meinzen-derr@cchmc.org

Principal Investigator: Jareen K. Meinzen-Derr, PhD, MPH
Public Contact: 513/636-7789

Project Number: 90IF0122
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,859; FY 17 $199,722; FY 18 $199,872

Abstract: This project develops a technology-assisted language intervention (TALI) program that incorporates aided augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) using iPads to improve language in children who are Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Project goals include: (1) Demonstrating the efficacy of a technology-assisted language intervention program for improving language outcomes in children who are DHH, (2) testing the relationship between language outcomes and adherence to the TALI program, and (3) evaluating whether the impact of the TALI on language is sustained 6 months post-intervention. Children ages 5-12 are randomized to either 24 weeks of the TALI program or 24 weeks of usual care. The project conducts focus groups with families and stakeholders to understand barriers to interventions and additional outcomes important to families, as well as AAC application monitoring to measure adherence. Outcomes include primary language components of syntax, semantics, and discourse collected from language samples. The final product is a model of evidence-based practice for language intervention that maximizes the full inclusion and integration of children who are DHH into society and allows for social self-sufficiency through improved language skills.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Oregon

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Trainer Skill Builder

University of Oregon
Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT)
1600 Millrace Drive, Suite 202
Eugene, OR 97403-1995
lpowell@uoregon.edu
cbirt.org/research/current-projects/tbi-trainer-skill-builder

Principal Investigator: Laurie Ehlhardt Powell, PhD
Public Contact: 541/346-0595

Project Number: 90IF0124
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,990; FY 17 $199,994; FY 18 $199,939

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Trainer Skill Builder, an interactive education and training resource for paraprofessionals that addresses the specific needs of individuals with moderate to severe TBI. Individuals with moderate to severe TBI frequently experience significant, long-lasting changes in physical, behavioral, cognitive, and social functioning that effect their participation in activities of daily life at home and in the community. Project activities occur in three phases: development, usability, and evaluation. During Phase I and II, researchers develop and evaluate a prototype of the TBI Trainer Skill Builder resource for paraprofessionals with the goal of promoting knowledge and skill acquisition, ongoing review, and practice and feedback. During Phase III, researchers evaluate the effectiveness of the program through (1) an experimental single case study involving paraprofessionals and individuals with TBI, and (2) a within-subjects product evaluation study involving paraprofessionals and professionals only. The outcome of this project is a fully-developed, evidence-based skills builder that is a cost-effective, accessible resource for paraprofessional to work effectively with adults with TBI.
Getting Out: Development of a Web-Based Application to Leverage Social Capital and Enable Self-Directed Community Participation for Individuals With Significant Cognitive Disability

Assistech Systems, LLC
99 West Tenth Avenue, Suite 325
Eugene, OR 97401
tkeating@cognitopia.com
www.cognitopia.com

Principal Investigator: Thomas Keating, PhD 541/912-4329
Public Contact: 866/573-3658

Project Number: 90IFDV0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,974; FY 19 $199,939; FY 20 $199,948

Abstract: This project develops an innovative web application, Getting Out, that provides a cognitively accessible tool for individuals with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities to help them effectively maintain social relationships established during high school transition, build new relationships, and turn virtual connections with social network members with and without disabilities into real world relationships around activities of common interest and mutual support. The project has two goals: (1) to develop a proof of concept version of the Getting Out application in collaboration with the Eugene 4J Schools Connections Transition Program (Connections), and (2) develop a proof of product version of Getting Out and evaluate its effectiveness in the City of Eugene’s Adaptive Recreation Program as a tool to promote inclusive recreation and community participation, followed by extensive beta testing by similar organizations and the general public. Major objectives take place over a three-year period. During Year 1, the project develops and evaluates the Getting Out proof of concept, conducts feasibility testing, and publishes specifications for full development in partnership with Connections. Transition students aged 18-22 with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities including autism and intellectual disabilities are engaged as usability testers and feasibility study participants. During Year 2, the project develops a minimally viable application product for collaborative implementation with participants in the Eugene Adaptive Recreation Services Program, and evaluates the prototype using qualitative methods and a within-subjects repeated measures effectiveness study. In the final year, the project continues development and evaluation on social engagement with both collaborating program, as well as public beta testing in preparation for commercialization. Outcomes include increasing self-direction and community participation and increased creation of social capital for inclusion. Products include a web application with high-potential for commercial marketing that integrates with the Cognitopia Connect Platform to meet users’ need for life management tools, and dissemination of project results through written reports and multimedia presentations to diverse audiences.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Oregon

Our Lives: Safe and Strong Program Toolkit

Portland State University
Regional Research Institute for Human Services
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
oschwald@pdx.edu

Principal Investigator: Mary Oschwald, PhD; Rollin Shelton
Public Contact: 503/725-9602

Project Number: 90IF0108
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000
Abstract: The Our Lives: Safe and Strong (Our Lives) Program Toolkit provides topic-specific, gender relevant, abuse-related training and technical assistance, and specialized training on the best practices of trauma-informed services delivery, to Centers for Independent Living (CIL) staff so they have the knowledge base and skill set necessary to work directly with CIL consumers with disabilities on issues related to interpersonal violence (IPV). The Toolkit is built upon previous field-tested, web-based abuse awareness tools: The Women’s and Men’s Safer and Strong Programs, which provide safety-planning options and resources for people with disabilities related to abuse, mistreatment, and neglect. A six-member CIL Consortium works together to implement and deliver effective IPV prevention and safety-planning supports and services to CIL consumers, and technical assistance to CIL staff to deliver IPV-related program activities. The CIL Consortium includes: Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living (NWVCIL); Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR) of Hutchinson, KS; REACH Center for Independent Living of Plano, TX; Disability Network Wayne County/ Detroit (DNWCD); Eastern Oregon Centers for Independent Living (EOCIL) of Ontario, OR; and Living Independently in Northwest Kansas (LINK) of Hays, KS.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Pennsylvania

Increasing Community Participation in Young Adults with Autism Living in Rural Communities

The Pennsylvania State University
Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
H073 500 University Drive
Hershey, PA 17033-0850
amp230@psu.edu

Principal Investigator: Amanda M. Pearl, PhD
Public Contact: 717/531-8517

Project Number: 90IFRE0018
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,999; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $199,999

Abstract: This project assesses the impact of PArticipation in Rural Settings to Engage in Communities (PARSEC), an intervention for families of young adults with autism living in rural areas to increase community participation. Approximately 27,000 individuals with autism reside in a rural community in Pennsylvania. Individuals living in rural communities often experience multiple barriers to community participation. Recent data assessing community participation in young adults with autism demonstrated significantly lower rates and variability of community participation in comparison to same-age peers without autism. Participants are randomly assigned to participate in PARSEC or an active control group for 12 months. PARSEC is assessed to determine whether participants report higher number of days participating in community activities and more variation of community activities compared to a control group. Quantitative analyses are used to assess two primary outcomes (e.g., days of community participation, number of community participation activities) from self- and caregiver-report questionnaire. Qualitative analyses are used to assess for satisfaction with the intervention and identify barriers to engagement.
Enhancing Community Participation for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders Through Peer-Mediated Transportation Interventions

Temple University
College of Public Health
Mitten Hall 201H
1913 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
tug57523@temple.edu

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Pfeiffer, PhD 215/204-0828
Public Contact: Amber Davidson 215/272-3080

Project Number: 90IFRE0013
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project develops and tests a peer-mediated intervention to reduce barriers to public transportation for transition-aged youth and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Transportation is a major obstacle to accessing essential services and overall community participation for many individuals with ASD. Driving is often not a viable option due to the impact of the disability or lack of financial resources, resulting in a reliance on alternative modes of transportation. Public transportation is a low-cost option, although often avoided due to lack of training and experience. Preliminary research has demonstrated positive outcomes of training programs for people with disabilities to learn how to use public transportation systems, although none of the interventions explored the impact of peers as interveners. Peer-mediated interventions connect two individuals with a shared lived experience (i.e., condition of ASD), which is believed to enhance the interpersonal relationship, benefits of role modeling, and promote a more equal relationship. The goals of this project are to: (1) implement a randomized control study with 64 participants to determine the efficacy of an innovative peer-mediated intervention to reduce transportation barriers for transition-aged youth and adults with ASD; (2) determine dosing recommendations for the intervention; and (3) collect qualitative data to identify potential outcomes for future studies targeting peer-interventionists.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
South Carolina

PHOENIX: Development of a Spinal Cord Injury Peer-Supported Self-Management Intervention

Medical University of South Carolina
College of Nursing
99 Jonathan Lucas Street
Charleston, SC 29425
newmansu@musc.edu

Principal Investigator: Susan Newman, PhD, RN, CRRN; Suparna Qanungo, PhD
Public Contact: 843/792-9255

Project Number: 90IFRE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,783; FY 18 $199,940; FY 19 $199,960

Abstract: This project develops, and pilot tests a spinal cord injury (SCI) peer navigator intervention for implementation across South Carolina, integrating online and telehealth platforms. The Peer-supported Health Outreach, Education, aNd Information eXchange (PHOENIX) intervention, which builds on a pilot Peer Navigator study, is specifically designed to promote self-management after SCI. The broad goals of PHOENIX are to improve participants’ community participation and quality of life and decrease subjective impact and occurrence of secondary conditions and re-hospitalization after SCI. Researchers complete translation of the existing in-person SCI Peer Navigation program for online and telehealth delivery, including integration of mobile technology to improve access and reach of PHOENIX, and development of additional multimedia online educational content. Next, the project conducts a randomized waitlisted pilot trial to identify potential logistical and methodological issues of both intervention implementation and study procedures including evaluation of feasibility, acceptability, and fidelity of intervention implementation and study design and procedures, and obtaining estimates of variability of relevant outcome measures.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
South Dakota

Sinte Gleska University Disability Center

Sinte Gleska University
PO Box 105
Mission, SD 57555-0105
burdette.clifford@sintegleska.edu

Principal Investigator: Burdette Clifford
Public Contact: 605/856-8219

Project Number: 90IFST0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $195,189; FY 18 $197,520; FY 19 $199,931

Abstract: The Sinte Gleska Disability Center (SGDC) program model seeks to improve the effectiveness of service delivery to the underserved and unserved populations of American Indians and Alaska Natives by enhancing the knowledge and education of professionals and non-professionals working or caring for those with disabilities. SGDC addresses awareness, education, and training needs of Tribal disability program personnel and family members in rural Tribal communities throughout the South Dakota Region (including neighboring states). Goals of the program are to: (1) Improve the effectiveness of culturally relevant disability services delivered to Rural Underrepresented Tribal Communities in the South Dakota Region for improved community living and inclusive participation; and (2) provide access to continuing education and training for personnel employed as providers of disability-focused services including Tribal rehabilitation service programs to maximize inclusion and integration into society through independent living, employment, family supports, and self-sufficiency. The focus area is South Dakota and neighboring states due to the high population and reservation representation, yet, the SGDC model can be implemented through other Tribal Colleges and Universities that want to better serve their Tribal members and students with disabilities.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Virginia

Identifying Predictors for Enhanced Outcomes for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Education
700 East Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23219
padinora@vcu.edu

Principal Investigator: Parthenia A. Dinora, PhD
Public Contact: 804/827-0016

Project Number: 90IFRE0015
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: The overall goal of this project is to determine what individual and service characteristics are associated with better outcomes for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), and how these factors interact with costs. Researchers utilize state databases to retrieve and link individual-level data on demographic characteristics, support needs, Medicaid expenditures, and service outcomes. Data sources include the National Core Indicators Project Adult Consumer Survey, assessment scores from the Supports Intensity Scale, and Medicaid claims for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Research objectives are to: (1) identify predictors of enhanced outcomes for people with I/DD who use Medicaid long term supports and services, and (2) examine how individuals’ outcomes change over time as Medicaid systems change policies and practices are implemented. Outcomes include research findings that can be used in advocacy and programmatic decision making to improve the participation of individuals with I/DD in community living, and documentation and national dissemination of a process for linking and analyzing state datasets, so that I/DD systems across the country can adapt project protocols to measure I/DD system quality and the impact of system changes in their own states.
Maximizing health and function among people with disabilities is critical to the achievement of NIDILRR’s mission and the associated higher-order outcomes of employment as well as community living and participation. Functional ability reflects the complex interaction between individuals and the environments in which they live. NIDILRR supports centers and projects on health and function that improve understanding of health status, health needs, and health care access of individuals with disabilities. These centers and projects also develop and test interventions, including public policy interventions, to improve health outcomes, increase or maintain functional abilities, and contribute to more effective and more integrated rehabilitation and long-term services and supports.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Developmental Disabilities and Health

University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Disability and Human Development
1640 West Roosevelt Road, MC 626
Chicago, IL 60608
theller@uic.edu
rrtcadd.org
healthmattersprogram.org

Principal Investigator: Tamar Heller, PhD
Public Contact: 800/996-8845 (V); 312/413-1647 (V); 312/413-0453 (TTY); Fax: 312/996-6942

Project Number: 90RT5020 (Formerly H133B130007)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH

NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $874,992; FY 14 $874,992; FY 15 $874,999; FY 16 $874,992; FY 17 $874,994; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/30/2019)

Abstract: This project enhances the health and function of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) over their lifespan through a coordinated set of research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities. The goals of the center are to (1) increase the understanding of health status, health access, and health behaviors of adolescents and adults with I/DD; (2) improve the health and function of persons with I/DD through health promotion interventions; and (3) improve health care access through integrated care practices. Research activities include, but are not limited to, national database analyses of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, the National Health Interview Survey, Survey of Child Special Health Care Needs, and the Survey of Adult Transition and Health; a continuing prospective cohort study of health behaviors on health and function over a 10-year period, including minorities with I/DD; the development of a technology-based intervention to reduce obesity; and evaluation of the scaling up of the evidence-based “Health Matters” exercise and nutrition program for individuals with I/DD developed by the project under a previous grant. The Center includes a prospective study to assess the impact of changes in health and long-term practices to health and function, health care access, preventative services, and satisfaction of adults with I/DD in the process of a change from fee-for-service to integrated health and long-term care with specific analyses targeting persons with diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s disease. The project’s innovative training and technical assistance approaches include (1) dissemination through national provider, professional, and consumer collaborations; (2) development of user-friendly products in various formats; (3) use of the train-the-trainer and peer training models to promote local ownership of effective practices; (4) targeted promotion of systemic changes that maintain programmatic and policy changes; (5) leadership in national task forces; and (6) use of web-based technologies to provide global access to knowledge and training products, including dissemination through...
the project’s website, the National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability, and the Health Matters Program; and (7) provision of certificate programs in disability and health promotion. This project continues its leadership role in increasing the self-determination of adults with I/DD and their families by involving consumers in all phases of its research, training, and dissemination activities.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

RRTC on Developing Optimal Strategies in Exercise and Survival Skills to Increase Health and Function

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
eroth@sralab.org
www.ric.org/research/centers/dosesses

Principal Investigator: T. George Hornby, PhD, PT; Elliot J. Roth, MD
Public Contact: 312/238-4864; Fax: 312/238-1417
Project Number: 90RT5027 (Formerly H133B140012)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $874,864; FY 15 $874,768; FY 16 $874,820; FY 17 $874,793; FY 18 $874,782

Abstract: This RRTC develops and tests innovative strategies to enable people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their optimal health and function; assesses the optimal dosing, cost-effectiveness, and value of selected approaches to achieve and maintain their health and function; and disseminates information regarding these strategies to various stakeholders. Specific project objectives include: (1) establishing and operating a coordinated, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary Center comprised of a team of specialists with expertise in clinical rehabilitation and research methodology; (2) evaluating the contributions of the task-specific training parameters, intensity, and variability on lower extremity function post-stroke; (3) evaluating the impact of focused, intensive training applied during clinical inpatient physical therapy on mobility outcomes, health, and community participation in patients with acute neurological injury; (4) conducting a randomized clinical trial to compare the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of two different dosing methods for providing an Intensive Comprehensive Aphasia Program; (5) developing and evaluating the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of a targeted evidence-based Peer Health Navigator program for Medicaid beneficiaries with physical disabilities; and (6) assessing the economic and social value of each proposed research intervention. This project also conducts knowledge translation activities and builds research capacity through educating future generations of disability researchers, professionals, people with disabilities and their families, and the general public by providing them with the tools and training they need to be able to understand important information regarding health, function, community living, and research methods.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Integrated Health Care & Self-Directed Recovery

University of Illinois at Chicago
Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy
1601 West Taylor Street, 4th Floor, MC 912
Chicago, IL 60612
jonikas@uic.edu
www.center4healthandsdc.org
twitter.com/UICHealthRRTC

Principal Investigator: Judith A. Cook, PhD 312/355-3921
Public Contact: Jessica A. Jonikas 312/355-1696 (V); Fax: 312/355-4189

Project Number: 90RT5038
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $574,951; FY 16 $574,991; FY 17 $574,986; FY 18 $574,937; FY 19 $574,927
Other Funding: FY 15 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 19 $300,000 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: This project creates, modifies, and improves self-directed models of medical care and mental health services that promote recovery, health, and employment for people with psychiatric disabilities and co-occurring medical conditions, stimulate the development of self-directed recovery models that are peer-led, and improve employment outcomes. Research activities include: a multisite randomized controlled trial of self-directed care for adults with psychiatric disabilities, and development of a transition intervention that supports patients as they move from the hospital to the community using teams of community health workers and mental health peer specialists. Evaluation activities include: an evaluation of costs, medical service utilization, and 30-day readmissions following discharge from medical hospitalizations using the national Truven Health Analytics MarketScan Multistate Medicaid Database; and evaluation of the impact of personal budgets called Career Accounts on the employment outcomes of individuals receiving evidence-based supported employment services. The Center also implements the UIC Health & Recovery Solutions Practice, Policy, and Science Exchange to promote knowledge translation through training, dissemination, and technical assistance. Each component of the Exchange meets the specific needs of its audience with varied dissemination, training, or technical assistance formats. The Health & Recovery Solutions Suite is a set of tools, curricula, and manuals that help people with psychiatric disabilities, their supporters, service providers, and policymakers to promote self-directed recovery of health and wellness. The Health & Recovery Academy for Policymakers utilizes modalities that are tailored to the needs of human service system designers, including a policymaker mentoring initiative, legislative action alerts, and an online technical assistance web portal staffed by experts in state systems change and transformation. The Health & Recovery Solutions Science Showcase
meets the needs of researchers, scholars, and students by informing them about the Center’s research and evaluation projects, creating or highlighting research tools, featuring recent publications on self-directed recovery and health care integration, and offering podcasts and free mini-courses on disability research topics. The Center also convenes a state-of-the-science national summit focusing on self-directed health and mental health care, integration of health and behavioral health care, and self-determination in the vocational rehabilitation process.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Michigan

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Promoting Healthy Aging for People with Long-Term Physical Disabilities

The Regents of the University of Michigan
University of Michigan Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
325 East Eisenhower Parkway, Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
mameade@umich.edu

Principal Investigator: Michelle A. Meade, PhD
Public Contact: 734/936-7052

Project Number: 90RTHF0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,960; FY 19 $874,935; FY 20 $874,913; FY 21 $874,927; FY 22 $874,984

Abstract: Despite evidence of the importance of environmental factors for health and functioning outcomes for individuals with disabilities, it is often personal factors which are the focus of healthy aging studies and interventions. The overarching goal of the Investigating Disability factors and promoting Environmental Access for Healthy Living RRTC (IDEAL RRTC) is to promote the healthy aging of adults with long-term physical impairments and disabilities. This is achieved by identifying factors at the intersection of the person and environment that impede or support positive health and function outcomes and creating solutions that improve the fit between the two. The objectives of the synergistic group of research projects under this center are to: (1) identify how different person-level characteristics interact with environmental characteristics to influence healthy aging for people with physical disabilities using national, longitudinal databases; (2) identify best practices for promoting healthy aging with physical disabilities across individuals from diverse socioeconomic communities; and (3) develop a suite of informed interventions that promote healthy aging at the intersection of person and environment. Outcomes include a better understanding of the person-environment fit so that persons with physical disabilities, their families, and care providers can optimize healthy aging. Center outputs include interventions that will serve as the basis for the Center’s training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities, including: (1) best-practices alerts for medical information systems; (2) tailored information about best practices and community programs; (3) on-demand environmental audits; and (4) policy briefs.
Can You Hear Me Now? Listening to People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Health Research

The goal of this rehabilitation research and training center is to conduct systematic research that contributes to improving the long-term health-related function and quality of life outcomes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The research objectives are to: (1) adapt diagnostic, health, and health-related quality of life measures to increase self-report in adults with I/DD; (2) determine the prevalence of mental health conditions and health outcomes among adults with I/DD; and (3) develop best practice guidelines for psychotherapy for adults with I/DD. Project outcomes include: (1) stronger voice for self-advocating adults with I/DD in health research; (2) known prevalence of people with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions; (3) better understanding of health outcomes in adults with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions; and (4) established psychotherapy guidelines to advance mental health treatment for adults with I/DD. Project outputs include: (1) new cognitively accessible, reliable, and valid health measures for adults with I/DD; (2) guidelines on providing mental health care for adults with I/DD; and (3) peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, cognitively accessible data briefs, conference presentations, and training webinars. To ensure the quality and relevance of our work, the center engages people with I/DD throughout the project to emerge as a national resource on health and function for people with I/DD.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Washington

University of Washington Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Promoting Healthy Aging for Individuals with Long-Term Physical Disabilities

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
1959 Northeast Pacific Street
Seattle, WA 98195
agerrtc@uw.edu
agerrtc.washington.edu
www.facebook.com/agingRRTC
twitter.com/AgingRRTC

Principal Investigator: Ivan Molton, PhD 206/543-3602
Public Contact: Ian Nelson 866/928-2114; Fax: 206/685-3244

Project Number: 90RT5023 (Formerly H133B130018)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $875,000; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project is devoted to better understanding the factors associated with healthy aging in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), multiple sclerosis (MS), late effects of polio (PPS), and muscular dystrophy (MD). Research activities focus on the impact of secondary conditions and barriers to health care access; testing the feasibility of community-based health and wellness intervention to promote healthy aging in persons with SCI, MS, PPS, and MD; testing the efficacy of an existing telephone-based community intervention aimed at promoting happiness and resilience in individuals with multiple sclerosis; enhancing understanding of the effect of federal programs such as Medicaid Managed Care on receipt of and satisfaction with health care services; and serving as a national resource center on aging with long-term physical disabilities. Four interrelated scientific studies on healthy aging and disability make up this project and are conducted with the full involvement of consumers and key stakeholder groups. Project I continues a recently-completed, longitudinal survey of 1,600 individuals with long-term physical disabilities, creating the largest longitudinal database of secondary health conditions in the target population. Project II tests the efficacy of an existing, empirically supported health and wellness intervention in promoting healthy aging for adults with SCI, MS, MD, or PPS in collaboration with a large, regional community senior services agency. Project III tests the efficacy of a telephone-based format for an existing community intervention designed to promote positive psychological factors that are key to healthy aging in individuals with MS. Project IV builds on an existing study of Medicaid Managed Care to evaluate the impact of Medicaid Managed Care on health care utilization, function, and consumer satisfaction in a sample of more than 14,000 individuals with long-term physical disabilities. Dissemination activities include (1) holding a state-of-the-science webinar series on aging with disabilities; (2) publishing the findings from the studies in national and international journals; and (3) presenting the findings at high profile scientific conferences in the field. This project plans for knowledge translation to occur through pre-service curricula, national consumer organizations, and web-based platforms.
Dose-Response Effects of Transformative Exercise in Improving Health and Function in Adults with Stroke and Multiple Sclerosis

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Health Professions
1720 Second Avenue South, SHPB 331
Birmingham, AL 35233
jrimmer@uab.edu

Principal Investigator: James H. Rimmer, PhD
Public Contact: 205/975-9010; Fax: 205/975-7787

Project Number: 90DP0059 (Formerly H133A130044)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $475,000; FY 14 $475,000; FY 15 $475,000; FY 16 $475,000; FY 17 $475,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 7/30/2019)

Abstract: This project consists of three overlapping studies focused on developing and implementing sustainable and effective approaches to improving health and function in people with stroke and multiple sclerosis (MS). The first study (R1) develops and conducts a longitudinal trial focused on prospectively examining the relationships between variables such as sociodemographics, physical activity, diet, health outcomes, and environmental and sociocultural factors in a longitudinal cohort of adults with neurological conditions including MS and stroke. Each participant receives twice-yearly assessments via questionnaire and annual laboratory health/physical function tests. Anticipated outcomes include increased knowledge of variables that affect the health trajectories of people with stroke and MS as well as a data-driven framework for the development and testing of interventions to address secondary health conditions, functional deficits, and quality of life in people with disabilities. The second study (R2) is a randomized controlled trial examining the dose-response effects of two types of innovative group exercise classes on the health and functional status of adults with stroke and MS, and determines the relationship between gains in physical function and health status in this population. Finally, the third study (R3) utilizes a tele-health exercise training and monitoring system (e.g., tele-exercise) in translating clinical findings into a home-based exercise program addressing the needs of adults with stroke and MS that is supervised via a remote tele-coach.
ReInventing Yourself After SCI: A Multi-Site Randomized Controlled Trial of an Intervention to Improve Outcomes After Spinal Cord Injury

Craig Hospital
3425 South Clarkson Street
Englewood, CO 80113-2899
susie@craighospital.org
kmonden@craighospital.org
jcoker@craighospital.org

Principal Investigator: Susan Charlifue, PhD; Kimberley Monden, PhD; Jennifer Coker, MPH
Public Contact: 303/789-8306 (V); 303/789-8575 (TTY); Fax: 303/789-8441

Project Number: 90DPHF0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,530; FY 18 $495,118; FY 19 $498,859; FY 20 $485,660; FY 21 $499,613

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to conduct a multi-site randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the replicability and efficacy of a structured six-week, manualized, group therapy intervention, ReInventing Yourself After Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), that delivers positive psychology concepts within a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)-based model. The intervention is delivered through six sessions, each lasting approximately two hours. Eight skills are presented over the course of the intervention to address reframing a person’s method of looking at events, building confidence by focusing on personal strengths, developing methods of recognizing and appreciating the good in one’s life, and expressing gratitude for positive attributes. These skills are presented in a specific sequence through a workbook so that participants can gain mastery of introductory concepts before undertaking those that are both more difficult and complex. The goals of this RCT are to increase SCI-specific and general self-efficacy, enhance emotional well-being, and improve participation in society for people with SCI living in the community.
Characterization and Treatment of Chronic Pain after Moderate to Severe Traumatic Brain Injury

Craig Hospital
3425 South Clarkson Street
Englewood, CO 80113-2899
charrison-felix@craighospital.org

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD; Jeanne M. Hoffman, PhD; Kimberley Monden, PhD
Public Contact: 303/789-8565

Project Number: 90DPTB0017
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $600,000; FY 19 $600,000; FY 20 $600,000; FY 21 $599,999; FY 22 $600,000
Other Funding: FY 18 $127,000 (ACL TBI State Partnership Program)

Abstract: This project researches and evaluates the treatment needs of individuals with living with chronic pain; specifically, individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Living with chronic pain impacts almost all aspects of a person’s life: physical function, concentration and memory, sleep, and feelings of depression, and anxiety and irritability. The aims of this project include (1) determining chronic pain classification (musculoskeletal, headache, central/neuropathic); the prevalence, location, duration, and demographic associations of those living in chronic pain; and the injury severity, current level of functioning, and comorbidities in participants followed through the NIDILRR-funded TBI Model Systems, and Department of Veterans Affairs databases; (2) Identifying extreme groups based on responses to pain (interference and perception of improvement and treatment), or chronic pain extreme phenotypes to determine key differences between those with positive versus negative outcomes; and (3) identifying treatment practices by clinicians who treat comorbid TBI and chronic pain to determine gaps in availability and accessibility of guideline level treatment, and highlight underserved populations were applicable. Study results provide a more detailed picture of the issues surrounding chronic pain after TBI, and identify treatment targets (behavioral, cognitive, biological, and molecular) to advance a personalized medical approach for treatment for individuals with TBI living in chronic pain. Outcomes include educational materials on chronic pain and pain management that benefit patients, family members, clinicians, and policymakers; and a data-driven impact on clinical practice.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
District of Columbia

Improving Assessment of Opioid Use Disorder in People with Disabilities Related to Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain

American Institutes for Research (AIR)
Health Services Practice Area
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
kpaez@air.org

Principal Investigator: Kathryn Paez, PhD, MSN 301/592-2229
Public Contact: Jennifer Lucado 301/592-3326

Project Number: 90DPGE0006
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $499,979; FY 19 $499,909; FY 20 $499,826
Abstract: The goal of this project is to lay the groundwork for primary care providers and specialists to accurately assess for opioid use disorder (OUD) in people with disabilities who are taking opioids long term to manage musculoskeletal pain while using the best evidence to minimize OUD over- and under-diagnosis. The objectives are to: (1) conduct a systematic literature review to identify evidence-based best OUD assessment practices, tools, and resources; (2) identify barriers and facilitators to OUD assessment and treatment access through qualitative research; (3) adapt and test a screening tool to detect OUD in people who take opioids long term to manage musculoskeletal pain; and (4) develop an OUD assessment and referral toolkit and disseminate it through provider and disability organizations and those training providers in addiction medicine. The outcomes of this project are increased understanding of opioid misuse versus appropriate use in the target population, increased provider knowledge of steps to accurately assess for OUD, strategies for OUD risk stratification, and ways to facilitate transition into OUD treatment.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Florida

A Lifestyle Intervention Targeting Enhanced Health and Function for Persons with Chronic SCI in Caregiver/Care-Receiver Relationships: Effects of Caregiver Co-Treatment

University of Miami
1320 South Dixie Highway, Suite 650
Coral Gables, FL 33146-2919
mnash@med.miami.edu

Principal Investigator: Mark Nash, PhD
Public Contact: 305/243-3628

Project Number: 90DP0074
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $498,572; FY 16 $497,183; FY 17 $498,908; FY 18 $499,403; FY 19 $484,761

Abstract: This project evaluates and tests a population-specific lifestyle intervention (LI) in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) that significantly improves fitness, lessens the risk of cardiometabolic disease, and reduces body mass thus improving the execution of daily activities. An increase in body mass occurring early after SCI is widely reported to decay lifelong health and function. Obesity/overweight affects nearly 70 percent of the SCI population, imposing earlier and disproportionate risks for healthy-decaying cardioendocrine disease, inflammatory stress, musculoskeletal pain, and functional decline. These risks also impose significant physical and emotional stress on the caregivers of people with SCI, who are progressively challenged to maintain a reserve of health and function as they also age. Project goals include: (1) testing the impact of a model LI program on attributes of health and function that are recognized to compromise healthy aging in persons with SCI living in caregiver/care-receiver relationships, (2) examining the impact of the LI on the relationship of the caregiver/care-receiver dyad, and (3) determining whether co-intervention with the caregiver improves health/function for their partner. This two-center, randomized, parallel group, wash-in controlled study enrolls 60 men/women ages 18-65 with SCI for more than one year. Their caregivers are co-enrolled, and are defined as family members, significant others, or friends who provide social and/or physical support including personal assistance, routine emotional encouragement, and/or social interaction. All participants with SCI undergo an intense, 6-month LI program incorporating circuit resistance training, Mediterranean-style diet, and a customized 16-session behavioral intervention. A 6-month minimally supervised extension tests intervention durability. Half of the caregivers undergo a comparable, caregiver-targeted exercise, nutrition, and behavioral intervention; and the remaining caregivers receive a compilation of general exercise and nutrition recommendations vetted by medical and nutritional authorities. The outcomes for participants with SCI are examined for body mass and fitness; biomarkers of cardioendocrine risk and inflammation; function; multidimensional pain; and health-related quality of life, treatment acceptance, and symptoms of anxiety, and depression. Caregiver participants are evaluated for their function, multidimensional pain, and health-related quality of life, caregiver burden, life satisfaction, anxiety, and treatment acceptance.
A Consumer Advisory Board and Medical Monitor evaluate project progress and information, which is disseminated through consumer conferences, scientific presentations, juried manuscripts, web-based media, and conference symposia attended by health care professionals.
A Multi-Center Clinical Trial to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Intermittent Hypoxia Therapy in Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
345 East Superior Street
Chicago, IL 60611
w-rymer@northwestern.edu

Principal Investigator: W. Zev Rymer, MD, PhD
Public Contact: 312/239-3919

Project Number: 90SIMS0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $899,985; FY 18 $899,824; FY 19 $899,984; FY 20 $899,940; FY 21 $899,725

Abstract: This collaborative project evaluates a promising new treatment strategy for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), using brief reductions in oxygen levels in the inspired air. While treatment options for persons with SCI have greatly improved, they are still limited in efficacy. The goal of this project is to evaluate a new strategy called acute intermittent hypoxia (AIH), during which a person is administered brief bouts of low oxygen through a facemask. AIH triggers the synthesis and release of specific spinal proteins that promote effective increased neural plasticity, improving muscle contractions. The objective is to test whether daily AIH improves upper-limb function in persons with incomplete cervical SCI. Researchers evaluate training when AIH is used alone, in combination with task-specific traditional training, or using a sensorized robotic device (RAPAEL Smart Glove). The project aims to improve hand and arm function in individuals with SCI, enhance reintegration into social and vocational activities, and provide a greater understanding of hypoxia-induced neuroplasticity.
Thresholds Health Literacy and Wellness Promotion Center

The Thresholds
4101 North Ravenswood Avenue
Chicago, IL 60613-2193
Mary.Anzilotti@Thresholds.org

Principal Investigator: Mary Anzilotti; Lisa Razzano, PhD
Public Contact: Nicole Pashka 773/572-5265

Project Number: 90DPHF0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,795; FY 18 $499,778; FY 19 $499,903; FY 20 $499,624; FY 21 $499,525

Abstract: The Thresholds Health Literacy and Wellness Promotion Development Center (TWC) seeks to address the health and wellness of individuals in recovery of psychiatric disabilities with other co-occurring disabilities and physical health conditions, focusing on health literacy and promoting wellness as a means to enhance recovery and function within the community. The developmental activities included in this Center include three projects. Project 1 is an exploratory longitudinal study of chronic physical health conditions among individuals with psychiatric disabilities, focusing on health screening and management of chronic health and utilization of health services over two years. Project 2 focuses on improving health literacy and promoting wellness among individuals with psychiatric disabilities and workforce providers. This project builds on data collected in Project 1 to develop, evaluate, and disseminate a 12-month comprehensive, coordinated series of health literacy and wellness promotion modules with integrated components specifically relevant to illness risk and health management for the target population and the workforce of providers. Project 3 focuses on developing, pilot testing, refining, and disseminating a state-of-the-science curriculum focused on promoting wellness and health and addressing needs related to sexuality and sexual behaviors among diverse individuals in recovery.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Maryland

Robot-Aided Diagnosis, Passive-Active Arm Motor and Sensory Rehabilitation Post Stroke

University of Maryland, Baltimore
School of Medicine
100 Penn Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-1508
l-zhang@som.umaryland.edu

Principal Investigator: Li-Qun Zhang, PhD
Public Contact: 410/706-2145

Project Number: 90DP0099
Start Date: May 01, 2017
Length: 30 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,829; FY 18 $499,678

Abstract: This project develops a custom rehabilitation system to provide a robot-aided diagnosis and passive-active arm motor and sensory rehabilitation post stroke. Project objectives are threefold: (1) quantify the progression of neuromechanical properties throughout the upper extremity during recovery from stroke, (2) address allocation of therapy resources between the arm and hand, and (3) examine the benefits of combining passive stretching with active movement training. Custom devices are employed to both perturb and measure the arm and hand. The data captures the timeline for the advent of specific complications such as spasticity in the different joints and the extent to which they change over time and provides a guide for future treatment. The project investigates and assesses a rehabilitation paradigm for targeting the entire upper extremity, rather than just the arm or just the hand. Both passive stretching and active movement therapy are implemented by two unique devices, the IntelliArm and the X-Glove. The multi-joint IntelliArm rehabilitation robot is capable of controlling and measuring the shoulder, elbow, and wrist simultaneously in order to carry out multi-joint sensorimotor characterizations, forceful stretching, and robot-guided active movement training. The X-Glove robot independently actuates each digit, allowing for stretching and movement assistance customized for each digit. Subacute stroke survivors participate in a blinded, controlled longitudinal intervention trial. Outcome evaluations in stroke survivors capture changes both in clinical measures of upper extremity performance and in neuromechanical properties. The results provide important data for deciding how best to devote limited resources to therapy.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Massachusetts

**INROADS: Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services**

Brandeis University
Heller School for Social Policy and Management
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2728
reif@brandeis.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Sharon Reif, PhD; Rachel Sayko Adams, PhD; Monika Mitra, PhD; Joanne Nicholson, PhD; Cindy Parks Thomas, PhD

**Public Contact:** Sharon Reif, PhD 781/736-3924

**Project Number:** 90DPGE0007

**Start Date:** September 30, 2018

**Length:** 36 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Sarah Ruiz, PhD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $482,852; FY 19 $489,502; FY 20 $499,826

**Abstract:** The goal of the INROADS (INtersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services) Project is to contribute to evidence-based policy and practice on behalf of people living with disabilities and opioid use disorder (OUD). The objectives are to: (1) conduct a systematic literature review on OUD and disability; (2) undertake comprehensive, targeted research activities with significant key informant input; and (3) engage the community of people with disabilities in shaping the research and informing INROADS products for widespread dissemination to diverse audiences. The project includes mixed methods research activities with analyses of quantitative data from multiple available national and state-level datasets, integrated with qualitative data from focus groups and key informant interviews, and examination of peer support services. Outcomes include knowledge transfer and dissemination of research findings to people with disabilities, advocates, practitioners, policy makers, and others, and, ultimately, improving access to care and facilitating lives in OUD recovery.
Motivating Self-Management Through Multi-Media Health Promotion

University of Montana
The University of Montana Rural Institute:
A Center for Excellence in Disability Research, Education and Services
52 Corbin Hall
Missoula, MT 59812
craig.ravesloot@mso.umt.edu
www.healthycommunityliving.com
www.facebook.com/HealthyCommunityLiving
www.flickr.com/groups/healthycommunityliving
www.youtube.com/channel/UCVu6D_eCN5aRQ6tYueCyecg
twitter.com/WeAreHCL

Principal Investigator: Craig Ravesloot, PhD
Public Contact: 406/243-2992

Project Number: 90DP0073
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $499,811; FY 16 $499,999; FY 17 $499,780; FY 18 $499,815; FY 19 $499,952

Abstract: This project develops two online, multimedia products that community-based agencies can use to deliver state-of-the-art health promotion services to people with disabilities living in the community. The first product, Multi-Media Living Well with a Disability (MMLWD) is based on the 4th edition of Living Well with a Disability curriculum created by the Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities. The second product, Motivation for Self-Management, is a new multimedia health promotion module based on Self-Determination Theory that increases consumer motivation and confidence for engaging in self-management. These products help to improve the health of people with disabilities by increasing accessibility to evidence-based health promotion curricula that has been shown to be cost-effective for reducing limitation due to secondary conditions. While not focused solely on rural populations, this project partners with long-term collaborator, the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), who has recruited eight Centers for Independent Living to participate on one of two development teams. These centers are located in urban areas across the country but also provide services to rural areas using satellite offices (e.g., Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Houston). These development teams work in parallel to develop each online multimedia curriculum using an Iterative Participatory Curriculum Development (IPCD) procedure. Knowledge translation activities include new training and technical assistance procedures, and along with outcome results, are widely disseminated to a variety of community-based programs (e.g., Aging and Disability Research Centers) and health promotion researchers.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Oregon

Enhancing Parenting Skills:
Application of a Web-Based Three-Tiered Model

University of Oregon
College of Education
347 HEDCO Education Building
Eugene, OR 97403-5208
llmcinty@uoregon.edu

Principal Investigator: Laura Lee McIntyre, PhD
Public Contact: 541/346-7452

Project Number: 90DPHF0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $474,502; FY 19 $474,347; FY 20 $474,507; FY 21 $474,217; FY 22 $474,686

Abstract: This project develops and rigorously evaluates an intervention to reduce challenging behavior in young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The objectives are: (1) to use input from stakeholders using a Community-Engaged Research framework to develop the Tiered Online Training and Support (TOTS) intervention, a web-based, three-tier model of parent training and support to manage behavioral challenges in home and community settings, (2) to test the efficacy of TOTS using a randomized controlled trial in collaboration with University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) in Oregon and Ohio, and (3) to disseminate the intervention for broad implementation in UCEDD and community settings. Outcomes include: (1) improvement of child behavioral health and function in terms of reduction of challenging behavior and improvements in adaptive behavior; (2) improvement of parenting skills, self-efficacy, problem-solving, and child behavior management; and (3) an online intervention packages that provides families with access to intervention components tailored to their child and family needs.
Promoting Independence and Self-Management Using mHealth

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6026 Forbes Tower
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
parmanto@pitt.edu
www.rercict.pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Bambang Parmanto, PhD
Public Contact: 412/383-6649

Project Number: 90DP0064 (Formerly H133A140005)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,911; FY 15 $499,562; FY 16 $499,291; FY 17 $499,619; FY 18 $499,581

Abstract: This project develops and implements mobile health (mHealth) tools to support self-management and aid youth with brain and spinal anomalies (BSA) in their transition to adulthood. Individuals with developmental BSAs, who may have impairments in self-management skills, are susceptible to secondary conditions. The early teen years are a developmentally appropriate time in one’s life to seek separation from one’s parents and gain full independence with regard to self-management. Many teens fail to develop the self-management skills necessary to independently manage medical and self-care routines. One major barrier identified was the lack of developmentally appropriate tools to help in this transition. The mHealth tools incorporate mechanisms for caregiver and family involvement and peer support. This project builds upon previous research with a self-management pilot project for individuals with spinal bifida, implementing the mHealth supported self-management program in a community setting, and developing educational support for participants.
Innovation in Disability Empowerment and Service Delivery

University of Pittsburgh
Human Engineering Research Laboratories
400 North Lexington Street, Suite LL104
Pittsburgh, PA 15208-2574
dicianno@pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Brad Dicianno, MD
Public Contact: 412/648-6666

Project Number: 90DPGE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,960; FY 17 $496,919; FY 18 $497,153; FY 19 $492,835; FY 20 $481,355

Abstract: This project’s overall objective is to identify potential models of healthcare delivery for individuals with disabilities that are effective in improving health and the patient experience of care, while reducing cost. The project includes a systematic review of the research and health policy literature to identify innovative health service delivery models that offer long-term support services to people with disabilities and that are supported by evidence-based research, actionable policies, or both. Three rigorous research projects evaluate the impact of three different models of care on the Triple Aim: (1) a community-based care management program delivered by a non-profit organization through waiver funds, (2) the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) applied to younger individuals with disabilities between ages 55-64, and (3) a state-of-the-art mobile health platform that supports community-based service delivery. A development project with participatory action design refines the existing mobile health system to support the third research project. Evidence-based studies demonstrate that delivering services via non-profit organizations or through PACE models of care have the potential to positively impact outcomes for people with disabilities. The main barrier that has prevented these programs from being fully implemented outside of research has been lack of integration into a system that can support financial sustainability. To overcome these barriers, this project includes partnerships between an integrated delivery system and community-based programs, identifying promising aspects of delivery systems, and proposing plans for implementation.
A Multidisciplinary Approach to Translating New Knowledge into Practice to Promote Health and Well-Being after Spinal Cord Injury

Medical University of South Carolina
College of Health Professions
Department of Health Science and
151-B Rutledge Avenue
MSC 962
Charleston, SC 29425
krause@musc.edu
www.longevityafterinjury.com
sciandtbiresearch.blogspot.com

Principal Investigator: James S. Krause, PhD
Public Contact: 843/792-1337; Fax: 843/792-5649

Project Number: 90DP0098
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $149,877; FY 17 $149,894; FY 18 $149,867

Abstract: This project translates new scientific knowledge relating to health and function to reduce risk of secondary health conditions (SHCs) and other health complications after spinal cord injury (SCI) by developing automated individualized risk profiles for use by consumers with SCI and interdisciplinary healthcare providers. This addresses a key limitation in current knowledge translation practices and utilization tools which are typically general in nature, such as factsheets, videos, or other self-help information. This project uses data on over 5,000 participants related to risk and protective factors for SHCs and other health outcomes, previously gathered under the NIDILRR-funded Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on SHCs after SCI, to develop the automated individualized risk profiles, as well as factsheets for those who do not have Internet access. Stakeholders, including those with SCI, health professionals, and those who work with SCI registries, identify the conditions upon which to focus, the types of formats and appropriateness of the tools for different environments and end-users, and the usefulness of the tools. The project includes the following activities: (1) convene stakeholder groups to identify the most important areas of focus, (2) develop the automated tools, (3) reconvene stakeholder groups throughout the project to evaluate the tools, (4) disseminate the tools through stakeholder, institutional, and public health agencies, and (5) evaluate the utility of the tools within those settings. The project collaborates with several stakeholder organizations including the RTC on Independent Living at the University of Kansas, the South Carolina SCI Association, AccessAbility (local independent living center), Roper Hospital, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the South Carolina SCI Surveillance System.
Multicenter Evaluation of Memory Remediation After Traumatic Brain Injury with Donepezil (MEMRI-TBI-D)

TIRR Memorial Hermann
Baylor College of Medicine
One Baylor Plaza
BCM350
Houston, TX 77030
david.arciniegas@bcm.edu

Principal Investigator: David B. Arciniegas, MD
Public Contact: 713/797-7579; Fax: 713/798-4089

Project Number: 90DP0060 (Formerly H133A130047)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $600,000; FY 14 $600,000; FY 15 $600,000; FY 16 $600,000; FY 17 $600,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project evaluates the effectiveness of donepezil as treatment for traumatic brain injury (TBI)-related memory deficit. The study is a four-site, randomized, parallel design, double-blind, placebo-controlled, 10-week trial of donepezil 10 mg daily for verbal memory problems among adults with TBI in the sub-acute or chronic recovery period. The study recruit’s persons with TBI and functionally important memory problems during a four-year period of open recruitment to evaluate the effects of treatment with donepezil on verbal memory. Additionally, the study evaluates the effects of treatment with donepezil on memory-related activities. Data is collected assessing the effects of donepezil on attention, processing speed, neuropsychiatric symptoms, community participation, quality of life, and caregiver experiences.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Massachusetts

Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
300 First Avenue
Charlestown, MA 02129
BostonHarvardBIMS@partners.org
www.bh-bims.org

Principal Investigator: Ross D. Zafonte, DO; Lewis E. Kazis, ScD; Colleen M. Ryan, MD; Jeffrey C. Schneider, MD; Mary Slavin, PhD, PT; Diana Tenney

Public Contact: 617/952-6313; Fax: 617/952-5934

Project Number: 90DPBU0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $363,000; FY 18 $363,000; FY 19 $363,000; FY 20 $363,000; FY 21 $363,000

Abstract: The overall goal of Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System (BHBIMS) is to provide a multidisciplinary, comprehensive system of care for burn survivors that fosters innovative burn injury rehabilitation research. The project includes multiple objectives: (1) provide model care, (2) facilitate the comprehensive longitudinal assessment of burn injury outcomes by contributing to the Burn Model System National Database, (3) carry out a high quality site-specific project to develop social recovery trajectories using the LIBRE Profile, (4) propose and participate in a collaborative module project, and (5) disseminate research findings for a variety of targeted populations developed through partnerships with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center and the burn survivor community.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Texas

North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS)

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
5323 Harry Hines Boulevard
Dallas, TX 75390
radha.holavanahalli@utsouthwestern.edu
www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/medical-school/departments/
physical-medicine/model-systems/ntbrms

Principal Investigator: Karen Kowalske, MD; Radha Holavanahalli, PhD; 214/648-3654 (Kowalske); 214/648-9540 (Holavanahalli)
Public Contact: Radha Holavanahalli, PhD 214/648-9540; Fax: 214/648-2005

Project Number: 90DP0042 (Formerly H133A120090)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $383,000; FY 13 $383,000; FY 14 $383,000; FY 15 $383,000; FY 16 $383,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary services to children and adults who sustain major burn injuries from the time of injury to long-term follow-up. The project contributes data to the Burn Model System national database, including follow-up data on eligible subjects at 6 months, 1, 2, 5, and 10 years, and extends follow-up to every 5 years thereafter. North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS) includes a quarterly rural satellite clinic to serve the needs of those patients who cannot return to the burn center for a follow-up. The project includes two site-specific studies: (1) The Effect of Heat Intolerance on Exercise and Physical Function, a prospective, randomized single-center study on the efficacy of an exercise intervention and outcomes relating to heat intolerance among survivors of a burn injury to assess if perception of heat intolerance and the related fear of exercise among burn survivors changes following an exercise intervention; and (2) The Evaluation of a Web-Based Social Skills Training Program for Burn Survivors, a program that is designed to assist burn survivors who have a disfigurement in preparing for social situations after leaving the hospital. The NTBRMS collaborates with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center in planning its dissemination activities and providing scientific results and information to clinical and consumer audiences by participating in its systematic reviews of evidence and development of consumer factsheets. Other dissemination efforts include state-of-the-science meetings, several webinars, and other materials.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Texas

North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS)

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
5323 Harry Hines Boulevard
Dallas, TX 75390
radha.holavanahalli@utsouthwestern.edu
www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/medical-school/departments/physical-medicine/model-systems/ntbrms

Principal Investigator: Karen Kowalske, MD; Radha Holavanahalli, PhD; 214/648-3654 (Kowalske); 214/648-9540 (Holavanahalli)
Public Contact: Radha Holavanahalli, PhD 214/648-9540; Fax: 214/648-2005

Project Number: 90DPBU0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $380,000; FY 18 $380,000; FY 19 $380,000; FY 20 $380,000; FY 21 $380,000

Abstract: The goals of the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS) are to (1) assess long-term outcomes of individuals with burn injury by enrolling participants into the Burn Model System National Database, (2) conduct one site-specific research project “Vitamin D Deficiency in Adults Following a Major Burn Injury,” and (3) participate in three module research projects. The goal of the Vitamin D project is to compare low dose versus high dose Vitamin D replacement and evaluate its effects on Vitamin D levels and burn-related symptoms such as fatigue, muscle weakness, pain, itch, and peripheral neuropathy. The site-specific intervention study provides information regarding the maintenance of Vitamin D levels following the supplementation and its impact on these burn-related secondary conditions. NTBRMS module projects build on the existing Burn Model System infrastructure and include: (1) Early predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, examining early clinical hospital events to better understand the effects of early injury and in-hospital events on functional outcomes and risk factors for recovery; (2) Genetic predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, investigating whether preexisting genetic factors influence physical and psychological recovery; and (3) LIBRE Profile Social Integration Outcomes, using the LIBRE Profile to determine the importance of post-traumatic growth, mental health, and burn-related clinical complications as predictors of social participation outcomes. Module project outcomes include identifying an effective bio-psycho-social model of predictors affecting burn recovery. Products include educational materials in various formats disseminated to both professional and layperson audiences such as burn survivors and their families.
Effects of Anabolic Steroids and Blockade of Chronic Catecholamine-Mediated Stress on Psychosocial, Growth, Scar, and Physiologic Outcomes After Massive Burn Injury

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
301 University Boulevard
Galveston, TX 77555-5302
kepperso@utmb.edu

Principal Investigator: David Herndon, MD; Oscar Suman, PhD 409/770-6731 (Herndon); 409/770-6557 (Suman)
Public Contact: Kathy Epperson, Project Coordinator 409/770-6573; Fax: 409/770-6919

Project Number: 90DPBU0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $375,000; FY 18 $375,000; FY 19 $375,000; FY 20 $375,000; FY 21 $375,000

Abstract: This Pediatric Burn Center conducts clinical research studies that aim to modulate the catabolic and hypermetabolic response to burn trauma and improve long-term outcomes in children with burn injuries. Research focuses on children with severe burns to assess the efficacy of propranolol, oxandrolone, or the combination of oxandrolone plus propranolol administered for one-year post-burn to reduce the hypermetabolic and catabolic response. Research looks at outcomes within the first years after burn injury, as well as long-term outcomes.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Washington

Northwest Regional Burn Model System Center

University of Washington
Department of Surgery
325 Ninth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
carrough@uw.edu
burnrehab.washington.edu

Principal Investigator: Nicole Gibran, MD 206/744-3140
Public Contact: Gretchen Carrougher, MN, RN 206/744-2866; Fax: 206/744-3656

Project Number: 90DPBU0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $382,000; FY 18 $382,000; FY 19 $382,000; FY 20 $382,000; FY 21 $382,000

Abstract: The Northwest Regional Burn Model System (NWRBMS) (1) provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to individuals with burn injuries from the time of injury through recovery; (2) educates patients, families, care providers, and the public about the natural course of burn injury; and (3) creates and disseminates new knowledge about innovative evidence-based interventions that improve health and function, community living and participation, and employment after burn injury. NWRBMS includes a site-specific research project, a randomized controlled trial of Virtual-Environment Home Rehabilitation. This project addresses the feasibility and practicality of a self-directed, technology-driven home rehabilitation program and analyzes whether technology-driven home-based rehabilitation improves functional outcomes for individuals with burns in a real-world setting. The NWRBMS participates in four BMS collaborative modules. NWRBMS investigators lead two of these modules: (1) Early post-injury and in-hospital data predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, and (2) genetic predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury. NWRBMS participates in two other modules led by other BMS centers: (1) Effects of anabolic steroids and blockade of chronic catecholamine mediated stress on quality of life and physical function after massive burn injury and (2) defining clinical predictors of social integration following burn injury.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Alabama

UAB Spinal Cord Injury Model System

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1717 Sixth Avenue South, SRC 529
Birmingham, AL 35233-1816
sciweb@uab.edu
www.uab.edu/sci
www.uab.edu/sciprimarycare
www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/informacion-en-espanol
www.facebook.com/UABSCIMS
www.twitter.com/UABSCIMS
www.youtube.com/UABSCIMS

Principal Investigator: Amie B. McLain, MD; J. Scott Richards, PhD 205/934-3330 (McLain);
205/934-3454 (Richards)
Public Contact: Phil Klebine 205/934-3283; Fax: 205/975-4691

Project Number: 90SI5019
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: Spinal Cord Injury Model System (UAB-SCIMS) provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary rehabilitation services to individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) as a basis for conducting research that contributes to evidence-based rehabilitation interventions and clinical and practice guidelines. Activities of the UAB-SCIMS, both ongoing and during this cycle, reflect an active partnership within the components of UAB’s health system and between UAB and community organizations in Birmingham and across the state. Objectives of the UAB-SCIMS are: (1) Continue to be an effective participant in data collection activities for the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, enrolling a minimum of thirty newly-injured individuals annually with SCI and completing required follow-up examinations; (2) complete a controlled intervention trial of a home-based diet intervention to improve metabolic health, body composition, and quality of life; (3) participate in three collaborative research modules; (4) utilize the active involvement of persons with SCI in the design and execution of the proposed activities; and (5) disseminate project results via a variety of accessible formats and venues for both professionals and persons with SCI and their families, and in conjunction with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). Outcomes of this project include: (1) Availability of a cost-effective diet approach with demonstrated efficacy to improve health and well-being; (2) achievement of recruitment goals for three collaborative modules; (3) dissemination of new knowledge to professionals who work in the field of SCI, persons with SCI, and their families; and (4) maintenance and improvement of UAB’s SCI comprehensive care continuum. Project outputs include: A cookbook to improve health with demonstrated efficacy, and nutritional guidance disseminated via a variety of venues, a periodic newsletter, ongoing dissemination via a website, development of a variety of Fact Sheets, Question and Answer topics, Rehab Tip Sheets, peer reviewed publications, and national and international presentations.
Southern California Spinal Cord Injury Model System at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center
Rancho Research Institute
7601 East Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242
l.sutherlandrerc@verizon.net
ranchoresearch.org/research/spinal-cord-injury

Principal Investigator: Yaga Szlachcic, MD; Michael Scott, MD; Sara Mulroy, PhD; Philip S. Requejo, PhD 562/385-8111
Public Contact: 562/385-7541; Fax: 562/803-5569

Project Number: 90SI5018
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $463,140; FY 17 $463,140; FY 18 $463,140; FY 19 $463,140; FY 20 $463,140

Abstract: The overarching goal of the Southern California Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS) at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (RLANRC) is to generate new knowledge that fosters recovery of function, community re-integration, and wellness throughout the lifetime of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). RLANRC is designated as the Patient-Centered Medical Home for SCI in Los Angeles County, providing services to a large underserved and minority population. The objectives of this SCIMS are achieved through four integrated categories of effort during the five years: (1) Comprehensive service delivery; (2) participation in the National SCI Database; (3) site-specific research; and (4) a collaborative research module. SCIMS partners include Emergency Medical Services, Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center, and Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, treating a majority of the region’s trauma victims. The site-specific research evaluates outcomes and sustainability of two programs for promotion of physical activity after SCI. The collaborative research module evaluates a sensor system for establishing effective pressure relief behaviors and reducing risk of pressure ulcer development among wheelchair users. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) Increased knowledge about incidence, causes, and outcomes of traumatic SCI; (2) evidence-based interventions and technologies that facilitate healthy behaviors in individuals with SCI; (3) increase in practical, effective, and scientifically-informed knowledge and strategies for enhancing health, function, and well-being after SCI. Project outputs include peer-reviewed publications, factsheets, presentations, training materials, and guidelines for promoting physical activity and technology for motivating healthy behaviors after SCI.
The Rocky Mountain Regional Spinal Injury System (RMRSIS)

Craig Hospital
3425 South Clarkson Street
Englewood, CO 80113-2899
scharlifue@craighospital.org
lmorse@craighospital.org
craighospital.org/programs/research/spinal-cord-injury-research

Principal Investigator: Susan Charlifue, PhD; Leslie R. Morse, DO 303/789-8970
Public Contact: 303/789-8306 (V); 303/789-8575 (TTY); Fax: 303/789-8441

Project Number: 90SI5015
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $483,644; FY 17 $483,644; FY 18 $483,644; FY 19 $483,644; FY 20 $483,644

Abstract: The Rocky Mountain Regional Spinal Injury System (RMRSIS) conducts a program of site-specific research, leads and participates in collaborative module research, maintains the SCI Model Systems National Database, and advances an established SCI Model System of care and research. Project objectives include: (1) conducting a site-specific research project to add to the literature regarding the use of statins in preserving bone health and mitigating neuropathic pain for people with SCI, (2) leading a module research project to evaluate the use of complementary and alternative healthcare to treat pain following SCI, (3) contributing at least 60 new cases each year to the SCI Model Systems National Database and continuing its record of outstanding longitudinal follow-up data collection, and (4) maintaining a successful system of care. Outcomes include: (1) individuals with chronic SCI having low-cost options for managing bone health and reducing neuropathic pain, (2) a greater understanding of the use of complementary and integrative healthcare for people with SCI, and (3) improving an already world-renowned system of care meeting the lifetime needs of people with SCI. This project produces manuscripts in high-impact peer-reviewed journals, presents at national professional scientific meetings, and disseminates research results to consumers and other stakeholders through collaborations with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC).
South Florida Spinal Cord Injury Model System

University of Miami
PO Box 016960, C-206
Miami, FL 33136-1015
efelix@miami.edu
scimiami.med.miami.edu

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Roy Felix, PhD
Public Contact: 305/243-4497

Project Number: 90SI5023
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $451,349; FY 17 $451,349; FY 18 $451,349; FY 19 $451,349; FY 20 $451,349

Abstract: The South Florida Spinal Cord Injury System (SFSCIS) serves a high volume of patients with spinal cord injury (SCI) providing comprehensive rehabilitation services specifically designed to meet their needs. The clinical components of the SFSCIS include in-patient rehabilitation at Jackson Memorial Rehabilitation Hospital, vocational services, community and job placement, and long-term community follow-up and health maintenance. Project research includes a site-specific study, as well as collaborative projects with other Model System centers. The goal is to improve outcomes in the preservation or restoration of function following SCI. Additionally, this project contributes to the National Spinal Cord Injury Database; utilizes culturally appropriate methods of education, training, and outreach throughout the care system; and includes a comprehensive evaluation program.
The Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS) at Shepherd Center offers multi-disciplinary rehabilitation specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals with SCI across the continuum of care. SCIMS is conducting two site-specific research projects, and one collaborative module. Project 1 evaluates the effects of motor-training plus non-invasive brain stimulation with an anticipated outcome to improve walking ability. Project 2 gathers data about how individuals with SCI utilize hospital emergency departments with an anticipated outcome to improve understanding of the circumstances wherein these services are used. In the collaborative module SCIMS serves as the lead center to evaluate and characterize the experience of spasticity in everyday life with the goal to understand how spasticity impacts function and well-being in individuals with SCI. SCIMS projects and collaborative efforts produce substantive scientific results, and information for dissemination to clinical and consumer audiences.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Illinois

Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MRSCIS)

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
dchen@sralab.org
www.sralab.org/research/labs/midwest-regional-
spinal-cord-injury-care-system

Principal Investigator: David Chen, MD; Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-0764; Fax: 312/238/0869

Project Number: 90SI5022
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $479,482; FY 17 $479,482; FY 18 $479,482; FY 19 $479,482; FY 20 $479,482

Abstract: The Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MRSCIS) provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary medical and rehabilitation care to persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) from the site of injury to community reintegration. The objectives of the MRSCICS are to (1) provide a comprehensive continuum of care for persons with SCI, (2) contribute to assessment of long-term outcomes by enrolling 80 subjects per year into the national SCI database, (3) conduct one site-specific study, (4) disseminate research findings to various stakeholders in an effective and timely manner, (5) collaborate effectively with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center, and (6) involve individuals with disabilities in research and dissemination activities.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Massachusetts

Spaulding Hospital-New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
300 First Avenue
Charlestown, MA 02129
rzafonte@mgh.harvard.edu
www.snerscic.org
www.twitter.com/SpauldingSCIMS

Principal Investigator: Ross D. Zafonte, DO 617/952-6220
Public Contact: 617/952-6174

Project Number: 90SI5021
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The Spaulding Hospital New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center is a comprehensive network of care spanning from preventative programs and emergency services to outpatient care with a special focus on community reintegration and vocational rehabilitation. Clinical and investigative activities are directed to developing evidence-based rehabilitation interventions and clinical practice guidelines through spinal cord injury (SCI) research. The project develops and improves its multidisciplinary system of rehabilitation care designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals with SCI, contribute to the SCI Model Systems National Database and facilitate the longitudinal assessment of long term SCI outcomes, and contribute to improved long term SCI outcomes by conducting a site-specific research project and participating in a collaborative research project.
Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System

Kessler Foundation
Spinal Cord Injury Laboratory
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
rbyrne@kesslerfoundation.org
tdysonhudson@kesslerfoundation.org
kesslerfoundation.org/researchcenter/spinalcordinjury/modelsystems.php

Principal Investigator: Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD; Steven Kirshblum, MD 973/324-3576
Public Contact: Rachel Byrne, Project Coordinator 973/324-3567; Fax: 973/243-6984

Project Number: 90SI5026
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System (NNJSCIS) provides a comprehensive continuum of state-of-the-art care for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) and their families from the time of injury through rehabilitation and return to the community. Research and clinical activities at NNJSCIS include pharmacologic approaches to managing bladder dysfunction, a complication that adversely affects quality of life for many individuals living with SCI. The project also maintains active communication with the SCI consumer and research communities through web and social media, consumer and professional conferences, newsletters, professional publications, and scientific presentations. The NNJSCIS is a cooperative effort of Kessler Foundation, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation and University Hospital-Newark.
Mount Sinai Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
One Gustave L. Levy Place
New York, NY 10029-6504
thomas.bryce@mountsinai.org
labs.icahn.mssm.edu/brycelab/?doing_wp_cron
=1478815644.9571 928977966308593750

Principal Investigator: Thomas N. Bryce, MD 212/241-6321
Public Contact: 212/241-5417

Project Number: 90SI5017
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $456,375; FY 17 $456,375; FY 18 $456,375; FY 19 $456,375; FY 20 $456,375

Abstract: The goal of the Mount Sinai Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MSSCIMS) is to provide a comprehensive program of coordinated patient care, education, and research activities for individuals who have sustained spinal cord injury (SCI). Clinical activities are directed at promoting evidence-based practice, understanding the particular needs of the target population, and providing individualized lifetime care to persons with SCI. Research activities include collecting longitudinal data on complications, impairments, activities, participation, and quality of life; participation in three collaborative modules with other Model Systems; and conducting a site-specific project in collaboration with the VA Center of Excellence on the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury in the Bronx by implementation and evaluation of a protocol for improving therapy participation by preventing orthostatic hypotension.
Northeast Ohio Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System

Case Western Reserve University  
2500 MetroHealth Drive  
Cleveland, OH 44109-1998  
gnemunaitis@metrohealth.org  
mroach@metrohealth.org

Principal Investigator: Gregory A. Nemunaitis, MD; Mary Jo Roach, PhD  
Public Contact: 216/778-4414 (Nemunaitis); 216/778-8781 (Roach)

Project Number: 90SI5025  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $453,282; FY 17 $453,282; FY 18 $453,282; FY 19 $453,282; FY 20 $453,282

Abstract: The Northeast Ohio Regional Spinal Cord Injury System (NORSCIS) at the MetroHealth Medical System/Case Western Reserve University (MHS) provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to the care of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). NORSCIS targets newly injured persons with traumatic SCI who come to the MHS for acute rehabilitation for inclusion in the National SCI Database (NSCID). This SCIMS project follows the new traumatic injuries along with the 495 persons already entered into the NSCID. NORSCIS utilizes intramural and collaborative research projects to test innovative approaches to treating SCI and to assess outcomes in health and function. NORSCIS includes two site-specific projects. Early Characterization of Upper Extremity (UE) Paralysis in Cervical SCI as a Means to Determine Patterns of Injury and Recovery, Informing Prognosis, and Guiding Time-Critical Interventions collects preliminary data demonstrating the power of unique UE muscle assessments, providing the groundwork for developing a patient-centered guide to UE treatment for the restoration of function for people with cervical SCI. Methods for Reduction of “Unavoidable” Pressure Ulcers in Persons with Acute SCI focuses on the redesign, fabrication, and testing of a new spine board that reduces excessive body-board pressures currently found on standard spine boards. In addition, NORSCIS includes a collaborative module project, Early Predictors of Rehabilitation Outcomes After Acute Traumatic SCI, to identify trauma data variables that predict rehabilitation outcomes of persons that survive traumatic SCI. NORSCIS continues to improve care delivery and services through a quality initiative that is based on the preferences of SCI consumers. This initiative matches a peer navigator to a newly injured patient while the patient is in the acute hospital and followed for 1-year post-rehabilitation discharge. NORSCIS collaborates with MHS SCI Consumer Group, the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the United Spinal Injury Association, and NIDILRR’s Model System Knowledge Translation Center to ensure the participation of persons with SCI in conducting SCIMS research and to enable the production of internet and electronic media to serve as a vehicle for dissemination of project outcomes to clinical and consumer audiences.
## Ohio Regional SCI Model System (ORSCIMS)

The Ohio State University  
Wexner Medical Center  
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
480 Medical Center Drive  
2145 Dodd Hall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
jan.schwab@osumc.edu  
wexnermedical.osu.edu/neurological-institute/departments-and-centers/  
departments/department-physical-medicine-rehabilitation  
go.osu.edu/SCIMS

**Principal Investigator:** Jennifer Bogner, PhD; Jan Schwab, MD, PhD 614/293-3830 (Bogner);  
614/685-9278 (Schawb)  
**Public Contact:** 614-366-3877; Fax: 614/366-2741

**Project Number:** 90SI5020  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2016  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Amanda Reichard, PhD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 16 $444,000; FY 17 $444,000; FY 18 $444,000; FY 19 $444,000; FY 20 $444,000

**Abstract:** The goal of this Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System is to improve long-term quality of life for persons who have sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI). The objectives of this project are to (1) provide an exemplary and comprehensive system of care for individuals who have sustained an SCI; (2) contribute to the longitudinal study of outcomes following SCI; (3) identify biomarkers that predict patients who are at risk to develop infections; (4) conduct a collaborative project to evaluate an intervention to reduce substance misuse following an SCI; and (5) collaborate with the project’s Community and Scientific Advisory Boards to disseminate findings and develop products that can improve quality of life after an SCI. For objective 3, the project investigates whether sympathico-vagal instability identifies patients at risk for infections earlier than it is possible to obtain with routine blood samples.
Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley

Thomas Jefferson University
Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley
132 South 10th Street
375 Main Building
Philadelphia, PA 19107-5244
marilyn.owens@jefferson.edu
www.spinalcordcenter.org

Principal Investigator: Ralph J. Marino, MD
Public Contact: Marilyn Owens, RN 215/955-6579; Fax: 215/955-5152

Project Number: 90SI5024
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: The goal of the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley (RSCICDV) is to provide and evaluate a comprehensive program of coordinated patient care, education, and research activities for individuals who have sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI). Clinical activities are directed at promoting evidence-based practice, understanding the particular needs of the target population, and providing individualized lifetime care to persons with SCI. Research activities are designed to generate longitudinal data on impairment, activities, participation, and quality of life as part of the national database. These activities include site-specific research and contribution to collaborative modules, including research in upper extremity neurological function, pressure ulcer prevention, spasticity after spinal cord injury, and risk determinants for cardiometabolic disease after spinal cord injury. Dissemination activities include development of educational resources and offerings for patients, healthcare providers, and researchers, including online materials and training workshops in the use of outcome measures.
Principal Investigator: Michael L. Boninger, MD 412/648-6979
Public Contact: Karen Greenwald, RN 412/232-7949; Fax: 412/232-7535

Project Number: 90SI5014
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The University of Pittsburgh Model Center on Spinal Cord Injury (UPMC-SCI) builds upon work from a previous cycle to develop web-based transfer and wheelchair maintenance training materials targeted at wheelchair users and evaluates the impact of each training in single-blind randomized controlled trials. During the previous funding cycle, UPMC-SCI developed successful in-person training programs for wheelchair users, demonstrating that transfer training is a potential mediator for preventing secondary upper limb injuries, and that a strong association exists between wheelchair maintenance and decreasing adverse events (such as injuries, missing work, etc.). UPMC-SCI also continues to investigate equity and disparities in assistive technology through its module project. In additional to collecting cross-sectional data, researchers prospectively collect longitudinal data on wheelchair repairs and subsequent adverse consequences. UPMC-SCI continues its heavy focus on knowledge translation so that this research can lead to changes in clinical care. UPMC-SCI participates in collaborative modules investigating trauma databases for early predictors of rehabilitation outcomes after SCI, residential instability in chronic SCI, and characterizing experiences in spasticity after SCI.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Texas

Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury System

TIRR Memorial Hermann
Spinal Cord Injury and Disability Research Center (SCIDR)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
heather.taylor@memorialhermann.org
tirr.memorialhermann.org/research/model-spinal-cord-injury-program

Principal Investigator: Heather B. Taylor, PhD 713/797-5908
Public Contact: Stacey Eckert 713/797-5972

Project Number: 90SI5027
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: The Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury System (TMSCIS) center conducts innovative spinal cord injury (SCI) research to improve outcomes and advance rehabilitation methods, procedures, and technologies. TMSCIS provides a comprehensive system of care for persons with SCI extending from emergency medical services to intensive acute medical care; comprehensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation; psychosocial services; and long-term follow-up. This center also contributes to the National SCI Database. TMSCIS includes a site-specific project to conduct a clinical trial of a psychological health promotion intervention for women with SCI, delivered in the online virtual world of Second Life. This trial uses a community-based participatory research approach, partnering closely with a National Community Advisory Board of people with SCI. This innovative approach reduces barriers to participation, representing the first group intervention designed to address the psychological needs of women with SCI. This intervention is tested with a national sample of 192 women with SCI randomly assigned to either an intervention or a control group, with assessments at three-time points (pre-intervention, post-intervention, and six-month follow-up), to examine the immediate and longer-term efficacy of the intervention and mechanisms through which the intervention influences psychological health outcomes. The center also participates in multiple collaborative module projects on pain, predictors of acute care on outcomes, and exoskeleton use in SCI. TMSCIS develops knowledge translation materials in various accessible media, designed to reach consumers, clinicians, and researchers to inform health-related decision-making of persons with SCI and their medical service providers. TIRR-Memorial Hermann partners with Harris Health Systems, the University of Texas Health Science Center – Houston (UTHHealth), Baylor College of Medicine, and the University of Montana.
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1717 Sixth Avenue South, SRC 529
Birmingham, AL 35233-1816
tbi@uab.edu
www.uab.edu/tbi
www.uab.edu/medicine/tbi/informacion-en-espanol
www.facebook.com/UABTBIMS
www.twitter.com/UABTBIMS
www.youtube.com/UABTBIMS

Principal Investigator: Thomas A. Novack, PhD; Robert Brunner, MD
Public Contact: Phil Klebine 205/934-3283; Fax: 205/975-4691

Project Number: 90DPTB0015
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $465,000; FY 18 $465,000; FY 19 $465,000; FY 20 $465,000; FY 21 $465,000

Abstract: The University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (UAB-TBIMS) provides multidisciplinary, comprehensive rehabilitation services specifically designed for individuals with TBI. The goal of this project is to improve the lives of people with TBI and their family members by identifying trends in recovery and predictors of outcome while developing interventions to improve outcome. The objectives are: (1) Maintain enrollment and follow-up for the TBI National Database; (2) complete one in-house research project, aimed at improving the health and function, as well as the community participation, of persons with TBI by addressing barriers to healthy lifestyle behaviors; and (3) completion of an exploration and discovery module study focusing on return to driving after TBI, an essential component to independent living for many individuals. UAB-TBIMS products include an Internet-based program to promote healthy lifestyles after TBI and dissemination of project results through professional meetings and journals, as well as distribution of information to stakeholders through the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS)

Craig Hospital
3425 South Clarkson Street
Englewood, CO 80113-2899
charrison-felix@craighospital.org
www.craighospital.org/programs/research/the-rocky-mountain-regional-brain-injury-system

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD
Public Contact: 303/789-8565; Fax: 303/789-8441

Project Number: 90DPTB0007
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS) provides a comprehensive multidisciplinary specialty system of traumatic brain injury (TBI) care for Colorado and beyond, with research focusing on the health and function and community living and participation of individuals with moderate to severe TBI. Research activities include a site-specific randomized controlled trial of a group intervention to improve Self-Advocacy for Independent Life (SAIL) after TBI and help people get the services they need, a collaborative multi-center module to develop and evaluate crosswalks for aligning legacy domain measures to new measures in the longitudinal TBI Model Systems National Database. RMRBIS also participates in one or more modules lead by other TBI Model System centers, contributes to the TBIMS National Database by enrolling new individuals with TBI each year and continuing to follow more than 900 cases already enrolled, and disseminates findings to stakeholders through presentations and publications for consumer and professionals.
South Florida Traumatic Brain Injury Model System
(SF-TBIMS)

University of Miami
PO Box 016960, D-461
Miami, FL 33101
djgreene@med.miami.edu
www.umpmr.med.miami.edu

Principal Investigator: Douglas E. Johnson-Greene, PhD
Public Contact: 305/243-8472; 305/243-4569; Fax: 305/243-4560

Project Number: 90DP0046 (Formerly H133A120099)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $427,188; FY 13 $503,526; FY 14 $426,780; FY 15 $426,484; FY 16 $427,145; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project provides rehabilitation services and research aimed at meeting the special needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) through a coordinated, multidisciplinary, comprehensive TBI program. The project includes active participation and data collection for the TBI Model Systems national database, participation in collaborative modules, and two site-specific studies: (1) Evaluation and Intervention of Sleep Disordered Breathing (SDB) in Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury, and (2) in Evaluating Assessment Methods for Pain in Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury. Activities of the South Florida Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (SF-TBIMS) reflect an active partnership within the components of the University of Miami and Jackson Memorial Medical Center Health System (UM/JMMC) and Miami HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, and between UM and community organizations such as the Brain Injury Association of Florida, The Florida Department of Health Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, and the WellFlorida Council. In addition, the TBI Model System disseminates research findings in the region and nationally through seminars, presentations at professional and consumer meetings, publishing in professional and consumer journals, and collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
Indiana

Brain Research in Aggression and Irritability Network (BRAIN):
Building Evidence-Based Approaches to Managing
Traumatic Brain Injury

Indiana University
Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana
4141 Shore Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46254
flora.hammond@rhin.com

Principal Investigator: Flora M. Hammond, MD
Public Contact: 317/329-2106; Fax: 317/329-2600

Project Number: 90DP0036 (Formerly H133A120035)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $427,500; FY 13 $427,500; FY 14 $427,500; FY 15 $427,500; FY 16 $427,500; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project aims to further the evidence for improving clinical management and outcomes for irritability and aggression in individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). BRAIN is a comprehensive model service delivery and research system serving individuals with TBI. The System includes prevention and emergency medical services, intensive and acute care, comprehensive medical rehabilitation, long-term follow-up, community reintegration, and vocational rehabilitation. The project includes two site-specific studies: (1) Buspirone for the treatment of chronic post-TBI irritability and aggression: A 91-day single-site, flexible-dose, parallel group, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial; and (2) Preliminary Development of the Aggression and Irritability Impact Measure: Study 2 works towards the development of a standardized measure to evaluate the impact of irritability and aggression on various aspects of functioning and participation. Measuring impact is a novel, yet complementary approach to existing measures that evaluate the expression of irritability and aggression. In addition, the TBI Model System disseminates research findings in the region and nationally through seminars, presentations at professional and consumer meetings, publishing in professional and consumer journals, and collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Abstract: This project aims to improve the lives of those affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI) through the following objectives: (1) to determine the breadth of post-TBI outcomes affected by alexithymia (poor emotional self-awareness) and to evaluate the effects of an alexithymia intervention on emotional self-awareness and related emotion regulation; (2) to provide high enrollment, quality data, and leadership to the TBI Model Systems; and (3) to produce knowledge about TBI rehabilitation. Alexithymia, a key component in impaired emotional control, is characterized by poor emotional awareness, difficulty describing and differentiating emotions, and problems acknowledging and associating physical sensations with emotions. This project includes a randomized controlled trial to assess the efficacy of an alexithymia intervention to teach people with TBI the fundamental awareness needed to regulate self-emotions. The project also includes a multi-site observational study to gain a greater understanding of the impact of alexithymia on variables beyond the intervention study.
Spaulding-Harvard Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
300 First Avenue
Charlestown, MA 02129
SpauldingHarvardTBIMS@partners.org
www.sh-tbi.org

Principal Investigator: Joseph T. Giacino, PhD
Public Contact: 617/573-2757; Fax: 617/952-5934

Project Number: 90DPTB0011
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $441,500; FY 18 $441,500; FY 19 $441,500; FY 20 $441,500; FY 21 $441,500

Abstract: The overall goal of Spaulding-Harvard Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (SH-TBIMS) is to provide a multidisciplinary, comprehensive system of care for those with TBI that fosters innovative TBI rehabilitation research. Project objectives include: (1) providing model care, (2) facilitating comprehensive longitudinal assessment of TBI outcomes by contributing to the TBIMS National Database, (3) executing a high quality site-specific project to develop a recovery measure accessible to acute and post-acute clinicians and patient families for tracking TBI recovery among those with the most severe injuries, (4) proposing and participating in a collaborative module project, (5) disseminating research findings, and (6) involving persons with TBI and their families in all stages of research. Final products include a unique recovery metric that bridges acute and post-acute care and user-friendly dissemination products for a variety of target populations developed in partnership with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center and the TBI survivor and family community.
Southeastern Michigan Traumatic Brain Injury System

Wayne State University
5057 Woodward Avenue, Suite 13202
Detroit, MI 48202-4050
ckoviak@dmc.org
www.rimrehab.org/our-services/brain-injury/
traumatic-brain-injury-system

Principal Investigator: Robin A. Hanks, PhD
Public Contact: Carole Koviak, RN 313/745-9763

Project Number: 90DPTB0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $446,000; FY 18 $446,000; FY 19 $446,000; FY 20 $446,000; FY 21 $446,000

Abstract: This project studies and provides services to people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families from injury onset through long-term community integration. Research activities for this center include a site-specific study, a randomized controlled trial of a group intervention to improve resilience and social support in family members of those with TBI, which addresses the well-established problem of burden and social/emotional distress associated with caring for persons with TBI, and the potential adverse effects of family emotional distress on the outcomes of the person with the brain injury. A multi-center collaborative study examines the role of menopause in women with TBI. Women with TBI have been woefully understudied and the proposed module provides researchers with an opportunity to determine if the experience of menopause is different in women with brain injury versus those without. This project contributes to the National TBI Model Systems Database and disseminates research findings in the region and nationally through seminars, presentations at professional and consumer meetings, publishing in professional and consumer journals, and collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
This project provides comprehensive, integrated, team-based rehabilitation to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families to promote full personal and societal participation, and to fill gaps in research knowledge and service delivery. Lack of access to specialized care is a common need identified by individuals hospitalized for TBI. Explosive advances in communication technology have brought telemedicine to the forefront of health care. The CONNECT Trial aims to remotely connect groups and individuals to Mayo Clinic TBI rehabilitation specialists and to each other, and to test the extent to which a brain rehabilitation intervention delivered remotely improves participation outcomes and satisfaction compared to a matched group receiving usual care in their communities. The CONNECT Trial uses traditional communication methods (phone and mail) and other information communication technology (internet-based, email, smartphone, text, social media, and Skype). Those groups joined together by the CONNECT Trial include (1) individuals recently hospitalized with TBI and their families, and (2) local health care providers (primary care providers, psychologists, therapists, social and vocational service providers). Mayo Clinic’s TBI Model System Center is testing the extent to which partnership with local providers for TBI-related assessment and treatment is feasible, effective, and satisfying for everyone involved. Assessment is also being done to provide TBI-specific education, consultation on the management of common problems, and coordination of care to promote recovery and return to work, school, and family life. The long-term outcome of the study is to reduce barriers to accessing specialized TBI rehabilitation care. This study is being conducted in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.
Mayo Clinic Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Center

Mayo Clinic
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine
Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research
200 First Street
Rochester, MN 55905
tbims@mayo.edu
brown.allen@mayo.edu
www.mayo.edu/research/centers-programs/
traumatic-brain-injury-model-system

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Brown, MD
Public Contact: Anne M. Moessner, APRN 507/255-0718; Fax: 507/255-0695

Project Number: 90DPTB0012
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $441,500; FY 18 $441,500; FY 19 $441,500; FY 20 $441,500; FY 21 $441,500

Abstract: This project tests a new way of delivering medical and social services to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families, addressing three chronic unmet needs: (1) ineffective connection to specialized medical and community resources in the transition from hospital to community-based care and beyond; (2) limited access to TBI experts; and (3) variable primary care provider (PCP) knowledge about the complex needs of individuals with TBI. The study integrates medical-rehabilitation expertise with the services of Resource Facilitation (RF) from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance. This intervention delivers direct clinical care remotely using telemedicine and other information and communication technology, connecting individuals with TBI, their families, and PCPs to TBIMS clinicians and to each other. The goals are to improve participation and quality of life for individuals with TBI, reduce caregiver burden and distress, and increase self-efficacy and mastery among PCPs caring for individuals with TBI and their families. The long-term goal is development of a replicable, sustainable, and cost-effective model of telemedicine care that integrates TBIMS Centers and Brain Injury Alliances/Associations nationwide to improve outcome following TBI.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems:
Improving Longitudinal Assessment and Tracking of Activity Limitations in Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury

JFK Health Systems
2048 Oak Tree Road
Edison, NJ 08820-2012
kcicerone@jfkhealth.org
www.jfkjohnson.org

Principal Investigator: Keith D. Cicerone, PhD; Georgianna Dart, PhD; Yelena Goldin, PhD; Brian Greenwald, MD
Public Contact: Yelena Goldin, PhD 732/906-2903; Fax: 732/906-9241

Project Number: 90DPTB0014
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $437,450; FY 18 $437,484; FY 19 $437,308; FY 20 $437,963; FY 21 $437,854

Abstract: This project provides a coordinated, multidisciplinary system of neurorehabilitation designed to meet the needs of individuals with TBI. Project activities include contributing to the TBI Model System National Database by enrolling 42 participants annually, conducting longitudinal follow-up, and filling knowledge gaps by providing novel information about activity limitations and patterns of recovery for individuals with TBI. Collaborative multi-center research and site-specific research focus on functional recovery patterns. The goal of the site-specific project is to improve assessment of outcomes across all post-acute settings by evaluating activity limitations and changes in functional activity domains throughout the course of recovery and rehabilitation. Objectives are to: (1) evaluate the sensitivity of Activity Measure for Post-Acute Care (AM-PAC) to longitudinal changes in activity limitations during acute rehabilitation and through the first year of recovery after TBI; (2) demonstrate treatment-induced changes in activity limitations after post-acute rehabilitation; (3) examine the relationship between AM-PAC scales and traditional discipline-specific measures; and (4) evaluate agreement between patients and proxy AM-PAC respondents.
Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System (NNJTBIS)

Kessler Foundation
Traumatic Brain Injury Laboratory
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
tbi@kesslerfoundation.org
kesslerfoundation.org/researchcenter/tbi/modelsystems.php
www.facebook.com/pages/Traumatic-Brain-Injury-Research/122808701125183
twitter.com/KesslerFdn
www.youtube.com/user/KesslerFoundation

Principal Investigator: Nancy D. Chiaravalloti, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-8440; Fax: 973/386-1361

Project Number: 90DPTB0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $446,000; FY 18 $446,000; FY 19 $446,000; FY 20 $446,000; FY 21 $446,000

Abstract: The goal of the Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System (NNJTBIS) is improving the overall quality of life of individuals with TBI. Project objectives include: (1) enrolling at least 35 participants per year into the national database, following participants 1, 2, and 5 years post-injury and beyond, and meeting or exceeding National Data and Statistical Center benchmarks; (2) conducting a site-specific, double-blind, placebo controlled randomized clinical trial of an evidence-based cognitive rehabilitation intervention for learning and memory deficits following TBI; and (3) collaborating or leading at least two modular studies, including a modular project examining the relationship between social cognition and social integration following TBI. Project results, as well as prevention and education materials, are disseminated through the project’s website, scientific and consumer publications, presentations, and other activities in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
New York Traumatic Brain Injury Model System at Mount Sinai (NY-TBI-MS)

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
One Gustave L. Levy Place; Box 1163
New York, NY 10029-6574
damsok02@mountsinai.org
www.tbicentral.org
icahn.mssm.edu/research/programs/new-york-traumatic-brain-injury-model-system

Principal Investigator: Kristen Dams-O’Connor, PhD
Public Contact: 212/241-2221; Fax: 212/241-0137

Project Number: 90DPTB0009
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $438,000; FY 18 $438,000; FY 19 $438,000; FY 20 $438,000; FY 21 $438,000

Abstract: The New York Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (NY-TBIMS) provides comprehensive interdisciplinary services for individuals with TBI and conducts site-specific and collaborative research with the goal of improving health, functioning, community living, and participation of people with TBI. Project objectives are to: (1) enroll new participants into the TBIMS National Database and follow those already enrolled; (2) conduct a randomized controlled trial examining the efficacy of Online EmReg, an Internet-delivered group intervention to improve post-TBI emotional dysregulation; (3) conduct a multi-center module project to evaluate changes in cognitive functioning five to seven years after TBI and identify risk factors for cognitive decline; and (4) through a program of knowledge translation and dissemination, partner with our consumer stakeholders and organizational partners to ensure widespread dissemination of the results of project research. Products include an EmReg treatment manual for clinicians, consumer-oriented presentations and outreach activities, and professional publications and presentations.
Rusk Rehabilitation Traumatic Brain Injury Model System
(RRTBIMS)

NYU Langone Health
Rusk Rehabilitation
Ambulatory Care Center
240 East 38th Street
ACC 17-71
New York, NY 10016
rusk.research@nyumc.org

Principal Investigator: Tamara Bushnik, PhD; Brian Im, MD; 212/263-6547
Public Contact: Michelle Smith, MPH, CHES 646/501-9162; Fax: 212/263-2683

Project Number: 90DPTB0010
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $435,000; FY 18 $435,000; FY 19 $435,000; FY 20 $435,000; FY 21 $435,000

Abstract: Over the course of the 5-year cycle, Rusk Rehabilitation aims to enroll 50 individuals with TBI per year into the TBIMS National Database. For the site-specific project, Rusk Rehabilitation and its numerous clinical, academic, and community partners provide evidence for characterizing TBI as a chronic condition and implement programs in order to improve Quality of Life (QoL) for those living with TBI for more than one year. The goal of the site-specific project is to demonstrate the numerous ways in which TBI affects QoL in individuals with TBI and their caregivers. The objectives are: (1) to determine the long-term medical and psychological issues associated with living with TBI; (2) to understand the facilitators and barriers to managing TBI while considering the diverse experiences of racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds; and (3) to provide interventions and recommendations to impact the holistic experience of living with a TBI from individual action and community involvement to healthcare collection management. Anticipated outcomes include (1) collecting critical information regarding the multi-faceted issues surrounding long-term management of TBI; (2) improved understanding of the coping mechanisms employed by individuals, caregivers, and community members in various populations; and (3) increased community participation during this project by employing a community engaged research approach. As a result of the site-specific project, expected products include a toolkit to disseminate clinical care recommendations as well as culturally-tailored educational materials to individuals, community-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders.
The Ohio Regional TBI Model System

The Ohio State University
Wexner Medical Center
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1016
monica.lichi@osumc.edu
ohiovalley.org/modelsystems/ohioregionalms

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Bogner, PhD 614/293-3830
Public Contact: Monica Lichi 614/293-3802; Fax: 614/293-8886

Project Number: 90DPTB0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $463,000; FY 18 $463,000; FY 19 $463,000; FY 20 $463,000; FY 21 $463,000

Abstract: The goals of the Ohio Regional Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (ORTBIMS) are to: (1) provide rehabilitation services in a comprehensive and coordinated system of care serving 3.9 million people in 47 Ohio counties; (2) conduct one local and one module research project, each supporting development of an evidence-based approach to proactively managing TBI as a chronic health condition; (3) continue significant contributions to the TBI Model System National Database by recruiting 250 new participants and following the 1,150 enrolled in previous years; (4) disseminate timely and appropriate information for clinical practice, research, and policy to consumers, advocates, practicing professionals, and students in professional training programs; (5) collaborate with other researchers in disability, rehabilitation, and public health through TBI Model Systems Special Interest Groups, engagement with the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators and input to national organizations representing consumers; and (6) provide a management structure that enhances implementation of the project goals.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
Pennsylvania

The Moss Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

Albert Einstein Healthcare Network
Moss Rehabilitation Research Institute
5501 Old York Road
Philadelphia, PA 19141-3018
thart@einstein.edu
mrri.wpengine.com/moss-traumatic-brain-injury-model-system-of-care

Principal Investigator: Tessa Hart, PhD
Public Contact: 215/663-6153; Fax: 215/663-6113

Project Number: 90DPTB0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: This project conducts new research, disseminates new knowledge to clinicians, researchers, and persons affected by TBI, and provides state-of-the-art clinical care to persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI) in greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. The goal of this project is to create and disseminate new knowledge to improve health, function, and quality of life for people with TBI. Objectives are to: (1) study the effects of an innovative eight-week treatment program to reduce depression and anxiety after TBI; (2) determine the optimal time to repair skull defects caused by emergency surgery to relieve pressure on the brain; and (3) conduct education and training to enhance knowledge of people with brain injury, their families, and professionals. Project outputs include a regional conference for people with TBI and their families; protocols for treating depression, anxiety, anger, and memory disorders after TBI; videotaped training materials for community support providers; and educational materials including professional publications and presentations reporting research results.
North Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

Baylor Scott and White Research Institute (BSWRI)
909 North Washington Avenue, Suite 232
Dallas, TX 75246
sjdriver@bswrehab.com
www.bswrehab.com/research-education/current-research/tbi-model-system

**Principal Investigator:** Simon J. Driver, PhD  
**Public Contact:** 214/820-9014; Fax: 214/265-3640

**Project Number:** 90DPTB0013  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

**Abstract:** The goal of this project is to improve the health and function of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their care partners through evidence-based clinical care and innovative research. The objectives are to: (1) provide comprehensive clinical care and rehabilitation to individuals with TBI; (2) assess the long-term outcomes of individuals with TBI; (3) test the efficacy of an evidence-based weight-loss intervention for individuals post TBI (site-specific project); (4) assess the feasibility and efficacy of problem-solving training to reduce the care burden of care partners of individuals with TBI (module project); and (5) develop resources and disseminate findings to stakeholders. Products include usable and replicable interventions for individuals with TBI and their care partners, scientific papers and presentations of intervention study results, stakeholder and student workshops, educational resources on TBI for individuals and care partners, and plain language factsheets disseminated locally and through the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
Texas

Texas TBI Model System of TIRR

The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
mark.sherer@memorialhermann.org
www.memorialhermann.org/locations/tirr/
forhealthprofessionals/content.aspx?id=1162

Principal Investigator: Mark Sherer, PhD
Public Contact: 713/799-7007

Project Number: 90DP0028 (Formerly H133A120020)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $447,500; FY 13 $447,500; FY 14 $447,500; FY 15 $447,500; FY 16 $447,500; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2019)
Abstract: This project conducts a program of research, dissemination activities, and clinical care designed to decrease emotional distress and to improve participation outcomes for persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Research activities include: (1) contributions to the TBI Model Systems National Database, (2) participation in collaborative module projects, and (3) a local project that is a randomized controlled trial of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy as compared to a devised standard of care intervention to decrease emotional distress and improve participation for persons with TBI. This initial trial will lead to larger multicenter comparative effectiveness trials using this intervention. In addition, the TBI Model System disseminates research findings in the region and nationally through seminars, presentations at professional and consumer meetings, publishing in professional and consumer journals, and collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Texas TBI Model System of TIRR

TIRR Memorial Hermann
Brain Injury Resource Center (BIRC)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
mark.sherer@memorialhermann.org
tirr.memorialhermann.org/research/traumatic-brain-injury-model-system

Principal Investigator: Mark Sherer, PhD; Angelle Sander, PhD
Public Contact: 713/799-7007

Project Number: 90DPTB0016
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $463,000; FY 18 $463,000; FY 19 $463,000; FY 20 $463,000; FY 21 $463,000

Abstract: The Texas TBI Model System of TIRR, in collaboration with other funded centers and consumers (persons with TBI, caregivers, and rehabilitation professionals) conducts rigorous research that improves the health and function, community integration, and employment of persons with TBI, as well as providing effective, accessible dissemination. The goal of the center is to improve chronic health management in persons with TBI. To accomplish this goal, the center is: (1) Conducting a randomized controlled trial of a low cost, mood tracking app plus action recommendations to improve mental health, quality of life, and participation; (2) participating in four collaborative projects and leading a module project to characterize health literacy in persons with TBI and its relationship to health outcomes; (3) contributing at least 35 persons with TBI annually to the TBIMS National Database and collecting follow-up data on previously enrolled participants at 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years post-injury; and (4) conducting a comprehensive program of dissemination to consumers and professionals. As a result of these activities, people with TBI and caregivers experience improved understanding of management of long-term health effects after TBI, and rehabilitation professionals use new information to guide treatment of emotional distress and presentation of health information to consumers. Products include fact-sheets on using a mood tracker mobile app to reduce emotional distress after TBI and on application of health management strategies to minimize poor health outcomes, multimedia presentations to improve health literacy for persons with TBI and making health information accessible for persons with TBI, as well as scientific publications and presentations at professional meetings.
Virginia Commonwealth University
Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Box 980542
Richmond, VA 23298-0542
jennifer.marwitz@vcuhealth.org
model.tbinrc.com

Principal Investigator: Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, PhD; David X. Cifu, MD
Public Contact: Jennifer Marwitz 804/828-3704; Fax: 804/828-2378

Project Number: 90DPTB0005
Start Date: September 20, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $452,000; FY 18 $452,000; FY 19 $452,000; FY 20 $452,000; FY 21 $452,000

Abstract: This project utilizes rigorous scientific methods to examine a two-arm, randomized controlled trial comparing the benefits of a basic resilience-building intervention with an expanded, patient-centered, resilience intervention following traumatic brain injury. Outcome measures focus on resilience, emotional distress, adjustment, and stress management. The sustainability of treatment benefits is investigated. In addition to the site-specific trial, the Virginia Commonwealth University Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (VCU TBIMS) collects data for the National Database and participates in collaborative module projects. VCU is the lead in a 6-center, longitudinal study of caregiver resilience. VCU is also a participant in a module titled, “Return to Driving After Moderate-Severe TBI: Who, When, Where, and How Safe?” VCU TBIMS Researchers maintain a highly active dissemination program in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. As in the past, VCU’s dissemination efforts include a high volume of peer-reviewed publications and consumer-oriented outreach. In partnership with Brain Injury Services and the National Resource Center for TBI, the VCU TBIMS on an annual basis hosts a national TBI rehabilitation conference in Williamsburg, VA. The conference was first held in 1977 and remains the longest running TBI rehabilitation conference in the world. The conference planning committee continues to include research and researchers from TBIMS sites in organizing upcoming conferences.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
Washington

University of Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (UWTBIMS)

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
Box 356490
BB-953 Health Sciences
Seattle, WA 98195-6490
jeanneh@uw.edu
tbi.washington.edu

Principal Investigator: Jeanne M. Hoffman, PhD 206/221-6511
Public Contact: 206/543-0219; Fax: 206/685-3244

Project Number: 90DPTB0008
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: The goal of the University of Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Model System is to improve the lives of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Project activities include: (1) providing a multidisciplinary system of rehabilitation within a full continuum of medical care; (2) contributing to the TBIMS national database with follow-up of more than 1,000 currently-enrolled subjects; (3) conducting a site-specific study of collaborative care versus usual care to reduce the interference of pain, including headache, after TBI; (4) participating in module studies, including the examination of physical activity in the first year after TBI and its relationship to significant functional outcomes; and (5) delivering evidence-based, patient-centered information through a website, newsletter, and partnership with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). Outcomes include (1) meeting or exceeding benchmarks for enrollment and follow-up on all studies, (2) successful implementation and collaboration on module projects, (3) improving consumer awareness and education on TBI-related topics, including partnering with the Brain Injury Alliance of Washington and MSKTC, and (4) disseminating research findings to other professional and consumer audiences.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Alabama

Prognostic Indicators for Reading in Pediatric Vision Impairment

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Callahan Eye Hospital
Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation
1720 University Boulevard, Suite 405
Birmingham, AL 35233
lowvision@uab.edu

Principal Investigator: Mark Bolding, PhD; Dawn K. DeCarlo, OD; Gerald McGwin, PhD 205/325-8114
Public Contact: Lisa Forte 205/488-0788

Project Number: 90IF0104
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,909; FY 16 $199,985; FY 17 $199,985; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This longitudinal study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What demographic characteristics of young children with vision impairment contribute to later reading ability? (2) What is the relationship between executive function and reading ability among young children with vision impairment? (3) Is there a relationship between executive function and visual acuity in young children with vision impairment? (4) Does Rapid Automatic Naming predict reading ability in young children with vision impairment as measured by the Woodcock Johnson III® Tests of Achievement? and (5) Are there areas of school readiness of particular concern for young children with vision impairment? There is already work being done to address the above questions in children without vision impairment, however children with vision impairment are systematically excluded from such studies. In order to address these questions in this population, the project has assembled a team consisting of experts in pediatric vision rehabilitation, eye movements, and eye movement recording, as well as developmental psychology. The project assesses domains known to be associated with reading: The Battelle Developmental Inventory, 2nd Edition (development), the Beery VMI (visuomotor integration), RAN (Rapid Automatized Naming), and an Executive Function Battery (working memory, inhibitory control, and attentional shifting). The primary outcome measure is performance on the Basic Reading cluster of the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement. Children are evaluated prior to entry into kindergarten and twice annually until the completion of first grade. The study assesses the relationship between reading and the domains listed above to identify factors that are more potent mediators of individual variance in reading ability. By identifying characteristics of children with vision impairment at risk for reading disability or repeating kindergarten or first grade, the project enables educators to appropriately allocate the limited and highly specialized services of teachers of the students with visual impairments. The knowledge gained facilitates utilization of existing interventions or development of new, individual-centric, targeted interventions.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
California

The Disability, Rehabilitation, Engineering Access for Minorities (DREAM)

California State University Los Angeles
School of Kinesiology and Nutritional Science
5151 State University Drive
Golden Eagle Building, Room 314
Los Angeles, CA 90032-4226
skeslac@calstatela.edu

Principal Investigator: Stefan Keslacy, PhD
Public Contact: 323/343-4654

Project Number: 90IFST0001
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $199,999

Abstract: The goal of this project is to focus the field of spinal cord injury (SCI) research on reducing risk for cardiometabolic diseases. The objective is to provide individuals with traumatic SCI with greater access to exercise. A traumatic SCI is a devastating event with lifelong consequences. Life expectancy after SCI has improved to nearly normal lifespan. However, stroke, cardiopulmonary events, and diabetes are main causes of mortality and morbidity after SCI, due in large part to sedentary behavior. This project has three complementary, multidisciplinary aims: (1) test the efficiency of exercise to improve fitness and reduce disease risk using both new and gold standard biomarkers; (2) innovate a DREAM app that tracks muscle activity and provides feedback to encourage achievement of goals outside of rehabilitation; and (3) assess the impact of exercise intervention on social participation and quality of life. Outcomes for this project include: Relationships between reduced disease risk and improved fitness assessed as a function of exercise; a mobile app using upper limb muscle activity to provide feedback to individuals with disabilities engaged in exercise both in and out of the rehabilitation setting; and documenting how these interventions facilitate attainment of self-determined goals, increased social participation, and quality of life. Achieving these aims results in new exercise guidelines that improve health, and technology-based solutions to provide greater accessibility outside of the rehabilitation setting.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
District of Columbia

Development of a Urinary Symptom Measurement Instrument

Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital
102 Irving Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2921
inger.h.ljungberg@medstar.net

Principal Investigator: Suzanne L. Groah, PhD 202/877-1196
Public Contact: Inger Ljungberg, MPH 202/877-1694; Fax: 202/726-7521

Project Number: 90IF0121
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,989; FY 17 $199,995; FY 18 $199,990

Abstract: Urinary tract infection (UTI) is the most common bacterial infection worldwide. Neurogenic bladder, a central nervous system problem causing a lack of bladder control often due to spinal cord injury (SCI) and multiple sclerosis (MS), puts people at high risk for UTIs. Diagnosis of UTI is largely dependent on symptoms being present, however not all urinary symptoms are due to an infection. It is unknown which symptoms are more likely to lead to infection, versus those that do not. The result is that most urinary symptoms are treated as if they represent an infection – with antibiotics – which may be overtreatment, leading to side effects and antibiotic resistance. This project advances the understanding of and ability to identify and follow urinary symptoms that may or may not be related to UTI. The goal of this project is to create the first Urinary Symptom Questionnaire (USQ-NBV) specifically targeting people with neurogenic bladder due to SCI and MS who void without using a urinary catheter. The objectives are: (1) to develop and validate the USQ-NBV; (2) to pilot test the predictive validity of the USQ-NBV; and (3) to determine which urinary symptoms are related to UTI. The resulting instrument offers a tool for patients, clinicians, and researchers to track urinary symptoms while generating more specific data guiding diagnostic guidelines for the target population. The project team includes MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, United Spinal Association, and consumer experts.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Florida

GoCC4All: Using Pervasive Technology to Provide Access to TV to the Deaf-Blind Community

Dicapta Foundation Corporation
1511 East State Road, 434
Winter Springs, FL 32708
lfiallos@dicaptafoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Maria Victoria Díaz; Angel Garcia Crespo
Public Contact: Lourdes Fiallos 407/389-0712; Fax: 407/682-1997

Project Number: 90IFDV0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,461; FY 18 $199,892; FY 19 $199,776

Abstract: The goal of the project is to enhance community living and participation for individuals who are deaf-blind by bringing them access to TV information that is widely available to any other citizen. The project develops and tests GoCC4All, a product that uses pervasive technologies to bring television programming, including regular television programming as well as national and local emergency information provided through this media, to users who are deaf-blind through their mobile devices and braille displays. The objectives of the project are to develop a functional product, confirm proof of adoption of the technology among the deaf-blind community, and add to knowledge about technologies that serve the deaf-blind community.
Personalized Medicine for Pressure Ulcer Prevention:
Clinical Measures of Buttocks Deformation

Georgia Tech Research Corporation
Rehabilitation Engineering and
Applied Research Laboratory (REAR Lab)
555 14th Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30332-0356
sharon.sonenblum@coa.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Sharon Sonenblum, PhD
Public Contact: 404/385-0633

Project Number: 90IF0120
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,985; FY 17 $199,897; FY 18 $199,858
Abstract: The Rehabilitation Engineering and Applied Research Laboratory (REAR Lab) identifies the clinical characteristics that are related to biomechanical pressure ulcer (PrU) risk. These are the clinical measurements needed to bring wheelchair seating and PrU prevention into the era of personalized medicine. The goal of this study is to reduce the incidence of sitting-acquired PrUs by providing quantitative information about biomechanical risk that supports personalized interventions. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to: (1) identify differences in seated buttocks tissue deformation that are associated with differences in PrU risk, and (2) to identify clinically measurable, biomechanical risk factors that contribute to seated tissue deformation and to an individual’s level of PrU risk. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) Clinicians benefiting from new information relating clinical measurements to their clients’ individual PrU risk. (2) Wheelchair users benefiting from a more personalized PrU risk assessment and more informed and personalized interventions. This should result in fewer PrUs and increased comfort and satisfaction with wheelchair cushions and seating systems. (3) An improved understanding of the mechanisms of PrU development and the buttocks’ response to loading may also lead to improved cushion design and evaluation. The expected products are: (1) 3D MRI scans and deformation descriptions of seated buttocks of 36 individuals with different levels of PrU risk. (2) Measurements of clinical characteristics of individuals with different levels of risk. (3) Statistical analyses relating the clinical measurements to buttocks tissue deformation and PrU risk.
Environmental Barriers and Facilitators to Assisted Toilet Transfers by People Aging with Disability and their Spousal Caregivers

Georgia Tech Research Corporation
Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA)
505 Tenth Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-5775
su.lee@design.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Su Jin Lee; Jon Sanford
Public Contact: 404/385-2632 (Lee), 404/894-1413 (Sanford)

Project Number: 90IFRE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,925; FY 18 $199,991; FY 19 $199,380

Abstract: This project identifies environmental factors that create barriers and facilitators to caregiver assisted transfers for individuals aging with disability to inform the development of design criteria for dyadic-centered AT/EM toilet transfer interventions. Specific aims are to: (1) describe the overall effectiveness of existing AT/EM toilet transfer interventions for individuals aging with disability and their caregivers by evaluating transfer performance of caregiving dyads using their own AT/EM interventions; (2) observe and delineate categorical differences in unmet needs for environmental supports for care recipient/caregiver dyads with different functional abilities; (3) identify the salient factors of the AT/EM that either act as barriers or facilitators to successful transfer performance based on the different needs and abilities of care recipients and their caregivers; (4) develop design criteria for the subsequent development of effective AT/EM solutions for assisted transfers by individuals aging with disabilities and their spousal caregivers; and (5) develop and execute a knowledge translation plan to disseminate study findings to appropriate stakeholders.
Motivational Interviewing and Physical Activity Change in Parkinson’s Disease

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
ljones1@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Linda Ehrlich-Jones, PhD, RN
Public Contact: 312/238-0743

Project Number: 90IF0093
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,941; FY 16 $199,926; FY 17 $199,863; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project aims to develop a web-based application for self-monitoring of physical activity for persons with Parkinson’s Disease (PD). The project includes testing the efficacy of motivational interviewing (MI), a patient-centered guiding method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change, and the web-based self-monitoring application for improving physical activity as the primary outcome, and balance and quality of life as secondary outcomes; and assessing persistent effects of the interventions at nine months (three months post-intervention) in persons with PD. The project begins with focus groups of persons with PD to assist in developing the web-based application for self-monitoring and the other interventions. A clinical trial includes participants with PD recruited from several sources, including ClinicalTrials.gov and randomly assigned to one of four intervention groups: education (control intervention); MI intervention only; web-based self-monitoring application only; and both MI + web-based self-monitoring application interventions. Participants are assessed for physical activity, balance, and quality of life at baseline, 3, 6, and 9 months to assess for changes in the outcomes.
Weight Management and Wellness for People with Psychiatric Disabilities

University of Illinois at Chicago
Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy
1601 West Taylor Street, 4th Floor, MC 912
Chicago, IL 60612
jonikas@uic.edu
www.center4healthandsdc.org

Principal Investigator: Judith A. Cook, PhD 312/355-3921
Public Contact: Jessica A. Jonikas 312/355-1696 (V); Fax: 312/355-4189

Project Number: 90IF0100
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,998; FY 16 $199,212; FY 17 $199,896; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/30/2019)

Abstract: This project conducts a randomized controlled trial to test the effectiveness of an intervention called Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery (NEW-R) in promoting weight loss, healthy eating, and increased physical activity among individuals with psychiatric disabilities. NEW-R is an eight-week recovery-oriented behavioral intervention. It uses innovative strategies such as peer support and modeling, exercise videos featuring people with psychiatric disabilities, real-world weight management strategies that are inexpensive and easily adopted, and freely available instructor and participant manuals. A total of 225 research participants were recruited and randomly assigned to receive NEW-R or services as usual. Research participants are interviewed at study baseline, 2-months (immediate post-intervention), and 8-months post-baseline to assess weight loss, health and mental health outcomes, and changes in health knowledge. The study has two aims: to finalize the intervention and fidelity assessment procedures, and then, hire and train NEW-R instructors; and to deliver the intervention and gather data to test its effectiveness on participant health and mental health outcomes. The dissemination plan includes podcasts, research briefs, and other knowledge exchange formats to promote the translation of research findings into practice.
Examing Determinants of Negative Attribution Bias in People with Traumatic Brain Injury

Trustees of Indiana University
Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana
980 Indiana Avenue
Lockfield, Room 2232
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2915
drneuman@iupui.edu

Principal Investigator: Dawn Neumann, PhD
Public Contact: 317/329-2188

Project Number: 90IF0095
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,999; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project examines factors associated with negative attribution bias in people with traumatic brain injury (TBI), and how this bias differs from healthy controls. Negative attribution bias is the tendency to perceive others’ behaviors as intentional, hostile, and blameworthy, especially when those behaviors are ambiguous or benign. The aims of the study are to: (1) determine group differences for negative attributions (intent, hostility, and blame) and feelings of irritation and anger reported by people with and without TBI for ambiguous behaviors; (2) determine the associations of negative attributions for ambiguous behaviors with cognitive processes and emotional factors; (3) identify regression models that best explain attributions of intent, hostility, and blame in response to ambiguous behaviors; and (4) determine the associations of negative attribution biases with community participation and satisfaction with life. Participants with and without TBI are presented with scenarios that describe characters’ behaviors as benign, ambiguous, or hostile, and result in hypothetically unpleasant outcomes for the participant. Participants rate how irritated and angry they are in response to the situation, and judge the intent, hostility, and blameworthiness of the characters in the scenarios. Trait aggression, anxiety, alexithymia, executive functioning, perspective-taking, and social inference are also evaluated, as well as community participation and satisfaction with life. Study objectives rest on the premise that negative attribution bias is exacerbated in people with TBI and differs from healthy controls due to frequent cognitive and emotional impairments. The findings from this study are critical to the development of an intervention to reduce negative attribution bias in people with TBI.
Take Charge of Burn Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Web-Based Self-Management Intervention to Improve Burn Pain Outcomes

Principal Investigator: Stephen Wegener, PhD
Public Contact: 410/502-2441

Project Number: 90IF0068 (Formerly H133G140079)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $198,000; FY 15 $198,000; FY 16 $198,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project uses a randomized control trial to test the efficacy of Take Charge of Burn Recovery – Pain (TCBR-Pain), a web-based self-management intervention. The project goals are to: (1) determine the efficacy of TCBR-Pain in improving pain management efficacy, and reducing pain and pain-related interference in burn survivors; and (2) determine whether TCBR-Pain improves psychological health and participation in life activities for burn survivors with pain. Participants are randomized into a control group or a standard-care plus TCBR-Pain group and are evaluated at baseline, two months, and five months follow-up. The project advances the knowledge about management of burn-related chronic pain, pain interference, and pain-related distress. The project disseminates information utilizing a cloud-based system that allows for nationwide dissemination, facilitates patient-centered care, and improves access for persons with disabilities.
Efficacy of an Interactive Web-Based Home Therapy Program in the Recovery of Arm and Hand Following Stroke: A Randomized Trial

University of Maryland, Baltimore
School of Medicine
100 Penn Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-1508
smcombewaller@som.umaryland.edu

Principal Investigator: Jill Whitall, PhD; Sandy McCombe Waller, PhD, PT
Public Contact: 410/706-0764 (Whitall); 410/706-0787 (Waller); Fax: 410/706-6137

Project Number: 90IFRE0011
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,999; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000

Abstract: This project investigates the efficacy and feasibility of using a free, easy-to-use, interactive web-based upper extremity stroke rehabilitation program on individuals with stroke who have recently been discharged from outpatient rehabilitation. The goal is to compare the home use of the web-based stroke rehabilitation program with that of written exercises in a randomized trial. The objectives are to assess (1) motor function immediately before and 6 weeks after intervention and after 20 weeks’ follow-up in order to support the efficacy of using this web-based intervention; (2) behavioral changes in motivation and self-efficacy at the same timepoints to understand the relationship between behavioral and motor function changes; (3) perceptions of patients and caregivers of the web-based program to understand feasibility and barriers to home use; and (4) perceptions of therapists to understand feasibility and barriers to clinic use.
Targeting Sedentary Behavior Reduction in Adults with Cerebral Palsy Using a Real-Time Behavioral Intervention

Principal Investigator: Mark Peterson, PhD
Public Contact: 734/763-0692

Project Number: 90IF0102
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $200,000; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 No-cost extension through 1/27/2020)

Abstract: This project aims to determine the extent of cardiometabolic risk in adults with cerebral palsy (CP), and to reduce sedentary behavior using a novel strategy that will lead to sustainable behavior modification and improved health outcomes. The project comprises three objectives: (1) Compare total sedentary behavior and cardiometabolic risk profiles between adults with CP and matched adult controls; (2) determine the effectiveness of a novel, context-aware wearable monitoring and smartphone-based intervention (iReduceSB) to reduce total sedentary behavior, increase fragmentation of sedentary behavior, and lead to sustainable improvement of behavior change in adults with CP; and (3) determine the effects of reducing total sedentary behavior and increasing fragmentation of sedentary behavior on clinically relevant serum markers of cardiometabolic risk.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Michigan

The Effect of Gentamicin Intravesical Instillations on Decreasing Urinary Tract Infections in Patients with Neurogenic Bladder After SCI: A Clinical Trial

The Regents of the University of Michigan
University of Michigan Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
3003 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340
dgtate@umich.edu

Principal Investigator: Denise G. Tate, PhD
Public Contact: 734/763-0971

Project Number: 90IFRE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000

Abstract: This project conducts a randomized clinical trial to test the efficacy of intravesical gentamicin instillations to reduce the incidence of urinary tract infections (UTIs) in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), improve bladder and bowel health, and assess the effectiveness of this intervention in promoting quality of life (QOL) and community participation. The goal of this project is to produce new scientific information about treating frequent UTIs in persons SCI. The objectives are: (1) to assess the efficacy of gentamicin in reducing UTIs in those with recurrent infections (at least 3 within the past 12 months) as well as other related bladder and bowel complications such as incontinence; and (2) to examine the effect of this treatment on people’s lives by assessing its impact on community participation and QOL.
Treating Cognitive Deficits in Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): A Randomized Clinical Trial

Kessler Foundation
Spinal Cord Injury Laboratory
120 Eagle Rock Avenue, Suite 100
East Hanover, NJ 07936-3147
nchiaravalloti@kesslerfoundation.org
www.kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Nancy D. Chiaravalloti, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-8440; Fax: 973/736-7886

Project Number: 90IF0113
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,994; FY 17 $199,637; FY 18 $199,706

Abstract: The goal of this study is to identify treatments for cognitive deficits experienced by people with spinal cord injuries (SCI). Multiple studies in the SCI population have documented cognitive deficits that adversely impact daily life and benefit from rehabilitation. Published studies note cognitive deficits in persons with SCI in learning and memory (LM) and processing speed (PS), further demonstrated in pilot data collected in previous studies conducted by these researchers. Given that these cognitive deficits have a critical impact on functional outcome after SCI, it is imperative to identify effective treatment for these deficits in an effort to improve everyday functioning and overall quality of life of impacted individuals. The objectives of this study are to: (1) apply a treatment protocol for PS and LM impairments, well-validated in other neurological populations, to individuals with SCI with objectively observable deficits in these areas and document efficacy on standard neuropsychological testing; (2) assess the effectiveness of the interventions in persons with SCI utilizing global measures of everyday life; and (3) evaluate the long-term benefit of treatment. Outcome is measured across two domains. First, researchers administer objective measures of cognitive functioning through a neuropsychological assessment. Second, researchers evaluate treatment efficacy in regard to functioning in everyday life, through an assessment of global functioning. These outcomes are assessed immediately following treatment and six months later. In this way, the project not only identifies the immediate treatment effect, but also the maintenance of treatment effects over time. The expected products are two highly structured, manualized treatment protocols with demonstrated efficacy in treating cognition in persons with SCI.
Improving Quality of Personal Care Assistance Services for People with SCI Through Online Education

Kessler Foundation
Spinal Cord Injury Laboratory
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
jzanca@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Jeanne M. Zanca, PhD, MPT
Public Contact: 973/324-3558

Project Number: 90IF0115
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $198,884; FY 17 $198,893; FY 18 $197,947

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the quality of personal care assistance (PCA) services for people with spinal cord injury (SCI) through online education. This project identifies educational needs and develops an online course to help new PCAs - who are typically unfamiliar with the special needs of people with SCI - understand the unique effects of SCI, the types of care needs that people with SCI have, and how the assistance that PCAs provide helps those with SCI live healthy, productive lives in the community. The course is designed to “jump-start” the training process by providing a foundation of knowledge about SCI thus making subsequent hands-on training in bathing, feeding, transfers, etc. more effective and efficient. The web-based curriculum includes a certification process. Discussion guides, worksheets, and a resource list facilitate the application and adaptation of the training to the care of specific individuals with SCI. The course also addresses how to improve communication between people with spinal cord injury and their PCAs.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
New Jersey

The Effectiveness and Underlying Mechanism of a Mindful Attention Program for Traumatic Brain Injury: A Randomized Clinical Trial

Kessler Foundation
Human Performance and Engineering Research
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
dallexandre@kesslerfoundation.org
kesslerfoundation.org/aboutus/Allexandre%20Didier

Principal Investigator: Didier Allexandre, PhD; Joanne Azulay, PhD; 973/324-3541
Public Contact: Samantha Schmidt 973/324-3571

Project Number: 90IFRE0016
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,969; FY 19 $199,978; FY 20 $199,931

Abstract: This project evaluated the effectiveness and underlying mechanism of a modified Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) group intervention called Mindful Attention Program (MAP) for individuals with severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). Individuals with TBI can experience long-term cognitive challenges in attention and memory, as well as depression, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation. Previous pilot investigations have found encouraging results in cognitive measures and clinically meaningful improvements in everyday life function. Mindfulness training is a process of developing a non-reactive focused attention to all present moment experiences, and mindfulness-based training can provide an ideal intervention to address those symptoms and the special needs of the TBI population. For this study, individuals with moderate to severe post-acute TBI with impaired attention receive either the 10-week MAP intervention or a 10-week psychoeducational and well-being program as an active control intervention. Outcomes are assessed pre- and post-intervention, as well as well at six-months follow-up, to determine whether MAP shows greater improvement in neurocognitive measures of attention as well as behavioral measures directly related to attention, including metacognition and social monitoring, while exploring its impact on everyday function and quality of life. Researchers also use neuroimaging to investigate the neural mechanisms of improvement by measuring both functional and structural connectivity associated with attentional regulation.
Adolescents with Lupus: The Impact of Patient/Provider Discordance, Depression, Cognition and Language on Quality of Life

Mercy College
School of Health and Natural Sciences
Main Hall 274
555 Broadway
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522
kkenneyriley@mercy.edu

Principal Investigator: Kathleen Kenney-Riley, EdD, APRN-BC, PNP; Kimberly Rapoza, PhD; Shari Berkowitz, PhD
Public Contact: Kathleen Kenney-Riley, EdD, APRN-BC, PNP 914/674-7582

Project Number: 90IFST0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project addresses the knowledge gap in the research and care of adolescents with lupus, an autoimmune disease that impacts all areas of patients’ lives, often resulting in significant disabilities and poor quality of life. When lupus is diagnosed in childhood, in non-white racial/ethnic groups, and/or in patients from lower SES backgrounds, the potential for disability and mortality is even greater. The goal of this study is to evaluate discordance in the relationship between adolescent patient/provider global assessment of disease activity using a longitudinal mixed method design (i.e., surveys and semi-structured interviews). The objectives are to: (1) examine the level of discordance between patient and provider’s perceptions of disease activity; (2) explore factors related to the level of discordance between patient and provider including depression, primary language, cognitive functioning, health related quality of life, pain, regimen compliance, and lab values; (3) identify the types of disabilities that adolescents with lupus exhibit; and (4) understand patients’ and providers’ perceptions of types of disability in adolescents with lupus. The project results in methods a provider can use to identify depression, cognitive dysfunction, language barriers, disability, and poor physical/social functioning in adolescents with lupus, as well as other chronic diseases.
Interpreting COPD Dyspnea Change:
Sensitivity, Responsive, and Predictive Validity of the DMQ-CAT

New York University School of Medicine
Rusk Rehabilitation Institute
240 East 38th Street
New York, NY 10016
AnnaMaria.Norweg@nyumc.org

Principal Investigator: Annamaria Norweg, PhD
Public Contact: 646/501-7777

Project Number: 90IF0128
Start Date: October 01, 2016
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,987; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The aim of this project is to test the relative sensitivity to change, responsiveness, and predictive validity of DMQ-CAT, a comprehensive dyspnea-outcome computer adaptive test (CAT) that measures new anxiety and activity avoidance in adults with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The 71-item DMQ-CAT captures four distinct dyspnea constructs: intensity, anxiety, activity avoidance, and self-efficacy to evaluate outcomes of COPD pharmacologic, preliminary rehabilitation, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. This project expects to: (1) begin to transform how dyspnea is assessed, (2) improve dyspnea symptom management, (3) impact functional status, (4) improve quality of life, (5) facilitate the earlier treatment and prevention of exacerbations, (6) improve COPD prognosis and survival, and (7) improve COPD healthcare utilization. The DMQ-CAT addresses the limitations of other dyspnea scales by using state-of-the-art item banking method techniques to provide a tailored multidimensional dyspnea assessment using only a minimal number of items.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Pennsylvania

Dynamic Supported Mobility for Infants and Toddlers with Cerebral Palsy

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Research Institute
34th Street and Civic Center Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19104
prosserl@email.chop.edu

Principal Investigator: Laura Prosser, PhD, PT
Public Contact: 215/590-2495

Project Number: 90IF0076 (Formerly H133G140166)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $200,000; FY 15 $200,000; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 3/30/2020)

Abstract: The objective of this project is to determine if dynamic supported mobility (DSM) using novel technology leads to greater improvement in motor function than conventional (CONV) physical therapy in infants and toddlers with cerebral palsy (CP). Participants receiving DSM training are given dynamic weight support and therapy focuses on child-directed motor play and exploration in a physically challenging environment designed to encourage motor variability and error experience with minimal assistance or correction from the therapist. CONV therapy involves therapist-directed activities with a focus on the repeated practice of typical movement patterns with assistance and correction from the therapist. The primary outcome measure is gross motor function. Motor outcomes are compared to published percentile scores to determine if the trajectory of predicted motor development has been altered. Secondary outcomes include improvements in physical activity at home, postural control, engagement in daily life, and parent satisfaction and cognition.
Prevalence of Chronic Disease After Spinal Cord Injury: A Longitudinal Study

Medical University of South Carolina
College of Health Professions
Department of Health Science and
77 President Street
MSC 700
Charleston, SC 29425
roperde@musc.edu
www.longevityafterinjury.com
www.sciandtbiresearchblogspot.com

Principal Investigator: Yue Cao, PhD
Public Contact: D’Andra Roper-Shine 843/792-3117; Fax: 843/792-5649

Project Number: 90IF0070 (Formerly H133G140101)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $199,707; FY 15 $199,823; FY 16 $199,952; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2019)

Abstract: The aim of this project is to perform a comprehensive and epidemiologic assessment of the prevalence and risk factors of chronic health conditions (CHC) after spinal cord injury (SCI). This project utilizes a population-based cohort from a state SCI surveillance system registry (SCISSR), lays the foundation for the development of prevention strategies, and provides valuable knowledge needed for the allocation of limited resources. The objectives of this project are: (1) identify the prevalence of CHC’s and the added risk associated with SCI relative to the general population, (2) identify differences in health behaviors compared with the general population, (3) identify risk and protective factors for multiple CHCs, and (4) assess the change in prevalence of a subset of CHC’s over a five-year interval. A community advisory panel convenes to provide stakeholder input from people with SCI. Dissemination activities are geared to both professional and stakeholders through multiple avenues. The ultimate goal of the entire project is to generate new knowledge that may be used in diverse settings and circumstances to promote better outcomes; specifically, the prevention of or early intervention for CHC after SCI.
Aging and Spinal Cord Injury: A 45-Year Longitudinal Study

Medical University of South Carolina
College of Health Professions
Department of Health Science and
151-B Rutledge Avenue
MSC 962
Charleston, SC 29425
krause@musc.edu
www.longevityafterinjury.com
sciandtbiresearch.blogspot.com

Principal Investigator: James S. Krause, PhD
Public Contact: 843/792-1337; Fax: 843/792-5649

Project Number: 90IF0112
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,247; FY 17 $199,835; FY 18 $199,841

Abstract: Many individuals now live to aging milestones after the onset of spinal cord injury (SCI). Recent longitudinal research suggests a dramatic increase in physician visits and hospitalizations among those reaching 40+ years post-injury, with some declines in life satisfaction and future expectations. The goal of this project is to better understand these changes to support individuals as they face aging-related challenges. This project conducts a 45-year follow-up, the 9th data collection in the SCI Longitudinal Aging Study. This study was initiated in 1973 using a revolving panel longitudinal design with regular follow-ups every four to five years and intermittent addition of new participant cohorts. As of 2013, a total of 768 participants had participated on 3-8 occasions, 50 of whom had been in the study since inception and 54 added in 1984. During this phase, the project assesses outcomes from a projected 538 participants of the 768 who participated in the 40-year follow-up. Researchers identify the natural course of health, participation, need for medical services, life satisfaction, and self-reported problems using an expanded version of the Life Situation Questionnaire. Specific measures have been added related to aging, with more detail and diversity than included in more basic large-scale data sets. Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses are performed. This research identifies factors related to unfavorable changes over time by contrasting participants with stable outcomes against those whose outcomes have declined. Two stakeholder panels meet annually throughout the project, assisting with dissemination and knowledge translation, interpretation of findings, recommendations for policy, and development of guidelines for healthy aging after SCI.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)  
South Carolina  

Number, Primary, and Secondary Diagnoses, and Costs of Inpatient Hospitalizations in a Population-Based Cohort of People with Spinal Cord Injury

Medical University of South Carolina  
College of Health Professions  
Department of Health Science and  
151-B Rutledge Avenue  
MSC 962  
Charleston, SC 29425  
swayngim@musc.edu  
www.longevityafterinjury.com  
sciandtbiresearch.blogspot.com

Principal Investigator: James S. Krause, PhD 843/792-1337  
Public Contact: Karla Swayngim Reed 843/792-7051; Fax: 843/792-5649

Project Number: 90IF0119  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,664; FY 17 $199,893; FY 18 $199,455

Abstract: Spinal cord injury (SCI) leads to an elevated risk of costly hospitalizations, yet there is limited understanding of the factors leading to hospitalization, the costs, or the consequences for participation and quality of life. Most research is limited to the first year, self-report data, and clinical rather than population-based participants. The purpose of this project is threefold: (1) identify the number of hospitalizations, primary and secondary diagnoses, and costs among a population-based cohort with SCI; (2) identify psychological, socioenvironmental, and behavioral factors associated with each hospitalization parameter; and (3) identify the relationship of hospitalization to participation and quality of life. This project uses administrative cost data to identify hospitalizations, primary and secondary diagnoses, and costs for all years after SCI onset for individuals identified through the South Carolina SCI Surveillance System Registry from 2000-2014 (3,850 individuals). Uniform billing administrative data is linked to self-report data from a subset of 1,069 participants who participated in a longitudinal study of the first 5 years after SCI onset to identify the predictors of hospitalization. The first set of linked analyses uses the theoretical risk and prevention model. A second set of analyses applies the ICF model from the World Health Organization to investigate relationships with quality of life. A consumer advisory panel meets twice annually throughout the project to help guide the direction of the analyses, interpretation, and recommendations for policy change. They also assist in dissemination and knowledge translation, including the development of self-help parameters to reduce the likelihood of hospitalization.
Project WOWii: Developing and Testing a Web-Based Intervention to Promote Exercise Among Those with Spinal Cord Injury

Baylor Scott and White Research Institute (BSWRI)
909 North Washington Avenue
Dallas, TX 75246
kfgrobe@bir-rehab.com

Principal Investigator: Katherine Froehlich-Grobe, PhD
Public Contact: 214/818-2584

Project Number: 90IF0106
Start Date: March 09, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,873; FY 16 $199,983; FY 17 $199,954; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project examines the usability, feasibility, and effectiveness of a technology-based intervention (WOWii) in promoting exercise and improved fitness for those with spinal cord injury (SCI), using community-based participatory research to refine and enhance an existing evidence-based approach. During the formative evaluation phase, the project uses an iterative process to refine and enhance the WOWii web-based exercise program for people with SCI, resulting in an acceptable and usable intervention approach. Feasibility testing examines participants’ engagement with the web-based intervention during a four-week trial, during which participants provide input on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. In the summative evaluation phase, WOWii aims to increase participant’s exercise behavior, fitness, and perceptions over a 16-week intervention and 2-month follow-up (6 months total).
Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): A Randomized Controlled Trial

Baylor Scott and White Research Institute (BSWRI)
3310 Live Oak, Suite 501
Dallas, TX 75204-6165
mark.powers1@bswhealth.org

Principal Investigator: Mark B. Powers, PhD
Public Contact: 512/993-6443

Project Number: 90IFRE0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,712; FY 18 $199,269; FY 19 $199,492

Abstract: This project uses a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the efficacy of Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). The National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center estimates 282,000 people in the US live with spinal cord injury (SCI), with approximately 17,000 new cases occurring each year. While there has been tremendous progress in the medical and rehabilitative management of people who have sustained SCI, there has been less innovation to support mental health among SCI patients. Estimates suggest that PTSD affects up to 60% of those with SCI compared to only 7% of the general US population. The most researched and effective treatment for PTSD is PE, where participants receive 12 sessions of therapy over 6 weeks. PE has been tested within survivors of combat, sexual assault, non-sexual assault, traumatic injury, and disasters, but has not been tested specifically within the SCI community. For this study, participants with SCI receive either PE or treatment as usual and researchers compare improvement in PTSD symptom as well as rates of pain reduction and improvements in sleep, depression, and quality of life.
Building an Evidence-Base for Weight Loss Strategies Among Those with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Baylor Scott and White Research Institute (BSWRI)
909 North Washington Avenue
Dallas, TX 75246
kfgrobe@bir-rehab.com

Principal Investigator: Katherine Froehlich-Grobe, PhD
Public Contact: 214/818-2584

Project Number: 90IFRE0022
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,999; FY 19 $198,288; FY 20 $197,771

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the effectiveness and usability of an evidence-based multi-component weight loss intervention to improve the health and function of people with spinal cord injury (SCI) by addressing the unique issues they may face when adopting lifestyle changes that promote weight loss. The fundamental components of weight loss such as eating a balanced diet and/or increasing physical activity may be more challenging for individuals with SCI to adopt compared to the general population. A community-based participatory research approach is used to systematically develop the multi-component weight loss intervention, gather preliminary evidence and usability data, guide further adaptations of the intervention, and inform specific weight loss strategies. This project evaluates the effectiveness and usability of prepackaged/portion-controlled meals, self-monitoring, and intervention adaptations to achieve weight loss over a 13-week period.
Efficacy of an Evidence-Based Healthy Lifestyle Intervention for People Following CVA

Baylor Scott and White Research Institute (BSWRI)
909 North Washington Avenue, Suite 232
Dallas, TX 75246
sjdriver@bswrehab.com

Principal Investigator: Simon J. Driver, PhD
Public Contact: 214/820-9014; Fax: 214/265-3640

Project Number: 90IFRE0021
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $198,868; FY 19 $199,637; FY 20 $197,151

Abstract: This project improves the health and function of people who have experienced a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) by demonstrating the efficacy of a weight loss intervention that promotes healthy physical activity and eating behaviors. Living a healthy life may be a challenge post-CVA due to the increased risk for secondary and chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, or heart disease. There is a need to identify evidence-based approaches to promote the health and function of people post-CVA. This project modifies an existing evidence-based weight loss intervention for the general population to meet the unique needs of people post-CVA, assesses the feasibility of delivery, and tests the efficacy of the modified intervention. Participants include individuals living within the community post-CVA who are overweight or obese. Outcomes include: (1) a comprehensive weight loss intervention tailored to meet the needs of people post-CVA, (2) evidence of the efficacy of intervention strategies for weight loss after CVA, and (3) a weight loss intervention that can be scaled for use within the community. Products include a usable and meaningful intervention for weight loss that is free and publicly available, a leadership guide so that individuals can deliver the intervention in different settings, and scientific papers and presentations of study results.
The Relations Among Pain, Depression, and Resilience and their Prediction of Life Satisfaction in Men and Women with Spinal Cord Injury

The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR)
TIRR Memorial Hermann
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
michelle.feltz@memorialhermann.org

Principal Investigator: Heather B. Taylor, PhD 713/797-5908
Public Contact: Michelle Feltz 713/797-5981

Project Number: 90IF0099
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,931; FY 16 $199,923; FY 17 $199,972; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project identifies and evaluates relations among pain, depression, and resilience, and the extent to which they predict life satisfaction in men and women with chronic pain secondary to spinal cord injury (SCI). The study uses a cohort longitudinal design with data collected at four time points (baseline, 4 months, 8 months, and 12 months). The aims are to investigate: (1) the extent to which men and women with SCI differ in the relation of chronic pain and depression to physical, psychological, and social functioning at initial assessment and over time; (2) the extent to which men and women with SCI differ on resilience characteristics at initial assessment and over time; and (3) the extent to which men and women with SCI differ on the relation of resilience characteristics to pain and depression and physical, psychological, and social functioning at initial assessment and over time. A new cohort of 200 men and women with chronic pain secondary to SCI are recruited from community-based, public, and private settings. Data is gathered at each time point using four telephone-administered questionnaires coupled with online self-administered questionnaires that incorporate several standardized instruments for measuring pain, resilience, depression, and functioning (physical and social). Findings from this study have implications for clinical practice in primary medicine and rehabilitation and for public health policy that governs the availability and delivery of health services to people with SCI. Dissemination strategies include articles published in peer-reviewed publication and fact sheets providing information on pain, depression, and resilience in people with SCI. This project is a collaboration of TIRR Memorial Hermann, the University of Montana, and Miami University.
NGAGE, A Neurological Guidance, Assessment, Goals and Engagement System for People with Parkinsons and other Degenerative Neurological Diseases

CreateAbility Concepts, Inc.
5058 Evanston Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46205-1365
steve@createabilityinc.com
createabilityinc.com/research-3

Principal Investigator: Stephen M. Sutter 317/777-0356
Public Contact: 317/810-1669; Fax: 317/777-0356

Project Number: 90BISA0014
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $100,000

Abstract: This project demonstrates the technical merit, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of a Neurological Guidance, Assessment, Goals and Engagement (NGAGE) system for people with Parkinson’s and other degenerative neurological diseases. People with Parkinson’s disease and other similar degenerative neurological diseases may be able maintain their levels of function with proper ongoing exercise programs geared towards their individualized needs. The NGAGE system supports individuals with Parkinson’s to increase their engagement in the maintenance of their disease. The built-in natural support mechanisms promote independence, enhance self-esteem, and create opportunities for self-direction using a respectful, non-invasive approach. This project combines commercially available components, cloud computing, open source utilities, and an innovative approach to create the NGAGE system. The result is a standardized, cost-effective option to improve assessments, and provide meaningful feedback to increase the engagement and participation with users. Specific Phase I objectives include: (1) determine end user requirements, (2) develop a proof-of-concept prototype of the system, and (3) evaluate of the utility of the prototype with actual individuals and the clinicians who support them, while performing voice and physical exercises under varying cognitive loads, using protocols developed by Triad Exercise Technologies.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
Massachusetts

UTI Reduction in Neurogenic Bladder

Innovative Chemical and Environmental Technologies Inc.
916 Pleasant Street, Unit 12
Norwood, MA 02062
Shantha@icetinc.com
www.icetinc.com/index.html

Principal Investigator: Shantha Sarangapani, PhD
Public Contact: 781/769-6064

Project Number: 90BISA0013
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $99,827

Abstract: This project develops and tests two novel functional gel compositions to be used with intermittent and indwelling catheters. There is a high incidence of life-long recurrent urinary tract infection (UTI) in individuals with neuro-urologic disorders who use these catheters due to continuous, repeated catheterization, and compromises in the hygiene and the natural mucosal barrier. This results in chronic inflammation, recurrent UTI episodes, stone formation and continuous antibiotic use. Multi-resistant organisms (MRO) in neurogenic bladder populations are common, leading to nosocomial infections in rehabilitation units. Currently, there is no proven prophylaxis for UTI, in such populations and the level of morbidity remains unacceptable. This project demonstrates the potency of two novel functional gel compositions for intermittent and indwelling catheters and characterizes their individual and combined ability in this proof of concept stage to reach >95% mucosal pathogenic biofilm inhibition and reduction of inflammatory response on ex vivo human bladder mucosal explants and Inhibit bacterial contamination of the catheter and insoluble calcium crystal growth by >95% in urine media. A successful therapeutic approach such as this would help improve the quality of lives for adults and children with neurogenic bladder, who live with the consequences of recurrent UTI.
Online Mindfulness Intervention for Adolescents with 22q11DS

Innovation Research and Training, Inc.
5316 Highgate Drive, Suite 121
Durham, NC 27713
aparker@irtinc.us
irtinc.us/ResearchProjects.aspx

Principal Investigator: Alison Elaine Parker, PhD; Janis Kupersmidt, PhD
Public Contact: 919/493-7700

Project Number: 90BISA0016
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,999

Abstract: This project creates an online, interactive, self-paced mindfulness intervention program specifically designed for adolescents with chromosome 22q11.2 deletion syndrome (22q11DS), a common genetic disorder. The goal of the project is to adapt and examine the usability of a novel online mindfulness training program for adolescents (ages 13 to 18) with 22q11DS. To date, there are very few behavioral interventions that have been developed and evaluated for adolescents with 22q11DS. Thus, there is a need for effective interventions that are tailored for this population to improve their mental and physical health and well-being, and potentially prevent the severity of future psychiatric symptoms. The objectives are to: (1) develop content and pedagogical methods for the program with input from families and youth with 22q11DS and expert consultants, (2) produce and implement the program’s technology, and (3) examine the usability of the program.
Development of a Wearable Robot for Motor Rehabilitation in Acute Stroke

Rehabtek, LLC
803 Barkwood Court, Suite B
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090
rehabtek_bo@yahoo.com

Principal Investigator: Yupeng Ren
Public Contact: 847/853-8380

Project Number: 90BISB0001
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $262,819; FY 17 $312,181; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The goal of this Phase II project is to develop a wearable rehabilitation technology to help patients recover from stroke and regain mobility. Project objectives include: (1) developing an ankle wearable rehabilitation robot to guide and interact with acute stroke survivors; and (2) packaging the rehabilitation software which provides (a) closely-guided motor relearning based on real-time audiovisual/haptic feedback, (b) intensive combined stretching and active task-related mobility training with progressive postures in an acute stroke rehabilitation setting, and (c) quantitative assessment of improvements.

Outcomes include: (1) Delivering early acute rehabilitation with robot therapy in acute care settings, (2) providing intensive robot-assisted physical therapy for better motor re-learning in the early post-stroke stage and reduce loads to physical therapists in repetitive practice tasks, (3) monitoring impairment and recovery performance, and (4) providing assessment to gain insight into the mechanisms of impairment and neuroplasticity in early post-stroke rehabilitation. The resulting product is a wearable rehabilitation robot with real-time, multi-mode guidance and passive-active movement training to be used in acute stroke rehabilitation allowing for early sensorimotor intervention, and critical acute phase recovery.
Disability Demographics

Valid and reliable disability demographics and statistics are helpful for framing issues, understanding program’s effectiveness, and monitoring progress in the disability field. NIDILRR continues to work with other Federal agencies to meet its statutory mandate to collaborate in producing demographic and statistical data that describe the population of individuals with disabilities. Projects funded in this area generate and disseminate new and current information that can be used by individuals with disabilities, service providers, policy makers, and others working to identify disparities in employment, community living and participation, and health and function.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC)

University of New Hampshire
Institute on Disability
10 West Edge Drive, Suite 101
Durham, NH 03824-2620
disability.statistics@unh.edu
www.disabilitycompendium.org
www.researchondisability.org/statsrrtc

Principal Investigator: Andrew J. Houtenville, PhD 603/862-4004
Public Contact: Penny Gould, Program Support Assistant 603/864-0165; Fax: 603/863-0555

Project Number: 90RT5022 (Formerly H133B130015)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $874,998; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $874,999; FY 16 $874,998; FY 17 $874,998; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The objective of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) is to narrow and actively bridge the divide between the producers and end users of disability statistics. In pursuit of this objective, the RRTC conducts 12 research and 15 knowledge translation projects that build upon the work of past StatsRRTC projects. Several of the research projects focus on the collection of disability statistics and narrow the divide by (a) developing recommendations and tools that improve the identification of the population with disabilities and measurement of services, and (b) conducting experiments to test alternative survey methods. Project activities include (a) analyzing existing data to assess progress towards national goals and address information needs about critical programs; (b) providing access to timely and relevant disability statistics through national and state-level Annual Reports on Disability that track key indicators and an Annual Disability Statistics Compendium that allows end users to access even more statistics; (c) providing technical assistance to key stakeholders to produce customized statistical analyses and compilations; (d) developing and maintaining a State/Local Statistics which allows users to create customized reports; (e) providing information and referral services, and technical consultation on collection methods and data analysis; and (f) increasing the capacity of end users to effectively utilize disability statistics through the Annual Report and Compendium Rollout event, online training courses for vocational rehabilitation evaluators, and the Center’s State-of-the-Science conference.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
New Hampshire

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC)

University of New Hampshire
Institute on Disability
10 West Edge Drive, Suite 101
Durham, NH 03824-2620
disability.statistics@unh.edu
www.disabilitycompendium.org
www.researchondisability.org/statsrrtc

Principal Investigator: Andrew J. Houtenville, PhD 603/862-4004
Public Contact: Penny Gould, Program Support Assistant 603/864-0165; Fax: 603/863-0555

Project Number: 90RTGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,999; FY 19 $874,999; FY 20 $874,999; FY 21 $874,999; FY 22 $874,999

Abstract: The objective of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) is to actively narrow and bridge the divide between the producers and end users of disability statistics, thereby supporting better data collection and more relevant statistics to positively inform programs that serve people with disabilities and, ultimately, to improve conditions for people with disabilities and their families. In pursuit of this overall objective, the StatsRRTC conducts comprehensive and integrated research and knowledge translation activities that build upon and upgrade the work conducted under previous grants. The Center’s research projects narrow the divide by: generating new survey items and recommendations for improving the collection, relevance, and interpretation of disability data and statistics; developing techniques to improve the estimation of state/local statistics; and conducting deeper analyses of key demographics, outcomes, and programs. Dissemination projects actively bridge the divide by improving timely access to disability statistics by: continuing to expand the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, its Supplement, and State Reports; refocusing the Annual Report on statistical analyses to gauge progress towards national goals; developing a new series of infographics on the intersection of disability and other demographics; and upgrading the web-enabled platform used to produce the Compendium to improve its customizability and user-friendliness. The Center also creates a new Compendium of Survey Methods to address the needs of producers. Training projects narrow the divide by bringing producers and end users together through: continued expansion of the Annual Roll-Out Event/Webcast and a State-of-the-Science conference. The training projects also increase the capacity of future disability researchers to analyze data via a new online independent study curriculum and opportunities for summer fellowships and possibly post-doctoral fellowships. Finally, technical assistance (TA) projects actively bridge the divide by increasing the capacity of end users to access and effectively utilize disability statistics by providing: information and referral TA, follow-up TA to answer questions about the Center’s activities, and customized statistical analyses for key stakeholders.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Disability Demographics
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Technology for Access and Function

With NIDILRR’s research priorities, technology spans the goals of sustaining health and function, employment, and community living and participation and contributes to successful outcomes for persons with disabilities in all of these areas. At the individual level, the primary focus is on assistive technology devices that enhance the physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities of people with disabilities and assist them in participating and functioning more independently in the home, at work, in recreational settings, and at cultural and community events. At the systems level, the emphasis is on applying technology research and development in ways that enhance community integration, independence, productivity, competitiveness, and equal opportunity by mitigating or eliminating barriers found in large social systems such as public transportation, telecommunications, IT, and the built environment. This research area also includes research to ensure the accessibility and potential of cloud computing to support the independence, employment, and functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

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Interactive Exercise Technologies and Exercise Physiology for People with Disabilities

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Health Professions
1720 Second Avenue South, SHPB 331
Birmingham, AL 35233
jrimmer@uab.edu
www.rectech.org

Principal Investigator: James H. Rimmer, PhD
Public Contact: 205/975-9010; Fax: 205/975-7787

Project Number: 90RE5009 (Formerly H133E120005)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman

NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $950,000; FY 13 $950,000; FY 14 $950,000; FY 15 $950,000; FY 16 $950,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This Center conducts an advanced engineering research and development program using new and emerging technologies to address the high rates of physical inactivity in youths and adults with disabilities. The Center includes a coordinated set of research, development, capacity building, and knowledge translation/dissemination projects focused on promoting healthier, more active lifestyles for people with disabilities. The key target areas for the research and development projects are improving access to recreation and exercise venues and equipment, increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in beneficial exercise, using technology to support greater adherence to regular exercise, and promoting regular exercise and active lifestyles for people with disabilities as a way to improve health and function. The research agenda includes projects aimed at (1) determining a valid methodology for using commercially available activity monitors to estimate energy expenditure (i.e., daily physical activity) in manual wheelchair users, (2) the use of off-the-shelf e-health technology for promoting safe and effective dose-response tele-exercise training in the home for adults with mobility disability, and (3) evaluation of a highly scalable information communication technology platform that promotes community-based physical activity for youths with disabilities. Development projects include (1) adaptation of sensors and game controllers to allow youths with disabilities to participate in currently inaccessible active video games, (2) high definition video-based virtual exercise environments integrated into an Advanced Virtual Exercise Environment Device for promoting socially engaging physical activity in people with disabilities, and (3) development of universal design standards for accessible fitness equipment and fitness facilities. Capacity building efforts include a rehabilitation engineering mentorship program, student design coursework in exercise/recreation technology, and infusion of rehabilitation engineering and disability into the graduate curriculum. Knowledge transfer projects include a state-of-the-science conference in exercise/recreation technology, a RecTech wiki, and a series of webinars and online newsletters promoting new knowledge in exercise science, engineering, and recreation.
RERC on Exercise and Recreational Technologies for People with Disabilities

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Health Professions
1720 Second Avenue South, SHPB 331
Birmingham, AL 35233
jrimmer@uab.edu

Principal Investigator: James H. Rimmer, PhD; Mohanraj Thirumalai, PhD
Public Contact: 205/975-9010

Project Number: 90REGE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000

Abstract: This project conducts a set of research and development projects that span across the socio-ecological model from community to clinic to address a multilevel set of barriers to participation in healthful exercise and recreation among adults with physical disabilities. Six areas of research and development include: (1) a precision-based decision support tool to improve quality of exercise and recreation recommendations and outcomes; (2) advancement of a wheelchair accessible active video gaming controller to expand game play among users with physical disabilities; (3) final development of an exercise device that allows single-to-multiple limb loading in engaging virtual exercise environments; (4) a crowdsourcing platform for building accessible community-based exercise and recreation resources; (5) an eHealth tele-exercise platform for increasing exercise among adults with spinal cord injury; and (6) a mixed-methods study examining barriers and facilitators associated with adoption of universal design of fitness equipment standards by manufacturers and fitness facility managers. Training initiatives involve undergraduate and graduate level training in exercise/recreational technologies targeting engineering, exercise science, and rehabilitation science students. Dissemination includes presentations at engineering and rehabilitation conferences, publications in high-impact peer-reviewed journals, press releases, websites, and faculty presentations. Anticipated outcomes include a set of hardware and software products that improve the health, function, and quality of life among people with physical disabilities. A secondary outcome is to ensure that dissemination of these products and tools reach an array of stakeholders, including people with disabilities, caregivers, rehabilitation and exercise science researchers, and rehabilitation and exercise professionals, who can use them in their respective communities and professions.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center:
Develop and Evaluate Rehabilitation Technology and Methods for Individuals with Low Vision, Blindness, and Multiple Disabilities

The Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute
2318 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
brabyn@ski.org
ski.org/center/rehabilitation-engineering-research-center

Principal Investigator: John A. Brabyn, PhD
Public Contact: 415/345-2110

Project Number: 90RE5024
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $925,000; FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000

Abstract: The goal of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC): Develop and Evaluate Rehabilitation Technology and Methods for Individuals with Low Vision, Blindness, and Multiple Disabilities is to impact a number of current barriers to opportunity faced by individuals who are blind, have low vision, and have multiple disabilities. This RERC addresses specifically: (1) emerging and underserved subpopulations, such as children born as premature infants with cortical visual impairment (CVI), returning veterans, and individuals with visual impairments due to brain injury, and individuals with combined vision and hearing disabilities; (2) access to graphical information by people who are blind or who have severe visual disabilities; (3) improvements in indoor and outdoor navigation; and (4) access by this population to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and careers. The RERC’s activities to address these issues include: (1) research to lay the groundwork for more informed decisions on rehabilitation materials and strategies for children with CVI and veterans with traumatic brain injury, as well as improved communication for individuals with dual sensory loss; (2) the development of new tools for accessing graphics such as a Tactile Graphics Helper and sonification cues for computer screen readers; (3) development of new tools for accessing devices and appliances with digital displays; (4) development of guidelines for teachers in the use of 3-D printing technology for the benefit of STEM students; (5) development of tools and techniques to enhance access to the Maker Movement by consumers who are blind; and (6) the implementation of a sustainable open source, crowd-sourced video description system for web-based video.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Colorado

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Advancing Cognitive Technologies (RERC-ACT)

University of Colorado Denver
Assistive Technology Partner’s Product Testing Facility
601 East 18th Avenue, Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203
cathy.bodine@ucdenver.edu
www.rerc-act.org

Principal Investigator: Cathy Bodine, PhD; Michael Lightner, PhD
Public Contact: 303/503-8396; Fax: 303/837-1208

Project Number: 90RE5019 (Formerly H133E140054)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $949,999; FY 15 $949,995; FY 16 $949,999; FY 17 $950,000; FY 18 $950,000

Abstract: This project focuses on the research and development of cognitive technologies for individuals with cognitive impairments designed to improve their quality of life, and that of their caregivers. The RERC-ACT focuses on three research and three development projects; educational activities, knowledge translation, and utilization; and continuous quality improvement of the overall center. The Center’s six research and development activities focus on expanding the cognitive technology standards for work, training, dissemination/knowledge utilization, and commercialization by: (R1) performing usability tests with the myriad of technologies used by persons with cognitive disabilities in order to improve individual consumer selection of the ‘right’ technology as well as facilitating improvements in the design and development of existing, emerging, and new technologies for working-age adults with traumatic brain injury; (R2) developing a tablet-based simulator which enables researchers to test, in a very controlled manner, specific user interface features with specific populations; and (R3) conducting an applied clinical trial of the Non-Linear Context-Aware Interactive Prompting Platform (IPP). The clinical trial has three major development components: (D1) providing an easy-to-configure authoring system for non-technical set-up of the IPP in warehouse environments; (D2) combining workplace business systems monitoring (computerized inventory management/business processes) with navigation and contextualized prompts; and (D3) collecting ongoing data and comparing the prescribed task to actual performance, enabling error detection and correction.
RERC on Improving the Accessibility, Usability, and Performance of Technology for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH-RERC)

Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Technology Access Program; SLCC 1116
Washington, DC 20002-3695
christian.vogler@gallaudet.edu
www.deafhhtech.org/rerc

Principal Investigator: Christian Vogler, PhD; Linda Kozma-Spytek
Public Contact: 202/250-2795 (V/Video); Fax: 202/651-5476

Project Number: 90RE5020 (Formerly H133E140056)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

Abstract: This RERC’s mission is to provide consumers who are hard of hearing or Deaf, as well as their families and clinicians, with the knowledge and tools necessary: (1) to take control of their communication and hearing technologies, adapt those technologies to their needs in real-world environments, and achieve greater autonomy in their technology use; and (2) to derive full benefit of the shift from special-purpose devices to increasingly powerful and interconnected consumer electronics. The RERC aims to narrow the gaps between the potential for new technologies to improve the lives of individuals who are hard of hearing or Deaf and their ability to exploit this potential. The center carries out three research and three development and training projects: R1 investigates how a previously successful face-to-face, clinical program of aural rehabilitation for cochlear implant users can be transferred to a telerehabilitation model, in which services are delivered in the home to previously underserved populations with limited access to clinical facilities using the interactive platform for telehealth and collaborative applications developed by the RERC on Telerehabilitation. R2 investigates how consumers with hearing loss can customize their own cochlear implant mapping using a consumer-driven system to control the programming of the device and personally explore a range of programming parameters to determine if this type of user-driven customization can maximize device benefit. R3 investigates new clinical tools to address a critical gap in fitting hearing devices to very young, prelingual children with hearing loss. D1 develops a framework for a consumer-centric, technology-focused train-the-trainer program, which develops skilled consumer trainers to provide improved quantity and quality of technology training to other consumers. D2 develops field tools, implemented through the integration of hearing devices and smartphones, for monitoring listeners’ perceptions, environmental context information, and hearing device configuration during real-world listening situations, so that factors that interfere with the ability of consumers to use or benefit from hearing devices can be identified. D3 develops interactive learning
environments where consumers can explore virtual, yet realistic, listening situations, learn how to optimize the use of their hearing technology, and then transfer the knowledge and skills they have acquired to similar situations encountered in the real-world.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
District of Columbia

Patient-Centered, Home-Based Technologies to Assess and Treat Motor Impairment in Individuals with Neurologic Injury

The Catholic University of America
School of Engineering
620 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20064
lum@cua.edu

Principal Investigator: Peter S. Lum, PhD
Public Contact: 202/319-5181

Project Number: 90REGE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,934; FY 19 $924,993; FY 20 $924,886; FY 21 $924,904; FY 22 $924,876

Abstract: This rehabilitation engineering research center (RERC-DC) promotes rehabilitation engineering-based devices, strategies, techniques, and interventions that can facilitate activity and mobility following neurologic injuries, specifically home-based technologies for treating motor impairments. Over the last decade, with the help of innovative devices, technologies, and protocols, rehabilitation has evolved from compensation for impairment to goals of recovery through neurorehabilitation. The ultimate goal is improved integration of impaired limbs into functional activities in the home and community. However, treatment and assessments are done predominantly in the clinic by therapists. Home-based technologies can have a large impact by providing tools to augment clinic-based delivery with assessments that are more valid and treatments that are less expensive, more convenient, and potentially more effective. The need to travel to the clinic to receive treatment from a therapist severely limits access for many patients and may blunt the effectiveness of some interventions. To bridge this gap, this RERC focuses research (R) and development (D) efforts on home-based technologies to treat motor impairments. D1 develops wearable upper extremity exoskeletons that can be integrated into activities of daily living for individuals with stroke. D2 develops an ankle-based robotic platform combined with video games for home-based rehabilitation of children with cerebral palsy. There are no clinically-accepted, objective methods of assessing spontaneous use of impaired limbs in the home and community. R1 tracks sensorimotor development and predicts future outcomes in infants at risk for motor delay using home-based video and specially designed toys that provide novel sensory feedback. R2 studies machine learning algorithms and wrist worn accelerometry for objectively measuring the amount of functional arm use in persons with stroke. R3 investigates factors that affect the everyday choices made by persons with stroke to either use an impaired upper extremity or compensate with the opposite limb. This is critical to understand, as even mild stroke-related impairment, when measured in the clinic, can result in very little spontaneous functional use at home. Rehabilitation technologies are often rejected by consumers. D3 explores the patient and caregiver perspective on these home-based technologies and develop guidelines and best practices for how to translate all these technologies into the home.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Technology for Access and Function

5-9
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)  
Georgia

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technologies to Support Successful Aging with Disability (RERC TechSAge)

Georgia Tech Research Corporation  
Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA)  
512 Means Street, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
jon.sanford@design.gatech.edu  
techsage.gatech.edu

Principal Investigator: Jon Sanford; Wendy A. Rogers; Tracy L. Mitzner  
Public Contact: 404/894-1413; Fax: 404/894-9320

Project Number: 90RE5016 (Formerly H133E130037)  
Start Date: October 01, 2013  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $924,999; FY 14 $924,994; FY 15 $924,992; FY 16 $924,998; FY 17 $924,994; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The RERC TechSAge conducts programs of advanced rehabilitation engineering and technical research and development (R&D) to increase knowledge about, availability of, and access to effective, universally-designed technologies that enable people to sustain independence, maintain health, safely engage in basic activities of daily living at home and the community, and participate in society as they age with disability. The RERC conducts nine R&D projects. Research projects include: R1. User Needs. This project uses a multi-faceted approach to provide converging evidence to support development of integrated technology that meets the needs of older adults with disabilities. Specifically, it develops a taxonomy of everyday support needs, assesses user needs for home-based activities, and creates an integrated dataset to predict task performance and technology need; R2. Effects of Age-Related Hearing Loss. This project investigates the ancillary impact of age-acquired hearing impairment on the use of mobility-related assistive technology (AT) and outdoor mobility among visually-impaired older adults to identify impacts on AT use, mobility, and community participation, resulting in design and practice guidelines; R3. Telewellness Technologies. This project identifies the requirements of telepresence technology interventions to compensate for activity limitations and participation restrictions among older adults with disabilities through an understanding of telerobot acceptance by the target population, determining the effectiveness of telerobot exercise interventions for enhancing self-efficacy and social connectedness, and assessing the usefulness and ease-of-use of a telerobot. Development projects include: D1. App Development. This project develops mobile applications to support successful aging by older adults with a disability. Three apps are planned: cognitive training to prevent functional decline, route planning to promote community mobility, and gait analysis to predict activity limitations; D2. Smart Bathroom. This project develops a system of smart bathroom technologies and fixtures, such as grab bars and adjustable toilets, that adapt to user’s needs and functional abilities based on an analysis of gait, balance, posture, grip strength, and other factors; D3. Mobile Manipulator Robot. This project develops an open-source code, open hardware robotic system that performs common actions with its hand.
(e.g., tool use) and is capable of adapting to changes in a user’s abilities and preferences to provide better assistance. Project activities result in universally-designed interventions that support successful aging with disability.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive

Georgia Institute of Technology
Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP)
500 Tenth Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30332
info@wirelessrerc.org
www.wirelessrerc.org
www.facebook.com/WirelessRERC
twitter.com/CACPGT_wRERC
www.linkedin.com/groups?mostRecent=&gid=1854667&trk=my_groups-tile-flipgrp

Principal Investigator: Helena Mitchell, PhD
Public Contact: Maureen Linden 404/894-4804; Fax: 404/385-0269

Project Number: 90RE5025
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $924,994; FY 17 $924,967; FY 18 $924,986; FY 19 $924,949; FY 20 $924,966

Abstract: Project goals include: (1) creating and promoting inclusive wireless technologies that improve the ability of individuals with disabilities to independently perform activities of their choice now, and in a fully-engaged and all-inclusive future; and (2) working with industry, government, and disability stakeholders to raise awareness and champion adoption of accessible solutions for wirelessly connected technologies. Outcomes include: (1) consumers with disabilities directly contributing to the development of wireless devices and services, (2) increasing in social connectedness of individuals with disabilities (including those with intellectual and development disabilities) across varied environments, (3) incorporating universal design elements to guide cultural and social design of current and future wirelessly-connected devices and sensors, and (4) adopting regulatory policies that increase accessible emergency alerts over multiple platforms. Results include consumers with disabilities in product development; the adoption of inclusive wireless products in wearables, apps, auditory devices; publications; knowledge translation; technology transfer; and outreach to stakeholders. The Wireless RERC is a collaboration of the Georgia Institute of Technology in partnership with the Shepherd Center, Georgia State University, the University of Texas, Arlington, and other stakeholders.
RERC on Technologies to Support Successful Aging in Place with Long-Term Disability (TechSAge RERC II)

Georgia Tech Research Corporation
Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA)
512 Means Street, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30318
jon.sanford@design.gatech.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Jon Sanford  
**Public Contact:** 404/894-1413; Fax: 404/894-9320

**Project Number:** 90REGE0006  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $924,997; FY 19 $924,950; FY 20 $924,991; FY 21 $924,962; FY 22 $924,985

**Abstract:** The RERC TechSAge II conducts programs of advanced rehabilitation engineering and technical research and development (R&D) to increase knowledge about, availability of, and access to effective, universally-designed technologies that enable people to sustain independence, maintain health, safely engage in basic activities of daily living at home and the community, and participate in society as they age with disability. The RERC conducts six R&D projects. Research projects include: R1. Needs Assessment and Technology Use for People Aging-in-Place with Long-Term Mobility Impairments. This project builds upon previous and current TechSAge research to utilize population-based data sets, expand the minimum battery dataset, extend the current ACCESS data collection effort, and develop standard user needs protocols to provide the necessary foundation for effective technology design to support aging-in-place with long-term impairment. R2. Voice-Activated Digital Home Assistance to Support Health and Independence of People Aging in Place with Long-Term Mobility Impairments. This project examines the efficacy of a suite of voice-activated digital assistance to enable control of the environment, encourage physical activity, facilitate social communication, and provide healthcare reminders for people aging with long-term impairment. R3. Telewellness Technologies: Translating an Evidence-Based Tai Chi Intervention for People Aging-in-Place with Long-Term Mobility Impairment. This project translates an evidence-based, Administration for Community Living (ACL) recommended, in-person exercise program for seniors entitled Tai Chi: Moving Better Balance, and demonstrates its effectiveness as a televideo-based group intervention for long-term wheelchair users. Development projects include: D1. Smart and Connected Homes. (D1.1) SmartBathroom develops transfer algorithms that automatically adjust a motorized toilet system to meet a user’s needs and functional abilities at any given point in time; (D1.2) Augmented and Virtual Reality Tools to Enhance Acceptance and Adoption of Connected Home Technology develops a series of tools that enable consumers to experience, through virtual sight and sound, how different smart home technologies would work in the user’s own homes, and guide system installers on how to match technologies to meet user needs. D2. Monitoring and Managing Falls as a Secondary Condition Among Long-Term Wheelchair Users. This project develops a multi-component,
customizable fall-detection system that can accurately detect falls among long-term wheelchair users and notify caregivers to enable quick response and reduce the amount of time an individual spends lying on the ground. D3. Silver Skill-IT. This project develops mobile and voice applications to support successful aging in place by people aging with long-term impairment. This suite includes three initial apps: (D3.1) iFRAM: Individualized Falls Risk Assessment, Management, and Prevention app for people with long-term mobility impairment; (D3.2) At the Market, an app to promote social engagement by facilitating access to activities, goods, and services at neighborhood farmer’s markets; and (D3.3) App & Skills Factory, a program of application and skill development identified from the TechSAge design competition. Project activities result in universally-designed interventions that support successful aging with disability.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Timing Investigation Dosage Implementation (TIDI)

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
llovell@sralab.org
www.sralab.org/labs/SMU

Principal Investigator: W. Zev Rymer, MD, PhD 312/239-3919
Public Contact: Linda Lovell, Grants Manager 312/238-6197

Project Number: 90RE5013 (Formerly H133E130019)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $924,937; FY 14 $924,906; FY 15 $924,805; FY 16 $924,726; FY 17 $924,719; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: The Shirley Ryan AbilityLab together with its partners, Northwestern University (NU), Emory University, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Colorado at Boulder, and Ekso Bionics design and implement a program of research and development centered on establishing a rational basis for quantifying the appropriate time distribution for use of robotic and computer-based interventions in rehabilitation therapy. The center also investigates how therapists interact with robotic devices when delivering therapy. Seven areas of research and development include: D1-R1 mixed-reality therapy for restoration of arm function in stroke survivors, D2-R2 development of computer-based algorithms for restoration of speech after stroke, D3-R3 effect of stretching of ankle muscles on locomotion in stroke survivors, and D4 how to train people with a spinal cord injury to use a robotic exoskeleton. Training for the center includes an advanced Education and Training project for undergraduate engineers dedicated to the design of simple devices for rehabilitation as part of NU’s highly successful initiative in engineering design education. Dissemination includes presentations at engineering and rehabilitation conferences, publications in high-impact peer reviewed journals, press releases, websites, and faculty presentations.
Technologies to Evaluate and Advance Mobility and Manipulation (TEAMM) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
abarlow@sralab.org
www.sralab.org/teamm-rerc

Principal Investigator: Todd Kuiken, MD, PhD; Levi Hargrove, PhD; Arun Jayaraman, PhD; Konrad Kording, PhD; Christian Poellabauer, PhD; W. Zev Rymer, MD, PhD 312/238-1315
Public Contact: Ann K. Barlow, PhD 312/238-5653; Fax: 312/238-2081

Project Number: 90RE5014 (Formerly H133E130020)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $924,939; FY 14 $924,997; FY 15 $924,972; FY 16 $924,931; FY 17 $924,953; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This RERC develops technologies to evaluate and advance mobility and manipulation for people with movement disabilities and includes a total of six projects: three combined development/research projects, two research projects, and one development project. Two projects are focused on upper limb amputees: The Voluntary Opening and Voluntary Closing Terminal Device (VOVC) Project and the Partial-hand Control Project. The VOVC Project is a clinical trial of an innovative new terminal device that enables two types of grasp that traditionally require two separate devices. The Partial-hand Control Project develops a pattern recognition–based control system for motorized fingers and evaluates this technology in a clinical trial. The Ekso Project evaluates use of a powered exoskeleton device to improve gait and mobility therapy in people following severe stroke. The Social Mobility Project develops and evaluates a new research tool that uses a cell phone application (app) to monitor a person’s mobility at home and anywhere in the community. The app identifies the mobility mode (i.e. walking, wheelchair, car, etc.) and assesses social interactions by analyzing where people go. While focusing on people with stroke, one of the largest populations with disability, this app can be applied to virtually any population with mobility-limiting disability. The Manual Standing Wheelchair (MSW) Project develops and evaluates a wheelchair that enables users to be mobile in a sitting or standing position utilizing an ergonomically efficient lever drive. The MSW Project focuses on a large array of wheelchair users, including those with spinal cord injury, spina bifida, and multiple sclerosis. Finally, the Powered Leg Project uses state-of-the-art-technology to create a lightweight powered leg system targeted for older or smaller persons with a lower limb amputation.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Illinois

Collaborative Machines Enhancing Therapies (COMET)

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
Sensory Motor Performance Program (SMPP)
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Northwestern University
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
jpatton@SRALab.org

Principal Investigator: Jim Patton, PhD; David J. Reinkensmeyer, PhD; 949/824-5218
(Reinkensmeyer)
Public Contact: Jim Patton, PhD 312/238-1277; Fax: 312/238-7605

Project Number: 90REGE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,952; FY 19 $924,971; FY 20 $924,902; FY 21 $924,972; FY 22 $924,944

Abstract: This project establishes a new Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center, Collaborative Machines Enhancing Therapies (COMET), focusing on advancing technologies that work in partnership with patients and clinicians to enhance gait and dexterity outcomes for individuals with stroke and spinal cord injury (SCI) and other people with disabilities in a real-life rehabilitation setting. This project aims to produce technological innovations that improve therapeutic outcomes, advance the state of knowledge regarding technology-enabled therapy techniques and interventions, and educate and share this new knowledge with practitioners. Project outcomes include increasing clinician knowledge and improving practices, as well as utilizing new knowledge to determine the effectiveness and clinical uptake of rehabilitation therapy technologies. Products include new therapy technologies, commercial translation with Center partners, new methods of study, scientific publications, and educational materials. This multi-institutional collaboration includes partnerships with the University of California at Irvine, University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, North Carolina State University, Delft University of Technology, Harvard University, and several commercial, clinical, and consumer stakeholders.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Illinois

Technologies to Evaluate and Advance Mobility and Manipulation (TEAMM) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
abarlow@sralab.org
www.sralab.org/teamm-rerc

Principal Investigator: Todd Kuiken, MD, PhD 312/238-1315
Public Contact: Ann K. Barlow, PhD 312/238-5653; Fax: 312/238-2081

Project Number: 90REGE0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,999; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This RERC develops technologies to evaluate and advance mobility and manipulation for people with movement disabilities. The Center has six objectives: (1) to perform home trials of a manual standing wheelchair (developed under a previous RERC grant) and finalize the design to FDA standards; (2) modify a smart, wearable airbag system with custom smartphone application to sense falls in stroke survivors, and evaluate whether use of this system can mitigate fall injuries and improve walking confidence; (3) optimize and evaluate a robotic trainer for children with cerebral palsy; (4) develop and evaluate a low-cost prosthetic arm system targeted for individuals with amputation in both low-income countries and the US; and (5) evaluate a novel prosthetic leg with powered and passive modes (also developed under a previous RERC grant) in elderly users. In addition to research, evaluation, and developmental activities, this project implements comprehensive training programs to train the next generation of scientists and clinicians; and disseminates results to consumers, the public, and other relevant stakeholders. Outcomes include advanced production-ready prototypes of all devices that are clinically and commercially viable, production of peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings, and training materials for fitting powered prosthetic legs; and a low-cost prosthetic arm system using a simple, low-cost fabrication method.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Maryland

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Universal Interface and Information Technology Access

University of Maryland, College Park
Trace Research and Development Center
4130 Campus Drive
4105 Hornbake Building, South Wing
College Park, MD 20742
trace-info@umd.edu
trace.umd.edu

Principal Investigator: Gregg C. Vanderheiden, PhD 301/660-6357
Public Contact: Kate Vanderheiden 301/405-2043; Fax: 301/314-9145

Project Number: 90RE5027
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $925,000; FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/30/2019)

Abstract: This RERC is focused on accessibility of information and communication technologies, for persons across disability types and socio-economic levels. Accessibility issues addressed by this RERC stem from the interaction of four trends in information technology: (1) technology is increasingly required for all aspects of life (education, employment, health, safety, transportation, community participation, home management); (2) accessibility solutions do not exist for many groups – especially people with non-“mainstream” disabilities; (3) solutions that exist are often unaffordable; and (4) the number of different technology platforms, operating systems, and technology types that an individual must be able to use is increasing faster than assistive technology (AT) vendors can address. The RERC builds on and coordinates with the ongoing work of an international consortium (“Raising the Floor”) engaged in development of an underlying inclusive infrastructure that can greatly simplify accessibility and reduce costs for users and developers. This Global Public Inclusive Infrastructure (GPII) is designed to make assistive technologies and other access solutions available for many more users, much more efficiently and cost-effectively. (Both the consortium and the GPII concept were originated in the predecessor RERC.) The RERC’s research and development activities include: (1) Continuing development of the GPII concept – evolving it to address the changing technology landscape and the growing understanding of its role based on discussions with accessibility and mainstream stakeholders; (2) Moving the GPII from concept, papers, and laboratory prototypes, through to field implementations to test the efficacy and viability of the concept with real-world conditions, users, and limitations/realities; specifically: (a) Development and testing of a package for deploying and applying the GPII in public libraries of all sizes, with a focus on providing libraries with cost-effective ways of serving users with a wider range of abilities – including those with cognitive, memory, and digital-literacy related barriers such as elders and first-time users; (b) Development and testing of a decision support tool based on the GPII Unified Listing, that provides users and clinicians with a new capability for tracking and selecting ever-changing solutions for users – including not only comprehensive information on assistive technologies, but also...
(3) Facilitating and promoting access built directly into mainstream ICT products through technology transfer programs and research support for industry standards groups and governmental agencies working on accessibility standards.
Inclusive Information and Communications Technology RERC

University of Maryland
4130 Campus Drive
4105 Hornbake Building, South Wing
College Park, MD 20742
katevan@umd.edu

Principal Investigator: Gregg C. Vanderheiden, PhD 301/660-6357
Public Contact: Kate Vanderheiden 301/405-2043; Fax: 301/314-9145

Project Number: 90REGE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This RERC addresses access to inclusive information and communication technologies (ICT) for people with disabilities. ICTs are an integral part of life, impacting education, employment, health, transportation, and social communication; however, as ICTs continue to evolve (e.g., digital technologies) access for individuals with disabilities may become prohibitive. This project takes a two-part approach to addressing ICT accessibility issues by (1) ensuring that existing solutions are known, effective, findable, more affordable, and available on every computer or digital technology platform; and (2) exploring the emerging next-next-generation interface technologies for which there are no effective accessibility guidelines or standards, and problem-solving in advance of these technologies. Project activities include: (1) extending data science methods to include people with disabilities (who may be considered outliers to the developer community) so that data-driven technologies will work for them; (2) identifying interface strategies that work for people with severe and progressive cognitive disabilities (e.g., dementia); (3) creating new tools to easily discover which techniques and aids a person with a particular disability and/or disabilities needs in order to use ICTs, as well as have real-time solution-driven responses on any ICT a person with a disability utilizes; (4) developing a new approach to accessibility that works for next-next-generation interfaces including speech, text, eye-gaze, gesture, virtual reality, AI agents, emotion, and virtual direct-brain interfaces; and (5) ensuring existing proven solutions are within reach and available to those who most need them.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Michigan

Technology Increasing Knowledge: Technology Optimizing Choice (TIKTOC) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC)

The Regents of the University of Michigan
University of Michigan Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
325 East Eisenhower Parkway, Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
domichin@med.umich.edu
cthi.medicine.umich.edu/projects/tiktoc-rerc

Principal Investigator: Michelle A. Meade, PhD; Edmund Durfee, PhD
Public Contact: Donna Omichinski 734/615-6720; Fax: 734/936-7048

Project Number: 90RE5012 (Formerly H133E130014)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $923,442; FY 14 $924,560; FY 15 $924,502; FY 16 $920,402; FY 17 $922,220; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates innovative rehabilitation strategies, techniques, and interventions to enhance health, participation, and employment outcomes among adolescents and young adults with physical, cognitive, and neurodevelopmental disabilities. Center projects include two research studies and four development projects. The research projects include R1: An exploratory study to identify the primary cognitive and motivational variables that impact self-management ability and behaviors among adolescents and young adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities; and R2: A randomized clinical trial of a serious game developed to enhance self-management ability among adolescents and young adults with spinal cord dysfunction. The four development projects supported by the Center include: D1: The development of an effective system of data collection, analysis, and display tools to assist healthcare teams support individuals with disabilities to prioritize, address, measure, and track success in achieving personally optimal levels of health and participation; D2: The development of a dynamic scheduling system based on state-of-the-art artificial intelligence (AI) techniques that augments human cognition to support the management of health and participation of young adults with disabilities; D3: The development of a suite of data driven, context-aware and tailorable problem solving tools that leverage mobile and cloud-based technology to assist adolescents and young adults with physical disabilities manage their health in partnership with their care team; and D4: The development of evidence-based strategies, including interactive technology support, for adolescents and young adults with executive dysfunction and neurodevelopmental disabilities to improve self-care strategies, including medication management, medication adherence and side effect assessment. The TIKTOC RERC is an interdisciplinary collaboration of researchers, scientists and clinicians from the School of Medicine, the College of Engineering, the College of Pharmacy, and the School of Information within the University of Michigan.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
New Jersey

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Wearable Robots for Independent Living

New Jersey Institute of Technology
616 Fenster Hall
Newark, NJ 07102-1824
foulds@njit.edu
centers.njit.edu/rehabilitation/projects

Principal Investigator: Sergei Adamovich, PhD
Public Contact: 973/596-3413

Project Number: 90RE5021
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $924,577; FY 16 $924,776; FY 17 $924,818; FY 18 $924,858; FY 19 $924,558

Abstract: This project conducts research and development activities focused on wearable robots for independent mobility and manipulation. This RERC is a joint effort of the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and the Kessler Research Foundation comprising three research and two comprehensive development projects, plus a portfolio of training activities. Two of the research projects employ three commercially available, lower extremity exoskeletons: One explores the potential of simultaneous spinal cord stimulation to improve exoskeleton use by individuals with spinal cord injury; the second studies the possible improvement in gait after stroke caused by using exoskeletons early in the rehabilitation process. The third project studies the benefit of home-based robotic rehabilitation of the upper extremities in persons who have had a stroke, employing the new upper extremity exoskeleton being developed by the NJIT. One development project explores the application of robotic admittance control as means of allowing users of a lower extremity exoskeleton to have complete control over the movement of their legs. The users make walking-like movements with their hands (or fingers) which are sensed and used to control the movement of the exoskeleton legs. Haptic feedback of the leg movement, conveyed to the hands, provides essential feedback to the user. The project also explores the ability of additional powered degrees of freedom to allow a combination of autonomous and user-initiated balance. The second development project extends the NJIT-developed upper extremity orthosis to meet the needs of children with muscular dystrophy and people of all ages with incomplete tetraplegia due to SCI. Admittance control is used as it offers a superior way to counterbalance gravity and the mass of objects to be lifted, thus letting the exoskeleton respond reliably and accurately to limited residual muscle forces. Training activities include a new continuing education (2-3 day) course for clinicians and physicians on wearable robotic applications and a new graduate course for engineering students on the design of wearable robots. Material from the RERC is included in the Kessler Post-Doctoral and Rehabilitation Residency curricula as well as to NJIT’s existing graduate courses on biorobotics, neuromuscular engineering, and neurorehabilitation. Additional training includes a new graduate certificate to be given after the completion of four graduate courses, as well as the infusion of wearable robot experience into master’s theses, undergraduate capstone design projects, and mentoring of pre-college students.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Technology for Access and Function
5-23
RERC on Universal Design and the Built Environment

University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
School of Architecture and Planning
402 Crofts Hall
Buffalo, NY 14260-7003
ap-idea@buffalo.edu
idea.ap.buffalo.edu
twitter.com/IDeA_Center
www.facebook.com/pages/Center-for-Inclusive-Design-and-Environmental-Access
www.universaldesign.com
www.youtube.com/user/ideacenterU

Principal Investigator: Edward Steinfeld, ArchD 716/829-5899
Public Contact: Jordana Maisel, PhD 716/829-5902; Fax: 716/829-3861

Project Number: 90RE5022
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $924,992; FY 16 $924,993; FY 17 $924,996; FY 18 $924,998; FY 19 $924,995

Abstract: The RERC on Universal Design and the Built Environment uses a Knowledge-To-Action Model to advance accessibility and universal design (UD) in the four domains of the built environment: (1) housing, (2) commercial and public buildings, (3) community infrastructure, and (4) transportation. The RERC activities address key needs for knowledge and demonstrate the value of evidence-based practice through improved building regulations and adoption of voluntary UD standards. Strategically important research, development, training, and dissemination activities integrate accessibility and UD principles with the generally accepted models, methods, and metrics in the building and product development industries. Short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes improve physical access, health, and social participation for people with disabilities while also being beneficial for the broader population of users of the built environment. Project R1 conducts evaluations of buildings and facilities in which UD features have been incorporated to assess their effectiveness in practice, strengthen the business case for UD, and provide evidence to support increased adoption of UD. Project R2 conducts human factors research on prevention of slips and falls, use of wayfinding apps, and cost-effective methods to evaluate UD products during the design process. Project DV1 develops software tools to improve the implementation of accessibility and UD standards, including an interface for UD certification. Project DV2 engages nine industry partners to create exemplar UD products and environments. Training activities increase knowledge and capacity about accessibility and UD for a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities and their advocates. The RERC offers continuing education for design professionals and service providers through conferences, online modules, and collaborations with partners already serving these audiences. Interdisciplinary B; graduate education opportunities build the expertise of the
next generation of researchers and practitioners. To reach a broad audience, dissemination activities include a wide array of print and electronic media, all accessible from a web portal. Outreach includes participation in international, national, and local networks and events.
LiveWell RERC - Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Community Living, Health, and Function

Duke University  
Division of Speech Pathology and Audiology  
40 Medicine Circle, Clinic1-I  
DUMC 3887  
Durham, NC 27710  
john.morris@Shepherd.org  
www.livewellrerc.org

Principal Investigator: Frank DeRuyter, PhD; Mike Jones, PhD 919/684-6271 (DeRuyter); 404/350-7595 (Jones)

Public Contact: John Morris, PhD 404/367-1348; Fax: 919/684-8298

Project Number: 90RE5023  
Start Date: September 30, 2015  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $924,872; FY 16 $924,764; FY 17 $924,978; FY 18 $924,954; FY 19 $924,899

Abstract: The primary goals of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Community Living, Health, and Function (LiveWell-RERC) are to: (1) promote ICT access to existing and emerging technologies for all people regardless of ability, and (2) develop and validate ICT applications to improve the capacity for independent living and community participation. To accomplish these goals this project includes three research and three development projects. Each project examines important aspects of ICT access. Discovery of User Needs and Preferences for Information and Communication Technologies identifies and confirms users’ needs and access issues related to ICT use, and establishes priorities for potential ICT development independent of technology platforms or form factors. Factors Affecting Acceptance of ICT – People with Disabilities and Caregivers discovers and reports on barriers and opportunities to accessibility and use of wearable, home monitoring and automation technology. Improving Safety and Activity Independence in the Home/Community following TBI is designed to improve safety, increase activity and participation, lessen family burden, and improve life quality through use of self-report measurement paired with technology-based environmental feedback that informs on ability, realistic “next step” goals, treatment, and progress. Development activities include: (1) Technology/Policy Watch and Emerging Issues for ICT Access, to identify mainstream scientific and technology developments that can impact ICT access, policies, guidelines, and standards; (2) Tech Factory – Meeting User Needs by Developing ICT & Software, is comprised of two complementary efforts to respond rapidly to new mainstream ICT development that can be leveraged to meet the needs of people with disabilities; and (3) Use of Behavioral Informatics to Support Safety and Activity Independence in the Home and Community, builds a virtual coach to complement or replaces the hands-on support and assistance provided by a life coach or family member. Finally, training and dissemination activities promote the adoption of new knowledge into practice.
This includes student capacity building, as well as consumer and industry engagement to develop and maintain tools and channels for communicating information on accessible ICT produced by the LiveWell-RERC. The LiveWell-RERC is a partnership between Duke University, the Shepherd Center, and Northeastern University. Additional collaborators include the AGE-WELL National Center of Excellence and University of Toronto in Canada; The Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer (KT4TT); Side by Side Brain Injury Clubhouse; and commercial partners ilumivu, Samsung, and Verizon.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Physical Access and Transportation

Carnegie Mellon University
Robotics Institute
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
steinfeld@cmu.edu
www.rercapt.org

**Principal Investigator:** Aaron Steinfeld, PhD  
**Public Contact:** 412/268-6346; Fax: 412/268-6436

**Project Number:** 90RE5011 (Formerly H133E130004)  
**Start Date:** October 01, 2013  
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 13 $923,878; FY 14 $924,054; FY 15 $922,383; FY 16 $923,440; FY 17 $923,446; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

**Abstract:** The RERC on Physical Access and Transportation empowers consumers, manufacturers, and service providers in the design and evaluation of accessible transportation equipment, information services, and physical environments. Project activities build upon previous work to focus on enabling technology and universal design to support independent and efficient multi-modal travel in daily life, including its significant role in employment and social participation. Research and development activities provide new tools, research findings, guidelines, and products that advance the field of transportation and “last mile” (e.g., the portion of a trip from public transportation to the rider’s final destination) issues. Research Project 1 focuses on understanding real-time trip information and community dialog as methods for empowering accessible travel. Research Project 2 expands the evidence base for boarding and disembarking policies, practices, and products with an in-depth examination of vehicle ramp and interior design in large transit vehicles. Research Project 3 studies para-transit usage and the usability of the “last mile.” Development Project 1 leverages existing technologies to implement software systems to help riders during multi-modal trips. Development Project 2 partners with bus manufacturers, service providers, and transit agencies to produce standards and regulations, reference designs, and vehicle interior concepts ready for commercialization. This project’s training activities increase understanding and build capacity for accessible transportation and pedestrian rights-of-way for a wide range of stakeholders through an online continuing education program, multi-disciplinary research and development experiences for university students, and advanced graduate students. Dissemination outputs include traditional refereed and trade publications; an extensive website with downloadable information products and design tools; and outreach activities with professional, business, and standards development organizations. Finally, a State-of-the-Science conference brings together all stakeholder groups to envision how future transportation systems can support independent transit use and incorporate universal design as a guiding philosophy.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC):
From Cloud to Smartphone – Accessible and Empowering ICT

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6026 Forbes Tower
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
parmanto@pitt.edu
www.rercict.pitt.edu
www.imhere.pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Bambang Parmanto, PhD
Public Contact: 412/383-6649

Project Number: 90RE5018 (Formerly H133E140039)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $949,413; FY 15 $949,361; FY 16 $947,365; FY 17 $949,360; FY 18 $949,301

Abstract: The goal of this RERC is to mitigate accessibility barriers to information and communication technology (ICT) for persons with disabilities (PwDs) with functional and device limitations, provide affordable access to ICT for underserved populations, and develop innovative ICT to improve health and function, social participation, and employment among PwDs. The theme of “From Cloud to Smartphone: Empowering and Accessible ICT” guides the Center’s research and development activities which address cognitive and vocational rehabilitation, communication technology assessment and training, tele-rehabilitation infrastructure, and prevention and management of secondary conditions through six projects: (1) Cloud Accessibility WebAnywhere, (2) Accessible TeleWellness, (3) Accessible Mobile Vocational Coaching, (4) Speech and Language Teletherapy to Rural Underserved Areas, (5) Adaptive Accessible mHealth Transcoding, (5) Longitudinal Accessibility of Web 2.0, and (6) Privacy and Security for PwDs. Center collaborators include the University of Pittsburgh School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, the Computer Sciences Human-Computer Interaction Institute at Carnegie-Mellon University, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the DePaul School of Hearing and Speech.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Improving Health and Function Through Use of Performance Standards in Wheelchair Selection

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6425 Penn Avenue, Suite 401, Room 7
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dbrienza@pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: David M. Brienza, PhD; Patricia Karg; Jonathan L. Pearlman, PhD; Mark Schmeler, PhD; Stephen Sprigle, PhD
Public Contact: David M. Brienza, PhD 412/624-6383; Fax: 412/624-6501

Project Number: 90REGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $924,732; FY 18 $924,633; FY 19 $924,551; FY 20 $924,978; FY 21 $924,916

Abstract: This center investigates performance-based selection as a rehabilitation strategy that uses results from standards testing to inform the process of selecting appropriate wheelchair products for people with mobility disabilities, matching appropriate and quality products to meet user needs. The center develops, evaluates, and implements performance standards for cushion tissue integrity management, cushion durability, wheelchair durability, and wheelchair propulsion efficiency. These performance standards establish test methods and requirements for devices. The goal of the RERC is to improve wheelchair services through an evidence-based approach using a performance-based product selection strategy. The specific objectives are to: (1) Develop and validate a test method for seat cushion load-bearing performance; (2) improve a test method for seat cushion performance stability with use; (3) develop and validate a test method for wheelchair rolling resistance; (4) develop and validate a test method for wheelchair caster durability; (5) research and disseminate product performance using these methods; and (6) research clinical relevance by evaluating equivalency of product performance and relating standards outcomes to clinical and real-world outcomes.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

RERC on Physical Access and Transportation

Carnegie Mellon University
Robotics Institute
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
steinfeld@cmu.edu

Principal Investigator: Aaron Steinfeld, PhD; Jordana Maisel, PhD; 716/829-5902 (Maisel)
Public Contact: Aaron Steinfeld, PhD 412/268-6346; Fax: 412/268-6436

Project Number: 90REGE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,377; FY 19 $924,176; FY 20 $924,327; FY 21 $924,470; FY 22 $924,278

Abstract: The RERC on Physical Access and Transportation empowers consumers, manufacturers, and service providers in the design, utilization, and evaluation of accessible informational services, transportation equipment, and physical environments. Project activities build upon previous work to leverage emerging information technologies and address the need for customer-driven solutions that can be rapidly implemented and adapted to a wide range of transportation systems. Project outcomes include: (1) enabling technology and universal designs that support independent and efficient multi-modal travel in everyday life, including for employment and social participation; and (2) providing greater professional capacity in the domain of accessible transportation. Research and development activities provide new tools, research findings, guidelines, and products that advance the accessibility of transportation and the first/last mile (the distance between home and the nearest transportation pick-up and drop-off spot). These include: (1) research findings from a deployed, mobile transit information test bed application; (2) knowledge on how emerging transit service delivery models and automated vehicles can address first/last mile challenges; (3) new software for personalized transit information and daily travel planning; and (4) standards and regulations, reference designs, and vehicle interior concepts ready for commercialization by the autonomous vehicle industry. These products are developed with ongoing and extensive input from disability stakeholders, vehicle manufacturers, service providers, and transit agencies.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (The RERC on AAC)

The Pennsylvania State University
College of Health and Human Development
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
401H Ford Building
University Park, PA 16802
dbm2@psu.edu
rerc-aac.psu.edu
www.facebook.com/AACRERC
twitter.com/RERConAAC
www.youtube.com/user/AACRERC

Principal Investigator: Janice C. Light, PhD
Public Contact: David McNaughton, PhD 814/863-2010; Fax: 814/863-3759

Project Number: 90RE5017 (Formerly H133E140026)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $948,188; FY 15 $949,461; FY 16 $949,224; FY 17 $949,976; FY 18 $949,600

Abstract: This project conducts rigorous evidence-based research for designing effective augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies and interventions, develops and evaluates innovative AAC engineering solutions driven by consumer needs, and provides comprehensive training and dissemination to ensure that all individuals, including those with severe disabilities, have access to effective AAC to enhance the communication of individuals with complex communication needs (CCN). The Center’s research and development activities (R & D) are organized around three themes: (1) improving access to technologies for individuals with CCN who have severe motor impairments by investigating and developing new access techniques (e.g., brain control interfaces and multimodal access); (2) developing language support technologies to enhance communication for those with significant language/cognitive limitations (e.g., technologies that facilitate the transition to literacy, provide contextually relevant smart prediction, and support video visual scene displays to enhance participation in school, work, and community routines); and (3) improving the AAC human-computer interface to reduce cognitive processing demands and enhance communication. Additionally, the Center brings together a team of rehabilitation engineers and scientists to deliver targeted training and dissemination to build greater capacity and maximize the effective translation of R & D for real-world use.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Technology for Access and Function
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Scale-up of an Innovative, Evidence-Based Movement-2-Music (M2M) Intervention for Adults with Physical/Mobility Disability

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Health Professions
1720 Second Avenue South, SHPB 331
Birmingham, AL 35233
jrimmer@uab.edu

Principal Investigator: James H. Rimmer, PhD; Hui-Ju (Zoe) Young, PhD
Public Contact: 205/934-8773; Fax: 205/975-7787

Project Number: 90DPGE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This project examines the feasibility, efficacy, and effectiveness of an innovative, evidence-based intervention (Movement-2-Music, M2M©) for people with physical/mobility disabilities. The project conducts three studies. Study 1 is a randomized controlled efficacy trial examining the effects of a 12-week M2M© intervention in adults with physical/mobility disabilities on three functional levels: Level I – sitting exercise only, Level II – sitting and standing exercise (with or without support while standing), and Level III – sitting or standing exercise with emphasis on right/left side (for participants with hemiparesis). Study 2 is a 12-week randomized implementation trial testing the delivery methods of the M2M© intervention on study participants in two different settings: a community-based health and recreation center and a home-based telehealth (i.e., teleexercise) platform. The final study (Study 3) is a type 1 hybrid effectiveness-implementation random control trial comparing the effectiveness of two delivery methods of M2M©. Primary outcomes include improved physical and psychosocial health for individuals with physical/mobility disabilities. Training includes the development of a certificate in disability content and M2M© with the American College of Sports Medicine. Research findings including M2M© content are to be distributed nationally through the National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
District of Columbia

Twenty-First Century Captioning Technology Metrics and Usability

Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Technology Access Program; SLCC 1116
Washington, DC 20002-3695
christian.vogler@gallaudet.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Christian Vogler, PhD
**Public Contact:** 202/250-2795 (V/Video); Fax: 202/651-5476

**Project Number:** 90DPCP0002
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018
**Length:** 60 months
**NIDILRR Officer:** Stephen Bauer, PhD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $475,000; FY 19 $475,000; FY 20 $475,000; FY 21 $475,000; FY 22 $475,000

**Abstract:** This project examines access to video (broadcast or streaming) and its effects on societal participation (e.g., entertainment, news, political process, etc.), and develops a modern evidence-based approach to address the caption quality and caption user interface/user experience needs of viewers who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Project objectives are to: (1) develop caption quality metrics that are widely accepted, practical, technology neutral, and maximize access to video by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing; and (2) investigate factors in the presentation/display of captions on the screen to optimize their usability for and the experience of Deaf and hard of hearing viewers. Project outcomes include: (1) changes to caption quality policies, (2) changes to caption user interface guidelines, and (3) the adoption of clear standards that both human and ASR-based captioning processes should meet. Project outputs include programs, technologies, and guidelines for assessing captions; a video library for evaluating captioning methods; evidence-based reports that link caption quality metrics with subjective and objective viewer metrics; and evidence-based reports that describe the impact of caption display/presentation on the viewers. This project is a collaboration of Gallaudet University, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and Apptek in consultation with consumer and industry stakeholders.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project on
Inclusive Cloud and Web Computing

Carnegie Mellon University
Robotics Institute
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
steinfeld@cmu.edu
inclusiveweb.org

Principal Investigator: Aaron Steinfeld, PhD
Public Contact: 412/268-6346; Fax: 412/268-6436

Project Number: 90DP0061 (Formerly H133A130057)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $748,126; FY 14 $748,192; FY 15 $748,208; FY 16 $748,455; FY 17 $748,957; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project researches and develops methods to enable software providers to easily and rapidly implement inclusive user experiences so that consumers are empowered to fully participate in cloud and web systems. The project is guided by four main principles: (1) rapid utilization, (2) cloud services, (3) universal design, and (4) a focus on users with low vision and cognitive disabilities. Research and development activities are built upon cutting-edge efforts in computer science, human-computer interaction, and machine learning. The research projects are focused on forming a better understanding of how end users want and should interact with and utilize enabling software components. Key areas of research include crowd-sourced assistance, adaptive user interfaces, and authentication. The development projects are focused on implementing prototypes and moving them rapidly towards deployment and eventual commercialization. They are designed to draw from the research projects and ensure rapid transition of new knowledge through a variety of utilization pathways.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Self-Management Assistance Through Technology (SMART) -
Virtual Coaches for Wheelchair Users

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6425 Penn Avenue, Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dad5@pitt.edu
www.vwc.pitt.edu/index.html

Principal Investigator: Dan Ding, PhD
Public Contact: 412/822-3684; Fax: 412/822-3698

Project Number: 90DP0056 (Formerly H133A130025)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $473,772; FY 14 $474,735; FY 15 $474,724; FY 16 $474,590; FY 17 $474,685; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: This project aims to improve health and functional outcomes of wheelchair users by increasing their knowledge of appropriate wheelchair use and their role in the wheelchair service delivery process, and providing supportive technologies to assist them in leading a healthy lifestyle through the development and testing of two virtual coaches. The Wheelchair/Seating Usage Coach is a suite of interactive mobile apps and portable sensing devices that teach safe and effective use of a wheelchair (e.g., wheelchair fit, propulsion techniques, wheelchair maintenance, and use of seat functions), and assists wheelchair users in navigating the service delivery process. The Lifestyle Coach is a suite of interactive mobile apps and portable sensing devices that assist wheelchair users to self-monitor and manage their weight and physical activity. The United Spinal Association and peer support groups in the Pittsburgh area and other regions assist in the development and testing of these virtual coaches. The project expects to commercialize the portable sensing devices and disseminate the mobile apps through app stores, partner organizations, professionals pursuing continuing education credits, professional conferences, and social media. The coaching tools can be incorporated into a community-based program that teaches self-management skills applied to wheelchair use and healthy lifestyle for wheelchair users.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

**DRRP on Robotics and Automation for Inclusive Transportation**

Carnegie Mellon University
Robotics Institute
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
steinfeld@cmu.edu

Principal Investigator: Aaron Steinfeld, PhD
Public Contact: 412/268-6346; Fax: 412/268-6436

Project Number: 90DPGE0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,896; FY 18 $499,986; FY 19 $499,910; FY 20 $499,902; FY 21 $499,876

Abstract: This project researches and develops seamless transportation assistance from cloud-based autonomy and shared robots located in and around transportation hubs. The goal of this project is to enable more independent travel within the community by people with disabilities through universal design, coordinated research, and precursor projects already underway. The objectives are to: (1) identify methods for acquiring and applying knowledge about traveler routines to support seamless changes in travel, (2) determine appropriate intervention methods for preemptively addressing barriers along a traveler’s trip, (3) develop scalable methods for rich map information during user and robot navigation, and (4) develop cloud-based autonomy and shared hub robots that can provide assistance during daily travel. Through these objectives, the project aims to improve effective and seamless travel within the community; generate new knowledge on when and how to provide assistance to travelers with disabilities; develop new, reusable, open source travel assistance technologies; and expand capacity through new technology and training of new experts in the field.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Initiative to Mobilize Partnerships for successful
Assistive technology Transfer (IMPACT)

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6425 Penn Avenue, Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
jlp46@pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Jonathan L. Pearlman, PhD; Mary R. Goldberg, PhD; 412/648-1343
Public Contact: Kim Robinson 412/648-1332

Project Number: 90DPKT0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,266; FY 19 $924,202; FY 20 $919,779; FY 21 $924,915; FY 22 $920,109

Abstract: This project addresses the barriers, facilities, and factors associated with assistive technolo-
gies (ATs), and successful AT technology transfer (ATTT). ATs are needed by an estimated one billion
individuals worldwide to participate fully in society and live active, independent lives; without them,
individuals are often excluded from society, do not have access to basic opportunities such as education
and jobs, and are at a higher risk of being poor and unhealthy. There is a need and marketing opportu-
nity to address a poorly defined and fragmented markets, lack of clear regulations, and informal service
provision channels that lead to barriers to successful ATTT. This project develops tools and approaches
to streamline and improve the efficiency of ATTT for people with disabilities in the US and worldwide.
Specifically, this project conducts research and development projects to comprehensively understand
barriers and facilitators to successful ATTT, track the activities regarding the ATTT success rate of
NIDILRR-funded projects, and raise awareness and increase capacity of NIDILRR grantees to perform
successful ATTT.
Comparative Effectiveness of Off-the-Shelf (OTS) Versus Custom-made Ankle-Foot Orthosis in Individuals with Stroke

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center
Rancho Research Institute
7601 East Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242
smulroy@dhs.lacounty.gov

Principal Investigator: Sara Mulroy, PhD
Public Contact: 562/401-7177

Project Number: 90IFRE0017
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project compares the effectiveness of two commonly used ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs) types: (1) prefabricated, off-the-shelf (OTS) semi-rigid polypropylene, and (2) a custom-made polypropylene articulating AFO with a dorsiflexion stop and dorsiflexion spring assistance (DS/DA) for individuals with intermediary deficits in walking function post-stroke. AFOs are frequently prescribed for patients with hemiplegia to enhance walking function. Project objectives are to: (1) identify the biomechanical mechanisms underlying improvements in walking in an OTS and custom-made AFO; (2) compare the effects of OTS and custom-made DS/DA AFOs on self-reported measures of satisfaction and daily stepping activity with the AFO; (3) determine if effectiveness of the OTS and custom-made DS/DA is dependent upon clinical measures of muscle strength, range of motion, and sensation and/or spasticity; (4) determine the threshold levels of clinical and functional measures necessary to benefit from the semi-rigid OTS AFO; and (5) determine the rate of abandonment with OTS and custom-made DS/DA AFOs. Outcomes include: (1) criteria for prescribing the most appropriate AFO for the middle functioning group of persons after stroke, (2) threshold levels of clinical and functional measures that indicate whether an OTS semi-rigid or custom-made DS/DA AFO is most appropriate, (3) rate of abandonment of prescribed AFOs, and (4) a cost-effective AFO prescription for persons with hemiplegia from stroke using an evidence-based patient-centered decision-making guideline. Dissemination products include peer-reviewed publications, presentations, training materials, guidelines for optimal AFO prescription, and a mobile application.
**Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)**

Georgia

**ALIGN v.2.0: Identification and Quantification of Real-Time Barriers to Community Mobility**

Georgia Tech Research Corporation  
Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA)  
512 Means Street, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
jon.sanford@design.gatech.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Jon Sanford  
**Public Contact:** 404/894-1413; Fax: 404/894-9320

**Project Number:** 90IF0123  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2016  
**Length:** 36 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Brian Bard  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 16 $199,940; FY 17 $199,963; FY 18 $199,962

**Abstract:** This project builds upon the Application for Locational Intelligence and Geospatial Navigation (ALIGN) prototype developed and pilot tested as part of the RERC on Technologies for Successful Aging with Disability. This project: (1) identifies and validates key real-time factors (i.e., pedestrian volumes and timing of traffic of signals); (2) refines the database structure and data acquisition processes; (3) applies a weighting system to real-world factors to generate route mobility scores; (4) develops an enhanced routing algorithm; (5) develops the backend capability to collect actual use data to inform continual refinement; (6) refines and tests usability of the interface; (7) demonstrates feasibility through real-world utility testing; and (8) develops a management, marketing, and distribution strategy. Project outcomes include a proof-of-concept prototype ALIGN v.2.0 with routing algorithms that enable the application to be customized with location-specific data enhancing the mobility of people with mobility disabilities for any geographic area.
Improving Electronic Written Communication in Persons with Aphasia: A Clinical Trial

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
lcherney@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Leora R. Cherney, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-1117

Project Number: 90IFRE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,783; FY 18 $199,646; FY 19 $199,494

Abstract: The goal of this project is to evaluate the extent to which a novel treatment (T-WRITE) improves written language function and the use of text messaging for people with aphasia, who often have difficulty with writing and may struggle to use electronic communication that connects people to one another. The specific objective of this randomized clinical trial is to compare T-WRITE to ORLA+WTG, a similar treatment that targets written expression using handwriting, and to evaluate whether there are subsequent positive effects on the participant’s social connectedness and ultimately health-related quality of life. T-WRITE involves choral reading and repeated writing of sentences via texting. Participants work intensively and independently at home on a laptop computer. A virtual therapist directs the participant to practice copying and independently writing phrases and short sentences using the typing feature on a cellular phone.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Illinois

Timing of Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS) Combined with Speech and Language Therapy (SLT):
An Intervention Development Study for

Rehabilitation Institute of
Chicago d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
lcherney@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Leora R. Cherney, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-1117

Project Number: 90IFRE0020
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,613; FY 19 $199,821; FY 20 $199,872

Abstract: This study focuses on the timing and use of transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) in speech and language therapy for people with aphasia and/or communication disabilities. There is little research on the precise application of tDCS therapy, a noninvasive, safe, low-cost form of brain stimulation. This project systematically investigates whether it is optimal for tDCS to be administered before, after, or simultaneously with speech and language therapy. Individuals with chronic aphasia are randomized to one of four groups in which the tDCS or a sham tDCS is combined with speech and language therapy in a different sequence, with treatment lasting three weeks. The speech and language therapy is a scripted training and delivered via computer, and the tDCS provides cathodal stimulation to the lesioned left side of the brain. Language and communication skills are evaluated pre-treatment, immediately post-treatment, and at two and six weeks after the end of treatment to assess maintenance effects. Additionally, EEG measures of brain activity are taken on some of the treatment days. Determining the optimum timing of tDCS relative to speech and language therapy is an essential step in standardizing the use of tDCS as an adjuvant in aphasia therapy. Results may have important implications for the costs, delivery, and outcome of rehabilitation services to individuals with aphasia, including optimizing language recovery and enhancing their quality of life.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Michigan

Investigating Performance Indicators in Accessible and Inclusive Public Transportation

The Regents of the University of Michigan
Department of Industrial and Operations Engineering
503 Thompson Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340
crdsouza@umich.edu
dsouzalab.engin.umich.edu/research/transperf/index.php

Principal Investigator: Clive R. D’Souza, PhD
Public Contact: 734/763-0542

Project Number: 90IF0094
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $199,954; FY 16 $199,544; FY 17 $198,227; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project aims to determine factors in public transit vehicle design and operations that impact user performance (accessibility, safety, and usability) and users’ perceptions and mode preference (fixed-route bus, complementary paratransit, demand response), and in turn affect transit system performance. Two research studies are conducted to accomplish the project objectives. The first study involves a quantitative analysis of data obtained from a local transit agency combining operations (fixed-route, paratransit, and demand-response) and passenger information over a two-year period within a defined geographical area to determine dependencies between transit system performance and the performance (accessibility, safety, and usability) of users with mobility disabilities. The analysis uses datasets routinely gathered by transit agencies, including automated vehicle location, in-vehicle video surveillance records, archived demographic and trip information of paratransit service riders, and passenger surveys. The second study engages individuals with diverse mobility disabilities (including users of wheeled mobility devices, ambulation aids, and individuals that are blind or visually impaired) in a field study yielding kinematic, physiological, and self-reported contextual data to model relationships between physical, psychosocial, and environmental factors at the individual level. Individuals with disabilities, community partners, and transportation service providers play a key role in the project as consultants, Advisory Board members, and study participants contributing their expertise and first-person perspectives to this project. Dissemination activities focus on translating project findings into outputs and formats that are tailored to key stakeholder groups; including traditional refereed and trade publications for researchers; downloadable information products on a community partner’s website tailored to transportation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and their advocates; and collaborative outreach activities with community partners.
Real World Testing of a Brain-Computer Interface to Operate a Commercial Augmentative and Alternative Communication System

The Regents of the University of Michigan
Department of Industrial and Operations Engineering
503 Thompson Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340
janeh@umich.edu
khill@pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Jane Huggins, PhD; Katya Hill, PhD
Public Contact: 734/936-7177

Project Number: 90IFDV0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,994; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $199,998

Abstract: For the most vulnerable individuals who cannot otherwise access augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, access through brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) offers the opportunity to obtain AAC’s vital quality-of-life benefits. However, little evidence exists on the features, clinical services, and resources needed to effectively deliver an AAC-BCI. The University of Michigan has partnered with the University of Pittsburgh, the Prentke Romich Company (PRC), and the ICAN Talk Clinic, as well as patients and caregivers, to meet this need. The objectives are to: (1) test an AAC-BCI prototype that advances the effectiveness of current BCI communication, (2) improve the procedures and tools for comprehensive assessment to provide clinical evidence to support AAC-BCI funding, and (3) improve in-home training and treatment necessary for successful daily communication using an AAC-BCI. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) greater AAC access options for stakeholders (individuals, families, and practitioners); (2) improved tools for practitioners to compare access methods and recommend an AAC-BCI; (3) improved AAC-BCI in-home training resources for stakeholders; (4) improved clinical evidence for practitioners to support treatment decisions; and (5) available outcome data to advocate for billing codes and funding of AAC-BCI. The expected products are an AAC-BCI prototype incorporating a commercial high-efficiency AAC device, dry electrode technology, assessment protocols, in-home training materials, and a language sample repository for data sharing.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Michigan

Visual Gaze and Validity of Cognitive Evaluations

Wayne State University
5057 Woodward Avenue, 13th Floor
Detroit, MI 48202
rapport@wayne.edu

Principal Investigator: Lisa J. Rapport, PhD
Public Contact: 313/577-7879; Fax: 313/577-7636

Project Number: 90IF0092
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $195,489; FY 16 $192,631; FY 17 $193,956; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project aims to enhance diagnostic accuracy in identification of traumatic brain injury (TBI), using a novel application of eye-tracking technology during standard cognitive testing, based on the hypothesis that persons with verified TBI and persons who feign TBI each show distinct oculomotor patterns during cognitive evaluation. The primary target population is adults referred for assessment of TBI-related cognitive impairment. The study employs a known-groups design that comprises four groups: adults with moderate to severe TBI, adults with mild TBI, healthy adults instructed to put forth full effort, and healthy adults coached to simulate TBI. These groups are tested using adapted standard cognitive tests, including tests of malingering, to include eye tracking. Principal dependent variables relate to classification accuracies. Principal predictors are traditional scores from the tests plus indices of oculomotor response (e.g., distribution of attention in areas of interest, fixation patterns and time, pupil dilation, and blinks) combined with performance indices (e.g., correct/incorrect responses). The project is innovative in that no prior research has systematically investigated visual gaze combined with elements of decisional process applied clinically to distinguish cognitive impairment and dissimulation.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Michigan

Effect of Guidance Surfaces on
Travelers with Vision and Mobility Impairments

Western Michigan University
1903 West Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5200
robert.wall@wmich.edu

Principal Investigator: Robert Wall Emerson, PhD
Public Contact: 239/387-3072

Project Number: 90IF0127
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $587,055; FY 17 (This project was fully funded in the first year); FY 18
(This project was fully funded in the first year)

Abstract: This project focuses on international standards for materials and installation of tactile guidance surfaces for crosswalks with the goal of improved safety and guidance for pedestrians with visual disabilities. The project includes a review of international standards and use of surfaces for guiding people who are blind to crosswalks and helping them align, and collects data on the most promising materials and installation methods. With increasingly complicated modern intersections, people who are blind have more trouble finding crosswalks, aligning to cross, and crossing a street in a straight line. In the US, there is no standard for material or installation for tactile guidance surfaces to help people who are blind to locate a crosswalk or align correctly. International standards and pilot data suggest some surface treatments that might improve safety without creating barriers for people with mobility impairments. This project collects data with people with mobility impairments to determine what materials and installation pose the least problem for them. The project then assesses the best materials and installation from this phase with people who are blind to see which offers the best information for finding crosswalks and aligning to cross a street. The project team combines expertise from a research university, experienced professionals in the field of blindness and mobility, and a nationally recognized civil engineering firm. In addition to data from people with mobility and visual impairments, project outputs include a guidance document that can be used by cities and municipalities to standardize their approach to using tactile guidance surfaces for people who are blind.
Development of a Virtual Reality Spatial Retraining Therapy to Improve Neglect in Stroke Survivors

Kessler Foundation
Stroke Rehabilitation Research
120 Eagle Rock Avenue, Suite 100
East Hanover, NJ 07936-3147
pchen@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Peii Chen, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3574

Project Number: 90IFDV0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000

Abstract: This project develops the Virtual Reality Spatial Retraining Therapy (VR-SRT) System to address spatial neglect (SN) in people who have experienced a stroke. SN is the most common spatial deficit after stroke and a major hidden disability after brain injury. The project uses agile software development and user-centered design to deliver a VR-SRT System that is affordable and accessible in various healthcare settings, from clinics and hospitals to patients’ homes. Project objectives are to: (1) design and develop exemplar treatment tasks that target bottom-up and top-down treatment approaches for SN; (2) extend and enhance the features of the exemplar treatment tasks, thereby maximizing therapy engagement and user satisfaction; (3) expand the software to optimize treatment control and management for therapists and to amplify data extraction capabilities for researchers; and (4) evaluate the latest prototype and finalize the VR-SRT System by establishing preliminary feasibility and efficacy.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
New Jersey

Patient-Specific In-Shoe Orthoses for Knee OA Prescribed Using Weight Bearing MRI

Kessler Foundation
Human Performance and Engineering Research
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
pbarrance@kesslerfoundation.org
kesslerfoundation.org/researchcenter/hpel/index.php

Principal Investigator: Peter Barrance, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3550

Project Number: 90IF0077 (Formerly H133G140183)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $199,878; FY 15 $199,983; FY 16 $199,994; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: This project refines the process for prescribing in-shoe footwear modifications, leveraging upon the weight-bearing MRI technology developed under a previous NIDILRR field-initiated project Improved Weight Bearing Evaluation of Knee Osteoarthritis. This project consists of two phases: (1) investigation of the immediate effect of incremental lateral in-shoe wedging on both static and dynamic descriptors of lower extremity biomechanics, as assessed using weight bearing MRI and gait analysis; and (2) a short term interventional trial in which the clinical effect of patient-specific in-shoe wedging is compared against the performance of a neutral (un-wedged) orthotic. Functional mobility tests and questionnaire reporting are utilized to evaluate the clinical effect on osteoarthritis-related pain and disability.
Audio-Tactile Web Accessibility with Haptic Gloves

The Research Foundation of SUNY
Stony Brook University
West 5510 Frank Melville Memorial Library
Stony Brook, NY 11794-4600
borodin@cs.stonybrook.edu

Principal Investigator: Yevgen Borodin, PhD
Public Contact: 516/313-7356

Project Number: 90IF0117
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000

Abstract: This project conducts research aimed at improving the utility of web access for people who are blind or have low-vision. The goal of this project is to better understand how the effectiveness of non-visual web browsing may be improved with tactile interfaces in general and haptic gloves in particular. Project objectives include: (1) designing audio-tactile interfaces for general browsing, text entry and editing, and dynamic interaction with web interfaces; and (2) developing a haptic glove with finger tracking and tactile feedback, and input functionalities enabling research activities. Outcomes include: (1) to design and implement software for novel haptic interfaces for web browsing, (2) to understand tactile behaviors and strategies employed by people who are blind and those with low-vision, (3) to provide insight into how dynamic haptic feedback can be used to improve computer interaction, (4) to provide diverse educational outcomes for university students and people affected by vision loss, (5) to create FeelX – a working audio-tactile system capable of providing haptic feedback, and (6) to enhance the web browsing productivity of people who are blind or have low-vision leading to improved access to education and employability. This project is a partnership between the Web Accessibility Lab at Stony Brook University and Lighthouse-Guild.
Gaining Real-Life Skills Over the Web (GROW)

Children’s Hospital Medical Center
3333 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229
shari.wade@cchmc.org

Principal Investigator: Shari L. Wade, PhD; Kathi Makoroff, PhD; Monica Mitchell, PhD; Tara Rhine, PhD
Public Contact: 513/636-3370

Project Number: 90IFDV0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,320; FY 18 $199,486; FY 19 $198,794

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates an online learning environment of web-based intervention modules designed to promote family and child coping and adjustment (GROW: Gaining Real-life Skills Over the Web) based on a comprehensive needs assessment of children aged 0 to 14 years old, who experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI) between the ages of 0 to 4 years, and their families. The incidence of TBI peaks between the ages 0 to 4 years, yet there are no evidenced-based interventions to facilitate neurocognitive development and socio-emotional functioning of children injured during this critical development period. To address the unmet need of caregivers of infants and toddlers with TBI, the project uses a three-phase, three-year development process to generate proof of concept and initial proof of product. Phase 1 involves a comprehensive needs assessment that includes quantitative assessment of family and child needs, qualitative assessment through focus groups and interviews of families, feedback from family and professional advisory boards, and consultation with professionals implementing interventions with similar populations (e.g., families of children with very low birth weight). During Phase 2, the project develops the content and manual for the intervention modules, designs the online learning environment, and conducts intensive, iterative usability testing. Phase 3 involves a pilot of the GROW program with 20 families to evaluate its usability, acceptability, and qualitative and quantitative impact on stakeholder identified outcomes.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Tennessee

Toe Joint Articulation in Passive and Powered Prostheses for Enhancement of Walking and Long-Term Health

Vanderbilt University
Center for Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology
101 Olin Hall, 24th Highland Avenue
Nashville, TN 37240-7749
karl.zelik@vanderbilt.edu
my.vanderbilt.edu/batlab

Principal Investigator: Karl Zelik, PhD
Public Contact: 615/875-1506

Project Number: 90IFRE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,100; FY 18 $199,298; FY 19 $199,949

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the design of prosthetic feet to restore biological toe function in a way that aids individuals with limb loss as they navigate various slopes, uneven terrain, and daily obstacles. The project includes a systematic empirical study of toe joint stiffness in both passive and powered prosthetic feet to generate new data that characterize the functional role of the toes during various locomotor activities. This research advances the fundamental understanding of foot function during legged locomotion, and has the potential to spur transformative prosthetic advances that improve the mobility of lower limb prosthetic users while reducing device costs.
Energy Management System for Battery Powered Mobility Devices Based on Wireless Power Transfer Concept to Promote Community Living and Participation

Utah State University
1000 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-1000
zeljko.pantic@usu.edu

Principal Investigator: Zeljko Pantic, PhD
Public Contact: 435/797-2457

Project Number: 90IF0116
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,903; FY 17 $199,232; FY 18 $199,942

Abstract: The goal of this project is to create a state-of-the-art, hands-free solution that targets persons with severe disabilities struggling for independence and frustrated by the limited functionality of their powered mobility device. The solution is the creation of novel hardware and software components that lead to a comprehensive management solution for recharging the batteries of powered mobility devices based on the emerging wireless power transfer (WPT) charging technology. This project is divided into three sections, each with its own objective. Section I’s objective is to understand the needs of users by utilizing human-in-the-loop design principles to conduct usability tests and final testbed integration and validation. The objective of Section II is to develop new WPT charging infrastructure. Finally, the objective of Section III is a software and hardware platform for adaptive, reconfigurable EMS and user interface.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Wisconsin

Image Categorization Expert System to Facilitate Creation of Accessible Education Materials

Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System
Waisman Center
1500 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53705
etekin@wisc.edu
www.waisman.wisc.edu

Principal Investigator: Ender Tekin, PhD
Public Contact: 608/890-2455

Project Number: 90IF0114
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $197,179; FY 17 $199,632; FY 18 $199,298
Abstract: The goal of this project is to enhance the process of producing accessible descriptions for textbook images for students with print disabilities. Graphical representations of information are widely used in education for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These graphics pose a particular challenge for users who have print disabilities, defined as persons who cannot effectively read print because of visual, physical, perceptual, developmental, cognitive, or learning impairments. Creating accessible instructional materials for students with print disabilities is essential to promote better educational, and consequently, better employment outcomes for this population in an increasingly technologically-oriented world. This project develops a set of open source software tools to improve current workflows in the authoring of image descriptions for scanned textbooks. The project evaluates the effectiveness of the developed tools both in terms of the efficiency of image description volunteers, and the accuracy and perceived quality of the produced descriptions.
Community Participation Through Personalized Accessibility Information: The Access Ratings NextGen App

Board of Regents of UW System
for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Rehabilitation Research Design and Disability Center
College of Health Sciences
Enderis Hall 975
2400 East Hartford Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211
smithro@uwm.edu

Principal Investigator: Roger O. Smith, PhD
Public Contact: 414/229-5625; Fax: 414/229-5100

Project Number: 90IFDV0006
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000
Abstract: While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has substantially improved community accessibility there are many community buildings that remain inaccessible or only partially accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs). This project develops and evaluates the Access Ratings for Buildings NextGen (ARB-NextGen) application across three stakeholder groups (persons with disabilities [PwDs], proprietors of buildings, and rehabilitation professionals); and substantially advances tools for measuring, labeling, and informing PwDs about accessing the built environment. Research and development activities include: (1) working with focus groups, community agencies, and rehabilitation professional programs to advance the ARB-NextGen application suite; (2) populating a building barriers database; and (3) evaluating development processes and outcomes with stakeholder groups. The project produces four products: (1) AccessTools, a mobile application suite to quantify building accessibility; (2) AccessPlace, a consumer rating and integrated report platform for personalized accessibility information; (3) Access Ratings Training System; and (4) the ARB research database. Outcomes include increasing the quality of life of PwDs by predicting barriers they may encounter, improving the tools used by expert assessors to evaluate public buildings, and creating a research database on built environment accessibility.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
California

A Personalized Wheelchair Fitting System to Improve Function and Quality of Life

Kinetic Intelligence, LLC
4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 503
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292
smcnittgray@gmail.com

Principal Investigator: Shawn McNitt-Gray
Public Contact: 310/429-2976

Project Number: 90BISA0018
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $99,028

Abstract: The goal of this project is to confirm that informatics generated using the commercial version of the System for Personalizing and Evaluating the Fit of Assistive Devices in a Clinical Setting (SPEC) system, designed for clinicians by clinicians, can seamlessly integrate data into an Integrated Informatics System (IIS) database module for wheelchair fitting. The objectives are to: (1) verify that readily available quantitative information generated using a personalized model simulation tool can be used to monitor known factors that affect wheelchair fitting processes by using an ISS prototype, and (2) verify information gathered using questionnaires can be effectively integrated into IIS to visualize how modifications in wheelchair fitting affects function and quality of life. Outcomes include: (1) increased wheelchair fitting and prescription personalization accuracy from clinicians of all experience levels, (2) decrease in the number and length of wheelchair fitting sessions, (3) decrease in the number of prescription errors, and (4) development of an extensive IIS to support clinical decisions and improve clinical standards.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
Delaware

The Mouth Mouse: An Intuitive Bluetooth Controller of Electronic Systems for Persons with Upper-Limb Impairment

KTM, LLC
94 North Hunter Forge Road
Newark, DE 19713
manal@udel.edu

Principal Investigator: Kurt Manal, PhD
Public Contact: 302/388-3669

Project Number: 90BISA0020
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $100,000

Abstract: This project develops and tests a Bluetooth compliant tongue-based electronic controller (a.k.a. “Mouth Mouse”), designed to give people with upper limb disability control of peripheral devices including computers and communication systems, home automation, and powered wheelchairs, as well as many other Bluetooth compliant devices and new technologies to come in the future. The Mouth Mouse is encased in an oral appliance or retainer and the user slides the tongue across the roof of the mouth to move a cursor, make selections, or issue commands to a computer or other interactive technology. Phase I of this project includes engineering analyses and fabrication on the Bluetooth Mouth Mouse and usability and acceptance testing.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
Missouri

Measuring Activities of Daily Living in Stroke Patients with Motion Artificial Intelligence

NewVentureIQ, LLC
20 South Sarah Street
St. Louis, MO 63108
victoriagrace@gmail.com
www.platformstl.com

Principal Investigator: Victoria Swamidass
Public Contact: 314/808-5385

Project Number: 90BISA0015
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $99,995

Abstract: The goal this project is to create a motion artificial intelligence (AI) analysis software to monitor activities of daily living (ADL) for stroke survivors with disabilities. The project utilizes wearable smart devices and a supervised machine learning (ML) algorithm to monitor activities that are meaningful and useful for clinicians and healthcare providers. Objectives are: (1) create a working ML algorithm to recognize 23 ADLs with 10 post-inpatient rehabilitation stroke survivors, (2) create a basic user-interface and clinical practice protocol for use in clinic to record movements, (3) create the pipeline and framework to process recorded data, and (4) create the framework to remote-access activity logs. The resulting technology will inform healthcare providers on the duration, metabolic equivalent, and frequency of engagement in particular activities, which can be used to monitor recovery post-inpatient care, reduce risks such as re-hospitalization, and provide objective indicators of independence and rehabilitation efficacy.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
Oregon

TRACK (Tools for Reading to Acquire Content Knowledge):
An Intelligent Application for Middle and High School Students with Neurodevelopmental

Cogmetric, LLC
Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT)
1193 Pearl Street
Eugene, OR 97405
rode@cogmetric.com

**Principal Investigator:** Catrin Rode, PhD
**Public Contact:** 541/912-4817

**Project Number:** 90BISA0017
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018
**Length:** 6 months
**NIDILRR Officer:** Brian Bard
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $99,994

**Abstract:** This project develops and evaluates an intelligent web-based application, Tools for Reading to Acquire Content Knowledge (TRACK) for middle and high school students with neurocognitive deficits such as individuals with learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injury, or autism spectrum disorder. Applying a participatory action research approach, investigators engage recognized content experts, collaborate with the Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT), and engage stakeholders such as students, teachers, and parents to address issues with cognitive processing (e.g., memory, executive functioning, focus, reading comprehension) that interfere with learning and retaining educational content and often result in poorer academic outcomes and transition rates into post-secondary education and thereby affecting overall live outcomes. TRACK uses evidence-based learning strategies, natural language processing technology, and the highly customizable user interface and user experience design, integrating them into one easy to use, cost-effective application that students can use any time they learn from informational text with any curriculum across grade levels, subjects, and users with various level of cognitive impairment. With this innovative approach, this project aims to enhance long term workforce participation and community living through educational retention for students with neurocognitive deficits.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I  
Pennsylvania

Development of PathDetect: Algorithms that Utilize Smartphone Sensor Data to Detect Adverse Pathway Conditions

Pathway Accessibility Solutions, Inc.  
1401 Forbes Avenue, Suite 303  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
eric.sinagra@pathvu.com  
www.pathvu.com

Principal Investigator: Eric Sinagra  
Public Contact: 412/651-4180

Project Number: 90BISA0002  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 6 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $100,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2019)

Abstract: This project develops PathDetect, a smartphone app with algorithms that passively characterize adverse pathway conditions (APCs) as a wheelchair user traverses pedestrian pathways. As cities work to improve sidewalks and pedestrian walkways, accurate sidewalk assessments can provide important data to address APCs which can have a significant impact on older adults and individuals who use wheelchairs. The aims of this project are to: (1) Develop an obstacle course that simulates APCs that are compliant and non-compliant with accessibility guidelines published by the US Access Board; (2) develop and evaluate classifiers using a support vector machine and supervised machine learning algorithms to detect APCs from smartphone data collected while using a wheelchair; (3) conduct a “roundtable” discussion with wheelchair users to collect important user feedback about the PathDetect tool; and (4) develop and characterize a custom smartphone app that collects sensor data and geo-locates APCs.
Take on Training with Attainment: A Universally-Designed Video Training App to Foster Independence at Work for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Attainment Company, Inc.
504 Commerce Parkway
Verona, WI 53593-0160
CStanger@AttainmentCompany.com
www.attainmentcompany.com

Principal Investigator: Carol Stanger; Staci Carr, PhD
Public Contact: Carol Stanger 415/798-7771

Project Number: 90BISA0012
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $99,998

Abstract: This project develops Take on Training by Attainment, an application (app) that provides comprehensive instruction to job coaches and direct service workers (DSWs) to increase the independence of individuals with disabilities, maximize their independence on the job site, achieve advancement, and promote sustained employment. The goal for Take on Training by Attainment is to research and develop a mobile app to provide DSWs, including job coaches, with on-demand instruction by way of short video vignettes to promote the maximum level of independence for people with disabilities at work. The Phase I objective is to produce a prototype version of Take on Training to demonstrate feasibility for full research and development. Outcomes for this project include a prototype app and evaluation of the app by job coaches and individuals with disabilities in supported employment. Measurable results are obtained through pre- and post-test measures of job coach skills for DSWs and self-determination and quality of life of individuals in supported employment.
Improving Rehabilitation and Reducing Re-Occurrence of Diabetic Foot Ulcers by Shifting Plantar Pressure with Exo-Tendon and Exo-Skeletal Footwear Systems

Results Group, LLC
One Technology Drive
Tolland, CT 06084
mark.roser@resultsgroupllc.org
resultsgroupllc.org

Principal Investigator: Mark Roser; David Armstrong
Public Contact: 860/375-3039

Project Number: 90BISB0011
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $298,294; FY 19 $276,700

Abstract: This Phase II project brings novel exoskeleton footwear towards commercialization which reduces plantar loading, accelerates and improves rehabilitation after diabetic foot ulcer, and minimizes its reoccurrence to help people resume activities of daily living, maintain full employment and function, and prevent amputation. Project objectives include: (1) optimizing the performance of off-loading/propulsive exoskeleton footwear based on in-depth human factors analysis; (2) biomechanical performance testing of the refined footwear in both non-diabetic, healthy volunteers and diabetic patients; and (3) evaluating and validating deployed prototypes in the patients’ home environment. Outcomes focus on human factors in (1) establishing new qualitative metrics that illuminate factors which influence patients long-term adherence with assistive and prophylactic footwear based on in-depth in-home patient interviews, (2) biomechanical performance testing results, (3) in-home evaluation results to better understand and maximize adoption and long-term adherence by the end user, and (4) optimized design specifications for exoskeletons/products to benefit patients, researchers, orthotics and prosthetics companies, and footwear companies.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Indiana

WhenWear Advisor: A Cloud-Based Tool to Help Supervisors Increase Employment Options for Workers with Intellectual Disabilities

CreateAbility Concepts, Inc.
5058 Evanston Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46205-1365
steve@createabilityinc.com
createabilityinc.com/research-3

Principal Investigator: Stephen M. Sutter 317/777-0356
Public Contact: 317/810-1669; Fax: 317/810-1669

Project Number: 90BISB0009
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $287,500; FY 19 $287,498

Abstract: This Phase II project builds upon previous research to demonstrate the technical merit, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of combining commercially-available mobile devices and neural networks with cloud computing to further develop the WhenWear Advisor system to assist employees with intellectual disabilities (ID) to independently and successfully accomplish vocational tasks when provided with the proper automated prompts. Project objectives include: (1) completing the WhenWear Advisor system, (2) expanding features and functions, (3) performing extended usability evaluation of the system in a range of settings, and (4) preparing the system for a smooth transition into commercialization. The expected product is an intelligent cloud-based service that assists the supervisor in the creation of high quality instructional prompts, enabling workers with ID perform at higher levels and obtain higher salaries in community integrated employment.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Maryland

Touch-Responsive Models for Universal Access to Smithsonian Museums Exhibits

Touch Graphics
11 Harvest Lane
Elkton, MD 21921-2027
sl@touchgraphics.com

Principal Investigator: Steven Landau
Public Contact: 800/884-2440, ext. 1

Project Number: 90BISB0008
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $272,956; FY 18 $274,404

Abstract: This project develops new methods for fabricating replicas of museum artifacts and other 3D objects that describe themselves when touched, so that museums can create exhibits that are accessible to everyone, including visitors with visual impairments. Phase I demonstrated how ordinary capacitive touchscreens could be repurposed as sensors for determining locations of finger touches on 3D surfaces and objects that have been hand painted with a carbon-rich conductive coating. Phase II improves on these methods by showing how both conductive (graphene) filament, and transparent insulating filament, can be loaded into a standard, dual extruder 3D printer, to create light transmissive, inherently touch-responsive objects in one step, obviating the need for hand painting. The new translucent models can be illuminated from below by the touch screen, allowing dynamic lighting effects and visual feedback when models or parts of models are touched.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II  
Massachusetts  

SoundFit Ultrasonic Optimization for Lower Body Prosthetics  

FTL Labs Corporation  
218 Strong Street  
Amherst, MA 01002-1855  
mike@ftllabscorp.com  

Principal Investigator: Michael White, PhD  
Public Contact: 303/317-6566  

Project Number: 90BISB0007  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 24 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $287,494; FY 18 $287,494  

Abstract: This project develops an ultrasonic fitment tool to improve prosthetics performance for persons with lower-extremity amputations. The goal of this project is to develop a new clinical instrument used in the socket fitting process to optimize the performance of a lower-body prosthetic system and thereby improve mobility, activity, exercise, and quality of life for over 2 million American amputees. The ultrasonic device, called “SoundFit” uses low-cost, line-of-sight ultrasound transducers and a novel signal reconstruction and visualization system to elucidate the residual degrees-of-freedom of the bone inside a patient’s residual limb as socket fit modifications are made. This data represents a critical knowledge gap, and current practices are non-quantitative, difficult to train and reproduce, and vary widely between prosthetist shops. The specific objectives of the Phase II program are: (1) research and refine the electronics hardware and software system demonstrated in Phase I; (2) create novel wavelet signal processing algorithms to improve performance in challenging residual limb tissue; (3) perform clinical efficacy testing demonstrating the value of the technology; and (4) develop all testing and documentation necessary for FDA 510(k) submission.
Improving Hearing Aid Satisfaction Through Remote Feedback and Settings Adjustments

Innovative Design Labs Inc.
861 East Hennepin Avenue, Suite 450
Minneapolis, MN 55414
jcondon@innovativedesignlabs.com

Principal Investigator: John Condon
Public Contact: 612/567-8554

Project Number: 90BISB0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $259,594; FY 18 $314,395

Abstract: This project develops a system that improves communication between a patient and their audiologist, simplify the fitting and tuning process by allowing patients to remotely record their hearing aid (HA) experience via a smartphone application. Currently, only 28.5% of individuals who could benefit from a HA actually wears one. The goal of this project is to improve patient satisfaction with their HA, with the aim to increase and prolong continued use. The objectives are: (1) Develop a smartphone application and wireless interface to low-level HA functionality; (2) develop a cloud-based back-end system with a web-based audiologist interface; and (3) evaluate system with end users through a human trial.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
North Carolina

Indoor Navigation Aid for Individuals with Visual Impairments in Unfamiliar Spaces

Vortant Technologies, LLC
88 High County Road
Weaverville, NC 28787-9374
phil@vortant.com

Principal Investigator: Philip R. Schaefer
Public Contact: 828/645-1026, ext. 114

Project Number: 90BISB0005
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $275,599; FY 18 $299,288

Abstract: This project develops a technology solution to address the indoor navigation needs experienced by people with visual disabilities. This technology has several advantages over other wayfinding approaches such as GPS, in that it requires no infrastructure in indoor spaces nor does it require maps to be created prior to navigation. Thus, it is applicable to any unfamiliar indoor or outdoor space. The Phase II project includes building upon the Phase I proof-of-concept device to develop an improved, miniaturized hardware device; implementing a fully-functional smartphone app; iteratively conducting periodic pilot studies as the technology progresses; and finally conducting in-clinic and take-home studies in which potential end users use the device in their everyday lives. The project proves the functionality and user-acceptance of this product for improved indoor navigation, giving insights into the degree to which it enhances quality of life of users with visual disabilities.
The Bimodal Ankle for Mobility and Stability of Prosthesis Users

The Ohio Willow Wood Company
15441 Scioto-Darby Road
Mt. Sterling, OH 43143-9036
mattw@owwco.com

**Principal Investigator:** Matthew Wernke, PhD
**Public Contact:** 740/869-3377

**Project Number:** 90BISB0010
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018
**Length:** 24 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Thomas Corfman
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $295,633; FY 19 $279,302

**Abstract:** This Phase II project further develops and evaluates a prototype of the Bimodal Ankle Prosthesis (BAP) with the goal of improving balance and balance confidence of persons with lower-extremity amputations by developing a prosthetic ankle that has biomimetic modes for walking and standing. BAP provides flexibility for walking mobility and rigidity for standing stability. The objectives are to: (1) Develop (design and fabricate) a complete prototype incorporating a hydraulic actuator developed in Phase I that allows movement for walking and restricts movement for standing, (2) perform engineering verification of the BAP, and (3) perform controlled laboratory and field-use of the BAP with users of lower-extremity prosthesis. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) a BAP prototype that passes international standards, (2) clinical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the BAP features, and (3) commercialization by The Ohio Willow Wood Company.
Physiologically Compatible Hemodialysis Through Advanced Dialysate Regeneration

Chemica Technologies
2611 Southwest Third Avenue, Suite 250F
Portland, OR 97201-4957
taku@chemica.com
www.chemica.com/medicaldevices.htm

Principal Investigator: Takuji Tsukamoto, PhD
Public Contact: 503/352-0262; Fax: 503/352-0263

Project Number: 90BISB0002
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $322,222; FY 17 $252,492; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project develops an advanced, portable hemodialysis regeneration system that significantly enhances the quality of life of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients. ESRD impairs physiological systems and functions, and is associated with disability, high morbidity, and mortality. Hemodialysis is prescribed for the majority of individuals in the final stages of renal failure. Minimizing the loss of nutrients and improving dialysis delivery (length, frequency, and location) enables individuals with ESRD to feel better, have more energy, work more, and engage in activities in their communities. Project investigators use surface chemistry and material science techniques to develop an advanced dialysate regeneration system able to remove a broad spectrum of uremic toxins while minimizing the loss of nutrients such as amino acids, vitamins, and essential ions. Technical objectives include: (1) performing scale-up production of the components of the advanced dialysate regeneration system (DRS-2); (2) designing and constructing the prototype module (cartridge) to house the DRS-2; (3) proving the safety and efficacy of the DRS-2 in vitro; (4) performing overall efficacy and quality tests of the DRS-2 using spent dialysate; and (5) evaluating and summarizing Phase II processes and results.
Knowledge Translation

For NIDILRR, knowledge translation (KT) encompasses the multidimensional, active process of ensuring that new knowledge gained through the course of research ultimately improves the lives of people with disabilities and furthers their participation in society. KT involves not only knowledge validation, dissemination, and utilization but also the transfer of technology, particularly products and devices, from the research and development setting to the commercial marketplace as well as other settings to make possible widespread utilization of the products or devices. NIDILRR funds a number of KT projects focusing on different content areas, not only to assist NIDILRR grantees in their knowledge translation efforts through technical assistance, training, and other activities, but also to generate new knowledge and understanding of KT in the context of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation.

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Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC)

American Institutes for Research (AIR)
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
ccai@air.org
coverton@air.org
www.msktc.org
www.facebook.com/pages/Spinal-Cord-Injury-
   Model-Systems/154186677946545
twitter.com/sci_ms
www.facebook.com/pages/Traumatic-Brain-Injury-
   Model-Systems/159630024063887
twitter.com/tbi_ms
www.facebook.com/pages/Burn-Injury-
   Model-Systems/155712024448908
twitter.com/burn_ms

Principal Investigator: Steven Garfinkel, PhD; N. Lynn Gerber, MD 919/918-2306 (Garfinkel); 703/993-1940 (Gerber)
Public Contact: Xinsheng “Cindy” Cai, PhD; Cynthia Overton, PhD; 202/403-6929; 202/403-5058; Fax: 202/403-5454

Project Number: 90DP0082
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $791,998; FY 17 $791,950; FY 18 $791,950; FY 19 $791,950; FY 20 $791,950

Abstract: The Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) advances a knowledge translation (KT) paradigm among Model System grantees to ensure that spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury (Burn) research is relevant and accessible to people with disabilities and their families; researchers; practitioners, and clinicians; and policy makers and advocates. The goals of this project are to enhance understanding of SCI, TBI, and Burn rehabilitation research; increase awareness and use of SCI, TBI, and Burn Model Systems research findings by appropriate stakeholders; centralize SCI, TBI, and Burn Model Systems resources for effective and uniform provision of training, technical assistance, and dissemination; and increase capacity of Model System grantees to engage in KT activities. MSKTC designs and implements KT activities to accomplish the following objectives: conduct research on effective KT methods to increase awareness and use of Model Systems research; develop research-based, user-friendly products grounded in KT science; conduct KT training and technical assistance activities to increase KT capacities of Model System grantees; disseminate MSKTC resources to all potential stakeholders; and implement utilization activities to promote stakeholders’ awareness and use of Model Systems research for informed decision making.

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The overarching outcome of MSKTC is to improve the lives and services for people with SCI, TBI, and Burn. MSKTC generates research-based information resources for all stakeholders and makes them available on the MSKTC website. This project is a partnership of the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Inova Health System, George Mason University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and American Association of People with Disabilities.
TEST - Translating Evidence to Support Transitions: Improving Outcomes of Youth in Transition with Psychiatric Disabilities by Use and Adoption of Best Practice Transition Planning

University of Massachusetts Medical School
Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC)
Department of Psychiatry
55 Lake Avenue North
Worcester, MA 01655-0002
marsha.ellison@umassmed.edu

Principal Investigator: Marsha Ellison, PhD
Public Contact: 508/856-2816

Project Number: 90DP0080
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $149,707; FY 16 $149,248; FY 17 $149,789; FY 18 $149,936; FY 19 $149,877

Abstract: The goal of this project is to increase use and adoption of best practices in planning the transition of high school students to postsecondary employment and/or school enrollment; specifically, students with emotional behavioral disturbance (EBD) receiving special education services. This includes transition planning with the ultimate goal to improve postsecondary outcomes for this population through knowledge translation, testing, and dissemination of NIDILRR-funded research findings. The project develops materials, procedures, and guides for implementing three research-informed best practices in high school transition planning: (1) written goals for a concentration of career and technical coursework during high school, (2) student-led transition planning efforts, and (3) representation of adult-serving disability agencies and colleges on transition teams. The TEST project is guided by the National Implementation Research Network Stage-Based Implementation Framework and has five project objectives that correspond to this framework: (1) Developing research-informed materials and procedures for use by transition planning teams that are tailored to youth with EBD in close coordination with end-users and a stakeholder team; (2) pilot-testing resulting TEST procedures and materials in one school district with an implementation stakeholder team, finalizing TEST procedures and materials; (3) providing TEST implementation support and technical assistance to transition teams in two states and developing a TEST implementation guide; (4) presenting TEST best practices and the implementation guide at a national capacity building institute for high school special education transition planning teams; and (5) widely disseminating TEST materials. Project outcomes include the development of guides and curricula for practicing and implementing best practices in transition planning for students with EBD and the wide-scale adoption and use of TEST practices, improving employment and education outcomes for students with EBD. This project is led by the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research (formerly the Transitions Research and Training...
Center) and the Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center. This project also benefits from assemblage of prominent organizations and individuals with expertise in adoption and use of best practices for transition support for students with disabilities, knowledge translation, research on transition, and local transition efforts.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
New York

Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer

University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
Center for Assistive Technology
100 Sylvan Parkway, Suite 400
Amherst, NY 14228
joelane@buffalo.edu
kt4tt.buffalo.edu

Principal Investigator: Joseph Lane 716/204-8606, ext. 211
Public Contact: 716/204-8606 (V), 877/742-4141 (V), 716/204-8606 (TTY); Fax: 716/204-8610

Project Number: 90DP0054 (Formerly H133A130014)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $924,512; FY 14 $924,511; FY 15 $924,511; FY 16 $924,564; FY 17 $924,559; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2019

Abstract: The objective of this project is to study and apply the theory and practice of knowledge translation (KT) to the knowledge outputs of NIDILRR technology grantees. Goals of this project are to increase the rate of successful technology transfer (TT) of rehabilitation projects by NIDILRR grantees to the marketplace and into engineering standards, increase understanding among rehabilitation engineers and disability researchers in development of TT processes and practices that lead to successful TT, and increase capacity of NIDILRR grantees to plan and engage in TT activities. Research Project 1, Grantee Evidence of TT Practices, uses case-based examples from grantees in technology innovation processes to demonstrate how their actions and decisions affect TT outputs and outcomes. Research Project 2, Profile of Industry TT Receptivity and Capacity, optimizes the likelihood of accomplishing TT by evaluating industry opportunities and constraints. Development Project 1, Generate Three Need to Knowledge (NtK) Model Variants, utilizes planning and charting processes across three non-commercial output categories (standards and protocols, freeware, and instruments and tools) to increase capacity in TT and expand the original NtK Model for commercial products. Development Project 2, Collaborative Commercialization, utilizes partnerships between NIDILRR grantees and corporations to bring new or improved commercial products to the marketplace through two utilization activities: (1) Delivering Practice-Level TT Training, and (2) Demonstrating Program-Level NtK Model Uptake by External Agencies. These activities increase grantees’ ability to plan, implement, and manage TT capacity by teaching how to accommodate best practices within personnel, time, and resource constraints while demonstrating the use of the NtK Model by other government and advisory agencies. KT4TT operates at the School of Public Health and Health Professions, University at Buffalo (SUNY), in partnership with Western New York Independent Living Inc., and a team of international consulting experts.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Translating Transfer Training and Wheelchair Maintenance into Practice

University of Pittsburgh
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Rehabilitation Institute
3520 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
boninger@pitt.edu

Principal Investigator: Michael L. Boninger, MD; Lynn Worobey, PhD; Cindy Cai, PhD
Public Contact: 412/648-6979

Project Number: 90DP0078
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project focuses on the knowledge translation of transfer training and wheelchair maintenance into practice in order to improve transfers and wheelchair maintenance leading to decreased pain and increased independence for individuals with mobility disabilities. The multi-institution, consumer-focused team: (1) Develops and continually refines high-quality training products to translate wheelchair transfer and maintenance research to wheelchair users, their support systems, and clinicians; (2) integrates stakeholder feedback throughout all stages of material development; (3) creates self-assessment versions of the transfer assessment instrument and wheelchair maintenance training questionnaire as educational tools to enable wheelchair users to track progress and identify areas requiring further training; (4) disseminates and promotes utilization of materials to wheelchair users and their support systems including clinicians providing their care, nationally, and internationally; and (5) evaluates utilization of materials through focus groups, social media, satisfaction surveys, self-assessments, and population changes in reported pain and wheelchair breakdown. The University of Pittsburgh Model Center on Spinal Cord Injury is partnering with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and is joined by the United Spinal Association and the Spina Bifida Association to bring connections to the target audience and enable stakeholder participation.
Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research

American Institutes for Research (AIR)
4700 Mueller Boulevard
Austin, TX 78723
tbauman@air.org
www.kter.org
www.facebook.com/kter.org
twitter.com/kter_center

Principal Investigator: Kathleen M. Murphy, PhD 512/391-6541
Public Contact: Tracy Boehm-Barrett, MPH 800/266-1832; Fax: 512/476-2286

Project Number: 90DP0077
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $500,000; FY 16 $500,000; FY 17 $500,000; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000

Abstract: The Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research has as its purpose: (1) to identify findings related to improving employment outcomes among individuals with disabilities that NIDILRR-funded researchers and other entities have produced, with a focus on the high-needs populations of adults with autism, and transition-aged youth and young adults with disabilities; (2) to determine what needs for research-based information are most pressing for stakeholders, such as individuals with disabilities and their families, vocational rehabilitation practitioners, the business community, and policymakers; and (3) to investigate and test knowledge translation strategies that can increase these stakeholders’ appropriate use of identified research findings that meet their reported needs. To address those purposes, this project (1) reviews NIDILRR-funded and other findings to identify how to meet stakeholders’ pressing information needs related to improving employment outcomes for specific populations of individuals with disabilities with especially high needs; (2) conducts research studies to test ways of helping target audiences to access and use the research-based practices identified (i.e., testing knowledge translation strategies); (3) develops research-based informational resources related to stakeholders’ informational needs and to NIDILRR researchers’ capacity to plan and implement KT activities and measure their outcomes; (4) widely disseminates project findings; (5) provides technical assistance to researchers to support their utilization of project resources regarding the incorporation of effective knowledge translation strategies into their research, development, and dissemination activities; (6) promotes collaboration among NIDILRR-funded researchers working in the employment field, and between these researchers and their stakeholder audiences that can benefit from use of their research findings.
**Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)**

**Texas**

**AIR’s Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation**

American Institutes for Research (AIR)
4700 Mueller Boulevard
Austin, TX 78723
tbauman@air.org
www.ktdrr.org
www.facebook.com/ktdrr.org
twitter.com/ktdrr_center

**Principal Investigator:** Kathleen M. Murphy, PhD 512/391-6541
**Public Contact:** Tracy Boehm-Barrett, MPH 800/266-1832; Fax: 512/476-2286

**Project Number:** 90DPKT0001
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $750,000; FY 18 $750,000; FY 19 $750,000; FY 20 $750,000; FY 21 $750,000

**Abstract:** This project promotes the use of high-quality disability, independent living, and rehabilitation (DILR) research that is relevant to intended audiences’ needs by serving as the main knowledge translation (KT) resource for other NIDILRR grantees, including NIDILRR grantees that serve as KT centers. Project goals are to: (1) add new knowledge in the area of KT, (2) support the KT endeavors of NIDILRR grantees, and (3) promote the use of NIDILRR-funded work that is relevant to the needs of intended audiences including other researchers, people with disabilities, their families, consumer organizations, policymakers, and other NIDILRR audiences. The objectives are to: (1) facilitate use of DILR research, (2) build NIDILRR grantees’ KT capacity, and (3) integrate DILR perspectives into systematic reviews and research synthesis (SR/RS). Outcomes include increased use of DILR research to inform decision making by individuals with disabilities, their family members, as well as a broad array of other stakeholders, increased use of KT practices among NIDILRR grantees, and integration of DILR research perspectives into domestic and international bodies that produce systematic reviews. Center products include trainings, technical assistance, and tools to support grantees’ KT practices and on conducting SR/RS using appropriate standards, guidelines, and methods; a responsive website with many related resources, including a Database of KT Strategies, Registry of Systematic Reviews, and Info Briefs synthesizing KT and SR/RS literature; annual KT conferences and workshops on policymaker outreach and social media; KT Casebooks and conference panels to showcase grantees’ KT practices; and direct involvement with the new Campbell Collaboration Disability Coordinating Group.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Washington

Translating Evidence About Traumatic Brain Injury to Practice
Within Washington State Department of Corrections

University of Washington
Center for Technology and Disability Studies
1959 Northeast Pacific Street, HSB BB-919
Box 356490
Seattle, WA 98195
mharniss@uw.edu

Principal Investigator: Mark Harniss, PhD; Kurt Johnson, PhD
Public Contact: 206/685-0289 (Harniss); 206/543-3677 (Johnson); Fax: 206/543-4779

Project Number: 90DP0079
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project focuses on translating evidence about traumatic brain injury (TBI) into practice within the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). The goal is to improve interactions with offenders with TBI by helping front line staff understand what TBI is; how offenders might be affected by TBI; what they could do that would help in day-to-day management of problems faced by offenders with TBI (e.g., memory, communication, mood, impulsivity); how TBI might affect engagement in treatment programs; how TBI affects compliance with DOC rules and regulations; and how TBI might affect transition from corrections to community living. The goal is to affect change at two levels in the DOC by increasing awareness and knowledge about TBI system-wide, and developing and piloting intensive knowledge translation (KT) activities with front line staff who work with specific target populations (e.g., veterans, women, or individuals with disabilities) in order to translate knowledge into practice. These activities can then be generalized to other correctional facilities within the DOC. In order to achieve these goals, the project identifies and prioritizes research-based products on TBI from current and completed NIDILRR-funded projects that are most relevant for the DOC. Factsheets and evidence-based materials developed by previous NIDILRR-funded grants serve as starting points for integrating research-based evidence into practices within corrections. The project assesses the current level of TBI knowledge and programming within the DOC to identify knowledge gaps and potential barriers and facilitators to the use and adoption of NIDILRR-sponsored TBI evidence in DOC. Finally, the project develops and implements a comprehensive KT plan, including system-wide strategies and an intensive pilot intervention, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies and overall processes, and providing a summary of findings for recommendations of informed practice within DOC and the broader criminal justice community.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Washington

National Data and Statistical Center for the
Burn Model Systems

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
1959 Northeast Pacific Street
Box 354237
Seattle, WA 98195
burndata@uw.edu
mcmulk@uw.edu
burndata.washington.edu

Principal Investigator: Dagmar Amtmann, PhD; Kurt Johnson, PhD 206/543-4741 (Amtmann);
206/543-3677 (Johnson)
Public Contact: 206/685-4889; Fax: 206/543-2779

Project Number: 90DP0053 (Formerly H133A130004)
Start Date: April 12, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $350,000; FY 14 $350,000; FY 15 $350,000; FY 16 $350,000; FY 17
$350,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: The purpose of the National Data and Statistical Center for the Burn Model Systems (BMS
Data Center) is to (a) maintain and enhance a longitudinal database following individuals with burn
injury, (b) support research on health outcomes in burn injury conducted by both researchers in the NIDILRR Burn Model Systems Centers (BMS Centers) and external to the BMS Centers, and (c) provide annual reports to the public. The project enhances the technological foundation of the BMS Database by adding more sophisticated reporting features; enhances the capacity of BMS Data Centers to collect high quality data on individuals with burn injury from all racial and ethnic backgrounds through training and technical assistance; improves the capacity of researchers within and outside of the BMS Centers to engage in research and statistical analysis of the longitudinal database through technical assistance and direct participation in research, statistical analysis, and writing; collaborates with other NIDILRR-funded data centers in spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury and with national organizations that collect large datasets on burn injury, such as the American Burn Association’s National Burn Repository, to increase efficiency and reduce redundant effort; and improves the quality of information provided to the public through better reports and the development of consumer-friendly materials. The primary outcome across all five years of the project is the development of significant research evidence about the effects of burn injury on the lives of burn survivors through the maintenance and enhancement of a robust, high quality, longitudinal database; and through training and technical assistance to those who use it.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Washington

National Data and Statistical Center for the
Burn Model Systems

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
1959 Northeast Pacific Street
Box 354237
Seattle, WA 98195
burndata@uw.edu
mcmulk@uw.edu
burndata.washington.edu

Principal Investigator: Dagmar Amtmann, PhD 206/543-4741
Public Contact: 206/685-4889; Fax: 206/543-2779

Project Number: 90DPGE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $350,000; FY 19 $350,000; FY 20 $350,000; FY 21 $350,000; FY 22 $350,000

Abstract: The purpose of the National Data and Statistical Center for the Burn Model Systems (BMS-NDSC) is to (a) maintain and enhance a longitudinal database following individuals with burn injury, (b) provide access to BMS data, (c) promote inclusion of participants from minority backgrounds in BMS data collection efforts, (d) provide statistical support to NIDILRR Burn Model Systems Centers (BMS Centers), (e) conduct research utilizing the BMS National Database (NDB) while supporting burn injury research conducted by both researchers in the BMS Centers and external to the BMS Centers, (f) provide administrative support for BMS activities, and (g) provide training and technical assistance to BMS Centers. The BMS-NDSC introduces various products to increase the utility and visibility of the BMS NDB, including: (1) an interactive web-based data dictionary, (2) data visualizations, (3) interactive features for online surveys, (4) publicly available annual reports, and (5) database summaries. The primary outcome across all five years of the project is the development of significant research evidence about the effects of burn injury on the lives of burn survivors through the maintenance and enhancement of a robust, high quality, longitudinal database, and through training and technical assistance to those who use it.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Alabama

National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center

The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
1717 Sixth Avenue South, SRC 515
Birmingham, AL 35233-1816
nscisc@uab.edu
www.uab.edu/nscisc

Principal Investigator: Yuying Chen, MD, PhD 205/934-3329
Public Contact: Phil Klebine 205/934-3283; Fax: 205/975-4691

Project Number: 90DP0083
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $662,500; FY 17 $662,500; FY 18 $662,500; FY 19 $662,500; FY 20 $662,500

Abstract: National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (NSCISC) provides resources and services that support the Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS) Program and Database, with the goals of ensuring high-quality data in the Database and promoting rigorous SCIMS research and collaboration. Project activities are conducted with several target groups in mind: individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI), SCIMS Centers, and individuals who intend to access/use the Database for SCI information or research. The objectives include: (1) maintenance of the SCIMS Database through a secure web-based data management system; (2) assurance that high-quality data is collected from participants of all races/ethnicities through standard operating procedures, certification of Data Collectors, data quality monitoring, SCIMS Center site visits, cultural diversity needs assessment, training, and technical assistance; (3) improved accessibility and utilization of the SCIMS Database through implementation of a comprehensive public access plan, as well as through collaborative research, internship, award, workshops, information resources, and individual consultation and technical assistance; and (4) continuity of the SCIMS Database through subcontracts and centralized data collection for continued collection of follow-up data from defunded Centers. Outcomes for this center include improved representativeness of Database participants to the SCI population at large, increased quantity and quality of Database research and collaboration, established standards on culturally appropriate SCI research, and advanced knowledge in SCI outcomes. Products from this center include a web-based system that provides a secure environment and user-friendly features for data management and reporting; website-provided informational tools for searching SCI statistics and resources for researchers; annual statistics reports and consumer-friendly infographics; as well as research presentations and publications.
The Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems (TBIMS) National Data and Statistical Center (NDSC) at Craig Hospital maintains the TBIMS National Database (NDB) increasing the rigor and efficiency of scientific efforts to longitudinally assess the experience of individuals with TBI. The center creates a sustainable data preservation program; provides ready access to TBIMS data and expertise in advanced analytics for TBIMS data collectors, researchers, and NDB users; and enhances the TBIMS support infrastructure by ensuring data security, validity, and storage. The NDSC is organized into functional groups: (1) a data core focusing on state-of-the-art data management technology, improved data quality, and culturally competent research; (2) a statistical/methodological core focusing on training and consultation to improve the rigor of longitudinal research; and (3) a collaborative core focusing on joint research with federal and non-federal partners to maximize NDB use. Project goals include: (1) improving data quality metrics, (2) closing the racial/ethnic gap in NDB recruitment and retention, (3) maintaining exceptional customer satisfaction in regular surveys, (4) increasing use of the NDB by TBIMS and outside researchers, (5) increasing the number and methodological rigor of peer reviewed articles using the NDB, and (6) successfully completing modules and collaborative studies using NDSC data management services. The NDSC products include a customizable data capture that works on any device using any browser, a certification process for Form II interviewing, advanced statistical training, and a public use version of the NDB that can be queried.
Abstract: The goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act National Network Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKTC) is to facilitate coordination, organization, and collaboration among the ADA National Network (ADANN) grantees and to generate new knowledge about optimal methods to enhance stakeholder’s use of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities under the ADA. To achieve this goal, the ADAKTC is optimizing the efficiency and impact of the ADANN’s outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building activities by (1) maintaining and further developing the ADANN’s document portal, (2) enhancing our system for sharing training and technical assistance materials, (3) continuing the joint development of products with the ADANN, and (4) supporting the annual meetings of the ADANN. We are increasing the awareness and use of ADA-related research findings and ADA-related information with appropriate ADA stakeholder groups by (1) conducting research on knowledge translation, (2) using findings from our systematic review of the ADA to develop and disseminate research briefs, (3) enhancing our knowledge translation efforts to reach broader audiences, and (4) organizing an ADA research conference in Year 5. Finally, we are improving understanding of ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADANN services over time by (1) maintaining and increasing the quality and efficiency of the Outcome Measurement System (OMS); (2) increasing data quality, monitoring those improvements, and providing training and technical assistance on use of the database; (3) conducting a needs analysis of the OMS data to identify emerging issues related to stakeholders rights and responsibilities under the ADA; (4) producing an annual report based on OMS data; and (5) extending and enhancing the measurement of ADA implementation outcomes.
National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)

HeiTech Services, Inc.
8400 Corporate Drive, Suite 500
Landover, MD 20785
naricinfo@heitechservices.com
www.naric.com
www.facebook.com/NationalRehabilitationInformationCenter
twitter.com/naricinfo
www.facebook.com/NARICenEspanol
twitter.com/naricenespanol
plus.google.com/+Naricinfo
www.pinterest.com/naricinfo
naricspotlight.wordpress.com
www.youtube.com/channel/UCuFQ2MKi4ArIiGNo0BZkYg

Principal Investigator: Mark X. Odum 800/346-2742, ext. 1112
Public Contact: Information Specialists 800/346-2742 (V), 301/459-5900 (V); Fax: 301/459-4263

Project Number: GS-06F-0726Z
Start Date: September 28, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $1,583,388; FY 16 $1,948,101; FY 17 $1,868,203; FY 18 $1,922,781; FY 19 $1,977,360

Abstract: The National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC) maintains a research library of more than 65,000 documents and responds to a wide range of information requests, providing facts and referral, database searches, and document delivery. Through telephone and online information referral, NARIC disseminates information gathered from NIDILRR-funded projects, other federal programs, and from journals, periodicals, newsletters, and multimedia. NARIC maintains REHABDATA, a bibliographic database on rehabilitation and disability issues, both in-house and online. Users are served in English and Spanish by telephone, mail, electronic communications, or in person. Current tasks include expanding the collection with international research, including data originally collected by the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE); acquisition of digital media; maintaining and expanding a digital archive of original research documents; and knowledge translation activities in support of NIDILRR’s mission including citation analysis, long term project tracking, and promotion of NIDILRR-sponsored research. NARIC also prepares and publishes the annual NIDILRR Program Directory, available in database format from NARIC’s web site, and several regular publications highlighting NIDILRR research.
AbleData

New Editions Consulting, Inc.
103 West Broad Street, Suite 400
Falls Church, VA 22046
abledata@neweditions.net
www.abledata.acl.gov
www.twitter.com/AT_Info
www.facebook.com/Abledata

Principal Investigator: Tyler Matney 703/356-8035, ext. 114
Public Contact: Information Specialists 800/227-0216; 703/356-8035 (V); 703/992-8313 (TTY); Fax: 703/356-8314

Project Number: GS00F0083N
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $729,653; FY 19 $751,094; FY 20 $773,181; FY 21 $795,927; FY 22 $795,927

Abstract: AbleData provides objective information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment available from domestic and international sources to consumers, organizations, professionals, and caregivers within the United States. This project maintains and expands the AbleData database of assistive technology, develops information and referral services that are responsive to the special technology product needs of consumers and professionals, and provides data to major dissemination points to ensure wide distribution and availability of the information to all who need it. The AbleData database contains information on more than 48,000 commercially produced and custom-made assistive devices. All of the project’s resources are available free of charge on its website. Requests for information are answered via telephone, mail, electronic communications, or in person.
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) opens more opportunities for persons with disabilities. It also places certain responsibilities on employers, transit and communication systems, state and local governments, and public accommodations. To assist covered parties to understand and comply with the ADA, NIDILRR has funded a network of grantees to provide information, training, and technical assistance to businesses and agencies with duties and responsibilities under the ADA, as well as to conduct ADA-related research. The current program includes ten regional centers, one collaborative research center, and one ADA knowledge translation center.

Contents

ADA National Network ........................................................................................................................3
ADA National Network  
Region I - CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT

New England ADA National Network Regional Center - Region I

Institute for Human Centered Design, Inc.  
200 Portland Street, First Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
adainfo@newenglandada.org  
www.NewEnglandADA.org

Principal Investigator: Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director 617/695-1225, ext. 226  
Public Contact: Oce Harrison, EdD, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY in CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT), 617/695-1225 (V/TTY); Fax: 617/482-8099

Project Number: 90DP0087  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000

Abstract: The New England ADA Regional Center meets the increasingly complex challenges of providing outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building of the ADA core services. Project activities include an extensive training and information agenda with products designed for ease of use and maximum impact and tailored to meet the needs and preferences of people with rights and responsibilities under the ADA. Services include information and training for individual, business, and government needs at the local, regional, and national levels. To address ADA knowledge and implementation gaps, the Center has established new research partnerships and two research priorities: (1) to collaborate with statisticians to generate nuanced state-level data of emerging and projected reasons for disability, and (2) a randomized digital survey of regional municipalities to assess barriers to non-compliance in collaboration with the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning. This research seeks to identify the emerging and projected profile of people with rights under the ADA at the state level, understand the factors that impede municipalities from implementing the ADA, and identify an intervention or an innovative approach that can facilitate implementation of the ADA at the municipal level. Center outputs include state-wide data sets that tell the story of disability today and in the coming years, a set of new digital and interactive information tools including the Title II Action Guide, and distance learning web courses, as well as information tools developed in response to the municipal survey.

To increase capacity building among priority audiences, two new initiatives focus attention on accessibility for an aging population and those with behavioral health and substance use issues. New England is home to the three US states with the oldest average populations – Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Under the ADA, the rights of aging populations everywhere are covered by the broad protections of the American Disabilities Act, as are those in recovery from substance use. Those rights are not widely understood among the public, nor in some cases among public officials or businesses. A mission of the New England ADA Regional Center is, through every action, to refresh an understanding of the ADA in New England for the 21st century as a tool for more inclusive society. This center serves Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.
ADA National Network
Region II - NJ, NY, PR, and VI

Northeast ADA National Network Regional Center - Region II

Cornell University
Office of Sponsored Programs
201 Dolgen Hall, Room 203
Ithaca, NY 14853
northeastada@cornell.edu
www.northeastada.org

Principal Investigator: Wendy Strobel Gower, Project Director 607/255-6751
Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY in NY, NJ, PR, and VI); 607/255-6686; Fax: 607/255-2763

Project Number: 90DP0088
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,112,165; FY 17 $1,112,165; FY 18 $1,112,165; FY 19 $1,112,165; FY 20 $1,112,165

Abstract: The goal of the Northeast ADA Regional Center is to educate and empower the diverse range of ADA stakeholders throughout the region to increase their knowledge of the ADA, to make better decisions regarding disability inclusiveness, and to implement the ADA in their own lives, workplaces, businesses, and communities. The center provides high-quality services that are relevant and responsive to the needs of individuals and organizations who have rights and responsibilities under the ADA. While this project serves all ADA stakeholders, the project focuses on three groups identified as high need: (1) healthcare professionals, (2) small employers including state and local government’s Title I functions, and (3) facility access professionals. Outcomes include: Improved ADA stakeholders’ understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the ADA; identification of barriers to ADA compliance and development of innovative approaches to address these barriers; continuous improvement of the understanding of ADA stakeholders’ needs for and use of Center services; systematic enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness of Center services; and increasing the implementation of the ADA across the diverse stakeholders throughout the region. To ensure achievement of these outcomes, the Center engages in an array of activities in three core areas: (1) Stakeholder engagement activities through ADA services, (2) measurement and tracking, and (3) research. The Center’s research project, which focuses on implementation of the ADA in small local businesses, cuts across all of the supporting objectives, and builds upon and shapes activities in the other two core areas. This intervention research is designed to identify barriers and carriers to ADA implementation, and test innovative approaches for eliminating these barriers within small business organizations. These activities have been designed to ensure direct engagement with ADA stakeholders through different modalities and at different levels of intensity. These activities include outreach, information dissemination, technical assistance, training, and capacity building. The Center’s measurement and tracking activities include evaluation, needs assessment, and collaboration with local, regional, and national partners. This center serves New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.
Ada National Network
Region III - DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV

Mid-Atlantic ADA National Network Regional Center - Region III

TransCen, Inc.
12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Suite 350
Rockville, MD 20852
adainfo@transcen.org
www.adainfo.org

Principal Investigator: Laura Owens, PhD 301/424-2002
Public Contact: Karen Goss, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV); 301/217-0124 (V/TTY); Fax: 301/217-0754

Project Number: 90DP0089
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,112,165; FY 17 $1,112,165; FY 18 $1,112,165; FY 19 $1,112,165; FY 20 $1,112,165

Abstract: The Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center identifies and disseminates the effective practices of individuals and entities which promote improved integration of individuals with disabilities into all areas of community life. The center has three areas of focus: Training, technical assistance, and information dissemination on all titles of the ADA, with a sharpened focus on educating individuals with disabilities about their rights; capacity building and outreach through local networks; and research in areas where barriers still occur for individuals with disabilities. The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center implements an operational plan of specific objectives and tasks associated with each of the following major project goals: (1) Improve the understanding and interpretation of the rights and responsibilities under the ADA for both individuals and entities, by expanding existing Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Networks, the hospitality initiative, and relationships with individuals with disabilities, the aging population, and organizations that represent these stakeholders; (2) identify barriers to compliance with the ADA and develop innovative strategies to eliminate such barriers through research activities focusing on the needs of state and local governments and individuals with disabilities; (3) identify emerging issues and develop innovative strategies to address ADA compliance issues experienced by individuals with disabilities who are aging and youth with disabilities by strengthening the working relationships with Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, Area Agencies on Aging, and Aging and Disability Resource Centers; and (4) enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the ADA Network Services by building the capacity of the Mid-Atlantic ADA Networks to serve Region III through training, technical, assistance, and information dissemination. Specific and detailed training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to pursue these goals are augmented by carefully designed activities to study and validate best practices and policies through a comprehensive quantitative/qualitative research design as well as by direct cooperation with the ADA Knowledge Translation (KT) Center, other Regional ADA Centers, and other NIDILRR-funded research centers to identify areas of research need and to participate in mutual research projects. This center serves Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
ADA National Network
Region IV - AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN

Southeast ADA National Network Regional Center - Region IV

Syracuse University
Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education
Burton Blatt Institute
211 Lyman Hall
Syracuse, NY 13244
adasoutheast@law.syr.edu
www.adasoutheast.org
www.facebook.com/southeastadacenter
twitter.com/adasoutheast
www.youtube.com/user/DBTACSoutheastADA

Principal Investigator: Peter D. Blanck, PhD, JD 315/443-9703
Public Contact: Pamela Williamson, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN); 404/541-9001 (V/TTY); Fax: 404/541-9002

Project Number: 90DP0090
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

Abstract: The goals of the Southeast ADA Regional Center are to (1) promote voluntary compliance, effective implementation, and transcendence of the ADA; (2) increase ADA understanding and awareness; (3) encourage meaningful partnerships among government, business, and disability communities to facilitate effective ADA implementation; and (4) conduct leading-edge research to reduce and eliminate barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency, so as to increase civic and social participation of Americans with disabilities. Project objectives include: (1) expanding the Center’s provision of technical assistance, training, and dissemination of ADA information; (2) identifying structural, program, and technological barriers to ADA compliance by using the Center’s innovative participatory action research (PAR) model to increase access to financial institutions and related services; (3) using new data collection to identify and respond to stakeholder’s needs for services and supports from the Center and the ADA National Network; and (4) enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ADA Network Services by building on regional and national leadership, collaboration, and record of success. The Center’s core outcomes and deliverables include: (1) Expansion of training initiatives: furthering growth of ADA Trainer Network-Southeast in collaboration with partners, development of a new web course on all ADA Titles for access to financial institutions, WADA ADA Live!, Tax Access with community non-profit partners, continued improvement of online courses, and a webinar series; (2) development and expansion of ADA materials: targeted outreach and development of materials to meet the diverse needs of multicultural groups, including individuals who speak Spanish and the aging community, continuation of ADA Anniversary Tool Kit, legal briefs and alerts current with ADA developments, enhancement of project’s accessible website and social media outreach; (3) continued provision of highest quality
technical assistance: advice through the toll-free number, email, social media, and website forms; development of new website portals for stakeholders; (4) implementation of PAR research model: evaluate and increase access to financial institutions; develop a Quality Indicators Financial Inclusion Tool (QI-FIT) to be widely shared at regional and national levels; and (5) improved access to services of the ADA National Network: enhanced collaboration with regional ADA Centers, ADA Knowledge Translation Center, NIDILRR, and Administration on Community Living to increase outreach to all targeted stakeholders and rigorously evaluate effectiveness of services. The Center is a project of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University (SU) in partnership with various organizations including: Affiliate Leadership Network of 8 state affiliates and their network of 52 local affiliates; training partnership with Southeast Center Director’s Association that includes majority of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in the Southeast; Aging and Disability Advisory Group; Multi-Cultural Outreach Collaboration with Morehouse College and Spelman College, Bluegrass ADA Employment Consortium; Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE); Best Buddies Jobs, and Financial Research Advisory Group. This center serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.
Great Lakes ADA National Network Regional Center - Region V

University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Disability and Human Development
1640 West Roosevelt Road, MC 728
Chicago, IL 60608
adata@adagreatlakes.org
www.adaconferences.org, www.qiat-ps.org
www.facebook.com/ADAGreatLakes
twitter.com/adagreatlake

Principal Investigator: Robin A. Jones, Project Director 312/996-1059
Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI); 312/413-1407 (V/TTY); Fax: 312/413-1856

Project Number: 90DP0091
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

Abstract: The Great Lakes ADA Regional Center promotes awareness and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Project goals and objectives center on the provision of high quality, timely, and accurate technical assistance, training, and material dissemination to identified target audiences. The Great Lakes ADA Regional Center provides responsive and proactive services utilizing a comprehensive service delivery model. The technical assistance, training, and information needs of the individuals and their families, employers, business, government, educational entities, design professionals, and employment programs serving veterans with disabilities are part of an ongoing needs assessment, and programs and activities are tailored accordingly. Project activities and goals include: (1) operation of a toll-free number and use of current and emerging technologies for information and referral; (2) enhancement of the Center’s existing regional network of individuals and organizations who can provide on-site consultation, technical assistance, and training as needed; (3) conducting and sponsoring training events and activities at the local, state, and regional level focused on raising awareness of the ADA; (4) development and dissemination of technical assistance and training products and tools that are evidence based; (5) identification and dissemination of best practices related to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities by employers and employment training programs; (6) promotion of the acquisition and utilization of accessible information technology by employers, business, government, and educational institutions; and (7) utilization of existing and emerging technology
to promote the exchange of information including websites, listservs, e-newsletters, mobile applications, social media, multi-faceted distance learning strategies and techniques, self-paced learning, and web-based assessment tools. Through partnerships and collaboration at the local, state, regional, and national level, the Center maximizes resources ensuring that a high quality and quantity of activity occurs. This center serves Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.
Southwest ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VI

TIRR Memorial Hermann
Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
swdbtac@ilru.org
www.southwestada.org
www.facebook.com/swdbtacilru
twitter.com/southwestada
www.youtube.com/DisabilityLawLowdown

Principal Investigator: Lex Frieden, LLD; Vinh Nguyen; 713/520-0232, ext. 124 (Frieden); 713/797-7121 (Nguyen)

Public Contact: Vinh Nguyen, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in AR, LA, NM, OK, and TX); 713/520-0232 (V); 713/520-5136 (TTY); Fax: 713/520-5785

Project Number: 90DP0092
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,111,021; FY 17 $1,112,002; FY 18 $1,111,275; FY 19 $1,111,601; FY 20 $1,111,445

Abstract: The goal of the Southwest ADA Regional Center (SWADA) is to maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities so they can fully participate in their communities through the ADA. SWADA serves federal Region VI and conducts activities to address barriers for people with disabilities in employment, access to state and local government programs and services, and access to places of public accommodations. SWADA provides several services to benefit individuals and entities with rights and responsibilities under the ADA (ADA stakeholders): high impact training with experienced, qualified, and well-trained trainers; dissemination of information about the ADA utilizing methods ranging from print mail to the latest popular social media tools and networking websites to reach the broadest audiences; timely, relevant, accurate technical assistance that responds to the needs of the requesting individuals and entities; innovative research into access barriers experienced by people with disabilities and improving the capacity of entities to serve them; and collaboration with affiliates and the ADA Network Services to efficiently deliver these services nationwide. SWADA improves the knowledge of stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities under the ADA and improves the capacity of entities to serve them; and collaboration with affiliates and the ADA Network Services to efficiently deliver these services nationwide. SWADA improves the knowledge of stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities under the ADA and improves the capacity of service providers to provide ADA trainings, technical assistance, and dissemination to their consumers. ADA stakeholders utilize the knowledge and capacity to address barriers and improve access for people with disabilities. SWADA Center products include: Training modules for businesses, health care providers, and corrections; trainings to various targeted entities; webinars on emerging legal and disability issues; publications; protocol for referring cancer survivors to vocational rehabilitation or ADA National Network services; and best practices for removing barriers to service animal users. This center serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
Great Plains ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VII

University of Missouri at Columbia
100 Corporate Lake Drive
Columbia, MO 65203
ada@missouri.edu
www.gpadacenter.org
www.adasympodium.org
www.facebook.com/GreatPlainsADA
www.youtube.com/user/GreatPlainsADACenter
gpadacenter.org/blog
www.adacoordinator.org

Principal Investigator: Jim de Jong, Project Director; Chuck Graham, Associate Director 573/882-3600
Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in IA, KS, MO, and NE); 573/882-3600 (V/TTY); Fax: 573/884-4925

Project Number: 90DP0093
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000

Abstract: The Great Plains ADA Regional Center continues to expand services as the ADA National Network Regional Center for federal Region VII, serving Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska. The mission of the Center is to ensure the full opportunity for participation of persons with disabilities and their families in all facets of American life by providing professional-quality services to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) stakeholders. Target populations include all entities and individuals with disability-related issues that have rights and responsibilities under the ADA. The Great Plains ADA Regional Center: (1) implements a sustained program of outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building (collectively ADA Network Services); (2) provides information to ADA stakeholders on both longstanding ADA requirements as well as the ADA Amendments Act, the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, and subsequent judicial/regulatory changes; (3) identifies best practices through collaborative initiatives addressing emerging critical issues such as Olmstead implementation, emergency preparedness, and the professionalization of ADA Coordinators; (4) sponsors the National ADA Symposium, which offers a comprehensive matrix of training opportunities presented by nationally recognized authorities and experts in their fields; and (5) partners with the ADA Network Knowledge Translation Center and other ADA Regional Centers to develop, provide, and distribute ADA training and technical assistance materials and other informational products and services. Through a collaborative structure of partnerships with local, regional, and national organizations, the Center provides core service delivery of ADA knowledge to the stakeholders of Region VII.
Rocky Mountain ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VIII

Meeting the Challenge, Inc.
3630 Sinton Road, Suite 103
Colorado Springs, CO 80907-5072
dbarton@mtc-inc.com
www.rockymountainada.org
twitter.com/RockyMtnADA
www.facebook.com/RMADACenter
www.instagram.com/rockymtnada

Principal Investigator: Jill Bezyak, PhD 719/444-0252
Public Contact: Dana Barton, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY); 719/444-0268 (V/TTY); Fax: 719/444-0269

Project Number: 90DP0094
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000
Abstract: The Rocky Mountain ADA Regional Center provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) tailored to meet the needs of individuals and organizations in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The Center presents a comprehensive program of training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities designed to move toward full implementation of the ADA throughout the region. The Center continues its program of technical assistance based on the concept of mass customization to address the specific needs of stakeholders across the region. The training program takes advantage of technology and customized curricula to ensure maximum impact of training activities. Dissemination efforts provide tailored materials that offer actionable information for the specific needs of stakeholders. The Center also has an extensive plan of evaluation and ongoing regional needs assessment research to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the ADA Network services.
Principal Investigator: Erica C. Jones, MPH, Project Director

Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in AZ, CA, HI, NV, and the Pacific Basin); 510/285-5600 (V/TTY); Fax: 510/285-5614

Project Number: 90DP0081
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

Abstract: The Pacific ADA Regional Center implements an integrated, multi-dimensional initiative that facilitates enhanced awareness, understanding, compliance, and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all states and territories within the region. The program places special emphasis on collaborations by expanding the existing Pacific Region ADA Network of affiliate and local community organizations to maximize meeting the grassroots-level needs of ADA stakeholders (such as employers, businesses, state and local governments, and individuals with disabilities), as well as the development of resources in the emerging areas of accessible information technology and emergency preparedness. Pacific ADA Center goals include: (1) improving understanding regarding rights and responsibilities and implementation of the ADA, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and corresponding regulations for Title I from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the regulations for Title II and III of the ADA published by the US Department of Justice in 2010, as well as emerging compliance issues in information technologies and emergency preparedness, and continuing developments in ADA case law, policy, and implementation through comprehensive training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to individuals with rights and responsibilities under the ADA; (2) improving understanding of ADA stakeholders’ needs for, and receipt of, Region IX services over time through data entry and analysis of Center activities in conjunction with the ADA National Network made up of the ADA Knowledge Translation (KT) Center and other ADA Regional Centers; and (3) enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ADA information dissemination, awareness, and referral activities by establishing effective, coordinated, local, regional, and national resource networks, including by partnering with the ADA KT Center and other regional ADA Centers to develop, implement, and evaluate materials, products, trainings, and services that are useful to ADA stakeholders. The Pacific ADA Center conducts a comprehensive evaluation that monitors the quality, scope, and effectiveness of...
all Center programs and activities, including a quantitative evaluation program that tracks programmatic outputs related to Center services, and a qualitative evaluation program designed to assess the impacts and outcomes of its work. This center serves Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the protectorates in the Pacific Basin.
ADA National Network
Region X - AK, ID, OR, and WA

Northwest ADA National Network Regional Center - Region X

University of Washington
The Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation
6912 220th Street SW, Suite 105
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98105-4162
nwadactr@uw.edu
www.nwadacenter.org
www.facebook.com/NorthwestADACenter
twitter.com/NWADACenter
www.youtube.com/user/NWADACenter

Principal Investigator: Kathe Matrone, PhD 425/771-7436
Public Contact: Michael Richardson, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, AK, ID, OR, and WA); 425/248-2480 (V), 425/233-8913 (Video Phone); Fax: 425/774-9303

Project Number: 90DP0095
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000

Abstract: The Northwest ADA Regional Center (NWADA) provides a sustained program of outreach, training, technical assistance, capacity building, information dissemination, and research services and activities. The goals and objectives of this project are: (1) to improve understanding by ADA stakeholders of their rights and responsibilities under the ADA, including addressing established ADA requirements and more recent legislative and regulatory changes, as well as emerging areas of focus; (2) to identify barriers to compliance with the ADA, and to develop and implement innovative approaches for eliminating these barriers; (3) to improve understanding of the ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADA Network services over time, including services which address emerging issues related to compliance with ADA requirements; and (4) to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of ADA Network Services and delivery. Project research focuses on understanding and addressing health care access issues while engaging a broad representation of recipient and provider health care groups across the states served by the NWADA. This center serves Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.
ADA National Network
Texas

ADA Participation Action Research Consortium

The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR)
Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
swdbtac@ilru.org
centerondisability.org/ada_parc/index.php

Principal Investigator: Lex Frieden, LLD; Joy Hammel, PhD, OTR/L 713/520-0232; 312/996-3513
Public Contact: Lex Frieden, LLD 713/797-7116 (V); 713/520-5136 (TTY); Fax: 713/520-5785

Project Number: 90DP0026 (Formerly H133A120008)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $613,091; FY 13 $614,007; FY 14 $613,688; FY 15 $613,828; FY 16 $613,651; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project examines what factors are influencing societal participation of citizens with disabilities within and at community and regional levels. The project conducts multiregional strategic gap analyses across three primary participation areas mandated by the ADA: community living, community participation, and work/economic. This includes mining of existing large population and community datasets to inform the benchmarking of key participation disparities and promising practices at state, regional, and community levels also includes collecting new individual data with people who are trying to move out of nursing homes and institutions into the community post-ADA and Olmstead Decision to add their participation experiences and issues, voices that have not been represented in existing ADA and participation research. As a second aim, this consortium of ADA Regional Centers and a network of disability and ADA stakeholders utilizes a participatory Strategic Gap Analysis process to (1) identify key indicators of high priority and high feasibility to collect in communities, (2) create a Community Participation Action Toolkit (CPAT) for assessing these indicators within communities, (3) pilot test this Toolkit within 18 communities across 6 collaborating ADA Center regions, (4) analyze results and translate back to communities in the form of benchmarking reports, and (5) create a toolkit of resources to accompany CPAT for both ADA Centers and community stakeholders to plan initiatives in their communities to reduce disparities and increase full participation. The aim is to create a tool and a systematic process for assessing community participation at the community level that could be shared with communities via the ADA Center collaboration, and formally linked to ADA Center information resources and technical assistance, as well as future participatory research initiatives.
Americans with Disabilities Act Participation Action Research Consortium (ADA PARC):
Advancing Participation Equity for People with Disabilities

TIRR Memorial Hermann
Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU)
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
marisa.demaya@memorialhermann.org
mdemaya@bcm.edu
centerondisability.org/ada_parc/index.php

**Principal Investigator:** Lex Frieden, LLD; Joy Hammel, PhD, OTR/L 713/520-0232, ext. 124 (Frieden); 312/996-3513 (Hammel)

**Public Contact:** 713/520-0232; Fax: 713/520-5785

**Project Number:** 90DPAD0001
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $500,000; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000; FY 20 $500,000; FY 21 $500,000

**Abstract:** The ADA Participation Action Research Consortium (ADA PARC) builds and expands upon previous collaborative research which explored how to measure, and document participation disparities experienced by people with disabilities. This iteration of the ADA PARC includes expansion of ADA National Network participation from seven to ten regional ADA centers, as well as the ADA Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKT). Activities include creation of an immediate access platform where stakeholders can query participation disparities across thousands of cities such as access to least restrictive community living with supports (CL); levels of community participation and civic engagement and access to resources to participate in communities (CP); and economic, work, and financial equity and resource access. The system generates GIS visual maps, accessible tables, and scorecards to show disparities across levels (national, state, city, community), including comparisons of people with and without disabilities, retroactive trends, and future need projections. The system also links users to ADA and ADA KT Center knowledge translation resources that highlight promising practices, case studies, and information resources to strategize participation disparities. ADA PARC datasets include addition of newly available indicators of civic engagement and financial equity and robust participation disparity/opportunity scorecards and reports across states and cities. ADA PARC activities also include participatory action community town halls to share findings and more effectively target disparities action planning. The consortium also models rigorous disparities analyses with existing and newly identified datasets, examining disparities at community levels in resources and funding related to accessible and affordable housing, transportation, and financial and economic equity.
Capacity Building for Rehabilitation Research and Training

In addition to supporting research and development, NIDILRR also aims to provide for the training of emerging talent to cultivate skills and leadership for the next generation of researchers in the disability field. To that end, NIDILRR builds the Nation’s capacity to conduct research and development activities that make positive contributions to the lives of individuals with disabilities across the domains of employment, community living and participation, and health and function. Activities funded in this area include fellowship and advanced rehabilitation research training programs where emerging talent and leadership in research and engineering are developed. These activities include opportunities for individuals with disabilities as well as individuals from minority backgrounds.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Oklahoma

Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities

Langston University
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies
6700 North Martin Luther King Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
clmoore@langston.edu
www.langston.edu/capacitybuilding-rrtc

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90RT5024 (Formerly H133B130023)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $875,000; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project engages minority entities (MEs) to generate new knowledge leading to improved outcomes for persons from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations and communities and to enhance research capacity and infrastructure at minority-serving institutions. The project works with six MEs to address research infrastructure challenges and enhance the research skills of their individual faculty scholars and students. The following themes are addressed through five major studies and numerous capacity-building activities: (1) describe and evaluate an emerging research team mentorship model across six different MEs; (2) examine factors that contribute to disability and rehabilitation research leaders’ career development and success to increase the number of talented researchers available to mentor ME junior investigators; (3) forecast the impact of new US citizen and legal permanent resident populations and trends on state vocational rehabilitation agencies’ (SVRAs) systems capacity to serve immigrants of color with disabilities; (4) describe SVRAs and Veterans Affairs co-service strategies aimed at placing veterans of color with disabilities into employment; (5) examine ME faculty scholars’ personal/intrinsic factors and extrinsic rewards that motivate them to conduct disability and rehabilitation research; and (6) pilot-test an emerging research capacity-building and infrastructure model across six different MEs. This project is developing and implementing a partnership plan that ensures that all activities are predominantly focused on research capacity and infrastructure building. The project plans a state-of-the-science conference in the fourth year to discuss the research topics identified and devotes attention to demonstrating how findings are translated to practical applications in research, service initiatives, and policy development for persons of color with disabilities and ME research capacity-building efforts.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Oklahoma

Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities

Langston University
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies
6700 North Martin Luther King Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
clmoore@langston.edu

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90RTST0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This project engages minority entities (MEs)/minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to generate new knowledge leading to improved outcomes for persons with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations and enhanced research capacity and infrastructure at MEs and MSIs. The RRTC works with various MSIs (i.e., historically Black colleges and universities [HBCUs], Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges/universities and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions) to enhance their faculty scholars’ and students’ research skills and address research infrastructure challenges such as library research resources, office of sponsored program and Institutional Review Board operations, invisible research center findings, and seed monies to jump-start research. Scientific panels mentor pre-doctoral, doctoral, post-doctoral, faculty, and research center Fellows, and visiting investigators in the development of research projects to be submitted to professional journals, and, where appropriate, a research grant proposal to be submitted to NIDILRR for funding consideration. The RRTC conducts eight major studies and numerous capacity-building activities informed by Citizen Scientists of Color with Disabilities and guided by National Advisory Panel Members that address the following themes: (1) field-testing and testing an emerging (i.e., Peer Multiple Mentor Model [PMMM]) and promising (i.e., Peer-to-Peer Mentor Research Team Model [PMRTM]) RCB approach, respectively; (2) exploring impacts of opioid use disorder on employment prospects among people with disabilities from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds; (3) field-testing an emerging State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVRA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Co-Service Partnership Model; (4) pilot-testing an emerging American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Program (AIVRP) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Co-Service Partnership Model; (5) exploring barriers that prevent HBCU-based science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research scientists and faculty members, and small African American-owned technology firm engineers from participating optimally in the federally assistive technology research and development enterprise; (6) examining factors that challenge federally-sponsored MSI-based research centers in producing highly visible research findings that advance the disability/rehabilitation and health science and literature; (7) evaluating an emerging

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Early Intervention Disability, Rehabilitation, and Health Research Careers Pathway Model (EIRCPM) that mentors MSI-based pre-doctoral and doctoral Fellows; and (8) longitudinally testing an Institutional Research Capacity-Building and Infrastructure Model (IRCBIM) across five different MSIs. A State-of-the-Science Conference is planned during the third year of the grant cycle on the research topics identified.
Understanding and Addressing the Vocational Barriers and Needs of Black Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions

Jonathan Delman, PhD, JD, MPH
University of Massachusetts Medical School
Department of Psychiatry
12 Summer Street
Stoneham, MA 02180
jondelman@comcast.net

Principal Investigator: Jonathan Delman, PhD, JD, MPH
Public Contact: 617/877-4148

Project Number: 90SFGE0009
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $80,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the short and long term vocational outcomes of African American young adults with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) through increased understanding of their experiences of barriers and facilitators to obtaining and holding jobs and achieving career goals, and more specifically of the vocational services that have served White Americans with greater efficacy. Research demonstrates that racial disparities exist in the delivery and outcomes of vocational services for African American young adults with disabilities. Additionally, the views, perspectives and priorities of African American young adults with SMHC clients’ have not been systematically explored, and our understanding of what they experience in seeking employment and career growth is limited. To address these disparities, researchers conduct a multi-staged mixed method study of the vocational experiences, needs, and preferences of African American young adults with SMHC. The study consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with African American young adults with SMHC, most in vocational programs but some not currently. Researchers explore in particular the impact of receiving Social Security income on vocational services engagement and outcomes. After the interviews, researchers hold two focus groups with providers of vocational services to review the interview findings and identify areas in which services can be developed to meet the needs of African American young adults with SMHC.
Capnometry-Assisted Breathing Training for COPD:  
A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Annamaria Norweg, PhD  
Rusk Rehabilitation Institute  
240 East 38th Street  
New York, NY 10016  
AnnaMaria.Norweg@nyumc.org

Principal Investigator: Annamaria Norweg, PhD  
Public Contact: 646/501-7777

Project Number: 90SFGE0003  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 12 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $80,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project tests the feasibility and estimates the short-term effects of implementing a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of capnometry-assisted training in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to slow the breath (CATCH) combined with a comprehensive 10-week pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) program. Dyspnea, lung hyperinflation, and rapid breathing - all of which are characteristic of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) - are associated with significant disability, physical activity limitations, and anxiety. Breathing training has been shown to alleviate these symptoms in some patients and promote improved functional status and quality of life, but additional evidence is needed for practice guidelines. Capnometry-assisted respiratory training is a new, innovative approach, not previously tested in COPD, that promotes learning and focuses on modulating the perception of dyspnea at the central nervous system level, improving neuromechanical coupling (matching between respiratory effort and the mechanical response of the respiratory system), and improving autonomic nervous system regulation. Using novel technology for biofeedback of slow breathing and mindful breathing, capnometry-guided training, and a smartphone app for home exercises, this trial has the potential to significantly impact and improve rehabilitation outcomes. Project objectives are to: (1) test the feasibility of implementing an RCT of the CATCH intervention combined with PR based on estimates of short-term treatment effects (at 10 weeks) and retention of participants with COPD; and (2) evaluate the acceptability of the CATCH intervention as perceived by participants based on qualitative interviews, CATCH attendance, and adherence to home breathing exercises.
Family-Clinician Collaboration to Improve Neglect and Rehabilitation Outcome After Stroke

Peii Chen, PhD
Kessler Foundation
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052
pchen@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Peii Chen, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3574

Project Number: 90SFGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $80,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 5/31/2019)

Abstract: This project uses qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the effectiveness of a Family-Clinician Collaboration (FCC) intervention to address special neglect following stroke. Spatial neglect (SN) results from damage of the attention network in the brain and is a major hidden disability after stroke. SN symptoms and adverse consequences may continue to impact people’s lives years post stroke. Approximately 50% of stroke survivors in the inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) setting have SN, especially in patients with unilateral brain damage. SN impedes rehabilitation outcome, prolongs hospitalization, slows functional improvement, lowers the home return rate, and increases risks of safety concerns and risks of stress and burden among family caregivers. To address this problem and improve patients and family members’ well-being, the FCC facilitates the amelioration of the SN syndrome, improves functional outcome, empowers family members as a care partner during inpatient rehabilitation, reduces caregiver stress, and increases the home return rate at IRF discharge. The FCC intervention includes: (1) frequent and effective family-clinician communications; (2) setting patient-specific, attainable goals through a three-way communication among patients, family members, and clinicians while addressing patients’ evolving health and function status with frequent reviews of the goals and care plan; (3) educating family members about the concept of SN using concrete examples, and helping family members obtain SN-specific caregiving skills and management strategies that family members can perform with their loved ones; and (4) using a treatment log to encourage structured family-mediated SN treatments outside the regular therapy sessions.
Development of a Pneumatic Power Assist Wheelchair (PneuPAW)

Hongwu Wang, PhD
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Department of Rehabilitation Sciences
1200 North Stonewall Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73117
hongwu-wang@ouhsc.edu

Principal Investigator: Hongwu Wang, PhD
Public Contact: 405/271-2131

Project Number: 90SF0019
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $80,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to develop a novel pneumatically powered pushrim activated power assist wheelchair (PneuPAW) and investigate its compliance with ANSI/RESNA wheelchair standards, and usability via focus group study. Independent mobility is critically important for many aspects of life. Whether performing activities of daily living, attending school, or sustaining a vocation, mobility limitations can have a significant negative impact on the ability to succeed and quality of life. The wheelchair is one of, if not the most, common and effective assistive device available for people with significant mobility impairments. Pushrim-activated power-assist wheelchairs (PAPAWs) are alternatives to manual and electric powered wheelchairs for individuals with spinal cord injury or dysfunction who are at risk for complications such as upper limb injury and fatigue when using a manual wheelchair. The PneuPAW in production is expected to cost less than the current commercial devices (e.g., e-Motion and Xtender) due to the simplified design without batteries and electronics. The PneuPAW has a market advantage over current PAPAWs due to its lighter weight, improved versatility, and equivalent or better performance. The new technology could stimulate innovation and results in lighter weight, more reliable, and environmentally-friendly power assist wheelchairs. The outcomes of this research offer a helpful and medically necessary alternative that can prevent upper limb disorders common to long-term manual wheelchair propulsion and promote or maintain health and improve mobility. PneuPAW requires less effort to propel, especially in environments such as inclines, uneven terrain, and carpeted surfaces as compared to manual wheelchairs. When compared to standard power wheelchairs, PneuPAW is lighter and easier to transport which could make it possible for individuals with disabilities go to work since lack of transportation is reported as one of the barriers for employment of people with disabilities. By demonstrating feasibility and utility of PneuPAW, this project may result in an entirely new type of drive system for wheelchair technology that has weight and usability advantages over electric systems.
Fellowships (Distinguished)
Tennessee

Memory and Learning Phenotypes as a Biomarker of Long-Term Outcome in TBI

Melissa Duff, PhD
Vanderbilt University
Hearing and Speech Sciences
1215 21st Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37232
melissa.c.duff@vanderbilt.edu

Principal Investigator: Melissa Duff, PhD
Public Contact: 319/594-6449; 615/936-5057

Project Number: 90SFGE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $80,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to demonstrate the relationship between an individual’s memory and learning profile, or phenotype, and the appropriateness and success of a given intervention for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). This research addresses a critical gap in the literature concerning the question of why some individuals with moderate to severe TBI respond well to a given treatment while others do not, and what factors contribute to long-term psycho-social outcome and societal reintegration. This lack of knowledge represents a significant challenge for clinicians making decisions about the appropriateness of a given treatment for a particular patient and for making a timely and accurate prognosis. This lack of knowledge also impedes the work of clinical researchers who strive to develop new therapies and must determine candidate eligibility for clinical trial research. An individual’s memory and learning phenotype may be a critical factor in determining the appropriateness and success of a given intervention, may be the key to understanding mechanisms of change in rehabilitation, and may be linked to a range of real world abilities critical for societal reintegration. Project objectives are to: (1) identify characteristics of memory and learning phenotypes in TBI, (2) identify the structural neural correlates of the phenotype, and (3) determine the relationship between memory and learning phenotypes and psychosocial reintegration.
Vagal Nerve Stimulation to Address the Autonomic and Inflammatory State After Chronic Spinal Cord Injury

Crystal M. Noller, PhD
1095 Northwest 14th Terrace
Miami, FL 33136-6320
cnoller@med.miami.edu

Principal Investigator: Crystal M. Noller, PhD
Public Contact: 305/243-6320

Project Number: 90SFGE0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $70,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project addresses dysfunction in the autonomic nervous and immune systems, a serious medical complication sustained by a large segment of the spinal cord injury population that has, thus far, evaded effective treatment. This interrelated dysfunction can exacerbate persistent inflammation sourced from secondary conditions (e.g., urinary and pulmonary tract infections), and likely contributes to the elevated cardiovascular disease observed in this population. Moreover, autonomic dysfunction can lead to autonomic dysreflexia (AD), a serious, and potentially life threatening medical complication that occurs in persons with injuries at or above the sixth thoracic vertebra. This project examines neuromodulation of the autonomic nervous system, evaluating the use of vagal nerve stimulation (VNS) to modulate autonomic and inflammatory responses after injury. This novel use of VNS could improve health outcomes and quality of life after SCI without the risks and side effects imposed by current treatment.
Patient-Centered Pressure Ulcer Outcome Preferences:  
A Mixed-Methods Study

Shilpa Krishnan, PhD, PT  
Emory University School of Medicine  
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine  
Division of Physical Therapy  
1462 Clifton Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
skris30@emory.edu  
www.emorydpt.org

Principal Investigator: Shilpa Krishnan, PhD, PT 404/727-4738  
Public Contact: Aaron Wesselman 404/778-1669; Fax: 404/712-4130

Project Number: 90SFGE0002  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 12 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $70,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)  
Abstract: New or worsening of pressure ulcers (PUs) has been recognized as a quality measure in nursing homes by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services; because inadequate interventions may place older adults at risk to develop skin injury. Optimal PU prevention and management utilizes an interdisciplinary approach by engaging the patients and caregivers early in the process. Many best practices have been developed to prevent and manage the occurrence of PUs, but it is unknown if older adults and their caregivers have the knowledge to implement these practices. The first phase of this mixed methods study aims to examine patient characteristics (e.g., socio-demographic, clinical comorbidities) and PU interventions (ulcer and skin treatments) among older adults with new or worsened PUs vs. no new or worsened ulcers in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) using the MDS 3.0 dataset. The second phase aims to understand the older adult and caregiver knowledge of PU risk factors, preventive strategies, and resource needs and barriers to manage PUs in skilled nursing facilities.
Social Communication and Participation of Adolescents with Motor Speech Disability

Kathryn Connaghan, PhD, CCC-SLP
Northeastern University
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
k.connaghan@northeastern.edu

Principal Investigator: Kathryn Connaghan, PhD, CCC-SLP
Public Contact: 617/373-7887

Project Number: 90SFGE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to further the understanding of the social communication and social participation experiences of adolescent speakers with dysarthria. Successful social communication and participation are critical to healthy development, well-being, and positive quality-of-life. Effective social interactions are particularly critical during adolescence, a period when peer relations take a central role. Dysarthria is a neuromotor disorder of speech execution that is characterized by reduced speech clarity and naturalness that can interfere with communication. Though studies conducted with adults with dysarthria have demonstrated interference with social participation, the impacts of dysarthria on the unique social experiences of adolescence are unclear. Two studies address social communication and participation needs across different levels of disability. First, adolescents with dysarthria participate in semi-structured interviews to establish their social participation experiences and the role of speech production abilities in their social communicative exchanges. The second study uses acoustic analysis to compare the abilities of adolescent speakers with and without dysarthria to modify their speech and speaking styles across contexts. Understanding the speech limitations and social participation experiences of adolescents with dysarthria provide the foundation for the development of novel contextually-based interventions and person-report outcome measures to enhance the social participation of adolescents with dysarthria.
**Barriers and Facilitators For Transition to Independent Living For Youth With Developmental Disabilities**

Irina Cain, PhD  
Brandeis University  
Lurie Institute for Disability Policy  
415 South Street  
Waltham, MA 02453-2728  
icain@brandeis.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Irina Cain, PhD  
**Public Contact:** 781/736-3858

**Project Number:** 90SFGE0011  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018  
**Length:** 12 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $70,000

**Abstract:** This project aims to improve independent living outcomes for young adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) and/or autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Specifically, the project aims to: (1) identify supports and services contributing to successful transition to independent living from the perspective of young adults with ID and/or ASD, their families, and service providers; (2) assess the agreement between the three perspectives (youth/family/service providers), identify which of these three populations drives decision-making, and determine whether a certain consumer-provider dynamic is more often associated with increased independent living outcomes; (3) understand what sources of information families and youth use to prepare for transition to independent living, and what means of conveying information they would find most useful; and (4) quantify the frequency of identified facilitators and barriers across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, researchers identify differences between experiences, supports, decision-making, and sources of information reported by participants belonging to diverse cultural, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Phase 1 of the study is qualitative, involving focus groups with young adults with ID and/or ASD, their families, and service providers. Phase 2 is quantitative, involving the development and administration of a survey based on qualitative findings to assess the frequency of identified barriers and facilitators in a larger sample.
Self-Generation of Prospective Memory in TBI

Erica Weber
Fifth Lawrence Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
ericaweb@gmail.com

Principal Investigator: Erica Weber
Public Contact: 617/645-3678

Project Number: 90SF0015
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 12 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $70,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project evaluates the efficacy of self-generation to improve prospective memory (PM) in individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). PM is the ability to remember to perform an intended action at a specific point in the future (e.g., remembering to take prescribed medications on time). There is presently a lack of empirically-validated, theory-driven techniques to remediate PM deficits in TBI. One novel and potentially impactful approach to improving PM is self-generation, a process by which the individual must produce the material to be remembered. This project uses two approaches of increasing ecological validity (i.e., laboratory-based and naturalistic PM paradigms; translational “bench-to-bedside” approach). Additionally, this study explores relationships of self-generation PM benefit with relevant participant characteristics (e.g., neurocognitive performance, demographics, TBI severity) to clarify how and for whom this mechanism is most effective. These study aims are evaluated in 40 individuals with history of moderate-to-severe TBI, in the context of a larger neuropsychology and functional test battery. Results from this study are expected to directly inform future development of cognitive rehabilitation protocols in this population and enhance daily functioning in those with disabilities.
Motivational Influences on Cognitive Fatigue in Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury

Ekaterina Dobryakova, PhD
Kessler Foundation
Traumatic Brain Injury Research
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
edobryakova@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Ekaterina Dobryakova, PhD
Public Contact: 862/250-7323

Project Number: 90SF0009
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $70,000; FY 16 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2017); FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 4/1/2019)

Abstract: This goal of this project is to identify whether motivation is a factor that impacts cognitive fatigue in individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and if it can lead to the development of effective interventions that reduce cognitive fatigue and improve the quality of life in those with TBI. It has been suggested that cognitive fatigue is due to a disruption of the functioning of the fronto-striatal network, leading to an effort-reward imbalance. The striatum and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex play a vital role in effort calculation and reward valuation. This study investigates whether rewards associated with performing a task can modulate the expression of cognitive fatigue in individuals with TBI. Participants with and without TBI undergo functional MRI while performing a task that includes a reward and a no reward condition. During the reward condition, participants have a chance to receive a monetary reward, but not during the no reward condition, with fatigue ratings acquired at intervals during the scan. The study also examines functional and structural connectivity of the network to assess whether fatigue levels are related to the strength of functional and/or structural connectivity. Results are used to develop an intervention that involves self-motivation as a tool to cope with cognitive fatigue.
Pre-Implementation of the “Home-Based Self-Management and Cognitive Training Changes Lives” (HOBSCOTCH) Program to Improve Quality of Life for Patients with Refractory Epilepsy

N. Erkut Kucukboyaci, PhD
Kessler Foundation
1199 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052-1424
ekucukboyaci@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: N. Erkut Kucukboyaci, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-8425

Project Number: 90SFGE0010
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000

Abstract: Home-Based Self-Management and Cognitive Training Changes Lives” (HOBSCOTCH) program, a behavioral intervention that adds to the treatment alternatives for patients with refractory epilepsy (PWRE). Despite the debilitating consequences of refractory seizures, the medical treatment model provided to PWREs only targets seizure freedom via a series of inefficacious trials of medication and surgical therapies for years. As a result, PWRE face growing barriers to independent living, driving, education and employment. HOBSCOTCH is an inclusive, eight-week intervention delivered mostly over the phone. HOBSCOTCH combines psychoeducation, memory skills training, and problem solving therapy to helps patients improve the self-management of their chronic symptoms. The objectives of this study are two-fold: first, the project evaluates the feasibility of implementing HOBSCOTCH in a large, urban comprehensive epilepsy center and synthesizes the findings in an “implementation manual” for the intervention. This tangible output facilitates future dissemination of HOBSCOTCH to other clinical settings. Second, the project assesses whether the HOBSCOTCH treatment leads to improvements in quality of life and self-management skills for PWRE that are maintained three months after study completion.
Fellowships (Merit)
North Carolina

Using GIS and GPS Techniques to Understand Meaningful Participation for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dara V. Chan, ScD
University of North Carolina
School of Medicine
Bondurant Hall
CB# 7205
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7205
dara_chan@med.unc.edu

Principal Investigator: Dara V. Chan, ScD
Public Contact: 919/843-4471

Project Number: 90SFGE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to use innovative Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) measures to systematically assess the community participation of adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and investigate critical environmental and personal factors associated with participation. The primary goal of this project is to advance the understanding of where and how adults with ASD spend their time, how they interact with their community, and what resources or supports promote community participation. Participants use GPS trackers to capture time away from home, distance traveled, and locations visited for seven days. GIS technology integrates GPS travel data to create maps of activity locations and assess environmental accessibility related to service use and participation by creating maps of available community features (ex. transportation networks, community centers) around one’s home. Follow-up qualitative interviews assess the importance of community activities and feelings of belonging and social connectedness from the individual’s perspective, which is missing from the current literature. Researchers combine these results with adult outcome survey data to examine the role of person factors such as skill level (ex. communication, vocational, social, and daily living skills), living situation (independently, with family, group home), and employment status (full time, part-time, unemployed) on community participation. Community participation outcomes are analyzed in relation to both GIS community accessibility measures and person factors, collected through survey data. Study findings will be used to make recommendations for both community-based and person-based interventions seeking to improve participation and integration, and guide the development of more meaningful assessment measures of participation for this population in the future.
Fellowships (Merit)
Virginia

A Cultural Family Intervention After Brain Injury (CFIaBI) for African Americans

Kelli Williams Gary, PhD
730 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23298-0008
williamsjonk@vcu.edu

Principal Investigator: Kelli Williams Gary, PhD
Public Contact: 804/828-3412

Project Number: 90SF0014
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $70,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: The goal of this study is to quantitively identify and qualitatively describe barriers and facilitators that are culturally-based and that interfere with and enhance community integration (CI) and emotional well-being after a traumatic brain injury (TBI), resulting in the development of a cultural community-based TBI intervention for African-American families. Theoretical concepts from the Socio-Economic Model and input from a community advisory board provide the skeletal framework for development of the intervention. The project conducts mixed methods studies to determine content for a cultural family intervention that improves CI for African-Americans with TBI while also increasing emotional well-being for their caregivers, resulting in improved quality of life for both groups. Twelve African-American family dyads of individuals with TBI and their caregivers provide salient information for topic areas and input on content. Once developed, the intervention is tested for feasibility and effectiveness.
After Early Intervention: Young People’s Vocational Trajectories Following Discharge from Specialized Early Psychosis Services

Genevra Jones, PhD
2026 Hoyt Avenue
Everette, WA 98201-2240
genevra@usf.edu

Principal Investigator: Genevra Jones, PhD
Public Contact: 773/639-8360

Project Number: 90SFGE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $70,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: This project is a mixed method study of the experiences and vocational trajectories of young adult consumers discharged from specialized community-based early intervention in psychosis (EIP) services. The goal of this project is to improve the longer-term vocational outcomes of young adults with first episode psychosis through increased understanding of their experiences in the early years following EIP program discharge. The objectives are to: (1) characterize young people’s vocational trajectories following discharge; (2) explore the relationship between these outcomes and past EIP service utilization, background risk factors, and participant characteristics at EIP service entry; and (3) solicit young people’s own views on supports and/or interventions that would assist with vocational achievement. Anticipated outcomes are a better understanding of what happens to young adult consumers following discharge from EIP services, with a focus on vocational functioning; and actionable insights into barriers and needs and possible interventions and support that would address these barriers/needs.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
California

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in  
Neuromuscular and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Regents of the University of California at Davis  
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95616-5270  
patricia.settje@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu  
www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/pmr/education/fellowship.html

Principal Investigator: Craig M. McDonald, MD 916/734-2923  
Public Contact: Patricia Settje, Education Coordinator 916/734-5292; Fax: 916/734-7838

Project Number: 90AR5030  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training at UC Davis (ARRT) provides core research methodology training, advanced research training, research experience, mentorship, and career development support for clinicians, allied health professionals, and post-doctoral students committed to developing productive careers in rehabilitation research. The aim of the ARRT is to produce rigorously-trained, extramurally-competitive, and scientifically-productive independent investigators or physician-scientists who improve the health outcomes, participation, and quality of life of individuals with disabilities. Over the course of five years, this ARRT trains 10 postdoctoral or physician trainees in a two-year comprehensive program to develop specialized and multidisciplinary research skills. The focus of the research training is a mentored period of hypothesis-driven clinical research in areas related to the rehabilitation of individuals with neuromuscular diseases or neurodevelopmental disorders. The training provides core research competency in the following areas: (1) rehabilitation concepts and research methodology, (2) clinical epidemiology and study design, (3) methods in clinical research, (4) strategies for writing grants and publications, (5) health informatics, (6) medical statistics, and (7) responsible conduct of research. Advanced coursework and clinical training in neuromuscular diseases and neurodevelopmental disorders completes the didactic coursework. Each trainee is required to develop his/her own research project and grant proposal, author a scientific publication, and present findings at professional meetings and conferences. Rigorous and periodic assessment of the individual trainee’s progress, as well as a periodic evaluation of the training program, ensure the development of successful research training providing a research foundation that cultivates continual mentorship and provides multidisciplinary research opportunities for trainees to engage in productive careers that benefit the lives of individuals with neuromuscular and neurodevelopmental disorders.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Florida

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project (ARRT)

University of Florida
Building 212, Room 2107A
Gainesville, FL 32611
wmann@phhp.ufl.edu

Principal Investigator: William C. Mann, PhD
Public Contact: 352/273-6817

Project Number: 90AR5017 (Formerly H133P130009)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $150,000; FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project partners with the Veterans Health Administration to train postdoctoral fellows in conducting high-quality, multidisciplinary disability policy research in the area of community living and participation for veterans with disabilities. This project collaborates with a two-site Center of Innovation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (CINDRR) to bring opportunities to the project fellows through immediate experience in ongoing disability policy-related projects focused on veterans with disabilities. Through the training program, the project (1) increases capacity in the field by providing postdoctoral training in disability policy research to six postdoctoral fellows, including at least one fellow from a minority or underserved population; (2) conducts disability policy research, which results in fellow participation in 10 collaborative research projects, 10 conference presentations, 10 research grant proposals, and 10 peer-reviewed publications; and (3) advances each postdoctoral fellow to the next stage in their research career through career development support. Dissemination activities include a Disability and Rehabilitation Policy Seminar, planned and implemented by fellows, which provides practical experience in establishing a network for research dissemination.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training:
Interventions for Neurologic Communication Disorders

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
Feinberg School of Medicine
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
355 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
lcherney@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Leora R. Cherney, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-1117; Fax: 312/238-2208

Project Number: 90AR5015 (Formerly H133P120013)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $149,278; FY 13 $148,077; FY 14 $149,900; FY 15 $149,990; FY 16 $149,083; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)
Abstract: This training program targets individuals with advanced degrees in communication sciences and disorders and related fields, and engages them in rehabilitation research activities designed to address the communication needs of persons with disabilities. The program is structured to provide two years of intensive training to four post-doctoral fellows who are committed to a career in rehabilitation research. Fellows are supervised by a team of multidisciplinary mentors in a comprehensive program that has three major components: (1) didactic training; (2) a mentored clinical experience in stroke, traumatic brain injury (TBI), Parkinson’s disease, or other neurological disorder; and (3) immersion in a research practicum. The research practicum includes participation in ongoing research projects, and development and implementation of an independent research project. The capstone experience is the preparation and submission of a competitive grant application to an extramural funding agency.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Illinois

Northwestern University Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Program

Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine  
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)  
355 East Erie Street, Suite 14S  
Chicago, IL 60611-2654  
aheinemann@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD  
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90AR5019 (Formerly H133P130013)  
Start Date: October 01, 2013  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $150,000; FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This project provides an integrated, interdisciplinary, collaborative training program for early-career scholars focusing on rehabilitation-related health services research. Health services faculty work closely with fellows to provide a rigorous and relevant interdisciplinary curriculum, integrating faculty and programs from diverse departments and centers into a unified health services research training program. Through this program, six post-doctoral fellows develop new skills to enhance their previous training in order to pursue a research career in rehabilitation-related health services research. The program includes carefully matched mentors, didactic course work, original research, grant writing, and scientific publishing over a two-year period.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Illinois  

Advanced Training in Translational and Engaged-Scholarship to Improve Community Living and Participation of People with Disabilities

The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois  
Department of Disability and Human Development  
809 South Marshfield, Room 520  
Chicago, IL 60612-4305  
ysuarez@uic.edu

Principal Investigator: Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, PhD 312/413-0117  
Public Contact: 312/413-1467; Fax: 312/996-6942

Project Number: 90AR5023  
Start Date: September 30, 2015  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $148,245; FY 16 $148,438; FY 17 $149,550; FY 18 $149,852; FY 19 $149,426

Abstract: This project provides an interdisciplinary postdoctoral training program that actively engages scholars in research designed to improve the community living and participation outcomes for persons with disabilities. The advanced-training program focuses on sub-populations of people with disabilities who are most likely to encounter the greatest number of barriers in community life: minorities, persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, persons with severe physical disabilities, and older adults with impairments. Moreover, the training program prepares scholars to conduct research that has real world impact (i.e., guiding and changing services, programs, organizations, and policies that influence the lives of persons with disabilities). As such, it emphasizes: (a) translational scholarship that uses empirical knowledge to develop, refine, and test optimal community participation assessment instruments, services, and environmental strategies to support these outcomes; and (b) engaged-scholarship whose premise is that knowledge is generated by researchers, practitioners, and individuals with disabilities and other stakeholders collaborating not only to generate theory and research but also to advance practice. Trainees complete an intensive advanced training program designed to assure acquisition of key skills critical to successful research careers. The training program includes: didactic preparation, close mentoring by researchers, immersion in ongoing research, and field placement in programs or organizations that serve the target populations. The project supports trainees to develop capacity to enter productive research careers that directly improve services, programs, policies, and societal attitudes toward people with disabilities.
Rehabilitation Sciences for Engineers and Basic Scientists: 
An Advanced Training Program

Northwestern University  
Feinberg School of Medicine  
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
710 North Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60611  
sgard@northwestern.edu  
www.nupoc.northwestern.edu/faculty/profile.html?xid=10826

Principal Investigator: Steven A. Gard, PhD  
Public Contact: 312/503-5700; Fax: 312/503-5760

Project Number: 90AR5031  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this advanced rehabilitation research training (ARRT) project is to increase the number of postdoctoral engineers/scientists trained to perform research aimed at solving problems of persons with disabilities. This project trains six to eight scientists/engineers in three areas of expertise: Neurologic disorders, musculoskeletal injuries, and prosthetics and orthotics. Targeted technical, scientific, and clinical training are conducted through intensive clinical and scientific instruction and experience provided by the primary, secondary, and/or clinical mentors with relevant clinical/scientific expertise. Postdoctoral trainees are recruited using regional/national advertising in publications, web-advertising, and email list-servers with a strong effort focused on recruiting minority scientists, engineers, and/or individuals with disabilities to participate in the ARRTs training program.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Northwestern University Policy Research Fellowship

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)
355 East Erie Street, Suite 14S
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
aheinemann@sralab.org
www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/cehs/fellowship

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD; Jane Holl, MD; Megan McHugh, PhD; Kathleen Pike, PhD; Harold Pincus, MD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/503-5656

Project Number: 90ARPO0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000

Abstract: This project trains disability policy researchers to specifically address the critical policy issues facing the increasing numbers of persons with disabilities and older adults aging with and into disability. Four individuals participate in a two-year fellowship, focusing their career on policy issues pertaining to disability, independent living, or rehabilitation. The primary goals of this program are to recruit and train highly qualified trainees in advanced policy research methods, focused on disability, independent living, or rehabilitation policy; provide trainees with an immersive, residential experience in the application of disability policy research; provide trainees with robust mentorship for a disability policy research project; and continuously monitor and improve the effectiveness of the fellowship program. The objectives for each post-doctoral trainee are to develop competency and independence in disability relevant policy research methods; develop effective presentation and dissemination skills for key policy audiences; advance knowledge in a disability-related policy area by designing and executing a policy research project; and be prepared to become a positive change agent in disability policy, helping to shape a healthy and productive future for Americans with disabilities and chronic health conditions.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Advanced Rehabilitation Research and Training (ARRT) Program:
Northwestern University Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)
355 East Erie Street, Suite 14S
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
aheinemann@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90ARHF0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000

Abstract: This project provides an integrated, interdisciplinary, collaborative training program to five post-doctoral fellows focusing on skill development for research careers in rehabilitation-related health services research. Mentors work closely with fellows to provide a rigorous and relevant interdisciplinary curriculum, integrating faculty and programs from diverse departments and centers into a unified health services research training program focusing on the effectiveness, measurement, organization, provision, and financing of health care services for populations with functional limitations. During this program, five post-doctoral fellows develop new skills through didactic course work, original research, grant writing, and scientific publishing over a two-year period with the goal of a research career in rehabilitation-related health services research.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Maryland

University of Maryland Advanced Neuromotor Rehabilitation Research Training (UMANRRT)

University of Maryland, Baltimore
School of Medicine
100 Penn Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-1508
jabarro@som.umaryland.edu

Principal Investigator: Mark W. Rogers, PhD, PT 410/706-0841
Public Contact: Janice Abarro 410/706-0856

Project Number: 90AR5028
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The University of Maryland Advanced Neuromotor Rehabilitation Training (UMANRRT) program trains post-doctoral fellows in interdisciplinary rehabilitation research with a primary focus on neuromuscular disorders including Parkinson’s disease and stroke. The UMANRRT program targets doctorally prepared professionals with backgrounds in bioengineering, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and the movement sciences. The overall goal of the UMANRRT program is training post-doctoral fellows to further develop and refine the skills needed to conduct high-quality, independent, interdisciplinary, funded research in the rehabilitation of clinical populations with neuromotor disorders. Specific project objectives include: (1) recruiting and selecting highly qualified candidates to become UMANRRT post-doctoral fellows; (2) providing a scientifically-based, multidisciplinary training program that includes collaboration among affiliated institutions; (3) providing mentoring and collaborative opportunities with established researchers at University of Maryland at Baltimore and affiliated institutions; (4) providing fellows with interdisciplinary neuromotor rehabilitation research leadership experience by involving them in research projects where at least one is led by the fellow; (5) providing opportunities for participation in presentations, publications, and grant development; and (6) providing opportunities to develop teaching and mentoring skills for transitioning to a junior faculty role.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Massachusetts

Advanced Research Training Program in Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities

Boston University
Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1203
zlatka@bu.edu
www.bu.edu/SARPSYCH

Principal Investigator: Zlatka Russinova, PhD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90AR5018 (Formerly H133P130011)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $149,979; FY 14 $149,968; FY 15 $149,968; FY 16 $149,960; FY 17 $149,908; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

Abstract: This advanced rehabilitation research training project (ARRT) trains six post-doctoral fellows through a two-year training program in the area of psychiatric vocational rehabilitation. The training program is implemented in two consecutive cycles with three fellows in residence and is designed to provide broad-based, didactic training in psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment research, which is complemented with an intensive research practicum that combines mentored and independent research in one of the following specializations of employment-related research: vocational recovery research, interventional research, vocational rehabilitation policy and systems research, or transition-age and young adults. Throughout the program, the fellows are mentored, actively and intensely, by accomplished scholars, through a variety of modalities which allow them to acquire competencies in the following areas: research design/methodology; advanced statistics and instrument development; psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment research; participatory research methods and peer employment research; conduct of applied research; and grant and professional writing.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Massachusetts

Advanced Research Training Program in
Psychiatric Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Research

Trustees of Boston University
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1203
zlatka@bu.edu
www.bu.edu/SARPSYCH

Principal Investigator: Zlatka Russinova, PhD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90AREM0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $149,848; FY 19 $149,966; FY 20 $149,811; FY 21 $149,814; FY 22 $149,745

Abstract: This advanced rehabilitation research training project (ARRT) recruits and trains four post-doctoral fellows through a two-year training program in the area of psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with psychiatric disabilities. The training program is implemented in two consecutive cycles with two full-time fellows in residence. The program is designed to provide state-of-the-art didactic experience, intensive research practicum, and opportunities for collegial collaboration relevant to psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment research. Throughout the program, the fellows are mentored, actively and intensely, by accomplished scholars, through a variety of modalities which allow them to acquire competencies in independent research study design and methodology, grant and professional writing, and conference presentations with the goal to expand current practices in the field and improve the lives of persons with psychiatric disabilities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program on Health and Functioning of People with Disabilities

Brandeis University
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2728
mmitra@brandeis.edu

Principal Investigator: Monika Mitra, PhD
Public Contact: 781/736-3928

Project Number: 90AR5024
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $149,998; FY 16 $149,996; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $149,999; FY 19 $149,999

Abstract: This project trains six postdoctoral fellows, recruited from racial, ethnic, and/or disability minority backgrounds, who are interested in research careers. The overarching focus of this program is racial, ethnic, and disability-based health disparities among children and adults with disabilities. Each postdoctoral fellow receives training driven by an individual development plan, modeled on that created by the National Science Foundation. Project participants conduct a self-assessment, and, with the guidance of a primary mentor from Brandeis University and two secondary mentors from institutions in greater Boston, develop an individual development plan. They then embark on a training and professional development program that includes: (1) biweekly meetings with the primary mentor; (2) applied research experience on a funded research project of the primary mentor; (3) support and guidance from quarterly meetings with two secondary mentors; (4) coursework in advanced research methods, health services research, and disability from any of the 11 Boston Consortium universities (including Boston University, MIT, Boston College, Tufts, and Brandeis University); (5) participation in a biweekly postdoc seminar addressing fellows’ professional development; (6) mentored research on independent projects of the fellows’ choosing; and (7) advice, guidance, and community learning activities from the disability community represented by a Community Advisory Board. Through the course of this program, postdoctoral fellows author or coauthor six papers for peer-reviewed journal articles; attend at least four national scientific conferences; develop and submit one extramural grant proposal as principal investigator; and present their research findings in the disability community four times. Project mentors are drawn from the fields of disability studies, education, medicine, occupational therapy, public health, social policy, social work, and sociology. The project is overseen by a Community Advisory Board of individuals involved in the disability field in different ways, including self-advocates, clinicians, nonprofit executives, and community leaders.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Michigan

The University of Michigan Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program in Community Living and Participation

University of Michigan
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
325 East Eisenhower Parkway, Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
dgtate@umich.edu
pmr.med.umich.edu/education-training/fellowships/advanced-rehabilitation-research-training-program

Principal Investigator: Susan Murphy, ScD, OTR; Denise G. Tate, PhD
Public Contact: 734/963-5600; Fax: 734/936-7048

Project Number: 90AR5020 (Formerly H133P140005)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000

Abstract: The ARRTP-CP trains six postdoctoral fellows and up to five physician resident trainees to advance the rehabilitation field in community living and participation, promoted by embracing community-based research approaches. This training program is guided by the principles of competency-based education and assessment to develop individualized training plans and the achievement of core competencies. The overall objectives of the ARRTP-CP are to: (1) provide research training in community living and participation in persons with disabilities; (2) orient training toward advancement of rehabilitation science by promoting community-based research that enables the development of sound disability policy; (3) prepare researchers to conduct studies in community-based settings, including home, school, and other environments; (4) foster advanced research skills that result in successful research proposals addressing issues relevant to persons with disabilities; and (5) build productive partnerships and collaborations that lead to successful careers to address the critical shortage of qualified rehabilitation scientists.

Training in research methods focuses on diverse community-based research approaches designed to capture community living and environmental, social, and situational contextual factors. A core curriculum complements hands-on experience, and includes academic courses, seminars, and workshops to train fellows in qualitative methods (i.e. community-based participatory research - CBPR) supported by quantitative ones. Opportunities to complete a CBPR project, attend presentations and lectures at partner institutions and national conferences, and engage in networking round out the training program. This program is a collaborative effort among academic researchers at the University of Michigan’s School of Public Health, Institute of Social Research, and the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and their partners at community-based organizations.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Minnesota

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) on  
Community Living and Participation

Regents of the University of Minnesota  
204 Pattee Hall  
150 Pillsbury Drive, SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0223  
hewit005@umn.edu

Principal Investigator: Amy K. Hewitt, PhD  
Public Contact: 612/625-1098; Fax: 612/625-6619

Project Number: 90ARCP0002  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000  

Abstract: The goal of the Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training on Community Living and Participation (ARRT/CLP) program is to provide post-doctoral fellows with research training and experience as well as knowledge translation opportunities focused on community living and participation of persons with disabilities. ARRT/CLP provides post-doctoral participants (approximately 5-7 fellows) an opportunity to join an interdisciplinary team by matching participants with faculty mentors with shared topical and methods interests to guide their learning experience. Training opportunities include seminars, coursework, and direct hands-on training relevant to career development including, but not limited to, observational and survey research methods and programs, and the latest approaches to primary and secondary data analysis, policy analysis, program evaluation, and measurement development. Participants are supported in authoring research focused grants, peer-reviewed journal articles, and translational materials targeted to non-technical audiences, and in identifying research to policy and practice opportunities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
New Jersey

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Rehabilitation Neuroscience and Engineering

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Kessler Foundation
185 South Orange Avenue
Newark, NJ 07103-2757
gyue@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Guang Yue, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3539

Project Number: 90ARHF0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $147,060; FY 18 $147,458; FY 19 $147,451; FY 20 $147,437; FY 21 $147,758

Abstract: This project trains doctoral-level researchers committed to advancing the field of rehabilitation that improves overall health and function of individuals with neuromuscular and musculoskeletal diseases and injuries, specifically in the domains of sensorimotor neuroscience, rehabilitation robotics and engineering, and neuroimaging. The program is designed to be multidisciplinary, and solicits and enrolls postdoctoral fellows from rehabilitation-related fields. These fellows receive research training that facilitates their pursuit of a career in rehabilitation research. Fellows complete a minimum of one independent research project, participate on a minimum of two ongoing collaborative research projects, present results to professional and consumer groups, submit findings for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and participate in writing extramural grant proposals, including their own grant applications.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
New York

Rusk Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training
Postdoctoral Fellowship

New York University School of Medicine
Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine
240 East 38th Street; ACC 17-73
New York, NY 10016
joseph.rath@nyulangone.org
rusk.med.nyu.edu/research/psychology-postdoctoral-fellowship-rehabilitation-research

Principal Investigator: Joseph F. Rath, PhD
Public Contact: 212/263-6183

Project Number: 90ARHF0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $145,089; FY 18 $147,970; FY 19 $149,891; FY 20 $149,925; FY 21 $149,841

Abstract: This project trains psychology postdoctoral fellows in skills necessary to become independent investigators in clinical rehabilitation research. Doctoral-level professionals from appropriate fields of study in psychology (e.g., rehabilitation, clinical, counseling, and health psychology and neuropsychology) receive training through mentored independent research projects (IRPs) and ongoing multidisciplinary collaborative research projects. In addition to expanding their research expertise, fellows increase their knowledge of participatory action research (PAR) through collaborations with consumer disability advocacy groups, PAR-focused seminars, and/or partnership with a consumer whose disability is the focus of the fellow’s IRP. By completion of training, fellows are expected to complete a minimum of one IRP, participate on a minimum of one ongoing collaborative research project, present research results to professional and consumer groups and/or submit findings for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and participate in writing extramural grant proposals, including their own grant applications.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Oklahoma

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project at the Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (LU-RRTC) on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities

Langston University
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies
LU-RRTC
6700 North Martin Luther King Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
clmoore@langston.edu
www.langston.edu/capacitybuilding-rrtc

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90AR5029
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this program is to improve the capacity of minority-serving institutions (MSI) to develop and support disability and rehabilitation training pipeline infrastructure that can facilitate the development of talent and produce qualified investigators of color who can lead and participate in research and development aimed at improving the employment status of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations. To this end, the ARRT objectives are to: (1) implement a recruitment strategy to attract four to six well-qualified MSI-based fellows, including individuals with disabilities, interested in pursuing research careers in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities for advanced research training; (2) provide fellows with a multidisciplinary training program that includes didactic research coursework and classroom instruction offered through alternative technological platforms (including online) that increases their knowledge of scientific research methodologies, multicultural research best-practices, and solutions-focused translational approaches suitable to the field of rehabilitation; (3) implement mentoring through an interface between fellows and a peer-to-peer multiple mentor approach that consists of a primary mentor and a scientific mentorship panel comprised of context experts, multicultural specialists, methodologists, and a statistician from the LU-RRTC, Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston (an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (an historically Black college/university or HBCU), South Carolina State University (HBCU), and Jackson State University (HBCU); (4) increase fellows’ scientific writing abilities by having them collaborate with researchers on grant writing and preparation of independent research findings for submission to peer-reviewed journals; (5) improve fellows’ presentation abilities to both professionals and consumers; (6) provide fellows with interdisciplinary research experiences; and (7) involve fellows in consumer-related experiences by providing opportunities to deliver clinical employment support.
interventions and/or participate in structured community-based settings with organizations representing individuals with disabilities such as Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Public School District-Department of Special Education.
Solutions-Focused Translational Research to Improve Employment Outcomes and Experiences Among Individuals with Disabilities from Traditionally Underserved Racial and Ethnic Populations

Langston University
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies
6700 North Martin Luther King Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
clmoore@langston.edu

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90ARST0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this program is to improve the capacity of minority-serving institutions (MSI) to develop and support disability and rehabilitation training pipeline infrastructure that can facilitate the development of talent and produce qualified investigators of color who can lead and participate in research and development aimed at improving the employment status of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations. To this end, the project’s objectives are to: (1) implement a recruitment strategy to attract four to six well-qualified MSI-based fellows for advanced research training, including individuals with disabilities, interested in pursuing research careers in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; (2) provide fellows with a multidisciplinary training program that includes didactic research coursework and classroom instruction offered through alternative technological platforms (including online) that increases their knowledge of scientific research methodologies, multicultural research best-practices, and solutions-focused translational approaches suitable to the field of rehabilitation; (3) implement mentoring through an interface between fellows and a peer-to-peer multiple mentor approach that consists of a primary mentor and a scientific mentorship panel comprised of context experts, multicultural specialists, methodologists, and a statistician from the LU-RRTC, Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston (an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (an historically Black college/university or HBCU), South Carolina State University (HBCU), Jackson State University (HBCU); and the Kessler Foundation; (4) increase fellows’ scientific writing abilities by having them collaborate with researchers on grant writing and preparation of independent research findings for submission to peer-reviewed journals; (5) improve fellows’ presentation abilities to both professionals and consumers; (6) provide fellows with interdisciplinary research experiences; and (7) involve fellows in consumer-related experiences by providing opportunities to deliver clinical employment support interventions and/or participate in structured community-based settings with organizations representing individuals with disabilities such as Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Public School District-Department of Special Education.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2018 - Capacity Building for Rehabilitation Research and Training 8-39
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Pennsylvania

ARRT - Career Advancement for Engineers in the Science of Rehabilitation

University of Pittsburgh
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
6425 Penn Avenue, Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
dad5@pitt.edu
www.herl.pitt.edu/education/postdocs

Principal Investigator: Dan Ding, PhD
Public Contact: 412/822-3684; Fax: 412/822-3699

Project Number: 90AR5021 (Formerly H133P140012)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $149,991; FY 15 $149,993; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $149,966; FY 18 $149,997

Abstract: Career Advancement for Engineers in the Science of Rehabilitation (CAESOR) provides integrated engineering and clinical training for up to seven postdoctoral fellows, fostering a deep understanding of human function and needs, enabling them to design innovative rehabilitation devices, tools, and techniques to help people with disabilities and older adults live more satisfying and productive lives. CAESOR utilizes a rehabilitation research team consisting of a focused cadre of mentors with interdisciplinary expertise in engineering, clinical, and psychosocial disciplines to provide the trainees with a balanced exposure to research, clinical, and academic approaches to rehabilitation and disability issues. The program is specifically designed to give the postdoctoral trainees the skills needed to become independent researchers in rehabilitation engineering. The comprehensive training activities are designed to facilitate the development of skills and competencies in six key areas including technical, person-centered (clinical and psychosocial), research, communication, innovation, and leadership skills. The training program consists of five components, with each component addressing one or more of the six key skills: (1) immersion in a mentored rehabilitation research experience by matching postdoctoral trainees with highly successful research mentors; (2) complementary didactics including core and individualized components that teach and enhance the critical skills necessary for a successful research career (such as grant writing, ethics, and issues in human subject research), and topics that are not usually covered in traditional engineering curricula (such as medical and social aspects of disability, research methods, and statistical analysis); (3) involvement in mentored clinical experience to gain clinical insights into and better understanding of the clinical decision-making process; (4) structured professional development and networking activities; and (5) participation in a community practicum to understand the real user needs and contextual constraints of technology. The capstone experience for the postdoctoral trainees is the submission of an extramural research proposal.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Texas

Health and Function:
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) at UTEP

The University of Texas at El Paso
500 West University Avenue
El Paso, TX 79968
sirmontaylor@utep.edu

**Principal Investigator:** Bess Sirmon-Taylor, PhD
**Public Contact:** 915/747-8233

**Project Number:** 90AR5016 (Formerly H133P130001)
**Start Date:** October 01, 2013
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Shelley Reeves
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 13 $150,000; FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019)

**Abstract:** This project provides a multidisciplinary, doctoral-level rehabilitation research training in traumatic brain injury (TBI) that teaches six postdoctoral fellows techniques in rehabilitation counseling, speech-language pathology, public health, sports medicines, clinical laboratory sciences, diagnostic imaging, computer science, and kinesiology. The project (1) provides a multidisciplinary training program that emphasizes advanced research methodology, participatory in the initiation and carrying out of advanced research projects; (2) provides a clinical research experience utilizing both group designs and single-subject designs to further develop research skills in the rehabilitation of persons with TBI; (3) provides advanced research experience in a community-based research setting and community outreach to organizations serving individuals with TBI; (4) provides advanced research mentoring and opportunities for scientific collaboration with researchers in Kinesiology Vestibular Lab, Clinical Laboratory Science Lab, Public Health Sciences, Computer Modeling Lab, Sports Medicine Clinic, Concussion Management Research Lab, and the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Texas Tech University Medical School in El Paso; and (5) provides trainees with opportunities to publish findings and present papers in national, regional, local, and university outlets. The project’s training program leads postdoctoral researchers toward receiving the Certificate of Concussion Management.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Virginia

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects

Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Box 980542
Richmond, VA 23298-0542
jeffrey.kreutzer@vcuhealth.org

Principal Investigator: Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, PhD 804/828-3704
Public Contact: Nancy H. Hsu, PsyD 804/828-0231; Fax: 804/828-2378

Project Number: 90AR5025
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project implements a highly effective advanced rehabilitation research training program (ARRT) for individuals with advanced degrees, committed to a career in rehabilitation research, with a focus on neurobehavioral recovery and intervention. Training and research activities address brain injury and other neurological disorders including Parkinson’s, stroke, and brain tumors. The program trains a diverse group of fellows, including persons with disabilities. Individualized research training plans emphasizing scientific rigor guide fellows’ choices of training activities. Multidisciplinary mentors, didactic experiences, and collaborative and independent research activities provide the foundation for the VCU ARRT program. Mentors include scientists from the fields of rehabilitation medicine, neuropsychology, neurosurgery, and vocational rehabilitation. Core courses on ethics, biostatistics, research design, and grant writing are complemented by graduate courses, seminars, grand rounds, and conferences. All fellows complete and submit a grant application during the second year of their fellowship. The ultimate goal of the VCU ARRT is to benefit rehabilitation practice and outcomes by increasing the number of highly skilled clinical research professionals.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Washington

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Rehabilitation Research Policy (UW-ARRT-RP)

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
1959 Northeast Pacific Street
Seattle, WA 98195
imolton@u.washington.edu

Principal Investigator: Ivan Molton, PhD
Public Contact: 206/543-3602

Project Number: 90AR5026
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $79,103; FY 16 $148,677; FY 17 $148,935; FY 18 $149,203; FY 19 $81,242

Abstract: This project implements a five-year Advanced Rehabilitation Research Policy Fellowship (UW-ARRT-RP) for postdoctoral rehabilitation professionals. Through a collaborative partnership between the University of Washington and the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, administered by Columbia University, the primary goal is to increase the number of successful independent rehabilitation policy researchers who are prepared to conduct investigations related to healthcare policy in individuals with disabilities across the lifespan, with an emphasis on older adults. The program provides advanced training for four postdoctoral trainees in two phases. The first year immerses fellows in a mentored rehabilitation research experience at UW, matching trainees with researchers in disability and rehabilitation. All trainees complete an individualized research development plan, as well as formal coursework in policy research. In year 2, fellows move into the policy intensive portion of the program, by participating in the residential track of the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program in Washington, DC, working inside the Federal policymaking and policy-related research process as legislative assistants in Congress, or as professional staff members in executive-branch agencies or policy organizations. Both years of training include core and individualized didactics and coursework, as well as workshops and integrated mentorship. Fellows also complete a mentored policy research project, culminating in a presentation of findings at the end of Year 2. The UW-ARRT-RP also conducts ongoing formal evaluation of all aspects of the program.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Washington

Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living Fellowship (CHRIL-F)

Washington State University
Department of Health Policy and Administration
PO Box 1495
Spokane, WA 99210-0001
jjkennedy@wsu.edu
www.chril.org/chrilf

Principal Investigator: James J. Kennedy, PhD
Public Contact: 509/368-6971

Project Number: 90ARCP0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $149,896; FY 18 $149,788; FY 19 $149,896; FY 20 $149,788; FY 21 $149,896

Abstract: The objective of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living Fellowship (CHRIL-F) is to provide a highly personalized 18-month research training experience to three scholars with disabilities who hold doctorates or similar advanced degrees and are personally committed to understanding and improving health policies and services for all Americans with disabilities. The CHRIL-F complements and extends the work of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living (CHRIL), a multisite Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project funded by NIDILRR. The fellowship program involves rigorous coursework and supervised research. Each CHRIL-F participant is expected to work with CHRIL investigators on secondary analyses of health survey data, and may also opt to work with other select health scientists at the WSU Spokane campus. Fellows are required to enroll in at least two graduate courses in health policy and/or health services research methods. Fellows also participate in one or more WSU-sponsored workshops on grant writing. By the end of their first 12 months, CHRIL-F participants must prepare at least one research grant proposal, one conference abstract, two journal manuscripts, an academic curriculum vitae, and an individualized plan of research. During the last part of their training period, fellows may choose to spend three to six months at one or more CHRIL affiliate sites, including: Washington, DC (American Association on Health and Disability); Lawrence, KS (Institute for Health and Disability Policy Studies); or Houston, TX (Independent Living Research Utilization) to work on CHRIL research or knowledge translation projects.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Wisconsin

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in  
Pediatric Mobility for Physicians and Engineers

Marquette University  
Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Engineering Center  
735 North 17th Street  
PO Box 1881  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881  
deborah.epps@marquette.edu  
www.tech4pod.org/4researchers/training-activities/t1

Principal Investigator: Gerald F. Harris, PhD 414/288-1586  
Public Contact: Deborah Epps 414/805-6098; Fax: 414/288-0713

Project Number: 90AR5022 (Formerly H133P140023)  
Start Date: October 01, 2014  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000

Abstract: This project offers advanced education and training in rehabilitation research to selected engineers and physician researchers in four areas that support opportunities for career-oriented contributions to the field of pediatric mobility: (1) musculoskeletal biomechanics and biomaterials, (2) assistive devices and robotics, (3) foot and ankle mobility, and (4) functional assessment/outcomes measurement. A team of two senior mentors and a physician/surgeon with qualifications specific to each of these research areas support candidates entering the program to enhance their current skills and offer additional, high-level training and experience. The postdoctoral trainees experience a program designed to provide a unique set of capabilities to succeed as a rehabilitation researcher. The program includes three essential elements: didactics, mentored research areas, and collegial and collaborative activities. Fellowship research requirements include the successful submission of an intramural proposal, pilot study completion and refinement, multiple journal article submissions, and submission of extramural proposals. The fellowship experience also includes an ‘away’ rotation at one of several research support laboratories including: the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (CA); the University of California, Berkeley Department of Materials Science and Engineering (CA); the Hospital for Special Surgery Motion Analysis Laboratory (NY); the Thomas Jefferson University School of Health Professions (PA); and the Northwestern University Biodynamics Laboratory (IL). The fellowship also provides an international clinical rotation through videoconference with colleagues in the Motion Analysis Laboratory at ITESM, Chihuahua, Mexico. Optional off-site rotations are also available through facilities in Cali, Columbia and Manila, Philippines.
Grantees
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<th>Grantees</th>
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Cornell University
Ithaca, NY
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Crystal M. Noller, PhD
Miami, FL
90SFGE0006 ..................................................8-11

Dara V. Chan, ScD
Chapel Hill, NC
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Dicapta Foundation Corporation
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Ekaterina Dobryakova, PhD
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Erica Weber
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Indiana University
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Irina Cain, PhD
Waltham, MA
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Johns Hopkins University
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Jonathan Delman, PhD, JD, MPH
Stoneham, MA
90SFGE0009 ..........................................................8-6

Kathryn Connagahan, PhD, CCC-SLP
Boston, MA
90SFGE0007 ....................................................8-13

Kelli Williams Gary, PhD
Richmond, VA
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Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital
Washington, DC
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Colorado Springs, CO
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90SFGE0012 ....................................................8-10

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N. Erkut Kucukboyaci, PhD  
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National Disability Institute  
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New Editions Consulting, Inc.  
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New Jersey Institute of Technology  
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NewVentureIQ, LLC  
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NYU Langone Health  
New York, NY  
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Pathway Accessibility Solutions, Inc.  
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Peii Chen, PhD  
West Orange, NJ  
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Portland State University  
Portland, OR  
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Regents of the University of Minnesota
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Adamovich, Sergei, PhD
New Jersey Institute of Technology
973/596-3413 ........................................ 5-23

Allexandre, Didier, PhD
Kessler Foundation
973/324-3541 ........................................ 3-81

Amtmann, Dagmar, PhD
University of Washington
206/685-4889 .......................................... 6-12, 6-13

Antonelli, Karla
Mississippi State University
662/325-2001 ........................................ 1-8

Anzilotti, Mary
The Thresholds
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Arciniegas, David B., MD
TIRR Memorial Hermann
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Armstrong, David
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Ashley, Joseph M., RhD, CRC
University of Richmond
804/662-7624 .......................................... 1-23

Azulay, Joanne, PhD
Kessler Foundation
973/324-3541 ........................................ 3-81

Barrance, Peter, PhD
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Bezyak, Jill, PhD
Meeting the Challenge, Inc.
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Blanck, Peter D., PhD, JD
Syracuse University
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Bodine, Cathy, PhD
University of Colorado Denver
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The Ohio State University
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The University of Alabama at Birmingham
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Borodin, Yevgen, PhD
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The Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute
415/345-2110 .......................................... 5-5

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University of Pittsburgh
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NYU Langone Health
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University of Massachusetts Boston
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University of Pittsburgh
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Medical University of South Carolina
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d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
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Craig Hospital  
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303/789-8575 (TTY) ...........................................3-12

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Mississippi State University  
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Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
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JFK Health Systems  
732/906-2903 ...................................................3-55

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University of Massachusetts Medical School  
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University of Missouri at Columbia  
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The University of Alabama at Birmingham  
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University of Pittsburgh  
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Ehrlich-Jones, Linda, PhD, RN
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Syracuse University
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Frieden, Lex, LLD
The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR)
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Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
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<td>The Ohio State University</td>
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<td>913/945-6604</td>
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<td>University of Illinois at Chicago</td>
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Hornby, T. George, PhD, PT
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d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
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Kuiken, Todd, MD, PhD
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
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Lane, Joseph
University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
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Lee, Su Jin
Georgia Tech Research Corporation
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University of Colorado Denver
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312/355-4537 ...................................................2-4

Maisel, Jordana, PhD
Carnegie Mellon University
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Children’s Hospital Medical Center
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Mann, William C., PhD
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Marino, Ralph J., MD
Thomas Jefferson University
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Matrone, Kathe, PhD
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916/734-2923 ...................................................8-21

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Syracuse University
315/443-5313 ...................................................2-24

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Mississippi State University
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The University of Alabama at Birmingham
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McHugh, Megan, PhD
Northwestern University
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McIntyre, Laura Lee, PhD
University of Oregon
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McLain, Amie B., MD
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
205/934-3330 ...................................................3-32

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Meade, Michelle A., PhD
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Children’s Hospital Medical Center
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Georgia Institute of Technology  
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Georgia Institute of Technology  
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Children’s Hospital Medical Center  
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Washington University in St. Louis  
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Morse, Leslie R., DO  
Craig Hospital  
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Mullen-Gonzalez, Michelle G.  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
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Mulroy, Sara, PhD  
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University of Michigan  
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The University of Alabama  
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Nash, Mark, PhD  
University of Miami  
305/243-3628 ........................................ 3-15

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Case Western Reserve University  
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Nerkowitz, Shari, PhD  
Mercy College  
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Neumann, Dawn, PhD  
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Medical University of South Carolina
843/792-9255 ................................................... 2-37

Nguyen, Vinh
TIRR Memorial Hermann
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Noller, Crystal M., PhD
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Norweg, Annamaria, PhD
New York University School of Medicine
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Novack, Thomas A., PhD
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
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Portland State University
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Owens, Laura, PhD
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Paez, Kathryn, PhD, MSN
American Institutes for Research (AIR)
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Pantic, Zeljko, PhD
Utah State University
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Parker, Alison Elaine, PhD
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Parmanto, Bambang, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
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Patton, Jim, PhD
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
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Pearl, Amanda M., PhD
The Pennsylvania State University
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Pearlman, Jonathan L., PhD
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Pike, Kathleen, PhD
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Pincus, Harold, MD
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Poellabauer, Christian, PhD
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
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Powell, Laurie Ehlhardt, PhD
University of Oregon
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Powers, Mark B., PhD
Baylor Scott and White Research
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Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
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Putnam, Michelle, PhD
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Qanungo, Suparna, PhD
Medical University of
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Mercy College
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Rath, Joseph F., PhD
New York University School of
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University of Maryland, Baltimore
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Ryan, Colleen M., MD
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
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Rymer, W. Zev, MD, PhD
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
d/b/a Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
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National Disability Institute
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Sander, Angelle, PhD
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Schmidt, Robert, PhD
University of Richmond
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Schneider, Jeffrey C., MD
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
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Scott, Michael, MD
Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center
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Washington University in St. Louis
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Steinfeld, Aaron, PhD
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Steinfeld, Edward, ArchD
University at Buffalo
The State University of New York
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Suman, Oscar, PhD
The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
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Wade, Shari L., PhD
Children’s Hospital Medical Center
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Walker, Janet, PhD
Portland State University
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University of Maryland, Baltimore
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Wang, Hongwu, PhD
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
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Wehman, Paul, PhD
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Whitall, Jill, PhD
University of Maryland, Baltimore
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White, Glen W., PhD
The University of Kansas
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White, Michael, PhD
FTL Labs Corporation
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University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc.
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Wilson, Josephine F., DDS, PhD
Wright State University
937/775-1484 ...................................................1-20

Principal Investigators
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Worobey, Lynn, PhD  
University of Pittsburgh  
412/648-6979 .....................................................6-8

Young, Hui-Ju (Zoe), PhD  
The University of Alabama at Birmingham  
205/934-8773 ...................................................5-33

Yue, Guang, PhD  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
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Zafonte, Ross D., DO  
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital  
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Zhang, Li-Qun, PhD  
University of Maryland, Baltimore  
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