

DEFENSE-RELATED VISION FUNDING

Since it was created by Congress in FY2009 in Defense appropriations through NAEVR advocacy, the DOD's Peer Reviewed Vision Research Program (VRP) within the Congressionally-directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) has awarded 67 grants totaling \$50 million.

2015/2016:

USAMRAA and CDMRP To Issue Awards

For the FY2015/2016 VRP funding cycle, the US Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA) and CDMRP are expected to award approximately \$18.4 million to twelve researchers. An additional five investigators have been recommended as alternates should dollars become available. For the Technology/Therapeutic Development Awards, amounts of \$1.5 million for a maximum period of performance of three years are being negotiated, and for the Clinical Trial Awards, amounts of \$3 million for a maximum period of performance of four years are being negotiated.

2017:

Per NAEVR Request, House Proposes FY2017 VRP Funding at \$15 Million

On May 17, the House Appropriations Committee passed its FY2017 Defense bill, which includes \$15 million for the VRP—\$5 million greater than in FY2016 and the first time at that increased level. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its FY2017 Defense bill May 26 which did not include VRP funding. Traditionally the House takes the lead in funding many DOD Defense Health Programs and the Senate defers to its priorities.

Although funded at \$10 million in each of fiscal years 2013-2016, the final amount awarded to vision researchers has been greater each year due to transfers from other CDMRP programs.

Executive Director

James F. Jorkasky

240-221-2905 | jamesj@eyerresearch.org

Director, Government Relations and Education

David H. Epstein

240-221-2902 | depstein@eyerresearch.org

1801 Rockville Pike, Suite 400

Rockville, Maryland 20852-1606

www.eyerresearch.org



NAEVR Joins Advocates in Opposing Onerous NDAA Provisions

In early June, NAEVR, in partnership with the Defense Health Research Coalition—a group that advocates for medical research programs within the DOD—supported an amendment offered by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) that nullified language in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) bill that would have imposed two burdensome new requirements on DOD research programs. The first provision would have subjected every single DOD medical project grant to a very laborious and challenging level of review by senior DOD leadership who may not have the level of expertise to adequately assess the merits of the grants. The second provision would have imposed new contracting requirements on funded projects that could slow down the process to get money to researchers. NAEVR was one of 143 organizations that signed on to a letter that was delivered to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee urging that the two provisions be nullified in the final bill. In addition, NAEVR enlisted the support of individual researchers in sending letters to their Senators asking them to vote in support of the Durbin amendment.

While the effort to amend the NDAA succeeded, because the Durbin amended only nullified—rather than deleted—the two provisions, there is concern that when the House and Senate meet to conference their two versions of the legislation these provisions could be resurrected.

In mid-July at the National Press Club, NAEVR's James Jorkasky encountered former Cong. James Moran (D-VA), who as a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee championed the creation of the dedicated VRP funding line in FY2009 Defense appropriations and supported it until his retirement from Congress in 2014. When informed that the FY2017 House Defense appropriations bill increases VRP funding to \$15 million, he gestured a "thumb's up" and expressed his ongoing support for NAEVR's efforts.



On June 25, NAEVR's Director of Government Relations David Epstein participated in a meeting of Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and Military Service Organizations (MSOs) with senior House Democratic leadership, including Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Cong. Tim Walz (D-MN).



Visit the Defense-related Vision Research section of NAEVR's Web site for full details