



Health Science Specialist (GS-9)

Salary range: \$51,683 to \$67,183
1.0 FTE



To apply, please submit CV/resume, cover letter, and list of 3 references to nicole.floyd@va.gov.

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 (Research Associate/Health Informaticist) for the Evidence-based Synthesis Program Coordinating Center (ESPCC) of the Evidence-based Synthesis Program, a national research program.

Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) established the VA Evidence-based Synthesis Program to provide timely and accurate syntheses of scientific research evidence on targeted healthcare topics of particular importance to VA clinicians, managers, and policymakers, as they work to improve the health and healthcare of Veterans. This national research program is comprised of four research centers located at the Minneapolis, Durham, Portland, and West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, each with an active university affiliation and close links to the Agency for Health Care Research & Quality (AHRQ) Evidence-based Practice Centers. The ESP synthesizes scientific research evidence on important clinical practice topics, and these reports 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 disseminates these reports throughout the VHA, and many evidence syntheses have informed the clinical guidelines of large professional organizations. The program receives approximately \$1.5 million in HSR&D/QUERI funding per year, which is used to support over 25 staff involved in conducting dozens of evidence synthesis projects each fiscal year.

The ESPCC is charged with oversight of national ESP program operations, program development and evaluation, and dissemination efforts. The ESPCC establishes standard operating procedures for the production of evidence synthesis reports; facilitates a national topic nomination, prioritization, and selection process; manages the research portfolio of each Center; facilitates editorial review processes; ensures methodological consistency and quality of products; produces Rapid Response Evidence Briefs at the request of VHA senior leadership; collaborates with HSR&D Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources (CIDER) to develop a national dissemination strategy for all ESP products; and interfaces with stakeholders to effectively engage the program.

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.

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 proficiency with providing specialist information retrieval support for a wide range of health topics from a variety of scientific bibliographic databases across multiple platforms. Preference will be given to those with a master's degree in library sciences, public health, epidemiology, health policy, health services, medical anthropology, or behavioral sciences, and 3 years of experience working in a research setting.

KSAO'S or JOB ELEMENT	DUTIES
1. Knowledge of the principles, practices, procedures, and techniques for conducting systematic reviews of scientific literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
2. Skill in providing specialist information retrieval support for developing and conducting scientific literature and grey literature searches on a variety of health services and clinical topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
3. Skill in systematic review data synthesis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data abstraction of scientific research studies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops evidence tables, figures, and other supportive documents to synthesize data from scientific research studies for systematic reviews. • Performs basic statistical analysis.
<p>4. Ability to report research results via publication and/or presentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.