NEWS RELEASE
March 1, 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New model guides use of video-based psychotherapy to Veterans in remote areas

[White River Junction] – A new systems engineering model may help VA doctors better determine when to use video-based PTSD psychotherapy for Veterans living in remote areas. Developed jointly by researchers at the Healthcare Systems Engineering Institute at Northeastern University and White River Junction VA, the model and pilot results were featured in a study published in the February 2014 issue of *Military Medicine*.

VA has increasingly explored the use of video to deliver psychotherapy for Veterans with PTSD who live in remote locations. By initiating this study, researchers sought to better inform VA efforts regarding where and how this technology can best be used.

The study group was comprised of Veterans with PTSD in six New England states. Using data on projected care needs for Veterans across New England, the researchers developed a service location systems engineering model to help determine where to best locate and use in-person and video-based care. Such models, say the study team, are used by other industries, including health care, to determine location of facilities relative to current and projected geographic location of patients).

The researchers found that Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island were well suited for in-person care. However, for certain rural areas of Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire where in-patient services were not feasible, the research team found that Veterans were better served by video-based care, even when external (non-VA) care was available.

Additionally, the researchers noted significant cost savings could result from the model being used more widely. According to the researchers, the results in New England alone suggest a potential $3.6 million reduction in average annual total costs. This would be accomplished by shifting 9.73% of care to video-based treatment, and with the remainder of patients receiving in-person care traveling 12.6 miles, on average.

The Healthcare Systems Engineering Institute at Northeastern, which focuses on impacting healthcare through integration of research, application, and education in systems engineering methods, houses four federally-awarded healthcare engineering centers and three internship and post-doctoral development programs, with core funding from the National Science Foundation, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, National Institutes of Health, Veterans Health Administration, and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

To read this study, see "Optimal Location and Use of In-Person and Video-Based Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment for Veterans: A Location-Allocation Model."

- ### -