

A Systems Intervention to Enhance Health Care Access via Care Partner Inclusion During Health Care Encounters: An I-HEAL Study



Marc A. Silva PhD^{1,2} (presenter), Jill Coulter BS³, Rebecca Campbell-Montalvo PhD^{2,3}, Deveney Ching PhD³, Kristen Dams-O'Connor PhD⁴, Cassandra Decker MA³, Megan Moore PhD⁵, Risa Nakase-Richardson PhD^{2,6}, Jessica L. Ryan PhD^{2,3}, Jolie N. Haun PhD, EdS^{3,7}

¹MHBSS, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital; ²Morsani College of Medicine, University of South Florida; ³Research Service, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital; ⁴Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; ⁵School of Social Work, University of Washington; ⁶Chief of Staff Office, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital; ⁷Division of Epidemiology, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah



Introduction

I-HEAL: Focused program award (four projects) addressing health care access for cognitively impaired persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Project 1: Systems intervention (Cognitive Nudge)

- Intervention Target: Healthcare providers
- Short term objective: Include care partners during appointments
- Long term goal: Optimize healthcare delivery



This project will engage partners to develop a nudge intervention for providers to promote including care partners in healthcare appointments to support Veterans with cognitive difficulties.

Results to Date

Presented Project 1 overview and focus group guide for providers treating patients with TBI to the Community Engagement Council's Lived Experience Partners and Professional and Policy Partners.

Conducted focus groups with providers on including care partners in appointments.

Preparing to conduct focus groups with care partners of and patients with TBIs after participating in a reciprocal engagement process with I-HEAL's Lived Experience Partners to refine focus group guides.

Aims

End Users	Aim 1 Discover, Define	Aim 2 Develop, Refine	Aim 3 Validate (Pilot)	Implementation Target
Lived TBI Experience	Focus groups	Formative Evaluation	Interviews	Acceptability
Health Care Providers	Focus groups Survey		Interviews	Feasibility Acceptability
Executive Stakeholders	Engagement		Engagement	Adoption
	2025	2026	2027	

Methods

Design

- Mixed Methods Design
- Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
- Human Centered Design (HCD) Framework

Engagement (Ongoing)

- Healthcare Provider Partners
- Lived Experience Partners (LEP)
- Hospital Administrators

Completed Activities to Date

- Focus Groups with TBI rehab providers
- 23 Participants in 8 Focus Groups

Planned Project Activities

- Focus Groups with TBI Survivors and Care Partners
- ≤ 12 Focus Groups
- ≤ 40 Participants
- Survey with Providers Across Disciplines and Settings
- Survey Drafted and Undergoing Refinement

Discussion

Project 1 uses multi-level theoretical modeling, HCD, and CBPR to:

- Engage providers who would be implementing the nudge to develop the intervention and ensure toolkit is effectively implemented in healthcare systems.
- Partner with individuals with lived experience via engagement activities, focus groups, and surveys to design nudge to ensure a relevant, useful, intervention meets the needs of persons with TBI.
- Developed an evidence-based toolkit to support providers and healthcare systems in increasing access to high quality care for persons with TBI.

Acknowledgements and Disclosures

The views expressed in this presentation are of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official policy or position of the Departments of Veterans Affairs or any other U.S. government agency. Presented at VA Research Day, May 9, 2025, James A Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa, FL. This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital. The administering institution for this work is the Tampa VA Research and Education Foundation. This work was funded by DOD CDMRP [HT9425-23-1-0621].

To learn more about I-HEAL Project 1 visit our website: lheal.tbindsc.org

