Welcome and Opening Comments
Rachel Ramoni

Highlights of the agenda were presented along with appreciation to those who contributing to key efforts in the research enterprise.

ORD/Research Enterprise
Grant Huang

National Administrative Officers Meeting

The upcoming meeting in Salt Lake City, UT was mentioned with eager anticipation of an agenda covering several key operational topics. Particular acknowledgement was given to the organizing committee for all their hard work in putting the meeting together: Tony Laracuente, ORD, Co-chair; Holly Henry – Co-chair Cleveland; Coralyn Ana - San Diego; Margaret Covar – Tampa; Gregory Goodale – Albany; Sedra Graves – Honolulu; Elizabeth (Lizzy) Koester – Ann Arbor; Kari Points, Iowa City.

Assessing research center capabilities

As a part of the Research Enterprise Transformation, ORD leadership team has been meeting with ORD center managers from the services to better understand the capabilities, resources and activities that they have collectively and individually. As we have a preliminary set of info, we’re planning to next engage Center Directors on help with overall efforts to aligning the Centers with ORD organization as we move forward and to see what new opportunities are needed. Part of this effort is planning to have a webinar to talk about this effort. Also, with this objective in mind, we plan to distribute a brief questionnaire via Microsoft Form in the upcoming weeks that will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of your Center's contributions to researchers and Veteran needs. Your response to this questionnaire will be instrumental in helping us identify your Center's unique strengths and tailor our support to your specific requirements.

Psychedelics Research Data Call
Wendy Tenhula

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) has sent a request for information from all VA research programs with research studies on psychedelics. Responses are due by COB Wednesday, April 19th. Survey Link: Data Call on Psychedelics Research (office.com)

Background: There is a rapidly expanding evidence base from preclinical studies and clinical trials supporting the use of psychedelic treatments for mental health conditions prevalent in the Veteran population, including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and addiction. Several psychedelic treatments (e.g., MDMA and psilocybin) are in the pipeline with potential to be FDA-approved within the next 2-5 years. Research on the use of psychedelics has been
occurring at VA facilities for a number of years. This research has been largely privately funded and therefore not centrally tracked by VA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD). Given the high-level interest and plans to expand the VA research enterprise into this area in the future, we are asking for an accounting of the psychedelic research that is currently being conducted by VA investigators (including those publicly and privately funded studies). In this data call, we are interested in studies that are completed, enrolling or in the planning stages during the Fiscal Years 2020-2024. Psychedelics are defined as a group of substances that temporarily alter perception and mood and may impact numerous cognitive processes, this includes but is not limited to MDMA, psilocybin, ayahuasca, 5-methoxy-N,N-dimethyltryptamine, and ibogaine. Please complete the form for each study at your station.

Field Operations/Information technology  Carl Grunfeld

Use of VA phones and laptops

One of our sites received a Privacy and Security Event Tracking notification (aka PSET in IT lingo) of a security violation, as a VA laptop was detected attempting to VPN into the VA from a foreign country. Everyone should know you cannot just take a VA phone or a VA laptop (aka GFE in IT lingo) and work from a foreign country. Information on how to get approvals take GFE abroad will be posted on the TEAMs site. It is not an easy process.

Research Scientific Computing Devices (RSCD)

ORD has hired an enterprise Biomedical Engineer to place RSCDs on the isolated LAN (thank you Molly Klote). RSCDs are basic and clinical instruments run by a computer that cannot accept VA security software, hence the need for an isolated LAN. We will be sending out a request for information on RSCDs in the field in the future. If you have urgent needs, please reach out to Carl Grunfeld.

Tech Transfer  John Kaplan

We are finalizing the hire for the Million Veteran Program TT specialist and are interviewing candidates for the Field TT specialist in Ann Arbor.

Tech Transfer will present at the AO Conference, to be held in Salt Lake City.

VA Tech Transfer office is a member of the VA Commercialization Integrated Process team. In this role, we will investigate ways to provide sole source contracts for companies licensing VA-developed technologies.

A few years ago, TTP implemented a program with the VA’s Office of Business Oversight (OBO) to audit VA’s Academic Affiliates based on the Invention Management Agreement (IMA) with each Affiliate. The audit examines the Affiliates Technology Transfer Office with respect to invention disclosures and jointly owned Intellectual Property. We discussed these audits at the Federal Laboratory Consortium in March and found out that VA is the only Federal agency performing audits with respect to Intellectual Property.

We are planning for the BRAVE Funding program in FY24.
We want to make sure everyone is aware of the ORD Field AO and Financial Management Resource Center SharePoint: The SharePoint is a centralized online site that provides access to resources and training to support Finance processes including:

- Best practice guides
- Monthly training slides
- VSSC and FMS transaction codes
- ORD Finance training videos
- Key communications such as newsletters, memorandums, and field call minutes

Bookmark the resource center link for easy access, you can also access the site on the ORD Finance Field page.

Service Funding Opportunities, Reviews and Updates

**ORD Mentored Supplements for Diversity**

RD-23-029 — mentored research supplements for early career scientists from underrepresented populations applications are **due July 6, 2023**

This will be offered as a Type 3 supplement to active VA Merits funded by BLRD, CSRD, HSRD, and RRD.

- **Budget:** $100,000/yr for up to 2 years
- **Applications will only be accepted through grants.gov/NIH Assist and reviewed via eRA commons.**

The DEI supplement RFA 23-029 is posted on the VA intranet, here: [https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm](https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm)

An informational webinar was held on February 15, 2023 and is posted here: [https://www.research.va.gov/funding/diversity.cfm](https://www.research.va.gov/funding/diversity.cfm)

For more information: Carol.Fowler@va.gov.

**Pain/Opioid AMP; Broad RFAs and Webinar**

The Pain and Opioid Actively Managed Portfolio (POp AMP) is pleased to announce two forthcoming broad requests for applications (RFAs):

1) Parent RFA for pre-clinical, observational and epidemiological research and
2) Clinical Trial RFA for single and small multi-site clinical trials.

An informational webinar was hosted by VA HSR&D Cyber Seminars on April 18th, 2023 at 2 PM EST. The recorded session can be found at the HSR&D website at: [https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cyberseminars/](https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cyberseminars/)

Contacts: RR&D: Audrey.Kusiak@va.gov
RR&D Welcomes Ms. Charmaine O’Brien, Program Analyst in PARS

Ms. Charmaine O’Brien comes to ORD from the Orlando VA Healthcare System Research Department where she served as a Program Specialist. After earning a Master’s in Biochemistry from Florida State University, Ms. O’Brien joined the VA in 2008. She has held roles in all levels of research, including Coordinator for the Subcommittee on Research Safety, Institutional Biosafety Committee, Institutional Review Board, and Research & Development Committees and Research Compliance Officer. Ms. O’Brien also holds a Certificate in Healthcare Research Compliance. During her career, she has focused on identifying and addressing the needs of research programs, data management, and providing technical advice to Investigators regarding preparation of medical research proposals and review criteria.

As the daughter of a Veteran, Ms. O’Brien feels that Veterans deserve the utmost respect and best possible care and that evidence-based practices derived from high-quality research is essential to providing that superior care. She believes that research should be conducted safely, ethically, and in accordance with federal regulations. Ms. O’Brien looks forward to continuing her work in the field of research to both the VA’s and her own high professional standards to continuously improve the care we provide to our nations Veterans.

In The News on 60 Minutes: March 26, 2023

Feel again: Advancements in prosthetics limb technology allow feeling, control

60 Minutes featured VA researchers at the RR&D Advanced Platform Technology and Functional Electrical Stimulations Centers in Cleveland. The segment explored advancements in prosthetic technology that can now restore a sense of touch and included interviews with research volunteers.

View the 60 Minutes piece!

An expansion of the story in “60 Minutes Overtime” can be found here: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/prosthetics-breakthroughs-2006-to-now-60-minutes-2023-03-26/

In Remembrance of Regina McGlinchey, PhD

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Regina McGlinchey on April 12, 2023, only days after her 64th birthday. Gina, as she was known to her friends and family, was a
distinguished scientist who devoted her life to clinical neuroscience research in the service of Veterans Health. Even before receiving her Ph.D in Experimental Psychology at Tufts University in 1991, she worked as a psychology technician first starting in 1984 at the now long closed Court Street VA Outpatient Clinic, continuing in this capacity even while she completed her graduate work. Her dissertation on how stroke patients who suffered from hemispatial neglect were able to extract meaning from visual information they were not consciously aware of proved to be groundbreaking and a landmark study in contemporary cognitive neuroscience. As Gina found her stride in her career, she continued in the vein of adapting measures used in basic experimental neuroscience to study how the central nervous system was impacted by diseases and conditions endemic to the Veterans population. This work is too extensive to describe here, but she conducted critical and innovative research on dementia and alcoholism that solidified her national and international reputation as a scientist. In 2008 when the VA and country were faced with a new generation of Veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with complex and devastating challenges to their mental and physical health, she helped found the Translational Research Center for TBI and Stress Disorders (TRACTS) to conduct the research needed to address these problems in a rigorous and effective manner. TRACTS became the crown jewel of her career, producing hundreds of important studies and new techniques to assess and treat this generation of Veterans. Even as the recent medical issues Gina recently faced challenged her ability to work, she was unrelentingly devoted to her research and the Veterans who were affected by the trauma of their combat experiences. At the time of her passing, she was a Health Science Specialist based in the Boston Division of the New England Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) and a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Though the academic world knew well of her work, locally her impact extended well beyond her intellectual talents, as she was an indefatigable mentor and general problem solver for decades of VA Boston and Harvard Medical School trainees and post-doctoral fellows. She always found time to extensively revise and edit new grants and manuscripts, helping many young scientists establish their own careers, often without public credit or fanfare. She used her wisdom and boundless energy to help her colleagues whenever the opportunity presented itself, always with a quiet humility and unselfish devotion. Her excellence as a mentor was recognized by Harvard Medical School with the award of the Stuart Hauser MD, Ph.D Mentorship Award for 2021.

It has to be noted that Gina led a double life, the life of a scientist and colleague as documented, but also that of an agriculturalist running a large Apple Orchard near the Merrimack Valley with her beloved husband Keith Bohne. During most seasons, when she packed her papers into her shoulder briefcase, she would head out to help with the endless pruning, mowing, and spraying that were required to grow apples in the Northeastern United States. When the crop came in every fall, she would bring in bag after bag of spectacularly delicious apples, to the delight of her trainees and colleagues, and anyone who happen to be visiting the lab during that period.

Gina will be long remembered for her prodigious scientific achievements, but her kindness, generosity, and personal devotion is what will leave the greatest void for the many people whose lives she touched.

Paul B. Magnuson Award Call for Nominations

The Paul B. Magnuson Award is presented annually to a VA RR&D investigator who exemplifies the entrepreneurship, humanitarianism, and dedication to veterans displayed by Dr. Magnuson during his career. The award was established in 1998 in recognition of the importance of rehabilitation research within the VA Health Care System. The award consists of a one-time
$5,000 cash award to an individual, $50,000 per year for three (3) years supplemental funding for their ongoing peer-reviewed research, and a celebratory plaque. Nominations for the 2023 Paul B. Magnuson Award are being accepted through September 1, 2023. Please refer to Program Guide 1203.06 and the Instructions for Preparing and Submitting a Nomination Packet.

Review Updates:

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

Spring 2023 - Center and Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP):
- 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

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

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
- Scientific Review – April 20, 2023
- Scores and Summary Statements released – May 12, 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – mid-June 2023

Spring 2023 – Total Brain Diagnostics (TBD) Proof-of-Concept (PoC) Merit Award (I01):
- NEW TBD PoC RFA RX-23-005 published – March 3, 2023
This FOA/RFA is for VA supported studies approved for study under the Commander John Scott Hannon Act Public Law 116-171), Section 305 to implement an initiative to identify, validate and integrate brain and mental health biomarkers among Veterans, with specific consideration for depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, traumatic brain injury and other mental health conditions. The studies will include brain structure and function measurements, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and electroencephalogram, and will coordinate with ongoing clinical research efforts, e.g., Long-term Impact of Military-relevant Brain Injury Consortium (LIMBIC), The Translational Research Center for TBI and Stress Disorders (TRACTS) and the Million Veterans Program. These Proof-of-Concept (PoC) proposals provide the foundation for future high impact clinical research by:
  o Utilizing longitudinal multimodal assessments along with advance data science to develop machine learning algorithms that integrate clinical data into a diagnostic.
  o Creating collaborative teams of investigators across Brain Health conditions and biomarker expertise.
- No Pre-application required.
• Full award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – March 31, 2023
• Scientific Review – May 3, 2023; Administrative Review – May 11, 2023

Summer 2023 – Merit, Career Development and Research Career Scientist:
• Summer 2023 RFAs published – March 30, 2023
  o NEW Parent RFA RX-23-006 – See updated Special Emphasis Areas
  o Special Funding Opportunities:
    ▪ RX-22-012 Durability of Rehabilitation Interventions for VEterans (DRIVE) Award (I01): the goal of this RFA is to examine whether a multimodal approach, including short-term clinician-directed rehabilitation interventions and long-term Veteran self-managed components, combined with adjunct approaches (such as, but not limited to, psychological support, performance feedback or whole health) significantly improves Veterans’ adherence, motivation and maintenance of physical and psychological function and quality-of-life in the long-term.
    ▪ RX-22-020 Translational Rehabilitation Research Award: Stage 1 (TRRA-1) (IU1): the goal of this RFA is to facilitate the translation of promising VA research discoveries in the realm of neurological, musculoskeletal and sensory systems into new treatments for Veterans to obtain functional gains and to provide VA PD/PIs with funding for services NOT provided through a standard Merit Award and to prepare the PD/PI for TRRA-2 – Pre-clinical Good Laboratory Practice testing of the product for FDA IND/IDE submission. A TRRA-1 award provides administrative support for: 1) Preparatory planning for preliminary FDA interactions and early peer-review of the technical merit and feasibility of the approach. 2) An FDA regulatory consultant. 3) A Project Officer/Administrator (preparation and maintenance of a Masterfile, manages regulatory tasks, etc.). 4) Travel (if needed) for team members to meet.
    ▪ RX-22-032 Developing and Validating Alternatives to the Use of Canines, Felines and Non-Human Primates in VA Research (I01): the goal of this two-phased FOA/RFA is to provide VA investigators currently using sensitive species (e.g., non-human primates (NHP), canines and/or felines), with funding to develop and validate alternative methods.
    ▪ NEW RX-23-007 Translational Rehabilitation Research Award: Stage 2 (TRRA-2) (IU1): the goal of this RFA is to accelerate VA scientific discoveries into new treatments for neurological and musculoskeletal disorders to maximize Veterans’ functional independence, quality of life and participation in the community. This RFA supports Stage 2 of a two-stage translational award for pre-clinical testing activities towards e-filing a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Investigational New Drug (IND) or Investigational Device Exemption (IDE).TRRA-1 is the first stage of this two-stage funding mechanism (FOA/RFA RX-22-020) that enables VA investigators to prepare for preliminary FDA interactions. A funded TRRA-1 must proceed an application submission to this FOA/RFA (TRRA-2). The main objectives of TRRA-2 are to provide VA Project Directors/Principal Investigators (PD/PIs) with funding for a full pre-clinical, milestone-driven award to support the research and development efforts towards filing a FDA Investigational New Drug (IND) or Investigational Device Exemption (IDE).
• Pre-application (LOI and waiver request) submission deadline – May 1, 2023
• Full award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – June 12, 2023 (as June 10 falls on a Saturday)
• Scientific Review – August 7-15, 2023
• Scores released – August 17, 2023
• Summary Statements released – September 8, 2023
• Intent-to-Award notifications – late September 2023

Biomedical Lab R&D & Clinical Science R&D Updates Holly Krull

LOIs for the BL and CS R&D RFAs that require them are due on May 1.

• BLRD and CSRD Collaborative Merit Review Award (BCCMA) (I01)
• BLRD Data Science Merit Review Award (I01)
• BLRD Merit Review Award for Lead Isolation and Optimization and Pre-IND studies of Drugs and Biologics (I01)
• BLRD and CSRD Career Development Award (CDA-1) [IK1]) for VA Psychiatrists
• BLRD and CSRD Career Development Award (CDA-1) [[K1]]) for U.S. Military Veteran Scientists
• BLRD and CSRD Career Development Award (CDA-2) [IK2])
• Research Career Development Award for Scientists Associated with Minority Serving Institutions (CDA-1 and CDA-2 [IK1/IK2])
• BLRD and CSRD Career Development Award (CDA-1) [IK1] for Suicide Prevention
• BLRD Merit Review Pilot Project Awards to Validate Novel Animal or Cell-based Models of Diseases (I21)
• BLRD Merit Review Pilot Project Awards for Validation of Clinically Relevant Findings from Population Studies (I21)
• BLRD Merit Review Pilot Project Awards to Validate Clinically Significant Novel Therapeutic Target(s) and Approach(es) (I21)
• CSRD Combined Proof of Concept and Clinical Trial Merit Review Award (I01)
• CSRD Merit Review Award for Clinical Trials (I01)

Spring Review Cycle

Research investigators are reminded not to contact Scientific Program Managers until after funding decisions are made.

Biomedical Lab R&D Updates Holly Krull

Clinician Scientist Investigator Package Deadlines

Clinician-scientists with a competing renewal of their BLRD Merit (RFA BX23-001) under review for the Spring 2023 cycle are encouraged to consider applying for a Clinician Scientist Investigator (CSI) Award. The CSI Award will allow for a Merit award extension of up to 2 additional years (for a total of 6 years) and up to 4 additional years (for a total of 8 years) for a Senior Clinician Scientist Investigator (SCSI) Award. Upon receipt of your score and percentile, investigators can consult with their Scientific Program Manager when preparing the nomination package.

All nomination packages must be submitted to the VHABLDRD-CSRD@va.gov mailbox through the research office before Wednesday, June 28th, 2023.
Application and eligibility information for the CSI program can be found on our CSI website: https://www.research.va.gov/services/blrd/csi.cfm

Thank Dr. Arun Sharma (arun.sharma@va.gov) for supporting the CSI program while Dr. Kimberlee Potter was on an Interagency Rotation at the Department of Commerce.

**General announcements**

- Next Field Research and Advisory Committee meeting – May 17, 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 and at ORD Field Community Teams site: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3a2nyfplJuZK26bJx-K98HfZGRKv5wXX3Pld1_guZ3Po1%40thread.tacv2/General?groupId=c6b5cfe2-8445-4363-8b9a-d0875b06bd19&tenantId=e95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf

- Research Enterprise SharePoint link https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacomm/ORD-Research-Enterprise