

FY2008 Defense Appropriations and Authorization Bills Address Combat-related Eye Injuries, Include Vision Research Funding Opportunities

DOD/PRMRP:

The FY2008 Defense Appropriations bill (HR 3222) listed “eye and vision research” as eligible for the pool of \$50 million of peer-reviewed funding available under the DOD’s Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP) within the more-expansive Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). On February 13, DOD released a preliminary notice on its Web site stating that, by April 2008, it would issue an announcement of the award mechanisms available to the 21 areas of eligible research, including eye and vision research. The award mechanisms include a combination of basic research, through Investigator-initiated Research Awards, and translational research, through Translational Research Awards, Advanced Technology/Therapeutic Development Awards, and Clinical Trial Awards. NAEVR will monitor the Web site and report to its networks on the release of the final announcement and all applicable deadlines. Contact NAEVR’s David Epstein at depstein@eyersearch.org to be added to NAEVR’s update list.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

HR 3222 also funded provisions of the *Wounded Warriors Act*, including several that relate to TBI, which require the DOD and VA to conduct TBI research and establish a Traumatic Brain Injury Veterans Health Registry. One area of research is that of visually-related neurological conditions associated with TBI. The DOD may post TBI-related grant requests on its CDMRP Web site in early 2008, and NAEVR will inform all networks of that notice.

Full details about the stories on these pages appear in the NAEVR Web site Advocacy Center’s sections on NIH/NEI Appropriations and Defense-related Vision Research

Military Eye Trauma:

The FY2008 Defense Authorization bill (HR 4986) included provisions of the *Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act* (HR 3558), which create a Center of Excellence within the DOD that would collaborate with the VA on a comprehensive approach to the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of eye injuries and trauma, including a Military Eye Injury Registry to track the diagnosis and treatment of each significant eye injury incurred by a member of the armed forces while on active duty.

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology:

HR 4986 retained key functions of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP), including its education, consultation, and research services, as part of a newly created Joint Pathology Center located at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. The AFIP, which was set to be abolished by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission, houses a world-renowned Tissue Repository and provides educational training programs in ophthalmic pathology



NAEVR’s James Jorkasky and Nicole Brown from the Senate Special Committee on Aging, chaired by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), a defense appropriator. NAEVR has requested that Sen. Kohl champion the FY2009 listing of eye and vision research in the DOD/PRMRP.



Major General Gale Pollock, U.S. Army Deputy Surgeon General and Chief, Army Nurse Corps, met with NAEVR’s James Jorkasky to discuss her concerns about combat-related eye injuries, especially those that result in “low vision/no vision.”



Cong. John Boozman (R-AR), sponsor of the *Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act*, and NAEVR’s James Jorkasky

Cong. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) sponsored the successfully-passed *Blinded Veterans Paired Organ Act* (HR 797) which makes it easier for veterans who are legally blind to qualify for additional disability compensation payments