

DEFENSE-RELATED VISION FUNDING

Since it was created by Congress in FY2009, Defense appropriations by NAEVR advocacy and through FY2019, the Vision Research Program (VRP) within the Department of Defense's (DOD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) has been funded by Congress at \$104.5 million and has made 96 awards for a total of \$98 million, with FY2019 awards currently being negotiated.

FY2020: VRP Program Committee to Release Program Announcement

For FY2020, the VRP will have \$20 million, the same amount as FY2019. On April 1, the VRP Program Committee held a Vision Setting Web meeting in which NAEVR participated as a guest and during which the Committee established research goals and chose funding mechanisms for the FY2020 funding cycle. The CDMRP plans to release the FY2020 Program Announcement in the late-May timeframe, and NAEVR and ARVO are partnering to host a May 19 Defense Research Webinar featuring CDMRP/VRP Program Manager Tian Wang, PhD, who will explain the FY2020 Program Announcement (see front page box).

FY2021: NAEVR Requests VRP Funding at \$30 Million

NAEVR has requested FY2021 VRP funding at \$30 million, an increase of \$10 million over the enacted FY2020 funding level of \$20 million (which was the same as in FY2019). NAEVR justifies this increase by citing the results from AEVR's 2018 update of the *Cost of Military Eye Injury* study, published in the May/June 2019 edition of the journal *Military Medicine*, that estimated total cost from the 2000-2017 timeframe at \$41.5 billion, with \$40.2 billion of that cost reflecting the present value of a lifetime of long-term benefits, lost wages, and family care. Recent advocacy activities have included:

- On March 9, BVA submitted a letter to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees requesting FY2021 VRP funding at \$30 million, supporting NAEVR's request. The letter was signed by 25 other Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and Military Service Organizations (MSOs), including BVUK.
- On April 14, the Defense Health Research Consortium (DHRC), a coalition (including NAEVR) of advocacy groups and universities which support DOD Health Programs, sent letters to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittees requesting FY2021 increases for research funded by the DOD/CDMRP, including the VRP. The letter emphasized that the CDMRP's innovative research portfolio fuels scientific discovery by funding high impact research not sponsored by the NIH, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies. It included a document listing many examples of the important advances that have resulted from DOD research programs, including those in the vision space funded by the VRP. NAEVR, BVA, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology were signatories on the letter.

FY2019: VRP Program Committee Evaluating Proposals

On March 31, the VRP Program Committee held a Web meeting to review grant proposals and finalize decisions on which projects to fund in the FY2019 funding cycle using three funding mechanisms:

- **Focused Translational Team Science Award (FTTSA), with a maximum funding of \$5 million over four years**
- **Investigator-Initiated Research Award (IIRA), with two separate funding levels: Level 1, with a maximum funding of \$260,000 over two years; and Level 2, with a maximum funding level of \$500,00 over three years**
- **Translational Research Award (TRA), with a maximum funding of \$750,000 over three years**

BVA Hosting November 2020 Veterans Day Events

The BVA will host the November 11 Veterans Day 2020 Wreath-Laying event at Arlington Cemetery—the first time for a vision-related veterans group to serve in this capacity. BVA will host a reception of VSOs, MSOs, dignitaries, and sponsors (which includes NAEVR) at a reception at Ft. Myer, Virginia. Stay tuned for more details.

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



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