



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Research & Development

## Field Conference Call – Meeting Notes Monday, November 15, 2021 at 1:30 pm ET

Internal Teams Site: [Click Here](#)

### 1. Welcome

Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD

Dr. Ramoni welcomed attendees and highlighted the agenda, including the importance of informing ORD about publications and reporting inventions given VHA interest in these efforts.

### 2. ORD / Research Enterprise

Grant Huang, MPH, PhD

#### • Research Enterprise Spotlight - COVID-19 Research Resources

Maciej Gonek, PhD

Since the pandemic, ORD has been supporting several activities for use by the VA research community to advance COVID-19-related research. A document has been developed that entails available COVID-19 Research Resources and Infrastructure. Investigators are encouraged to be familiar with ORD's ongoing COVID studies, as well as the potential research enterprise resources which have been developed to support COVID-19 research, especially for the Post-COVID symptoms RFA that was released.

#### • Technology Transfer Program (TTP) updates John Kaplan, PhD, JD, PE

TTP provided a few updates and requests.

- Help is needed with submitting overdue Certification Forms
- Field Technology Transfer Specialists (TTSs) have been brought on and working in Atlanta, Tampa, Cleveland, Palo Alto and New York City
  - TTP will be adding more Field TTSs in FY22 and FY23
- A Knowledge Management System now hosted in Commercial Cloud
  - The field can access it from anywhere
  - TTP staff are in the process of setting up accounts for ACOS/Rs and AOs
  - TTP is also working on a system for on-line submission of Invention Disclosures and certification information

### 3. Finance Updates

John M. Verwiel

Information was provided on the following:

- RDIS reporting is at 97%. 25 stations still need to report.
- Prior Year balances are \$80M and planning to pull funds back on 15 January.
- The Contracting office RPA-E will be hiring additional Contracting officers.

4. **ORD Field Update and new publication-notification process**

Mitch Mirkin

- Overview of VA Research Communications

There was an overview of VA Research Communications and the services the group provides to the VA research community. In addition to providing an overview of key communications products and website features, Mitch emphasized *ORD Field Update* as the central communications vehicle between ORD and the field, complementing the monthly field call; and the publication notification process, which is transitioning from PubTracker to IRBNet. He concluded with the following five recommended action steps:

- Check out ***ORD Field Update***; make sure it is arriving in your Inbox
- [Sign up](#) for our GovDelivery email blasts
- Share our GovDelivery sign-up link with your professional networks
- Share your news with us, for potential features, briefs, newsletter items, etc. (Email [mitch.mirkin@va.gov](mailto:mitch.mirkin@va.gov))
- Remind investigators to comply with **Directive 1200.19** and report their upcoming publications and presentations

5. **Centralized HR and Central Services Contract updates**

Tony Laracuente

- Tony provided updates on two initiatives that are part of the overall research enterprise transformation effort:

Centralized Human Resources

Centralized Human Resources is moving along quite nicely. Presently in the development of a plan to begin implementation in February 2022. There will be 8 waves planned. ORD is asking the research offices to start looking at the employee data and make any necessary corrections to NTE dates, status etc. More information to come.

VA enterprise contract

A VA enterprise support services contract has been approved and presently in the stages of developing an intake program. A webinar will be provided as well as additional information on the process. Basic services to the investigator and the research office are included. The plan is to roll this out by end of December.

6. **Service Funding Opportunities, Reviews and Updates**

- ORD Post COVID-19 symptoms - RFA

Maciej Gonek

#### Merit Award

On November 15, ORD released a cross-service Post-COVID Conditions Collaborative Merit Award. This opportunity allows investigators to submit individual applications as part of a group of 3 I01 projects that address a clinical or scientific issue relevant to Post-COVID conditions. We hope this new funding mechanism will allow fruitful new collaborations to accelerate our understanding of post-COVID conditions by allowing investigators with different expertise to examine different aspects of a single, high priority problem. Just as important, this effort may serve as a prototype for encouraging cross-ORD research collaborations on other important problems facing Veterans. The link for all the documents is at: [RFAs and Program Announcements \(va.gov\)](#) (under ORD wide Post-COVID Conditions Collaborative Merit Award (I01)).

- Program Announcement for Research Supplements to Promote Diversity

Carol Fowler, PhD

A program announcement regarding the 2022 ORD-wide Research Supplements to Promote Diversity was sent out to the field on October 28, 2021. These will be offered as Type 3 supplements to active VA Merits funded by BLRD, CSRD, HSRD, and RRD, with at least two (2) years of funding remaining on the award at the time the supplement is funded. The FOA/RFA will be forthcoming. In the meantime, the program announcement a brief PowerPoint with information on budget and the essential components of the application is attached to the notes.

- Budget: \$100,000/yr for up to 2 years
- Applications will only be accepted through grants.gov and reviewed via eRA commons.
- Due: February 1, 2022. One application/yr from each VAMC.
- For more information: [Carol.Fowler@va.gov](mailto:Carol.Fowler@va.gov).

- Cross services announcements

Wendy Tenhula, PhD

#### eRA updates

VA-ORD is moving to eRA Commons for Just in Time (JIT) effective January 1, 2022. Any application for which JIT has been initiated in the VA JIT Document Manager will complete JIT using that system. Awards that have compliance document requirements later in the project period (i.e., phased awards), will have terms and conditions, or milestones added to the eRA notice of award. Documentation for later phases can be uploaded through eRA Commons to the Grant Folder which also holds the documentation submitted through the JIT system.

Following an intent to award notification from eRA, VA-ORD will indicate the applicable JIT areas for the application in the eRA Commons JIT module. When JIT is released, a

notification will then be sent to the applicant, who will be able to upload the necessary information in eRA Commons as a PDF, Word, Excel or one of several other allowable formats. Individuals with the Signing Official (SO) role can also upload documents and are the only individuals who can submit documents to VA-ORD on behalf of the research office and the applicant.

All JIT documents must be submitted within 180 days of the initial notification. The system will document all steps in the JIT review process and notify the applicant and SO by e-mail whenever there is a change in JIT area status or whenever the overall application status has changed. Reminder emails will be sent to the applicants at 90 days and 150 days after the initial notification.

Arrangements have been made for two (2) live training sessions with eRA for VA applicants and SOs. **Please disseminate the below meeting information to your investigators and staff as appropriate.** A recording from one of the sessions will also be made available.

Please direct any questions to the [VHA CO RDO ERA Mailbox](#).

Training Sessions:

**Wednesday, January 5, 2022 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM EST**

**Tuesday, January 11, 2022 2:30 AM – 3:30 PM EST**

- Million Veteran Program updates Suma Muralidhar, PhD

A reminder was given about the ORD concept RFA for joint VA-Department of Energy (DOE) projects. The deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>. Please submit you applications to [MVPLOI@va.gov](mailto:MVPLOI@va.gov). A webinar is planned for this Thursday, 11/18/21, from 4-5pm Eastern. I'll forward the details this afternoon. Please disseminate to your researchers so that they can get their questions answered. The webinar will be recorded and the recording posted for those who cannot attend.

MVP hosts an annual science meeting in September every year, where all funded MVP scientists present their work and network with other researchers. Typically, one of the Scientific project PIs serves as a host for the meeting at their local VA or academic affiliate. Previous meetings were hosted by the Philadelphia and Nashville VAMC. While previous meetings were virtual, the hope is to have an in-person meeting next year. With MVP data access opening up VA-wide, we're soliciting local VA sites that might be interested in hosting the 2022 meeting. I'll circulate the request after this call and if you're interested please respond to Marcia Lobos. Her contact information will be in the email request.

- BLR&D Updates Christopher T. Bever, Jr., MD

FY 2022 RFAs

A reminder that RFAs for FY2022 were released on October 4.

### Fall Review Round

The fall round of review meetings is underway. The stations are reminded that they should not contact the Scientific Portfolio Managers about applications but should direct any questions to the Review Manager, Dr. Michael Burgio.

### Laboratory Animal Major (LAM) Equipment for FY22

BLR&D will accept request for Laboratory Animal Major (LAM) equipment for FY22. Starting December 1, request may be submitted to the mailbox, [VACOInfrastructure@va.gov](mailto:VACOInfrastructure@va.gov). Submission will be closed on Jan 3. Please refer to BLR&D webpage for information or write to Alex Chiu, [alex.chiu@va.gov](mailto:alex.chiu@va.gov)

### BLRD Eligibility program updates

Applications for non-clinician eligibility to apply to BLRD will be accepted until **Dec 1, 2021 (No exceptions)**. The updated program guide is available on the BLRD Resources page, [GUIDANCE FOR REQUESTING ACCEPTANCE INTO THE BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY R&D \(BLRD\) PROGRAM FOR NON-CLINICIAN SCIENTISTS \(va.gov\)](#). **Note that the announcement that Dr. Mario Rinaudo was taking over as manager of the eligibility process caused some confusion in the field as he is not taking over any of Dr. Alex Chiu's other duties.**

### 2022 Middleton Award

Middleton Award Nominations have a deadline of **February 1, 2022**.

The Middleton award is 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 their impact on a research field of prime important to VA's mission.

All nomination packages must be submitted to the [VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov](mailto:VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov) mailbox by the research office before **February 1, 2022**.

The nomination instructions can be found on the Middleton website.

Middleton Website: [William S. Middleton Award \(va.gov\)](#)

Questions about the Middleton Award contact: [Kimberlee.potter@va.gov](mailto:Kimberlee.potter@va.gov)

### Clinician Scientist Investigator (CSI) Award

Clinician Scientist Investigator (CSI) Award nomination has deadline **January 5, 2022**

BLRD would like to invite clinician scientists with a competing renewal of their BLRD Merit under review for the Fall 2021 cycle 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. All nomination packages must be submitted to the [VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov](mailto:VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov) mailbox by the research office before **January 5, 2022**.

The nomination instructions can be found on the CSI website.

CSI Website: <https://www.research.va.gov/services/blrd/csi.cfm>

Question about the CSI program contact: [Kimberlee.potter@va.gov](mailto:Kimberlee.potter@va.gov)

All nomination packages must be submitted to the [VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov](mailto:VHABLRD-CSR@va.gov) mailbox by the research office before **February 1, 2022**.

- HSRD & QUERI Updates

David Atkins, MD, MPH

#### Fall Submissions

HSRD deadline for Fall submissions is December 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### Virtual State of the Art Conference on Emergency Medicine

HSRD is in final stages of planning for a virtual State of the Art Conference on Emergency Medicine. It is supported by three workgroups: 1) Emergency care of older patients; 2) Emergency care for mental health conditions; 3) Coordination of urgent and emergency care outside VA with VA care. Meeting will be held over 2 days January 12<sup>th</sup> and February 17. The outcome will be new research priorities for research and new clinical recommendations for EM practice in VA.

#### Planning committee with ORH

HSRD is working to update its research priorities in rural health. We are developing a planning committee with ORH for plan a meeting for the spring 2022. This point person in HSRD for this is Laura Zimmerman ([laura.zimmerman1@va.gov](mailto:laura.zimmerman1@va.gov)). Please contact her if you wish to be a part of this effort.

#### Awards

Our call for nominations for our HSRD field awards has been extended. The new due date is December 20 ([HSR&D Awards \(va.gov\)](#)). Contact Eric. Enone with any questions.

- RR&D Updates

Patricia A. Dorn, PhD

Job Posting for Program Analyst with the Program Analysis and Review Section in RR&D, GS-12, posting **closes November 19, 2021.**

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/621765700>

### Review Updates

**SCIENTIFIC REVIEW TIMELINES** (refer to applicable [FOA/RFA](#) for details):  
Please continue to contact [RR&D](#) for guidance and to ask questions.

#### *Fall 2021 – SPiRE:*

- NEW RFA published – June 30, 2021
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver request) deadline – August 2, 2021
- Last possible award application submission deadline (no changed/corrected applications after this date) – September 10, 2021
  - NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 12/2020 Approved Through 02/28/2023) must be used)
- Scientific Review – October 22, 2021
- Scores and Summary Statements released – November 15, 2021
- Intent-to-Fund notifications – by late November 2021

#### *Winter 2022 - Merit, Career Development and Research Career Scientist:*

- NEW RFAs published – October 1, 2021
  - NOTE: An updated VA Application Guide SF 424 (R&R) was published October 1
- LOI and Waiver Request deadline – November 1, 2021
- Last possible application submission deadline (**no changed/corrected applications after this date**) – December 10, 2021
  - NOTE: **Biographical Sketch Format (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 12/2020 Approved Through 02/28/2023) must be used)**
- Scientific Review – February 22 thru March 2, 2022
- Scores released – March 4, 2022
- Summary Statements released – March 25, 2022
- Intent-to-Fund notifications – by early April 2022