

Significant Developments in Defense-Related Vision Research Funding

DOD's TATRC Announces FY2009 Vision Research Program Funded at \$5.2 Million

On July 1, the Department of Defense's (DOD) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), which is managing the \$4 million Peer Reviewed Research-Vision line item included in FY2009 Defense appropriations, released its Vision Research Program (VRP) Announcement. TATRC has added \$1.2 million of its own funding to the \$4 million Congressional appropriation for an FY2009 VRP funding total of \$5.2 million. TATRC estimates that 10 grants

will be funded, although that will vary based on the submitted proposals. Proposal submission is a two-step process, with the pre-proposal deadline of July 30, 2009, and full proposal deadline of October 22, 2009. TATRC anticipates funding notifications to issue in February 2010. NAEVR (Executive Director James Jorkasky and Advocacy Manager David Epstein) and ARVO (Executive Director Joanne Angle) serve as Consumer Advocates to the TATRC Program Review Panel.



Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) Senior Project Officer Robert Read and Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D. at the ARVO session

NAEVR Hosts Key DOD Representatives in ARVO Annual Meeting Session

On May 4, NAEVR hosted a standing room-only *Defense-related Vision Research Briefing* which featured Robert Read, TATRC Senior Project Officer, who spoke about the impending Vision Research Program Announcement (see above), and Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D., Director of the Vision Center

TATRC's Program Announcement lists key areas of research:

Treatments for traumatic brain injury-associated visual dysfunction

Treatments to slow or stop loss of vision in traumatic optic neuropathies

Computational models of mechanisms of primary blast injury to the eye/vision system

Methods to test visual dysfunction in the presence of cognitive impairment

Treatments for blast and burn injury to ocular structures

of Excellence (VCE). Although Dr. Gagliano emphasized that the VCE will not be funding research, the Military Eye Trauma Injury Registry it is charged with developing will assist in identifying future DOD vision-related research needs. Dr. Gagliano also serves on the TATRC Program Review Panel.



Above, left to right: Mark Kupersmith, M.D. (Roosevelt Hospital and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary), Lori Grover, O.D. (Wilmer Eye Institute/Johns Hopkins) and Dr. Gagliano. Dr. Kupersmith is the Principal Investigator for NEI's new Neuro-Ophthalmology Research Disease Investigator Consortium (NORDIC), which will study visual dysfunction associated with increased intracranial pressure and could potentially coordinate with DOD research.



Left and above: Specialist Travis Fugate, USA (retired) above with Cong. James Moran (D-VA), lead champion for defense-related vision research, and with Axel Spens in the office of Cong. Jack Kingston (R-GA).

NAEVR Supports \$10 Million for Vision in FY2010 Defense Appropriations

On July 10, NAEVR made a last round of visits to members of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, prior to markup of its FY2010 Defense appropriations bill, requesting support to maintain the dedicated Peer Reviewed Medical Research-Vision line item and increase its funding to \$10 million. NAEVR was joined by Specialist Travis Fugate, USA (retired), who was blinded in Iraq and testified in a March 2009 House Veterans Affairs Committee

hearing about the aftermath of his injuries. NAEVR justified the line item increase with the following new data:

TATRC's addition of \$1.2 million of its own funding to the \$4 million FY2009 Congressional appropriation (see above).

Total FY2008 funding for vision in DOD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) is \$6 million, or about 12 percent of the \$50 million pool of funds.

DOD Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program Opens for Pre-Proposal Submission

On July 10, DOD/CDMRP released the Program Announcement for the FY 2009 Psychological Health/Traumatic Brain Injury (PH/TBI) Research Program. The program is funded at \$40.6 million, with an emphasis on research to prevent, mitigate, and effectively treat TBI. Pre-proposal submissions are due by August 14, 2009, with full submission due by October 28, 2009.

Visit NAEVR's Web site for full details.