# INNOVATION • DISCOVERY • ADVANCEMENT

# 85 Years

## VA Research

1925 - 2010

**1925:** Conducted the first hospital-based medical studies to be formally considered part of VA's newly established research program. Began publishing the U.S. Veterans' Bureau Medical Bulletin, designed, in part, to "promote research along practical lines."

**1928:** Reported findings from early VA studies looking at treatments for malaria, the long-term health effects of chemical warfare, and hospitalization and mortality among Veterans with mental illness.

**1932:** Published data comparing outcomes at VA clinics with those at other hospitals. The VA facilities compared favorably. Also, established the Tumor Research Laboratory at the Hines (Ill.) VA—the first research lab to receive funds from VA Central Office specifically for research.

**1935:** Published a series of articles in the New England Journal of Medicine about heart disease among Veterans.

**1941:** Established a research lab at the Northport (N.Y.) VA medical center to conduct clinical and biomedical research in neuropsychiatric disorders; contribute to the nationwide standardization of diagnostic and treatment methods; and teach the latest concepts and methods in neurology, psychiatry, and neuropathology to VA doctors.

**1946:** Developed and tested effective therapies for tuberculosis following World War II. These tuberculosis studies were among the first-ever large-scale clinical trials and led to development of the Cooperative Studies Program, which has since produced effective treatments for diseases and conditions including schizophrenia, diabetes, depression, heart disease, and stroke.

**1958:** Contributed to the development and early use of the implantable cardiac pacemaker, helping many patients prevent potentially life-threatening complications from irregular heartbeats.

**1960:** Pioneered concepts leading to development of computerized axial tomography (CAT scan).

**1968:** Performed the first successful liver transplants and developed techniques for suppressing the body's natural attempt to reject transplanted tissue.

**1970:** Published the results of a landmark VA Cooperative Study on hypertension, showing that drug treatment was effective in controlling blood pressure and reducing the incidence of major cardiovascular events.

**1977:** Nobel Prize awarded to VA researchers Dr. Andrew Schally, for his research on peptide hormone production in the brain; and Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, for her development of radioimmunoassay to detect and measure various substances in the blood.

**1984:** Developed the nicotine patch and other therapies to help smokers give up the habit.

**1991:** Developed Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) systems that allow patients to move paralyzed limbs.

**1994:** Demonstrated that one aspirin tablet a day reduced by half the rate of death and nonfatal heart attacks in patients with unstable angina.

**1994:** Identified a gene associated with a major risk for schizophrenia.

**1999:** Established, through a large clinical trial using the drug gemfibrozil, that raising HDL ("good") cholesterol and lowering triglycerides could prevent heart attacks and coronary deaths.

**2000:** Conducted the first large clinical trials of hearing aids, documenting that the devices can help the hearing-impaired in both quiet and noisy environments.

**2001:** Initiated a landmark clinical trial to assess the effectiveness of deep brain stimulators for Parkinson's disease.

**2002:** Published, together with National Institutes of Health colleagues, the main results from the landmark ALLHAT study, the largest hypertension study ever, which found that conventional diuretics were better than newer medicines for treating high blood pressure.

**2003:** Launched the largest-ever clinical trial of psychotherapy to treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**2004:** Took on leadership of a five-year, $60 million study nationwide study—funded by the National Institute on Aging and other partners—to identify brain changes linked to Alzheimer's disease.

**2005:** Showed the effectiveness of a new vaccine for shingles, a painful skin and nerve infection that affects older adults.

**2006:** Launched a Genomic Medicine initiative to advance knowledge of how genes affect health and to promote personalized medicine for Veterans.

**2007:** Unveiled the first powered ankle-foot prosthesis, developed in collaboration with researchers at MIT and Brown University.

**2008:** Sponsored an international conference on traumatic brain injury (TBI) and expanded VA research in this area, including studies looking at TBI in association with posttraumatic stress disorder, hearing and vision loss, chronic pain, and other conditions.

**2009:** Began first-of-its kind study at VA medical centers to optimize the design of an advanced prosthetic arm, made by DEKA Research and Development through funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Also, initiated the largest health study ever of Vietnam-era women Veterans, with up to 10,000 women expected to take part.

**2010:** As part of the VA Genomic Medicine Program, announced a groundbreaking genetics study—the Million Veteran Project—to study the effects genes have on health, with some two million Veterans expected to take part over the next five to seven years.

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