

RESEARCH WEEK 2023!

May 9, 2023, the VA and the National Association of Veterans Research & Education Foundations (NAVREF) kicked off this year's Research Week with Secretary Denis McDonough at the VA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The event was a special recognition ceremony of six extraordinary researchers who have been instrumental in their fields: **Dr. Rory Cooper** (Pittsburgh), **Dr. Donna Washington** (Los Angeles), **Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly**, (St. Louis) **Dr. Elizabeth Yano** (Los Angeles), **Dr. Nicholas Nickols** (Los Angeles) and **Dr. Samantha Connolly** (Boston).



Left to right: The VA Secretary, the Honorable Denis McDonough, Dr. Shereef Elnahal, Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, Dr. Nicholas Nickols, Dr. Samantha Connolly, Dr. Donna Washington, Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks, Dr. Elizabeth Yano, Dr. Rachel Ramoni, Chief Research & Development Officer, Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, front – Dr. Rory Cooper.

Each of these individuals have proven themselves to be an astounding research investigator, whose innovations in fields such as Oncology, Women's Health, and disability mobility have made them leaders in the health science community. They are pillars of VA research and demonstrate VA's leadership as the Nation's premiere learning health care system.



On behalf of NAVREF and BREFSA, I would like to recognize **each of you** and thank you for your tireless support of our Veterans Health and the incredible Veterans research work that you do.

For another great year of exploration and discovery benefiting the Veterans of our armed services. Thanks to **all of you** for your service and to all who wore the uniform and risked everything for all of us.



Left to right: Mrs. Rebecca Rosales, NAVREF Secretary, Mr. Hawk Tran, NAVREF Interim CEO, VA Secretary, the Honorable Denis McDonough, Mr. Ronald Hakes, NAVREF Chair, Mr. Matt Collier, NAVREF Board Member.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Below is a timeline of the groundbreaking research performed over the years at VAs across the network.

Biomedical Research and Education Foundation of Southern Arizona (BREFSA)
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VA RESEARCH THROUGH HISTORY

By the numbers

In Fiscal Year 2022, nearly 3,700 scientists were supported by VA Research; more than 13,000 research articles with some type of VA connection were published; and the VA provided more than \$2.2 billion of funding from VA. NAVREF Members contributed to more than \$350 million in research at 74 Nonprofit Corporations, to investigators.

Timeline of VA Research Accomplishments

- 1925 Founded VA research and development program.
- 1946 Issued Policy Memorandum No. 2, formalizing a relationship between the nation's medical schools and VA. The new policy laid the groundwork for medical care for returning WWII Veterans, and training medical students.
- 1946 Launched first decisive trials of antibiotics as a treatment for tuberculosis.
- 1950s Probed link between smoking and lung cancer; this VA research featured prominently in the landmark 1964 US Surgeon General's report.
- 1950s Developed a technique, using radioisotopes, to measure tiny quantities of various biological substances in human blood.¹
- 1960 Implanted the first pacemaker in Buffalo, New York.
- 1961 Published early conceptual work on computerized tomography (CAT Scan).
- 1964 Initiated a 5-year, 17-hospital study that showed drug treatment for moderate high blood pressure reduced patient deaths by more than 50%.
- 1967 Improved immunosuppression techniques needed to facilitate liver transplants.
- 1969 Determined the structure of hormones released in the pituitary gland; helping to explain how brain hormones interact with the endocrine system.²
- 1983 Developed the SMART Wheel, a device that led to improved wheelchair designs by enhancing assessments of upper extremity pain.
- 1984 Developed nicotine patch to aid smoking cessation.
- 2003 Launched major studies to examine psychotherapy interventions to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- 2005 Demonstrated the effectiveness of a new vaccine for shingles.
- 2011 Established the Million Veteran Program, one of the largest and most diverse genetic research databases in the world, with more than 900,000 Veteran participants to date, to assist in VA and non-VA research studies.

Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

¹ 1977 Rosalyn Yalow (radioimmunoassay)	² 1977 Andrew Schally (peptide hormone)
1998 Ferid Murad (nitric oxide)	

Lasker DeBaakey Award

1963 Michael E. DeBaakey	1975 William Oldendorf
1971 Edward D. Freis	1976 Rosalyn Yalow
1974 Ludwig Gross	1996 Ferid Murad
1975 Andrew Schally	2012 Thomas Starzl



Left to right: Mrs. Rebecca Rosales, NAVREF Secretary, Mr. Ronald Hakes, NAVREF Chair, Mr. Hawk Tran, NAVREF Interim CEO, VA Secretary, Ms. Peggy Bradley, BREFSA Executive Director/NAVREF Vice Chair, Mr. Matt Collier, NAVREF Board Member.

The Biomedical Research and Education Foundation of Southern Arizona (BREFSA) was established in 1988, as an Arizona 501c3 nonprofit corporation. BREFSA serves the Southern Arizona VA Medical Center.

Please contact me for more information about working with BREFSA for your next project.

Peggy Bradley

Peggy Bradley, BREFSA Executive Director,
NAVREF Vice Chair

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