



Health Science Specialist (GS-9)

Salary range: \$55,529 to \$69,860
1.0 FTE



To apply, please submit CV/resume, cover letter, and list of 3 references to nicole.floyd@va.gov by March 15, 2019 for first consideration.

Background

This position is housed in Research and Development Service located at the VA Portland Health Care System in Portland, Oregon. The incumbent will serve as a Health Science Specialist (Health Informaticist/Research Associate) for the Evidence Synthesis Program Coordinating Center (ESPCC) of the Evidence Synthesis Program, a national research program.

Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) established the VA Evidence Synthesis Program in 2007 to provide timely and accurate syntheses of scientific research evidence on targeted healthcare topics of importance to VA clinicians, managers, and policymakers, as they work to improve the health and healthcare of Veterans. The program is comprised of four ESP Centers across the US and a Coordinating Center located in Portland, Oregon. Center Directors are VA clinicians and recognized leaders in the field of evidence synthesis with close ties to the AHRQ Evidence-based Practice Center Program and Cochrane Collaboration. The Coordinating Center was created to manage program operations, ensure methodological consistency and quality of products, and interface with stakeholders.

ESP researchers synthesize scientific research evidence on important clinical practice topics and develop reports that help the VHA: 1) develop clinical policies informed by evidence, 2) implement effective services to improve patient outcomes and to support VHA clinical practice guidelines and performance measures, and 3) set the direction for future research to address gaps in clinical knowledge. The ESP offers a [range of products](#) from rapid review evidence briefs to full systematic reviews, tailored to the needs of decision-makers. The ESP disseminates these reports throughout the VHA, and many evidence syntheses have informed the clinical guidelines of large professional organizations. The program receives approximately \$1.75M in HSR&D funding per year, which is used to support over 25 staff involved in conducting dozens of evidence synthesis projects each fiscal year.

Major Duties

The Health Science Specialist's primary focus will be to support the conduct of Rapid Response Evidence Briefs and initial scoping of review topics for assignment to ESP Centers. Review topics often focus on health services delivery and policy and process of care and address the broader social issues among Veterans. Because of the emphasis on collaboration between VA operations and the evidence review team, ESP work products can have a strong impact on national policy.

1. Provide specialist information retrieval support for developing and conducting scientific literature and grey literature searches on a variety of health services and clinical topics.
 - Plan and undertake specialized scoping searches to evaluate feasibility for potential systematic reviews (free-text, subject headings, synonyms, related terms, truncation, proximity operators, etc.).
 - Plan and undertake searches for the conduct of rapid response evidence synthesis reports.

- Searches non-bibliographic database sources, to identify grey literature (eg, patient information, unpublished trials, and other evidence synthesis).
 - Retrieves full-text articles and orders necessary documents from intra-library loan as needed.
 - Follows quality standards for searches; keeps abreast of the latest methodological developments in the field.
2. Apply the principles, practices, procedures, and techniques for conducting systematic reviews of scientific literature in developing Rapid Response Evidence Products
 - Assists PI in developing and refining Key Questions and inclusion/exclusion criteria for evidence synthesis reports.
 - Reviews abstracts and full texts of scientific research studies for inclusion/exclusion; extracting relevant data.
 - Assesses the internal validity of studies using pre-established quality/risk of bias criteria; assesses the strength of the evidence using a structured tool.
 - Drafts components of evidence synthesis reports including: background, methods, results, data synthesis, discussion, and executive summary for PI review.
 - Adjudicates peer review comments; makes appropriate revisions to draft, and finalizes evidence synthesis report.
 - Develops evidence tables, figures, and other supportive documents to synthesize data from scientific research studies for systematic reviews.
 - Performs basic statistical analysis.
 3. Report research results via publication and/or presentation
 - Manages editing and final preparation of evidence synthesis report as specified by program style guidelines.
 - Prepares manuscripts for publication in scientific journals.
 - Develops PowerPoint presentation of report findings for VHA leadership briefings, cyberseminars, or other dissemination venues.
 - Presents report findings in person or by conference call to a variety of audiences.

Best qualified candidates will have knowledge of the principles, practices, procedures, and techniques for conducting systematic reviews of scientific literature; ability to read and assess the internal validity and strength of evidence of scientific research studies; AND be proficient in performing literature searches on a wide variety of topics, including hospitals and health systems, clinical epidemiology, implementation science, drugs/devices, and social issues such as health disparities, patient centered care, and resource utilization, and have a flexible approach in designing search strategies that meet the needs of the research team which may range in their level of specificity and sensitivity and timeline.

Preference will be given to those with a master's degree in library sciences/information studies, public health, epidemiology, health policy/services, medical anthropology, or behavioral sciences, and 3 years of experience working in a research setting with a demonstrated ability to report research results via publication and/or presentation.