MOUNTAIN HOME VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

MOUNTAIN HOME, TENNESSEE 37684

September 13, 2016

MEDICAL CENTER MEMORANDUM

151-16-02

**POLICY FOR ALLOCATION OF RESEARCH TIME**

**1. PURPOSE.** This memorandum is published to establish policy for allocation of research time for staff of Mountain Home VA Healthcare System (MHVAHCS).

**2. SCOPE.** The contents of this memorandum apply to all organizational elements of this medical center including MHVAHCS and all affiliated outpatient clinics.

**3. POLICY.** The primary mission of MHVAHCS is to provide high quality medical care to Veterans. Within the limits allowed by this primary mandate, it is the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to support research activity.

a. **10 percent time** (1/8 = 5 hours FTE) will be allocated for discharge of duties and responsibilities as the Research and Development Committee (R&DC) Chairperson and the Subcommittee for Research Safety (SRS) Chairperson.

b. **20 percent time** (2/8 = 10 hours FTE) as appropriate, may be recommended for discharge of duties and responsibilities as the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) committees.

c. **5 percent time** (0.5/8 = 2.5 hours FTE) will be allocated for discharge of duties and responsibilities as a voting member of the Research & Development (R&D) and SRS committees.

d. **10 percent time** (1/8 = 5 hours FTE) will be allocated for discharge of duties and responsibilities as a voting member of the IRB and IACUC committees.

e. **On the recommendation of the service chief**, a health care professional may be considered for approval of research time (where such time involves working as a principal or co-investigator on projects that have been approved by the R&DC). Up to 20 percent time (2/8 = 10 hours FTE), as appropriate, may be recommended.

f. **30 percent time** (3/8 = 15 hours FTE) can be requested for Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-PIs of major funded projects (e.g., VA, NIH, Industry Sponsored); 10 percent time (1/8 = 5 hours FTE) can be requested for Co-Investigators of major funded projects (i.e., the Co-Investigator’s time has been included in the budget of a major funded grant). See Appendix B for additional research activities and the associated ORD-recommended FTE.

g. **Time spent on patient care activities** cannot be allocated to research in the Decision Support System (DSS) or on the Cost Distribution Report (CDR) even when the activities are occurring as part of an R&DC approved research project (as specified in the official DSS instructions in Appendix A).

h. **In the case of studies conducted by part time employees**, the percent effort will be prorated between VA and non-VA time.

i. **Approval for research time** may be rescinded, at the discretion of the Director, if the ongoing research is deemed not to warrant continued time allocation or on the basis of changes in clinical care imperatives.

**4. ACTION/RESPONSIBILITY**

a. **Service chiefs** will assign research time in DSS and on the CDR in accordance with these stated policies. Service chiefs will ensure that the assignments reflect the actual work being performed, and that the DSS and CDR assignments correlate.

b. **The Research and Development Service** must be notified of all DSS labor mapping assignments that include a research component. After review by the Service Chief, the research assignment requests will be forwarded through the Associate Chief of Staff/R&D to the Chief of Staff (COS) and finally to the Medical Center Director (MCD) for approval. The request will be returned to the initiating Service for submission to the DSS Office.

**5. REFERENCES**

a. DSS Instructions for Mapping Labor to Research Support

b. VHA Directive 2011-009, Physician and Dentist Labor Mapping

c. ORD Research Administrative Review Report, Sept 2009

**6. RESCISSION.** Medical Center Memorandum 151-13-02

**7. RESCISSION DATE.** September 13, 2021

**8. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY.** ACOS of Research & Development (151)

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Acting Medical Center Director

Attachments:

Appendix A - DSS Instructions for Mapping Labor to Research Support

Appendix B – Guideline for Research Allocation Time

**DSS INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAPPING LABOR**

**TO RESEARCH SUPPORT**

***Overview***

Research support within the medical care appropriation is one of the primary missions of Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Accuracy in recording the cost of that mission is imperative. In order for VHA funding methods (VERA) to have accurate data to use in their methodology, accuracy, and standardization in costing research support is critical.

Excess costs mapped to research support could negatively impact the amount of resources available for direct patient care at a VAMC. Insufficient costs mapped to research support could reduce the dollars allotted for this purpose as part of the VERA model for your VAMC. Also note that the square footage tables in DSS used for indirect cost allocation must be kept current for proper research support costing.

***What is research support time?***

* A VA employee’s time spent working on research that is approved by ***the local VAMC Research and Development (R&D) Committee.***
* A VA employee’s time spent as a member of the VAMC’s R&D Committee or Human Subjects Committee preparing for and attending meetings.
* A VA employee’s time spent as a senior staff member mentoring a junior staff member who has received a Career Development Award in research.

***How to adjust to 80 hours per pay period?***

After identifying the research projects and the investigators, it is necessary to accurately allocate the investigators’ time to research support. An investigator on the Medical Care roll has as their first responsibility the care of the patients. Therefore, a full time physician working 90 hours during the pay period and spending 30 of these hours on a research project would show only 25 percent of his time as research support rather than 33 1/3 percent – the reason being the FTEE is calculated on a basis of 80 hours per pay period regardless of how much time is actually worked. The difference between the hours the employee should work and the hours spent in patient care, if due to research, will determine the hours for research support. See the example below:

* 90 hours worked per PP = 80 paid hours
* 30 hours worked per PP = 60 patient care hours
* 60 patient care hours per PP = 20 adjusted research hours

***What is NOT research support time?***

* All patient care of veterans, even if the care is part of an approved research protocol, is considered clinical care time in DSS.
* Time spent gathering data that is not for a previously approved research protocol.

1. Non-research support example: Dentists reviewing the last three years’ experience with specific dental products for a management report.
2. Non-research support example: Chaplains performing a follow-up review of patient outcomes for a Clinical Pastoral Education or other management study that is not a pre-approved research protocol.

* Time spent by a VA employee reading or attending lectures in recent research that is not related to the VA employee’s approved research protocol(s).

***Questions:***

If you have questions regarding what is Medical Care Appropriation Paid Research Support Labor in your VAMC, please see the VAMC’s ACOS for Research.

Remember only labor time spent on R&DC-approved research projects can be considered research time in DSS.

**GUIDELINE FOR RESEARCH ALLOCATION TIME**

The following table provides guidance for research time allocation. It applies to clinician researchers, i.e. researchers who also have clinical care duties. Protected research time is defined as time allocated to carrying out research activities during a clinician’s regular tour of duty and partial FTE assignments are based upon a 40 hr work week. The appropriate time allocated for research committee activity (e.g. Institutional Review Board, Research & Development Committee, Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee) should be dependent on the size of the research program. The times indicated are based on allocations for research committee activities at medium to large research facilities. Manuscript review and preparation, consulting on study design, steering committee and DSMB memberships by themselves should not receive protected time allocation.

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| **Research Activity** | **Recor Recommended FTE (per 40 hour workweek)** |
| PI Merit Review | 3/8 15 hours |
| Chair on VA CSP | 4/8 20 hours |
| Site PI on Merit/VA CSP | 1/8-2/8 5-10 hours |
| PI NIH RO1\* | 3/8\* 15 hours |
| VA Career Development Award (CDA) | 6/8 30 hours |
| Major Foundation Awards | 1/8-2/8 5-10 hours |
| Principal Investigator of VA Center of Excellence | 4/8 20 hours |
| Mentor of VA CDA | 0.5/8 2.5 hours |
| New investigator | 2/8-4/8 10-20 hours |
| Chair, IRB or IACUC | 2/8-4/8 10-20 hours |
| Chair IBC/SRS or R&D C | 1/8 5 hours |
| Member, IRB, IACUC | 1/8 5 hours |
| Member, IBC/SRS, R&D C | 0.5/8 2.5 hours |