

[Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research \(CHOIR\)](#) and [National Center for PTSD Paid Summer Research Program](#).

A Summer Program for Professional Development and Research Skills for Students from Under-Represented Groups (Summer 2024)

Introduction: The Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) is a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health services research center situated jointly at the VA Bedford and VA Boston Healthcare Systems. The National Center for PTSD is mandated by Public Law 98-528 as a specialized center within the Department of Veterans Affairs devoted to research and training in all aspects of PTSD. The full National Center operation currently involves a seven-site consortium of clinical, research, and training programs devoted to theoretical, empirical, and clinical aspects of PTSD. Trainees in the National Center for PTSD have access to world-class researchers in the field of traumatic stress, consisting of both local and visiting investigators. The Women's Health Sciences Division (WHSD) is one of two National Center for PTSD sites at VA Boston. The CHOIR Summer Research Program (CHOIR-SRP) is a summer training and career development program for post-secondary students from groups underrepresented in science, medicine, and health-related research. CHOIR is offering this program in conjunction with the Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD. In 2024, CHOIR-SRP will host 3 currently enrolled undergraduate students.

Goal: CHOIR's research seeks to improve the health of Veterans by studying the quality, safety, and value of healthcare delivery. The National Center for PTSD's mission is to advance the clinical care and

social welfare of America's Veterans and others who have experienced trauma, or who suffer from PTSD, through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders. WHSD specifically focuses on PTSD in women, as well as gender differences.

The goal of CHOIR-SRP is to create opportunities for students from underrepresented groups who are interested in public health, medicine, or social science careers by exposing them to an interdisciplinary health services research center. In doing so, we hope to bring a diverse range of voices into the research portfolios of CHOIR and WHSD. (*Note: The program is only available to US citizens per VA policy.*) CHOIR-SRP provides opportunities for undergraduate students to contribute to research projects, participate in academic writing efforts, and gain exposure to, and skills in, varied areas of health services research such as quantitative and qualitative methods, and implementation science. Through mentoring from research investigators, CHOIR-SRP students will form collegial relationships and lasting professional connections. CHOIR-SRP is designed with a long-term vision of encouraging students to consider careers in VA health services research and creating bonds between research mentors and students that may lead to their future return to CHOIR, the National Center for PTSD, or other VA research centers.

Content: Each student will be paired with a research investigator from CHOIR or WHSD. Students will be placed at either the Bedford VA hospital or Boston VA hospital depending on the mentor they are matched with. Each student will contribute to an investigators' research project and receive career mentorship. The student will have a hands-on research experience, such as working with quantitative or qualitative data (collection, analysis) or writing a literature review. In addition, students will attend 3-5 presentations or seminars each week led by investigators and research staff from CHOIR and WHSD. The topics of these presentations and seminars fall into four categories: *professional development, academic writing, research methods, and implementation science.*

Date: The program runs for 8 weeks, with an expected engagement of 20 hours per week for undergraduate students with an anticipated start date of June 17, 2024

Diversity Goals: A goal of the CHOIR summer research program is to enhance diversity and inclusivity in CHOIR, WHSD, and the VA more broadly, by providing research experiences and related opportunities to undergraduates from diverse backgrounds, such as from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, sexual minorities, individuals with disabilities, from disadvantaged backgrounds, etc. This goal is intended to increase the applicant pool but will not be used as a determinative factor in selecting participants for this program. For an expanded list of groups that are underrepresented in research please email Jackie Pendergast (Jacquelyn.pendergast@va.gov).