



Clinical Science Research and Development



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

CSRD Newsletter

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Miriam's Message



Farewell and Best Wishes to Jana!

Next week, Dr. Jana Drgonova is joining NIDA extramural program, Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences, as a Program Officer. Jana has worked as a Scientific Program Manager of CSRD and BLRD projects for over 3 years. Her portfolio included research on alcohol and substance use disorders, pain, and preclinical and genomic studies of mental health. She also served as ORD point of contact for medical cannabis and related substances, and a

VA representative for the DoD Alcohol and Substance Abuse Disorders Research Program (ASADRP). Jana obtained her PhD in Biochemistry from the Slovak Technical University. For her thesis, she used *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* to study regulation of cell cycle and cell morphogenesis. Her other interests include using R for text mining, natural language processing, and text analysis. Jana came to CSRD from the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR), where she worked as a Scientific Review Officer (SRO). In her role as an SRO, she oversaw review of grant applications submitted to the Neurotoxicology and Alcohol study section and various Special Emphasis Panels (Convergent Neuroscience, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, etc.). Before joining the CSR, Jana was a Staff Scientist at the National Institute on Drug Abuse. There she used animal models and behavioral and molecular approaches to evaluate the role of genes implicated in vulnerability to drug addiction.

Jana has been a very valued member of the ORD team. The significant expansion that she made on her portfolio will continue to have positive impacts on our Veterans into the future. Jana is a delightful person. We will miss her – and her wonderful email notes, often including entertaining phrases from the many languages she speaks. Thank you, Jana, for everything you have done for ORD!

Following her departure, questions regarding her portfolios should be directed to the mailbox, VHABLRD-CSRD@va.gov.

CADE Symposium set for July 19-20

BLRD and CSRD will be hosting our annual Career Development Symposium on July 19 and 20. Investigators with BL or CS Career Development awards with start dates in Calendar Year 2019 or Calendar Year 2021 have been invited to participate. We are looking forward to this opportunity to hear from our early-career investigators, answer their questions, introduce them to various ORD stakeholders, and build the community of CADEs.

VA SHIELD Applications due July 11

Applications are due July 11 for the previously announced request for applications (RFA) to establish new specimen collection sites for VA SHIELD.

VA SHIELD is intended to be a comprehensive repository of biospecimens and associated data in emerging diseases. Specimens stored in VA SHIELD are to be used to advance scientific understanding in support of developing diagnostic, therapeutic and preventative strategies for immediate deployment in clinical environments. VA SHIELD is intended to be a flexible ORD resource that can respond to research needs across the VA research enterprise.

As a research enterprise resource VA SHIELD can maximize the collection of high-quality specimens and data ethically and efficiently including close monitoring of costs, space, equipment, facility, and personnel needs and reducing research duplication and participation burden on participants, and/or any other identified protected populations.

The RFA and more information about VA SHIELD may be found at:

<https://www.research.va.gov/programs/shield/about.cfm>

Questions regarding this RFA should be submitted to: VASHIELD@va.gov.

eRA JIT: Things to Note

Fall 2021 applications still in eRA JIT have 49 days before reaching the 180-day deadline to clear JIT.

Reminder, only R&D office staff users with signing official (SO) roles can **submit** JIT data. After uploading documents into [eRA Commons JIT](#), Principal Investigators should alert their R&D office SO to submit the JIT data. Documents uploaded into JIT areas need to be submitted in order for Office of Research and Development (ORD) staff reviewing the documents to make a decision (approve or reject) in a timely manner. Staff may find the linked eRA Commons [JIT Training Video \(va.gov\)](#) useful.

If you need additional information, please contact: VHACOBLCSDJIT@va.gov.

Research Supplement Applications Due August 1

The VA-ORD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group will be accepting applications for two supplement opportunities.

1. A reissuance of the mentored research supplements, "ORD Research Supplements to promote Diversity (RD-22-029)"
2. And a new RFA, to support collaborative partnerships between VA Merit Award investigators and investigators at non-VA institutions, including, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions, "Research Supplements to Promote Collaborations to Enhance Diversity in VA Research (RD-22-030)"

Applications will be due **August 1**, through eRA commons. Both RFAs can be found at:

<https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm>

A recording of an informational webinar on these supplements is posted at: <https://www.research.va.gov/funding/diversity.cfm>

For more information, please contact Carol Fowler, PhD, (Carol.Fowler@va.gov).

Letters of Intent Numbers Released

The following shows the results of our recent review of Letters of Intent (LOIs) received May 2 for Clinical Trials (CT) and Career Development (CDA):

Merit Review Clinical Trial LOIs

Submitted: 24

Approved: 18 = 75%

Disapproved: 4 = 16.67%

Disapproved (Other Service): 1 = 4.17%

Disapproved (Standard Merit): 1 = 4.17%

Career Development (CDA-1 and CDA-2) LOIs

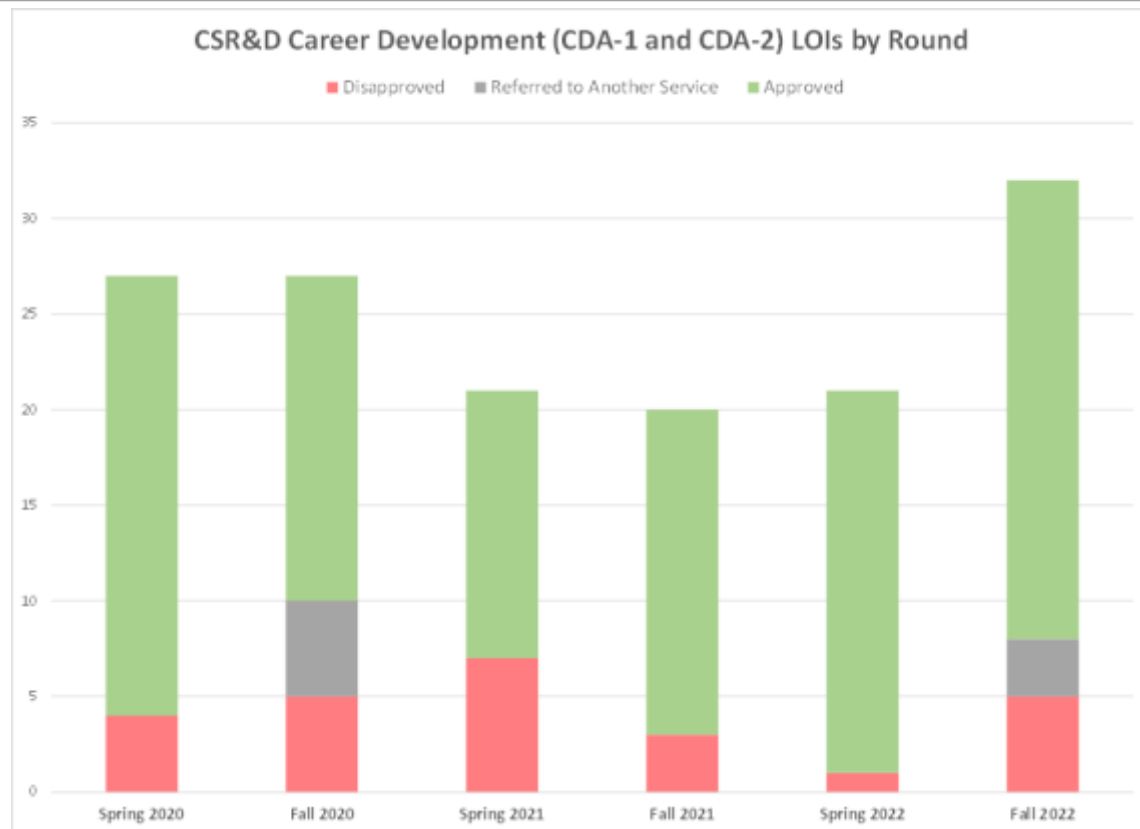
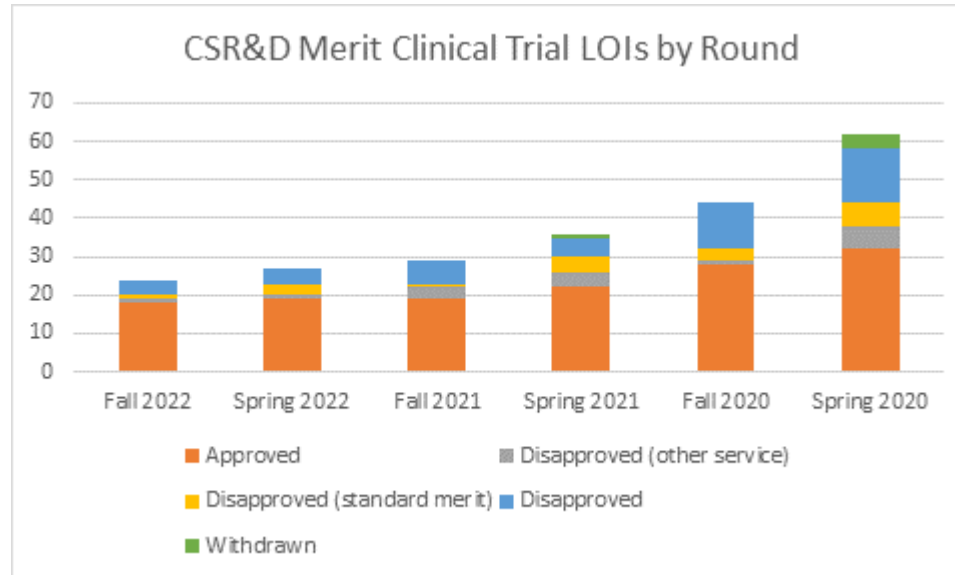
Submitted: 32

Approved: 24 = 75%

Disapproved: 5 = 16%

Deferred to another Service: 3 = 9%

Trends Over Last Six Rounds (CT/CDA LOIs)





The ORD Qualtrics Deployment Team has informed the ORD research community of an opportunity regarding accessing Qualtrics for survey and research needs.

ORD has secured Qualtrics licenses to support the needs of its researchers and their studies. This allows for a centrally managed and consolidated licensing program that helps researchers obtain access to survey tools in an efficient way.

All VHA ORD research teams may request to utilize this program at no charge to their studies. Each study can request one to three accounts, with access to an unlimited number of responses. If your team has an IRB approved study or a Quality Improvement (QI) Determination Letter, you can submit for review and approval.

If you are interested in obtaining an account, please complete and submit an interest form, available on this SharePoint site: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAORPPE/Qualtrics>

Requests should be submitted no more than 60 days before your study start date.

For additional information about the program, please visit the project SharePoint site at <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAORPPE/Qualtrics>

Interested in Joining the CSRD DMC?

The CSRD Data Monitoring Committee (DMC), that provides data and safety monitoring for CSRD funded projects, is seeking new members. For more information, please contact DMC Manager Tamara Paine, DBA. (Tamara.Paine@va.gov).

CSRD Contact Information

Career Development: VHACADEReview@va.gov

Clinical Trials: clin-review@va.gov

General Mailbox: VHABLRD-CSRD@va.gov (Please note this is a shared mailbox that should be used for general questions that will be triaged by staff to the appropriate individual.)

Just in Time Mailbox: VHACOBLCSDRJIT@va.gov

Newsletter: Lucindia.Shouse@va.gov

Scientific Portfolio/Program Managers: [BLR&D and CSR&D Contact Information \(va.gov\)](#)

