
About VA Research Week

Research Week is an annual event that celebrates the accomplishments of the VA Research Program and recognizes the researchers, Veterans, and partners who support the program. Research Week provides an opportunity to honor Veterans and to highlight outstanding achievements in VA research.

Who can participate? VA Research Week is geared towards Veterans, caregivers, researchers, clinicians, media, and members of the medical and academic communities. Check your local VAMC website or the Research Week website at www.research.va.gov/researchweek for more information.

When is Research Week? Research Week takes place during the third week in May. Research Week this year is from **May 14-19**, and the theme is **InnoVAtion to Implementation**.

Where is Research Week celebrated? Research Week is celebrated all over the country at VAMCs. VA facilities plan open houses or other activities to commemorate the week. Some plan research presentations, research displays or slide shows, and others will hold “Veteran Appreciation” days, featuring VA researchers and local officials, as well as personal testimonials by Veterans participating in VA research studies.

Why do we celebrate this event? The purpose of VA Research Week is to recognize Veterans for their participation in research studies and to provide an opportunity for VA investigators and administrators to present findings from their discoveries and innovations that have led to advancements in the health care for Veterans and improved upon existing medical knowledge. We recognize achievements in the following areas.

VA Research discoveries. VA researchers study a wide range of health topics from cancer, diabetes, women’s health and mental health; to prosthetics and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research Week is the premier event for researchers to present their discoveries on these topics and to show how they translate research to patient care and services for Veterans.

Veteran Participation in Research. Every year, Veterans from all over the country participate in research studies to help improve the lives of other Veterans. During Research Week, we honor Veterans and formally thank them for the vital role they play in supporting and contributing to the VA Research Program.

Collaborations and Partnerships. VA Research depends on its collaborations and partnerships with academic affiliates, industry partners, nonprofit organizations, outside organizations, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to deliver high-quality results. For Research Week, VA highlights these partnerships and the successful research studies that have been made possible through these collaborations.

VA Research Overview

VA Research: Improving Veterans' Lives Through Health Care Research

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

VA Research is unique because of its focus on medical 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 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 distinctions.

VA Research fosters dynamic collaborations with academia, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry—thus furthering the program's impact on the health of Veterans and the nation.

Intramural Program, Collaborative Spirit

VA Research consists of four main research services that work together to address the full spectrum of Veterans' health needs.

Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development

This division conducts preclinical research to understand life processes from the molecular, genomic, and physiological level in regard to diseases affecting Veterans. It includes research on animal models and investigations of tissues, blood, or other biologic specimens from humans, but does not include studies with people.

Clinical Science Research and Development

This division focuses on clinical trials and other research involving human volunteers to study new treatments, compare existing therapies, and improve clinical practice and care. The Cooperative Studies Program within this division is responsible for planning and conducting VA's large multicenter clinical trials and epidemiological studies on health issues vital to our nation's Veterans.

Health Services Research and Development

This division supports research to improve the delivery of health care to Veterans. Among the areas studied are quality and organization of care; patient access and outcomes; and cost-effectiveness. The division's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) is designed to translate research findings into advancements in Veterans' care.

Rehabilitation Research and Development

This division conducts research to discover knowledge and create innovations that restore Veterans who have become disabled due to injury or disease to their greatest possible functional capacity in their families, communities, and work places.

Cross-cutting Components

Other programs are cross-cutting. The Technology Transfer Program, for example, is dedicated to translating discoveries and inventions by VA researchers into practice.

Productive Partnerships

While embracing its status as an intramural program with close ties to its academic affiliates, VA Research also enjoys dynamic collaborations with academia, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry. Such teamwork promotes the leveraging of resources, speeds the translation of study results into clinical practice, and maximizes the overall impact of VA Research.

Discovery

The VA Research and Development program is positioned within an integrated health care system with a state-of-the-art electronic health record. This allows investigators to conduct pioneering research and also provide patient care—a distinctive dual opportunity that attracts the best and brightest to the program and enables VA to rapidly move scientific discoveries from bench to bedside. VA research accomplishments span the full spectrum of Veterans' health concerns.

Innovation

The VA Research and Development program includes these additional standout features in support of its mission:

- Full integration of basic, clinical, and applied research to comprehensively address Veterans' health needs, from disease prevention to rehabilitation.
- Career Development Program to mentor junior investigators.
- Extensive human subjects' protection program.
- Cooperative Studies Program and VA Central Institutional Review Board, which enable VA investigators to conduct large, multisite clinical trials.
- A rigorous external peer-review process, which ensures that all research meets the highest standards of scientific excellence.

Advancement

VA Research represents the promise of a brighter tomorrow for Veterans. The research process in VA starts with a close focus on the everyday health needs and concerns of Veterans. Solutions are identified and developed through careful, rigorous research in labs and clinics. These solutions are then applied to patient care as rapidly as possible. "Sometimes it works miracles," one Veteran has said of the program, which touches the lives not only of Veterans but of their family members and caregivers, as well as many others in the nation who ultimately benefit from VA medical discoveries.