Welcome and Opening Comments

Dr. Ramoni welcomed attendees expressing expectations that 2023 will continue to bring a lot of new things and changes. She highlighted some key agenda topics and expressed her appreciation for the field as ORD continues to carry out and/or launch some new efforts for the year.

ORD / Research Enterprise

2023 Meetings- ACOS and AOs
- Administrative Officers Meeting is scheduled for April 25-27, 2023, and to be held in Salt Lake City, UT. More info will be forthcoming via email regarding travel and other logistics.
- The annual meeting for ACOS-Rs will begin planning shortly and a request for volunteers to serve on the planning committee will be sent. This meeting will be held Sept. 17-20, 2023, in St. Paul, MN in conjunction with the National Association for Veterans Research and Education Foundations annual meeting.

ACOS-R Quick Start Guide
- The ACOS-R QuickStart Guide has been completed but has not yet been finalized pending some work to ensure it is Section 508 compliant. Thank you to the field/ACOS-Rs for your input into this tool.

ORD Enterprise Transformation Subcommittees
- ORD has 3 subcommittees to facilitate enterprise transformation priorities. Members include individuals from the field and ORD/Central Office. Some of the initiatives are “next phases” for previous efforts done in 2022 while others are newer activities.
  - Organizational Subcommittee – focused on ORD Organizational Alignment and Investigators, Scientific Review and Management Organization
  - Operations Subcommittee – focused on Finance Processes, Centralized Human Resources Function, Field Enterprise Research Support Services, Staff Training Empowerment and Motivation (STEAM)
  - IT and Data Subcommittee – focused on IT and data governance

Investigators, Scientific Review and Management (ISRM)

FY2022 AMP Initiative Accomplishments
- Defined framework, key capabilities, and requirements for Actively Managed Portfolios
- Established Precision Oncology Actively Managed Portfolio unit and role charters
- Completed Precision Oncology portfolio analysis
- Designed and implemented a policy for accelerated review of priority research for Actively Managed Portfolios
- Created a process and framework for Actively Managed Portfolios to identify Critical Research Priorities and set strategic goals

In addition to the AMP Initiative, ISRM also underwent significant changes during FY22.
- Launched Precision Oncology as the first prototype Actively Managed Portfolio
• Established the ISRM Leadership Council to support the organizational design of ISRM
• Established ISRM Requirements with CRADO
• Developed the design for initial testing of AMPs and Broad Portfolios

ISRM Organization Initiative for FY23
• Designing and testing different portfolios models. These AMPs and Broad Portfolios will emphasize and prioritize collaborative and cross-cutting partnerships to reduces duplication of research and address the real world needs of Veterans
• ISRM’s transition from Service-based funding to portfolio-based funding
  • Will be incremental and deliberative over the next 2 years
  • Current funding commitments will be honored and administered as normal
  • Field researchers should continue to submit proposals as they normally do as Standard Merit Review processes will remain unchanged
    o There will be additional review opportunities available through the new portfolios

Transitioning from Service-Based Research to Portfolio-Based Research
• The goal is to transition from funding research through the 4 Services to funding research through Actively Managed Portfolios and Broad Portfolios
• ISRM will pilot-test different leadership models, funding models, and review processes
  • Precision Oncology AMP: 11/01/2022
    • A single SPM leadership model, led by Dr. Ken Myrie
    • A defined budget that can only be spent on precision oncology
    • The new accelerated review process for priority research
  • Pain and Opioid Use AMP: 01/31/2023
    • A rotational leadership model amongst 4 SPMs from each of the Services. This leadership model is designed to increase collaboration across the Services and reduce duplicative research
    • A competitive budget
    • Standard Merit Review processes
  • 3rd AMP: TBD
  • Health System Services Broad Portfolio: 01/31/2023
    • A director-led leadership model, headed by Dr. David Atkins
    • A defined budget for HSR projects
    • Standard Merit Review processes
  • 2nd Broad Portfolio: TBD
  • These portfolios will prioritize collaboration and cross-cutting partnerships with researchers, clinicians, and other VA stakeholders
  • ISRM Organization initiative will be iterative process

ORD Supplements to Promote Diversity and Partnerships

Two RFAs for ORD-wide Research Supplements were released on January 23, 2023

RD-23-029 — mentored research supplements for early career scientists from underrepresented populations. Due July 6, 2023

RD-22-030 — intended to support partnerships between VA Investigators and investigators at non-VA institutions, including, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions. Due April 3, 2023
Communications

Ubon Mendie

The Media Clearance Flow Chart was reviewed. Please follow this when you are contacted by anyone from the media. The document is attached.

ORD Communications can assist with media preparation, media planning and communications planning. The team can be reached at VAResearchMedia@va.gov.

Field Operations updates

Grant Huang

The following were presented on behalf of Tony Laracuente

Cleland-Dole Act

The field should have general awareness of the recently passed Cleland-Dole Act that was signed into law on Dec. 29, 2022.

- Specifically, this legislation is under Division U of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (P.L. 117-328). The law is based on over 30 different bills on Veteran issues introduced during the 117th Congress. The law addresses health care, benefits, homelessness, Information Technology (IT) and other matters.
- The most relevant parts of this legislation to VA research can be found under Title I – Health Care Matters, Subtitle G.
- More information will be communicated about the parts of this law that affects research. However, the field should understand that reference to it may be variable given its association with appropriations and a range of topics.

209 guidance

- While the law has passed VA needs to develop guidance to address outside income when conducting VA research. OGC and ORD are working hard to get clear guidance for implementation of this critical legislation.

HR Transition

- Over the past week, R&D Offices have received multiple emails from Sarah Wycoff or Tony Laracuente. The group is moving quickly to meet the February 26 transition date. Please be responsive to any queries and forward any questions to Tony or Sarah. Regarding the WOC/IPA issue, ORD continues to work with WMC and CARDS to address the issues confronting these appointments. An email will be going out this week asking for a listing of all Research WOCs and IPAs so that WMC can begin tracking. Remember that Contractors cannot hold a WOC appointment and that when appointing non-citizens, follow the IPA guidance. Office hours will be setup in February to address further questions and concerns.

VERA Worksheet

- Late last month ORD sent out a VERA workbook to ACOS-Rs to help estimate the cost of VERA at your facility. Completion is voluntary and the results should be kept at your site for your use. Questions can be directed to Tony.

AO Mentoring Program

- ORD continues to evaluate the mentoring program in the hopes to make it more dynamic and useful to new AOS or those seeking assistance. Ideas can be emailed to Tony or Holly Henry.
IT update: Carl Grunfeld

We heard the message that it is too hard to request Software and Hardware, so ORD is working on it. Dr. Grunfeld will be sending out one page “how to” papers, when IT approves them. In the interim, please encourage your PI and staff to respond to any surveys when you see a request.

ORD has been successfully rolling out the SFFX folder control system. If you have not asked for SFFX and still want them, we can put you in the queues, but it will take a while. IT region 1 will not be using SFFX but will use an alternative System: VARONIS.

If you have not asked for the Guest Wireless/EDUROAM systems and are interested, please contact Dr. Grunfeld. That roll out is slower.

Service Funding Opportunities, Reviews and Updates

Rehabilitation R&D updates Brian Schultz

2023 Excellence in Technology Transfer Award from Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer

![Image of Dr. Christine Olney]

Habit Camera System Christine Olney, PhD, RN

The Habit Camera from the Minneapolis Adaptive Design & Engineering (MADE) Program was selected for a 2023 Excellence in Technology Transfer Award from Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer. Dr. Christine Olney led the research effort with support from Drs. Gary Goldish and Andrew Hansen.

This is a skin inspection device - essentially a telescoping gooseneck camera with wifi connection to smartphone app - to better view and record skin condition in problematic areas, such as seating areas for those with SCI and feet for the diabetic population. Through the wireless connection the user can securely message images to their clinician.

The Habit Camera project advanced from a pilot-level RR&D SPIRE award directly to a patent, license, and commercially available product from a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned business. Additional funding and support from ORD TTP and their BRAVE program led to the translation success.

To Learn more:
https://federallabs.org/2023-national-meeting/national-meeting/2023-award-winners

https://habitcamera.com
Review updates

Scientific Review Deadlines (refer to applicable FOA/RFA for details): Please continue to contact RR&D for guidance and to ask questions.

Winter 2023 - Merit, Career Development and Research Career Scientist:
- Updated RFAs published – September 28, 2022
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver requests) submission deadline – November 1, 2022
- Full award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – December 12, 2022 (as December 10 falls on a Saturday)
    - NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024)) is required for all application submissions
- Scientific Review – February 21 – 28, 2023
- Scores released – March 3, 2023
- Summary Statements released – March 24, 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – by early April 2023

Spring 2023 - Center and Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP):
- NEW RFAs published – March 3, 2022
- A NEW Pre-application (I02) RFA RX-23-101 published for the I50 award mechanism. Pre-application and List of Key Personnel submission deadline – September 1, 2022.
- Full award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – January 11, 2023
    - NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024)) is required for all application submissions
- Scientific Review – April 11-12, 2023
- Scores and Summary Statements released – May 10, 2023
- Administrative Review/Site Visits – June/July 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – Subsequent to site visit

Spring 2023 – SPIRE:
- NEW SPIRE RFA RX-23-004 published – December 27, 2022
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver requests) RX-22-101 submission deadline – February 1, 2023
- Full award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – March 10, 2023
    - NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024)) is required for application submissions
- Scientific Review – April 20, 2023
- Scores and Summary Statements released – May 12, 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – mid-June 2023

Biomedical Laboratory R&D updates

Holly Krull

Review Cycle:
- Notification of funding decisions were sent to the stations on January 20, 2023.
- Decisions for Clinician Scientist Investigator Awards have been made. Notices will be sent this week

Infrastructure Review:
- LAM program has received 16 requests. The requests are being reviewed administratively.
- ShEEP program has received 21 applications. The applications were peer-reviewed Jan 17. Scores will be released today.
- Funding recommendation for both LAM and ShEEP will be forwarded to Finance by end of this week.
Middleton award: Nominations for the 2023 Middleton Award are due in ORD on February 1, 2023.

The Middleton award, BLR&D’s highest honor for outstanding scientific achievement. We are looking for VA scientists whose research program has had a substantial real-world impact on the healthcare of Veterans. The nominee should stand head and shoulders above his/her peers in terms of their impact on a research field of prime importance to VA’s research mission.

More information and submission instructions for the Middleton Award may be found at: https://www.research.va.gov/services/blrd/middleton.cfm or you may contact Carol.fowler@va.gov.

Clinical Science R&D updates

Miriam Smyth

CSRD Intent to Fund notices went out to the field on Friday, Jan. 20, 2023.

CSRD is delighted to announce that Jayanthi Sankar, PhD, is our new Scientific Portfolio Manager in Mental Health, joining Dr. Vetisha McClair on the CSRD mental health team. Jayanthi comes to us following a 25-year career at NIDA as staff scientist in the Molecular Neuropsychiatry Research Branch. During her time at NIDA, she conducted preclinical and clinical research on substance use disorder, focusing mainly on epigenetic and genome-wide approaches to provide greater clarification of the biological substrates of drug addiction and identify rational targets for drug development.

CSRD is also delighted to announce that Kristina Nord has been hired into our new Clinical Trial Manager position. Kristina is a licensed independent clinical social worker. She joined ORD as a health science specialist in 2016 supporting clinical trials. Prior to that, she was a project manager at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center, managing a portfolio of projects in health services and implementation. She is looking forward to her new role as Clinical Trial Manager, contributing to all trial activity across the enterprise.

Military Exposures Research Program

Karen Block

ORD previously announced efforts to establish a Military Exposures Research Program (MERP) as part of its commitment to address evidence needs related to toxic exposures and health. ORD will be releasing an RFA through BLRD and CSRD by early February. Dr. Karen Block is currently serving as the ORD scientific lead for this effort while ORD is undertaking efforts to hire a new MERP Director.

General announcements

- Next Field Research and Advisory Committee meeting – February 15, 2023
- If your information in the ACOS-R/AO Directory (https://www.research.va.gov/about/national_directory.cfm) is missing or is incorrect, please email: ORD.Web@va.gov
- ORD Field call minutes to be posted at: https://www.research.va.gov/resources/ORD_Admin/call_notes/default.cfm
- ORD Field Update is a monthly newsletter dedicated to informing and strengthening the VA research community. Do you have a timely item of interest and relevance to the broad VA research community? Please share it with Tristan.Horrom@va.gov for potential inclusion in the newsletter. Visit the VA Research website to view back issues and to subscribe.
- Research Enterprise SharePoint corrected link below https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacomm/ORD-Research-Enterprise