Iowa City VA Health Care System's Health Services Research Program Awarded Funding to Advance the Prevention of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) Infections

Eli Perencevich, MD, MS, Director of the Center for Comprehensive Access and Delivery Research and Evaluation (CADRE), Department of Research & Development, Iowa City VA Health Care System was awarded $4.2 million to conduct four projects spanning five years to advance Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection prevention. This merit review award funding from the VA Office of Research and Development, and Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) was facilitated through the Collaborative Research to Enhance and Advance Transformation and Excellence (CREATE) initiative. The funding opportunity was offered to HSR&D researchers nationwide to support a group of coordinated research projects, conducted in a focused research area, to address high priority health system issues. The CREATE initiative funds programs that are interrelated, demonstrate collaboration and coordination, and produce products and knowledge important to VA healthcare system stakeholders. Iowa City was one of four sites to receive funding in this round of the national competition.

Dr. Perencevich noted that, "Hospital-associated infections (HAI) are a major threat to patient safety, and MRSA, accounts for an estimated 94,000 invasive infections and 19,000 deaths annually in the US." Dr. Perencevich and his Iowa City team are partnering with investigators from VA Health Care Systems around the country including: Ann Arbor, MI; Boston, MA; Miami, FL; Minneapolis, MN; Omaha, NE; Portland, OR; Salt Lake City, UT; Baltimore, MD; San Antonio, TX; and Iowa City, IA with the key implementation sites being Iowa City, Salt Lake City, Baltimore, and San Antonio.

The Iowa City CREATE program aims to: 1) determine the comparative effectiveness and cost effectiveness of existing and novel interventions to reduce MRSA infections in the VA; 2) determine the clinical and economic impact of the unintended consequences of contact isolation; 3) determine the relative importance and synergistic effects of interventions directed at the individual healthcare worker, clinical team, and facility; and 4) collaborate with operational partners to improve MRSA prevention in VA.