



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Healthcare Systems Engineering Institute receives 3 awards totaling \$1.7 million to assist VA implement Toyota Production System “lean” systems engineering methods

The Healthcare Systems Engineering Institute (HSyE) at Northeastern University has received 3 awards totaling \$1.7 million to help the Veterans Health Administration implement “lean” Toyota Production System methods across the national VA healthcare system. Professor James Benneyan, HSyE director and senior scientist, is a nationally recognized expert on the use of Lean and related systems engineering methods to improve healthcare, previously serving as principal investigator of a \$10m VA systems engineering center, senior systems engineer at Harvard Community Health Plan, and on several Institute of Medicine committees addressing the use of systems engineering to solve key healthcare problems.

“We are very excited by these awards and overall partnership. As the largest U.S. healthcare system, the VA is an ideal organization to demonstrate the value that systems engineering and Lean methods can have on improving patient care, population health, timely access, effective treatment, safety, and overall cost”, said Dr. Benneyan. These methods are used more extensively and for greater impact in other complex industries to improve efficiency, reliability, productivity, quality, waits and delays, and safety – national healthcare priorities also identified by the Institute of Medicine. With these awards focus on smooth flow and customer service, this work comes at an important time increasingly focused on timely care and patient-centered access and will include project-based training of an estimated 12,000 VA caregivers across the U.S. in these methods. Although focused on the VA, results also will serve as a broader demonstration of the application of these methods to improve problems in any healthcare system.

The mission of the Healthcare Systems Engineering Institute is to broadly improve healthcare nationally through the integration of research, application, and workforce development in systems engineering methods. The Institute houses four federally-awarded healthcare system engineering and patient safety centers, several multi-university grants, two coop and summer internship programs, and a post-doctoral fellowship program, with core funding from the National Science Foundation, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, National Institutes of Health, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, W.T. Grant Foundation, and dozens of health system partners.

The VA provides care for nearly 9 million veterans through over 1,500 care sites across the country and five U.S. territories, honoring President Lincoln’s pledge “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan.”

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