

DEFENSE-RELATED VISION FUNDING

Vision Research Program Funding Scorecard

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) will have awarded 77 grants totaling \$66.5 million (including FY2015/2016 awards). FY2017 is in process (see below).

New VRP Manager Named, Meets with NAEVR and ARVO



NAEVR's James Jorkasky with Q. Tian Wang, PhD

In late 2017, the CDMRP Director named Q. Tian Wang, PhD as the Vision Program Manager, coupling this program with the hearing/deafness to create a Sensory Program. Dr. Wang has a BS in Biochemistry from Peking University and a Doctorate in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Cell Biology from Northwestern University. She has more than 23 years of experience in biomedical science research, teaching, training and administration, and has co-authored 24 peer-reviewed publications.

On January 8, NAEVR and ARVO met with Dr. Wang, who will attend the ARVO Annual Meeting and participate in NAEVR's *Defense Vision Opportunities* session (see front page box). On April 17, the CDMRP will host a Stakeholder Meeting at which the VRP Programmatic Committee will analyze its current funding portfolio and consider updates to its list of DOD-identified research gaps.

Kevin Frick, PhD (Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business), who is currently updating NAEVR's 2012 *Cost of Military Eye Injury Study* for AEVR, will present. Incoming ARVO Board of Trustees President and NAEVR/AEVR Boards Member Steven Fliesler, PhD, will join the Committee as a Research Stakeholder representative.

FY2017: Programmatic Panel Meets to Finalize Awards



The VRP Programmatic Committee includes Michael Steinmetz, PhD (NEI's Acting Deputy Director and Director of Extramural Programs, left) and Robert Mazzoli, MD (Col. US Army, Retired) who is the Acting Director for Research at the joint DOD-Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vision Center of Excellence and also serves as Chair of the Committee

NAEVR attended the March 8 Programmatic Committee meeting at which the FY2017 grant submissions were graded for programmatic relevance scores that were then added to peer review scores to determine the final FY2017 funding cycle grantees and alternates. The VRP was funded at \$15 million in FY2017—\$5 million greater than in FY2016, and the first time at that increased level after funding at \$10 million in each FY2013-2016. The FY2017 VRP Program Announcement had two funding mechanisms: Clinical Trial Awards (CTA), with a maximum funding of \$5.25 million per award, and Technology and Therapeutic Development Awards (TTDA), with a maximum funding of \$2.1 million per award. Selected grantees will be notified shortly.

FY2018: Omnibus Includes VRP Funding at \$15 M

For the second year, the Defense section of the FY2018 Omnibus spending bill has funded the VRP at \$15 million. The CDMRP is unlikely to issue an FY2018 Program Announcement until after the ARVO Annual Meeting, especially in light of the planned Stakeholders meeting to update DOD-identified research gaps.

FY2019: NAEVR Requests FY2019 VRP Funding at \$20 M

NAEVR is requesting FY2019 VRP funding at \$20 million—a \$5 million increase from the \$15 million funding level in each FY2017 and FY2018—updating its request to include:

- With assistance from Dr. Wang, NAEVR has updated the number of published papers that have emerged from VRP funding since FY2009, which now stands at 153. In addition, VRP-funded projects have resulted in 15 patents or applications for patents. NAEVR emphasizes that the VRP-funded research has helped to develop the field of military eye trauma care.
- An updated \$45.5 billion cost of deployment-related eye injuries and blindness in the 2000-2017 timeframe, as estimated by Dr. Frick in the 2017 AEVR-funded update of NAEVR's 2012 *Cost of Military Eye Injury Study*. Note that \$44.4 billion of that cost reflects the present value of a lifetime of long-term benefits, lost wages, and family care. At this time, AEVR is only releasing the top line estimate, as the study manuscript is being prepared for journal submission in 2018.

Visit the Defense-related Vision Research section of NAEVR's Web site at www.eyersearch.org for details



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