

As DOD Finalizes FY2009 Awards, NAEVR Advocates for FY2011 Peer Reviewed Medical Research-Vision Extramural Funding at \$10 Million

TATRC on Track to Issue FY2009 PRMR-Vision Awards by First-Quarter 2010

On February 16, DOD's Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), which manages the dedicated Peer Reviewed Medical Research-Vision (PRMR-Vision) line in defense appropriations, held a meeting of its Programmatic Committee to make final recommendations regarding FY2009 extramural research awards. TATRC has proposed to combine the FY2009 appropriated funding level of \$4 million—plus its internal additional funding of \$1.2 million—with the FY2010 appropriated level of \$3.75 million, for a \$9 million total. In 2009, TATRC issued a Program Announcement in June, receiving 120 pre-proposal submissions that were reviewed in August. Full proposals, due

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NAEVR has educated staff of the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees that the PRMR-Vision line is the only dedicated funding source for extramural research into battlefield needs that is not conducted by the VA or NEI. NAEVR also stressed that Defense Secretary Robert Gates has identified "Restoration of Sight and Eye-Care" as one of four top defense research priorities. The BVA has used its significant influence to assist as follows:

- *Ensuring that The Independent Budget, an annual set of recommendations to Congress by close to 60 Veterans Service*

Executive Director James F. Jorkasky
240-221-2905 jamesj@eyerresearch.org

Advocacy Manager David H. Epstein
240-221-2902 depstein@eyerresearch.org

12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Suite 250
Rockville, Maryland 20852-1606
eyerresearch.org

in October, received peer reviewed in early December. TATRC will notify awardees, and NAEVR will post links to abstracts once information is publicly available.

The Committee, co-chaired by the VCE's Colonel Donald Gagliano and TATRC Director Colonel Karl Friedl, Ph.D., is composed of ophthalmologists and optometrists from the various branches of the U.S. military and the VA, in addition to representatives from the NEI and FDA. ARVO Executive Director Joanne Angle, as well as NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky and Advocacy Manager David Epstein, serve as "stakeholder" representatives.

Organizations (VSOs) and other supporters, urged FY2011 PRMR-Vision funding at \$10 million

- *Organizing letters to Congressional leaders from seven VSOs supporting the funding*
- *Testifying at a March 4 joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs, identifying PRMR-Vision as a top priority for funding*
- *Working to secure House and Senate "Dear Colleague" letters from non-defense appropriators in support of PRMR-Vision funding*

Visit the Defense-related Vision Research section of NAEVR's Web site for more details

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), center, was presented BVA's National Legislative Recognition Award on March 2 by Dr. Tom Zampieri (left) and BVA President Roy Kekahuna, Ph.D. Sen. Brown sponsored a bill that provides scholarships for future VA Blind Rehabilitation specialists. He also made a January 26 statement on the Senate floor regarding the importance of non-military vision rehabilitation and the need for Medicare coverage of professionals providing these services. NAEVR member Lighthouse International is leading advocacy on the latter issue.



TATRC Director Colonel Karl Friedl, Ph.D. and NEI's Michael Steinmetz, Ph.D.



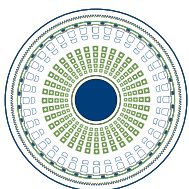
NAEVR's James Jorkasky and TATRC Vision Portfolio Manager Robert Read



Left to right: Colonel Janet Harris, R.N., Director, US Army Clinical and Rehabilitation Research, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Santullo, O.D., Air Force Optometry Consultant, Francis McVeigh, O.D., TATRC Senior Scientist, and ARVO's Joanne Angle



Congressman James Moran (D-VA), third left, a PRMR-Vision champion, is joined by Chris Gaspar from his staff (second left) and NAEVR's David Epstein (left) and James Jorkasky (right).



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