

CARES – WISE Merger
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is WISE? CARES?

The VA-affiliated Non-Profit Corporations (“NPC”) were created by Act of Congress and signed into law by President Reagan. Codified at 38 USC 7361 *et seq.*, and governed by VA Handbook 1200.17 and NPC policies and applicable laws, the NPCs serve as “flexible funding mechanisms” for the conduct of extramurally-funded, VA-approved research and education projects. The NPC serves as site administrator for funded projects that include the VA hospital, whether through use of the laboratories/VMU or inclusion of Veterans in clinical trials. Currently, WISE is a single-site NPC, serving Jesse Brown; CARES is a multi-site NPC, serving Hines VA, Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and Madison VA.

Q: Why does the NPC matter to me?

Pursuant to VA policy, the NPC administers all VA-approved projects that are funded by non-VA, extramural sources, including:

- Federal Agencies, such as NIH and the Department of Defense;
- Industry Sponsors, such as AbbVie, Sanofi, Janssen, and Novartis; and
- Private Foundations, such as American Cancer Society, McCormick Foundation.

The NPC is not bound by VA regulations relative to hiring of personnel and procurement of supplies, making it easier for you to run your project. The NPC can sponsor your travel to conferences, hire specialty staff to support your research, and purchase key equipment and supplies for your work at VA.

All monies managed by the NPC count 100% towards VERA funding. In FY18, the NPC network generated more than \$275 million for VA Research.

Q: Why would they merge?

There are two key drivers for this merger:

1. Efficiencies in contracting for industry-funded clinical trials; and
2. Capacity and expertise in managing federally-funded grants.

CARES is already a multi-site NPC, managing the extramural research programs at Hines VA, Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and Madison VA. The addition of Jesse Brown helps align operations within VISN12.

Q: Who approved this action?

The Boards of Directors for CARES and WISE voted in support of pursuing merger. The VA’s Non-Profit Oversight Board approved the merger in September 2019.

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Q: How will Jesse Brown’s interests be represented under the merger?

VA policy requires that the Director of each VA Hospital affiliated with the NPC be a member of the NPC Board. Additionally, CARES policy states that the ACOS/Research for each VA is a voting member of the Board; the Chief of Staff and ACOS/Education from each site are non-voting members of the Board.

Q: What does this mean for me?

Although some processes will change, administrative staff will continue to be located at Jesse Brown in their current office locations. Investigators will continue to be able to rely on the NPC to handle their hiring, purchasing, and invoicing on their funded projects. Through the merger, Investigators will now be able to rely on experienced staff for their federal submissions and industry-funded projects.

Active Investigator

Submissions

All proposal submissions related to the conduct of VA-approved research on extramurally-funded projects will now indicate CARES as the institution of record. CARES has an Indirect Cost Rate of 30% for industry-funded projects, and 28.45% for federal submissions.

Staffing

All current research staff and new hires on your funded projects will become employees of CARES.

Purchasing

All procurement of goods and services will be handled by CARES.

Residual Account Holder

In general, per CARES policy, investigators have access to and may continue to utilize residual funds for qualified research and education purposes. A copy of CARES Residual Funds Policy is available on the CARES website (www.CARES-Research.org).

Prospective Investigator

New investigators should contact CARES CEO Cindy Reutzel (cindy.reutzel@va.gov) to discuss new project ideas, potential funding sources, submission process and timeline, budgeting, and staffing.

Q: What activities are taking place?

- Individual or small group meetings will be scheduled with investigators who currently have active projects running through WISE
- JBVA Investigator profiles will be added to CARES website (www.CARES-Research.org)
- Administrative and project staff will be migrated
- Regulatory and agency registrations will be completed
- Existing contracts and agreements will be transferred
- Final fund transfers will be executed

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Q: What if I have questions or concerns?

Please contact Cindy Reutzel at Cindy.Reutzel@va.gov or Kevin Hull at Kevin.Hull@va.gov.