

JOINTS Study Key Staff



From NRH Research:

[Gerben DeJong, PhD \(PI\)](#) is a senior fellow with the NRH Research Division and is awaiting reappointment as a professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Georgetown University's School of Medicine where he previously held an appointment in the Department of Family Medicine for 14 years. He rejoined NRH in late 2004 after a 2-year stint with the University of Florida. Dr. DeJong previously served for 16 years (1985-2001) as NRH's first Director of Research and as the Founding Director of the NRH Center for Health & Disability Research. During his tenure with NRH, Dr. DeJong also served as the Co-director of the NIDRR-funded Rehabilitation Research & Training Center (RRTC) on Managed Care & Disability (1997-2002) and as the Director of the RRTC on Medical Rehabilitation & Health Policy (1993-97). Dr. DeJong is the author or co-author on more than 200 papers. He served as a Co-PI with Susan Horn, PhD on the very successful and large multi-site Post-stroke Rehabilitation Outcome Project (PSROP) that in many ways serves as a precedent for the current study.

As PI, Dr. DeJong provides overall leadership for the JOINTS Study, participates in the analyses of study data, meet with the Clinical Practice Team, works with the Policy Advisory Panel, supervises the project's administrative tasks (e.g., IRB process), contributes to the production of manuscripts and other project materials, monitors study progress, and serves as the interface with the sponsoring organization, HealthSouth.

[Robert Bunning, MD \(Lead Physician\)](#) is board certified in Internal Medicine and Rheumatology. He has been the Arthritis Rehabilitation Program Director and the Orthopedics Program Director at NRH for 20 years. He is a Fellow of the American College of Rheumatology and the American College of Physicians. He is the former president of the DC Rheumatism Society and served three years on the executive committee of the American College of Rheumatology section on Rehabilitation. He was appointed Associate Medical Director of National Rehabilitation hospital in September of 2004.

As the study's lead physician, Dr. Bunning assists in the design of the physician point-of-service documentation. He identifies the pertinent issues to be addressed and helps to answer questions that arise from other physicians participating in the study. Dr. Bunning brings his expertise in arthritis, joint replacement, and rehabilitation. He participates in meetings of the Clinical Practice Team and the Policy Advisory Panel. He will participate in the analyses of study data and contribute to the study's reports and publications.

[Cathy Ellis, PT \(Lead Therapist\)](#) is the Clinical Director of NRH's Musculoskeletal Program and is NRH's director of physical therapy, occupational therapy, vocational rehabilitation, therapeutic recreation and clinical rehabilitation engineering at the NRH. She has practiced at the NRH since 1985. Over the last several years she has served as APTA's member representative to the Medicare Negotiated Rule

Hearing on Payment for Prosthetics and Certain Custom Fabricated Orthotics. She currently serves on the CARF Board of Trustees.

Ms. Ellis contributes her first-hand knowledge about the clinical management of joint replacement patients. She works with Dr. Newman and others in revising the point-of-care documentation forms, participates in the training sessions aimed at lead therapists from other sites, and participates in the deliberations of the Clinical Practice Team in refining patient selection criteria, propose solutions to vexing data collection challenges, and in analyzing study findings.

Elizabeth Newman, OTD, OTR/L (Data Quality Coordinator and Research Therapist), is currently the Occupational Therapy Rehabilitation Manager for Inpatient Rehabilitation programs at the National Rehabilitation Hospital. Dr. Newman provides overall leadership for the OT Service at NRH and within the larger NRH system. She is responsible for daily operations of the OT service as well as coordination of OT staffing and practice at NRH. She also coordinates NRH FIM data collection and is intimately familiar with functional assessment issues. Dr. Newman has over 20 years of experience in post-acute rehabilitation. She recently completed her doctorate in occupational therapy from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions in May 2005. She has a MS in OT from Thomas Jefferson University. She serves on the AOTA Annual Conference Planning Committee.

Dr. Newman serves as NRH's lead OT for the study and also serves as the study's data quality coordinator. She works with the Clinical Practice Team in addressing patient selection issues and revising the stroke point-of-care documentation instruments for use in this study. Dr. Newman works with Ms. Gassaway (the study's site coordinator) and Ms. James (the study's data coordinator), in developing training materials and in conducting the training session of lead clinicians from all the study sites to be held at NRH. As the study's data quality coordinator, Dr. Newman works closely with both Ms. Gassaway and Ms. James in answering questions from clinicians at participating sites, making sure that data are collected consistently across sites, and in identifying non-probable values. She works with the ICOR team in developing auditing protocols needed to assure consistent reporting of intervention and functional assessment data. As a research therapist, Dr. Newman will also participate in the analyses of study data and preparation of reports and papers for publication and dissemination.

Mary Foley, RN (Project Consultant) is the Assistant Vice President of Care Management at NRH. Ms. Foley is a certified rehabilitation nurse with over 20 years experience in rehabilitation. Ms. Foley came to NRH as a liaison nurse evaluator assessing patients for admission to rehabilitation. Since the late 80's, she has also served as NRH's Director of Admissions overseeing the clinical and financial clearance of patients for admission. Ms. Foley is also responsible for physician relations management and utilization review. Over the last few years, she has also worked with industry leaders in addressing PPS rules and the 75% rule.

Ms. Foley brings her expertise in rehabilitation nursing, rehabilitation care

management, and post-acute payment systems. She brings her knowledge of joint replacement patient referrals to post-acute care, industry practice patterns, the role of fiscal intermediaries in shaping post-acute placement decisions, and industry data systems (e.g., IRF-PAI, SNF-MDS). Ms. Foley's knowledge of industry- and patient-level practice patterns provides a real-world perspective to the study's research design, data collection processes, and data analyses. She participates in the deliberations of the Clinical Practice Team and the Policy Advisory Panel as needed.

Cathy Elrod, PhD, PT (Policy Advisory Panel Coordinator) is a physical therapist and health policy analyst. She received her MS in Physical Therapy from the Medical College of Virginia in 1993 and worked as a physical therapist at the Medical University of South Carolina (1993-1997). In 1999, she joined Marymount University's Department of Physical Therapy where she served as an assistant professor while pursuing her doctoral studies in public policy at George Mason University's School of Public Policy. She completed her PhD in 2005. She remains active in the Virginia chapter of APTA. Dr. Elrod assisted Dr. DeJong in the recruitment of Policy Advisory Panel members, organizing the Panel's meetings, and summarizing Panel recommendations.

Donal Lauderdale, MSE (D&U Manager) is Research Information D&U Manager at NRH where she has played a central role in defining knowledge translation as a discrete program function at NRH. She has over 20 years experience in health information systems and management and most recently served as program manager for the NIDRR-sponsored RERC on Telerehabilitation and the DoD-funded Assistive Technology Research Center.

Ms. Lauderdale manages the study's website, works with the project coordinator in recruiting facilities to participate in the study, facilitates the dissemination of study findings and recommendations through newsletters, consumer outlets, and other media. In this latter capacity, she also works with the communication resources of HealthSouth and those of the stakeholder organizations represented in the study.

Mathew Elrod, PT, Med, NCS (IRB & HIPAA Compliance Coordinator), is a physical therapist and Programs Coordinator for the NRH Research Division. Mr. Elrod has work in multiple health care settings—acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, and an outpatient clinic. He came to NRH in 1997. Mr. Elrod coordinates clinical research activities and serves as NRH's principal liaison with MedStar's Institutional Review Board (IRB). He is currently active the APTA and serves as the Chapter president for the District of Columbia.

One of the major challenges at the outset of the study will be the need to obtain the necessary IRB and HIPAA approvals related to the protection of human subjects and information privacy involving as many as 20 sites. Mr. Elrod spearheads this process as he does for other NRH research studies. He coordinates with the MedStar IRB any other IRBs that may govern the participation of local sites. Mr. Elrod identifies the information

and compliance requirements of individual sites and identify the most efficient process by which approvals and compliance can be achieved across all sites. His participation will be particularly intense during the study's Phase 1 ramp-up period and then again on the 1-year and 2-year anniversaries of the initial approvals when IRBs normally require a study progress report—even after data are collected and data analyses continue. He will also coordinate the close-out report that must be submitted to IRBs.



From ICOR:

Susan D. Horn, PhD (Co-PI) is Senior Scientist with ICOR and Vice President for research for International Severity Information Systems, Inc. (ISIS), Adjunct Professor in the Department of Medical Informatics at the University of Utah School of Medicine in Salt Lake City, and Visiting Professor, School of Nursing, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Dr. Horn was a faculty member at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for 24 years where she conducted research, taught biostatistics and health services research courses, and directed the RWJF Program for Faculty Fellowships in Health Care Finance. Work begun in 1979 on issues of illness severity formed the basis for the CSI proposed for this study. Dr. Horn has conducted numerous CPI and cost-containment studies. She has authored over 140 publications on statistical methods, health services research, severity-of-illness measurement, CPI, and quality of care. Dr. Horn was PI for the NIDRR-funded PSROP. As Co-PI, Dr. Horn heads the ICOR team, chairs meetings of the Clinical Practice Team and works closely with Dr. DeJong in all phases of the project including data analyses, meetings of the Policy Advisory Panel, and dissemination of findings.

Julie Gassaway, MS, RN (Field Director), is the Director of Projects and Product Development at ISIS/ICOR and has served as the project coordinator or site coordinator for the several large CPI studies including the PSROP. She will convene the Clinical Practice Team and organize its weekly conference calls, and summarize its findings and decisions as the study progresses. In previous CPI studies, Ms. Gassaway has been especially instrumental in developing strong working relationship with clinical representatives at participating study sites. Ms. Gassaway has been involved in severity measurement and CPI studies for over 15 years.

Roberta A. James, MStat (Data Collection Coordinator), is the Data Systems Specialist at ISIS/ICOR. For the past six years she has been involved in the study design, data collection, and analysis phases for more than six Clinical Practice Improvement studies and was the Project Coordinator and data collector for the NIDRR-funded PSROP. Ms. James manages the proprietary Comprehensive Severity Index (CSI) software. Her major duties include development and programming of the auxiliary data modules (ADMs), training of data collectors in use of CSI for retrospective chart review, and monitoring data collection reliability throughout the project.

Randall J. Smout, MS (Senior Analyst) is a senior analyst at ISIS/ICOR. For the past 6 years, he has been involved in 10 or more CPI studies ranging from abdominal surgery to bone marrow transplantation, and most recently, stroke rehabilitation. He is an expert SAS programmer. Mr. Smout will be the project's principal data analyst. Mr. Smout is a superb research database manager who is capable of organizing several large research databases concurrently. He is able to present alternative approaches to the analyses of data to clinicians and investigators in helping to structure future analyses and findings. He was also a major contributor to the PSROP and the many manuscripts that resulted from it.