



OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

For more than 90 years, the Veterans Affairs (VA) Research and Development program has been improving the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health care discovery and innovation.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

VA Research is unique because of its focus on health issues that affect Veterans. It is part of an integrated health care system with a state-of-the-art electronic health record and has come to be viewed as a model for superior bench-to-bedside research.

The research process in VA starts with a tight focus on the everyday health needs and concerns of Veterans, and with consultation with national and regional VA clinical leaders. Solutions are identified and developed through careful, rigorous research in labs and clinics, and sometimes in the community. These solutions are then applied to patient care, or translated into new or improved programs, as rapidly as possible.

The groundbreaking achievements of VA investigators—more than 60 percent of whom also provide direct patient care—have resulted in three Nobel prizes, seven Lasker awards, and numerous other national and international honors.

VA Research fosters dynamic collaborations with its university partners, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and

private industry—thus furthering the program's impact on the health of Veterans and the nation.

The Office of Research and Development consists of four research services that together form a cohesive whole to explore all phases of Veterans' health care needs. Each service oversees a number of research centers of excellence.

Each of these four services (see page 2) is headed by a director who is supervised by the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO), who in turn reports to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Announced the formation of new research consortia, funded jointly by VA and the Department of Defense, to study PTSD and traumatic brain injury.
- Published results from a major study of abdominal aortic aneurysms that provided valuable guidance on surgical treatment options.
- Funded new types of centers of excellence—Collaborative Research to Enhance Transformation and Excellence

(CREATE) and Centers of Innovation (COINs)—that promise to speed the translation of research results into clinical practice in VA.

- Reported results from a large prostate cancer trial that shed important light on the relative benefits and risks of surgery and radiation.
- Played a key role in University of Pittsburgh-led research on a brain-computer system that enabled a woman with total paralysis to control a robotic arm using only her thoughts.
- Published findings from the first rigorous, large-scale comparison of different methods to wean patients with breathing difficulties from ventilators.
- Reported that infections acquired in the hospital are less likely to occur when acute-care patients are bathed daily with a simple, inexpensive antiseptic.
- Began collaboration with the Department of Defense on a \$6.5-million study to learn whether Vietnam Veterans with traumatic brain injury or PTSD are at higher risk for Alzheimer's disease as they age.
- Reported positive results from one of the largest studies to date on the use of

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videoconferencing to deliver evidence-based psychotherapy for Veterans with PTSD.

- Found that many Veterans suffering from blast concussions may have hormone deficiencies that mimic some of the symptoms of PTSD and depression, underscoring the value of hormone-based treatments for traumatic brain injury.
- Published new data indicating that Veterans exposed to Agent Orange are not only at higher risk for prostate cancer, but also more likely to have aggressive forms of the disease— information that could help guide screening and treatment.
- Disseminated information to gastroenterologists on innovative research-based methods to improve the cancer- detection rate of colonoscopy.
- Contributed to new clinical guidelines for cholesterol management.
- Collaborated with researchers in Europe and Israel to develop and test a new type of “artificial pancreas” that could lead to major improvements in care for diabetes, and that promises to impact cell therapy for a variety of other chronic health conditions.
- Launched the Million Veteran Program (MVP), an important partnership between VA and Veterans to better understand how genes affect health and illness. The ultimate goal of this research program is improving health care for Veterans.

Service Areas

BLR&D Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development Service

The Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development Service conducts research that explores basic biological or physiological principles in humans or animals but does not involve intact human beings. For example, it includes research on animal models and investigations of tissues, blood or other biologic specimens from humans.

CSR&D Clinical Science Research & Development Service

Clinical Science Research and Development (CSR&D) supports research focusing on intact human beings as the unit of examination. Examples include interventional and effectiveness studies, clinical, epidemiological and technological studies. CSR&D was created through a reorganization of the former Medical Research Service and Cooperative Studies Program (CSP). The CSP conducts multisite clinical trials and system-wide epidemiological investigations; CSP also provides infrastructure support for the Million Veteran Program.

HSR&D Health Services Research & Development Service

The VA Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) pursues research that underscores all aspects of VA healthcare: patient care, care delivery, health outcomes, cost, and

quality. HSR&D research also addresses critical issues for Veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with conditions that may require care over their lifetimes.

RR&D Rehabilitation Research & Development Service

Technology that gives Veterans back functional independence, career opportunities that encourage rehabilitation research education-all speak to just a small part of innovation in the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D). An intramural program for improving the quality of life of impaired and disabled Veterans, RR&D is dedicated to the well-being of America’s Veterans through a full spectrum of research: from approved rehabilitation research projects, through evaluation and technology transfer to final clinical application. The Veterans we serve not only help us define our research goals, but participate in research efforts, and often test the outcomes and ultimate usefulness of research results in their daily lives.