



NAVREF NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS' RESEARCH & EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A MESSAGE FROM THE NAVREF INTERIM CEO

VA'S MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM
CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

FROM THE GENERAL COUNSEL'S DESK

STAR CORNER

CLEVELAND VA'S JEFFREY MOORE JOINS THE
SITE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OMNIBUS

NPPO NEW STAFF

2022 ANNUAL REPORT
INSTRUCTION AND COMMON ERRORS

FINDING CLINICAL TRIALS FOR YOUR NPC

A TREATISE ABOUT THE VA AND NPC
RELATIONSHIP

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

ROGUE

NAVREF UPDATE ON THE CENTRALIZED HR
AND WOC/IPA ISSUES

A TREATISE ABOUT THE VA AND NPC
RELATIONSHIP

PASSING OF DAVE JOHNSON

SPECIAL SPOTLIGHT

Black History Month

NAVREF wishes to highlight the VA's Million Veteran Program's celebration of Black veterans.

Also check out this inspiring [video](#) about a pearl harbor hero.



A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM NAVREF CEO



Dear NAVREF Members and Friends:

Resistance to change is a phenomenon frequently discussed but rarely ever resolved. It's a major factor why projects and ambitious policies don't deliver the results they set out to. But at its core, it's unlikely change itself that is the problem. People seem to resist change because they believe they will lose something or fear they themselves will not be able to adapt to the change.

Since October, change has not only impacted NAVREF, but arguably has become part of the culture. It is no secret leadership changes have occurred internally, but they have also occurred externally throughout our community. In the past 18 months, over a dozen NPC executives have seen changes and transitions – a cycle that I personally witnessed over 8 years ago. And while in the moment it seemed like things were headed in the wrong direction, 8 years later, I look back and see the successes that came from these changes. Some NPCs experienced growth while others reinvented their images. Some were able to do both! The common thread was their deviation from the status quo opening up new opportunities they would have never explored before.

This is a philosophy I have carried with me ever since my first leadership role as a company commander in the Army. Having an open mind and embracing change is vital to organizational growth, and so, the journey ahead of us with NAVREF's growth will be paved with fresh perspectives and new ideas. Whether it is NAVREF's rebranding; enhancements to our programs and services; or how we engage with VA and Industry, this community will work together to develop the new era of NAVREF.

I truly thank you for your trust and confidence in our commitment to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hawk Tran'.

Hawk Tran
Interim NAVREF CEO

CONFERENCE UPDATE: REGISTRATION OPENING IN MARCH

Get ready to **explore new horizons** this September! The 2023 NAVREF Annual Conference is quickly approaching, and our planning committee has been hard at work. At the current stage of the process, topics have been developed, speakers have been pitched, and asks are beginning to be made. Additionally, the parallel VA planning committee has also begun to meet.

We are especially excited to tell the membership to expect the unexpected and that this conference will feature more dynamic and interactive programming.

2023 Conference Planning Committee:

- Peggy Bradley— Executive Director, Biomedical Research and Education Foundation of Southern Arizona
- Pamela Capone—Executive Director, McGuire Research Institute
- Julie Gouda, MD-- Executive Director, Midwest Veterans' Biomedical Research Foundation
- Lori Gould— Executive Director, Central New York Research Corporation
- Jeremy Greene, MS— Executive Director, Arizona Veterans Research and Education Foundation
- Jacob Lindheimer, PhD— Deputy Associate Chief of Staff/ Research, Madison VA Medical Center
- Jennifer Mock— Finance & Operations Manager, Veterans Health and Research Foundation
- Felix Oliver— Executive Director, Institute for Clinical Research, Inc.
- Christiane Perry— Contracts & Grants Post Award Manager
- Mary Reeder— Grants Administration, Tampa VA Research and Education Foundation
- Angie Smith, MPH— Executive Director, North Florida Foundation for Research & Education
- Jenni Waters— Operations Manager, Salem Research Institute

Official Dates: September 17-20

The Venue

We are excited to announce that this year's annual conference will be held at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront. (pictured right)

Address:

11 East Kellogg Boulevard
St. Paul Minnesota 55101





Learn more or join online
at mvp.va.gov



VA'S MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM (MVP) CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

At NAVREF, we're proud to support VA's largest research effort to improve health care for Veterans. One way VA is doing this is through the Million Veteran Program (MVP), which studies how genes, lifestyle, military experiences, and exposures affect health and wellness.

During this year's Black History Month, MVP is honoring over 150,000 Black Veteran participants. Because of their contribution, MVP researchers are making important discoveries that may improve health and wellness for Black Veterans.

MVP recently sat down with Terrence Hayes, Press Secretary at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Army Veteran, and Zelpha Anderson, U.S. Army Veteran, to talk about what inspired them to join the health research program. We hope that these stories inspire other Veterans to join MVP.

We encourage you to watch their stories on the Veterans Health Administration's YouTube channel:

- Veteran's Military Experiences Lead Him to Join Health Research
- Veteran's Children Inspire Her to Join Health Research Program

Want to improve the future of health for Veterans?

With 925,000+ Veterans in MVP, MVP is close to reaching the historic milestone of 1,000,000 Veterans in their research program. Every Veteran who signs up advances MVP's ability to study genetics and health – which brings VA closer to a future of personalized medicine.

Visit mvp.va.gov or call (866)-441-6075 to learn more or join today. Any Veteran can participate. You don't need to receive care at VA to be part of MVP.

To share information about MVP with your network, please contact Yanire.Camacho@va.gov.



Upcoming Calendar Events

March 16-17 – NPC Essentials Training

March 20- NAVREF Q2 Board Meeting

March 21 - Industry Partner Consortium Meeting

March 30 – STAR Webinar: Best Practices on Working with your STAR Attorney

April 5 – NAVREF Town Hall Meeting

April 6 – DCT Webinar presented by Mirati and Dr. Michael Kelly, VA

April 18 – STAR Webinar: Sub-Award Training

June 12 - NAVREF Q3 Board Meeting

June 13 - Industry Partner Consortium Meeting

**Please contact Peter Martin if you have any questions regarding these events:
pmartin@navref.org**



FROM THE GENERAL COUNSEL'S DESK

Hello everyone. As General Counsel, I can advise NAVREF and the NPCs on matters related to the operations of each. I cannot speak for VA. We should always consult VA (usually OGC STAR or NPPO) when VA has an interest in a particular matter. This issue comes up commonly in federal awards (NIH, DOD, etc.) directly to the NPCs or via subaward through a university or other entity. VHA Directive 1206, USE OF A COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (CRADA). Directive 1206 states in part:

VA NPCs are highly encouraged to use the appropriate VA CRADA model for research assistance awards, including but not limited to grants and subawards originating from nonprofit organizations, or when the nonprofit or for profit organizations are the prime awardee on a grant or sub award originating from a Federal source.

In practice, most NPCs interpret this clause to not mandate the use a CRADA for federal awards or subawards. There are occasions when the federal award or subaward contains language that invokes VA's interest, such as language granting rights to VA data or VA intellectual property or limiting liability or damages for breach of personal information security. The NPCs have no legal authority to bind VA in contract language. In such cases, I will either rework the language so that VA's rights are not affected, or if I cannot achieve that, I will consult OGC STAR. Please consult me or OGC STAR in cases where the federal award or subaward could potentially impact VA's rights.

There are other situations where VA's and the NPC's rights comingle and require mutual participation and cooperation. Recently, we had a case where the CRADA collaborator had not made payments in full under the Budget. VA OGC and the NPC worked together to get to a good resolution. Usually, not always, VA's interest and the NPC's interest will be the same. We do have the common mission of working together to improve VA research and education and making veterans' lives better.



NAVREF General Counsel: Derwood Haskell

STAR Corner

- Confidential Information: The start of a new year is a great time for NPCs to review their existing obligations to safeguard Confidential Information (e.g., VA, University Affiliates, Industry Partners) that is in their possession. Please reach out to your STAR attorney should you have questions about Confidential Information and obligations of non-disclosure and non-use.
- Subaward training: This spring OGC STAR is planning virtual training on the topic of NPC Contracts and Agreements including Subawards/Subcontracts and other non-CRADA agreements. In accordance with VHA Handbook 1200.17, VA NonProfit Research and Education Corporations, NPCs should consult with OGC on agreements pertaining to research projects and education activities (see paragraph 12d) and should not enter into agreements on behalf of VA or that purport to bind VA (see paragraph 12d(2)). Generally, if the agreements impose obligations on VA pertaining to use VA data or biospecimens, human subject protection issues, intellectual property, liability, publications, etc., OGC STAR should review. OGC STAR will discuss different types of arrangements and provide guidelines as to when agreements should be sent to OGC STAR for legal concurrence.
- Best practices training: OGC STAR is planning virtual training for NPCs on best practices. Here are some quick tips to facilitate working with STAR:
 - Provide a complete CRADA (or subaward) package, including: an unlocked/unprotected, redlined/tracked changes Word CRADA document; completed CRADA cover page, contact sections, and Statement of Work; VA Principal Investigator's (and any VA sub-investigator's) signed/dated/completed pdf Conflict of Interest form (OGE FORM 450 Alternative-VA); pdf final protocol (no abstracts or synopsis);
 - Reference STAR GC Laws case number in email subject line;
 - Keep organized files.



Open Positions

Location	Position
NAVREF Washington, DC	Chief Executive Officer
VERANNE White River Junction, CT	Sr. Administrator, Process improvement
PVARF Portland, OR	Executive Director
ARI Albany, NY	Executive Director
ICR Washington	Clinical Trial Nurse
DRI Denver, CO	Budget and Finance Manager
AVREF Phoenix, AZ	Lab Technician - Animal Handler
GLAVREF Los Angeles, CA	Human Resources Director
AVREF Phoenix, AZ	Data Analyst (Full and Part time)

Want to post a job? Contact pmartin@navref.org

CLEVELAND VA'S JEFFREY MOORE JOINS THE SITE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jeffrey Moore, executive director of the Cleveland VA Medical Research Education Foundation, has joined the Site Council, a fast-growing initiative founded last Fall that already has over 600 prominent site members. Members believe that the clinical research enterprise can succeed only when study sponsors and CROs have healthy relationships with healthy sites. "Jeff has been a friend and industry leader for many years, so I am delighted he has joined the Site Council's leadership," said Norman M. Goldfarb, Site Council founder and executive director.

The Site Council Bill of Rights clarifies site priorities for sponsors and CROs. It's not a one-way street: Sites must earn these rights by conducting clinical studies in a safe, ethical, efficient, high-quality, and timely manner.

There are no membership dues. The only member time commitment – which is modest – will be talking about the Site Council Bill of Rights with sponsors and CROs. "With enough sites on board, sponsors and CROs will apply themselves to addressing our priorities," said Mr. Moore. "NAVREF sites should all join in to make sure our needs are not ignored," said Hawk Tran, NAVREF interim CEO.

More information about the Site Council is at www.sitecouncil.org.

PAVIR: GOING THE EXTRA MILE

NAVREF would like to express our gratitude and recognize PAVIR (Palo Alto Veterans Institute for Research) for their hospitality with Dr. Rachel Ramoni this past week who was in need of working space while in the Palo Alto area. Dr. Ramoni is working from California, but upon arrival, ran into an immediate power outage. With the need for reliable power and internet, she found her way to PAVIR. And so, with a surprise knock on the door, she was received with open arms by PAVIR staff.

As Dr. Ramoni remarked in an email about the surprise visit, "In addition to the great science that is possible because of the breadth of the VA Enterprise, it is wonderful to have a friendly welcome in so many places."

No acts of kindness are too small so thank you!



OMNIBUS

The passage of the Omnibus Package in December included the ever important language from the original VIPER Act concerning Section 209 exceptions and Waiver of IPA Program Limits. Although the passage of the legislation has been signed into law, it is important to note that the language of the legislation specifically denotes these changes as the authority of the VA Secretary. What this means is that delegation of authority and implementation of these changes still needs to take effect within the department of VA and therefore NPCs should anticipate impacts after VA develops guidance on how they are going to approach each topic.



WEBSITE UPDATES

Clinical Trials and Funding Opportunities Pipeline

Is your NPC in search of new opportunities? Do not forget to check our [page](#) dedicated to publishing the latest opportunities curated by Priscilla West. In the last month we have published opportunities from both AstraZeneca and Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

Education Programs

NAVREF is privileged to be able to host educational webinars and town halls for the membership. Stay up-to-date by checking our NPC Educational Content [page](#). There you can find recordings of previous webinars, registration for upcoming ones, educational tools included in presentations, and pertinent VA-provided information. Topics presented thus far include the following: WOC Process Shortcuts, Project Rogue tutorials, Leveraging MS Teams, Promoting Educational and Research Learning Programs, etc..

ROGUE

[Project ROGUE](#) is active and ready for use. This tool was created by our own community and caters to the unique needs of NPCs. Visit the updated web page to learn more and watch a demo.



On February 10th, NAVREF along with other executive members from the Friend of VA Medical Care and Health Research met with Dr. Rachel Ramoni to hear her requirements for the upcoming appropriations year. The topic of research infrastructure was paramount as the new Research Enterprise takes shape within VA. For more information about FY24 appropriations and the FOVA recommendation, please visit the NAVREF website's advocacy page.

NPPO NEW STAFF

The Nonprofit Program Office is pleased to announce Mr. Oscar Boyce, as our Senior Auditor. Oscar has extensive audit experience in both civil service and private sector organizations. Since 2002, Oscar has held positions in the OIG offices at the Department of Labor, Railroad Retirement Board, U.S. Postal Service and Department of Veterans Affairs. Oscar has a Master of Business and Administration, from DeVry University. He is also a Certified Internal Auditor, Certified Financial Services Auditor, Certified Government Auditing Professional, Certified Fraud Examiner and holds the Certification in Risk Management Assurance.



FROM THE NPPO



The Nonprofit Program Office is pleased to welcome Ms. Patrice Randolph as our Auditor. Ms. Randolph began her career with the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center (TVAMC) in September 2018 as an Auditor in the Financial Management Service line. Included in her fiscal background are the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Prisons. Additionally, she served as a Correctional Officer and has completed Law Enforcement Officer training. Ms. Randolph also served as a Tax Auditor with the Florida Department of Revenue and has employment experiences in banking, auto manufacturing, and gaming industry.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, CA; she currently resides in Montgomery, Alabama with her family. Her grandfather and stepfather served in the U.S. military. Ms. Randolph graduated from Troy University where she earned both her Bachelor of Business Administration and MBA degrees. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and serving in her church.





Reminder!

Reminder: SAM.gov is a pain after expiration. Just a reminder, to keep an eye on your SAM.gov registration. Many of us already know the challenge, but it is a giant pain to renew your SAM.gov registration if you let it lapse past the expiration date. NAVREF just wants to remind you to keep an eye out for the automated warning from SAM.gov that your registration will be expiring soon. Sometimes these messages go to your spam folder so you might have to add the email as a known address to avoid missing out!

SAM.gov is your first step to access government funding and to do business with the federal government. There is no cost to use SAM.gov.

2022 NPC Annual Report Instructions and Common Errors

Please submit your completed 2022 NPC Annual Report to us by June 1, 2023. Your cooperation in carefully reading the following submission instructions will be greatly appreciated:

1. Please submit your 2022 Report and other required documents to:

Paula.Floyd@VA.gov
VACONPPO@VA.GOV

2. The subject line of the submission email should be titled:
"City, ST - 2022 NPC Annual Report".

3. The documents attached to the email should be:

a. NPC Annual Report Form – please title the document:
"City, ST - 2022 NPC Annual Report".

b. Form 990 tax return – please title the document:
"City, ST - 2022 Form 990".

c. Audited financial statements – please title the document:
"City, ST - 2022 Audited Financials".

d. Training certifications (Tab 2 of Annual Report) –
"City, ST - 2022 Certifications".

e. Audit Management Letter (letter from auditors, if any) – please title the document:
"City, ST - 2022 Auditors' Letter".

Please do not send us copies of any letters that you have written to your auditors.

We only want copies of letters that your auditors have written to you. Also, please submit files that are not password protected.

Please keep in mind that your NPC must have an audit done by an independent outside auditor if your annual revenues are \$500,000 or more. If your NPC's revenues are between \$100,000 and \$500,000 for the year, then an audit by an independent outside auditor is required only every three years. Those NPCs with revenues less than \$100,000 a year do not need to have audits by independent outside auditors.

Thank you in advance for submitting your 2022 NPC Annual Report by June 1, 2023. Early filing is welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated. Your cooperation in making a timely filing is necessary to meet the deadlines set by the VA Secretary and the U.S. Congress.

Sincerely,

Kim Collins, MBA
Nonprofit Program Office Director
Office of Research and Development
Veterans Health Administration
(202) 731-6973
kimberly.collins@va.gov



Common Errors To Be Avoided Are:

1. Not labeling your documents as specified above.
2. Changing the print settings or otherwise altering the Template.
3. Total revenues and total expenses amounts shown on Tab 4 do not agree exactly with the amounts for revenues and expenses shown on page 1 of the Form 990.
4. The net assets amount shown on Tab 6 does not agree with the net assets amount shown on page 1 of the Form 990.
5. The amount of government funding received on Tab 4 should equal or exceed the total of the amount entered on Tab 7 for governmental funding sources greater than \$25,000.
6. The amount of non-governmental funding received on Tab 4 should equal or exceed the total of the amount entered on Tab 8 for non-governmental funding sources greater than \$25,000.
7. Identifying non-governmental funding sources as being from universities when in fact they are from Federal sources. Please identify the Federal sources and show the amounts on Tab 7 for governmental funding sources greater than \$25,000.
8. Listing amounts from state universities as non-governmental revenues.
9. Not listing payments to employees greater than \$50,000 on Tab 9. Or conversely, listing employees but not vendors and other payees. Please de-identify the employees listed using an employee number or other number.
10. Not listing at least three accomplishments for your NPC on Tab 10. Please keep your “accomplishments” succinct, 20 words or less.
 - Please number your accomplishments.
 - Please use complete sentences to describe the accomplishments.
 - Do not include any dollar amounts in the accomplishments.
 - We cannot accept acronyms or abbreviations.
 - Please make sure the accomplishments are those of your NPC, not the VAMC’s Research Service that you support.
 - Please make sure accomplishments are business oriented and not science or Research projects.
11. As under 10 above, please observe the same guidance for Tab 11, Educational Activities.
12. Not showing any payroll taxes paid on Tab 5, Line 10.
13. Not listing Management and General expenses on Tab 5, Column (C).
14. Not filing the Single Audit Reports along with the audited financial statements if a Uniform Guidance or Single Audit is required.
15. Filing letters, you have written to your auditors. We are only interested in having copies of letters from your auditors back to you regarding audit findings, recommendations, deficiencies, and material weaknesses, if any.
16. Breaking up a report into more than one file. We must have one file for each report.
17. Submitting password protected files. We must be able to open, read, and, if convenient for us, be able to print the documents you are submitting.

Again, please do not change the print settings or otherwise alter the Template.



Finding Clinical Trials for your NPC

Priscilla West

As Development Advisor for NAVREF, I often work with NPCs that wish to expand their clinical trials portfolio. I enjoy strategizing about the best ways to identify appropriate studies for their individual site. Often they are smaller NPCs that may have a little bit of experience with clinical studies, but want to grow their programs. Here are some of the tips that I regularly share with them.



NAVREF Development Adviser: Priscilla West

- Play to your strengths and set yourself up for success. Choose clinical trials where you have a strong PI that is committed to research, a sizeable patient population that will ensure strong enrollment, and an experienced research coordinator.
- Use the CRADA registry to look for opportunities. On a regular basis, review the CRADA registry for recently opened studies that would be a good match for your site. Contact the ED at the site where it's been opened, and ask them to introduce you to their sponsor or CRO contacts to see if they'd be willing to add you as another site. If so, you'd have the advantage of using a CRADA that's already been negotiated with VA.
- If you have an academic affiliate with a strong clinical trials program, see if they'd be willing to add you as a subsite for some of their clinical trials. This is best done in close collaboration with your local ACOS/R.
- Look for chart review studies (often called 'registry' studies) on the CRADA registry. Chart review studies don't require the emergent, time-sensitive responsiveness that intervention studies require, and can be a good way for smaller programs with limited resources to get started in clinical research.
- Contact pharmaceutical companies that are active in your desired clinical area, and ask to be contacted as a prospective site if they have new studies. Many pharmaceutical companies keep listings of interested sites.
- Ask NAVREF. We'll do custom searches of ClinicalTrials.gov for you as a member service, and will also help you brainstorm about the best ways to expand your clinical trials program. Just send your request to Priscilla West at pwest@navref.org.

Optum Serve®

Together, we'll make a difference
for those you serve and achieve better
health outcomes nationwide.



Health services



Health IT



Preparedness and
emergency response



Consulting



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM STREAMLINING AND CONSOLIDATION

Over the past 30 years, NAVREF has taken many approaches to mentorship via various opportunities for our members. Our range of services have included the online member forum, a conference “buddy” program, direct peer-to-peer mentorship, best practice consultations, and the annual NPC Essentials Training. As we move into the future with these NAVREF pearls, they will now sit together under the umbrella of a consolidated NAVREF Mentorship Program. The refreshed and revised program will not deviate from the core principles of how NAVREF has approached mentorship, but rather strengthen, streamline, and reinforce these services for our members.

The new program starts with our new webpage on the NAVREF website found [here](#). This will be the nexus point for all of our services and be a one-stop shop for members to connect with mentors and for interested members to serve as mentors for new executives coming into the community. The next steps will then be for NAVREF to fortify our existing programs to enhance their efficacy. Some of these efforts will include:

- Additional membership surveys
- A redesign of the conference “buddy” program
- Parameters and expectations for mentors and mentees
- Updated standards for our Best Practice Consultations
- Further developing the NPC Essentials Training curriculum to include materials suited for inexperienced executives and NPC senior staff

We look forward to consolidating these services into the NAVREF Mentorship Program and making enhancements for the empowerment of our community.

IT'S TIME TO GO ROGUE (Research Operations & Grants User Engine)



Have you been thinking about a management system or CTMS for your NPC? If so, it might be time to go ROGUE.

NAVREF and the newly formed ROGUE Committee has partnered with Quickbase to develop an affordable CTMS platform designed by the NPCs for the needs of the NPCs. This new project and future member service is in its beta testing year which means users who sign up this year will get an added six months of usage and can influence the final look and feel of the end product.

Member pricing begins at \$5000 for ROGUE which will include 10 users with your account.

Non-member pricing will start at \$7500 and increase with additional users.

Any NPC who is interested in signing up for ROGUE can contact rogue@navref.org





Collaboration.
Now that's what we call a medical breakthrough.

At Janssen, we seek answers to some of the toughest questions in medicine.

We believe nothing is more powerful than collaboration. There should not be barriers in the pursuit of groundbreaking treatments.

Collaboration goes beyond new treatments. From early discovery to access and distribution, we seek partners who want the same things we do: better outcomes for our patients.

Our mission drives us. Our patients inspire us. We collaborate with the world for the health of everyone in it.

Learn more at www.janssen.com



NAVREF Update on the Centralized HR and WOC/IPA Issues

VA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) is currently centralizing the HR processes for Research, with a new system called the Human Resource Management and Consulting Services (HRMACS – "HR MAX").

As you may already be aware, ORD plans to implement WOC, IPA and Affiliate centralization towards the March/April timeframe. During this transition, many concerns from our members were brought to our attention. NAVREF has taken these considerations and formed a workgroup to actively collaborate with ORD to alleviate these issues.

NAVREF's workgroup, comprised of Ron Hakes, Cary Zink, and Katrina Washburn, began by meeting with Tony Laracuente, Director of Field Operations in ORD, to discuss policy concerns regarding WOC/IPA/Affiliate HR centralization. Mr. Laracuente, a former NPC Executive Director himself, expressed his understanding of the needs of NPC operations and was open to addressing the issues raised by the NAVREF membership.

While in this meeting, some clarity regarding badging and the new HRMACS came to fruition. HRMACS clearly distinguishes three (3) categories of appointments: affiliate, contractor, and employee. Employee is defined as those who have VA-paid, WOC or an IPA appointment. The intent of HRMACS is to increase the efficiency in obtaining these appointments and to allow for a smoother, less burdensome transition between them. IPA appointments still require that a person work for the non-federal facility for 90 days prior to issuing the agreement - the 90-day rule is still in effect!

NPC's, ED's, and their administrative staff - who do not conduct VA work - will be issued Affiliate appointments. These appointments are issued badges that allow them access to the VA facility and computer systems. An OGC opinion on this is available from NAVREF for those needing additional information.

At this time, no changes to your current HR processes are required unless initiated by your site's HR Service.

Ultimately, NAVREF will actively continue to communicate with ORD as the transition to a Centralized HR continues to unfold.

We encourage members to please contact us with any questions you have regarding the HR webinar and the transition to centralizing HR appointments.

A TREATISE ABOUT THE VA AND NPC RELATIONSHIP

Every so often, our unique NPC community builds relationships with those who have the only goal of protecting and enhancing our mission. NAVREF would like to recognize Eric Abercrombie, former Executive Director of the Bay Pines Foundation, who recently completed his PhD with a dissertation concerning the "blurred lines at the boundary between the public and private sectors". His treatise is an interesting examination of the relationship between the VA and NPC, and through five key areas of focus, Eric proposes a four-part solution to promote more effective VA-NPC partnerships.

His recommendations are as follows:

- *Recommendation 1: NPCs develop and implement best-practice guidelines to promote greater diversity and to limit VA hegemony on NPC Boards.*
- *Recommendation 2: NPCs and NAVREF jointly request a comprehensive review and reconstitution—if warranted—of VA's NPPO oversight policies, procedures, and practices.*
- *Recommendation 3: NAVREF develops and deploys enhanced NPC education and training initiatives.*
- *Recommendation 4: NAVREF develops a venue for ongoing information sharing and dialogue between diverse VA, NPC, and other relevant stakeholders.*

His completed dissertation is available for NAVREF members to read and with hope, glean some helpful insight on how we operate and what individual NPCs can do to enhance our mission together.

To get your copy, please visit our website here or email Peter at pmartin@navref.org



PASSING OF DAVE JOHNSON

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that we inform you of the passing of Dave Johnson on January 25th.

In addition to all the attributes mentioned below, Dave was also a dedicated NAVREF board member, including serving as treasurer. His willingness to share the knowledge he gained during his long VA career as both a scientist and R&D AO were invaluable to me during the early years of NAVREF. He patiently answered my frequent questions and helped make me a better advocate for VA research and a more effective NAVREF executive director. He was also my choice for serving with me on the OGC/ORD CRADA committee and reviewed many drafts as we developed the first models and masters. The final versions benefitted greatly from his attention to detail as well as his VA and NPC insights.

Dave was the founding Executive Director of the Baltimore Research and Education Foundation (BREF) in 1990 and continued in that role until handing the baton over to Caroline Zink in 2018. He led BREF for an astonishing 28 years! He conducted his duties as BREF Executive Director with dedication, proficiency, compassion, and creativity. He was also a wealth of VA knowledge having worked as a scientist and administrator within the VAMHCS for over 50 years. He was known as a very respected leader with a gentle, welcoming demeanor.

As written by Caroline Zink about Dave:

“He really cared about people which was evident in all his actions and conversations. While I have felt very welcomed in my role at BREF, I know that Dave’s presence in the Baltimore VA has been missed these last few years, and I know that I have big shoes to fill. Since retiring, Dave was always just a phone call away, happy to help, and I personally will miss his mentorship and advice very much. For those of you who did not have the pleasure of working with Dave before his retirement, you experience the tremendous mark he made, perhaps without even knowing it. His continued impact on BREF is undeniable. His legacy lives on as we work every day to fulfill the mission of BREF and improve the well-being of the Veterans we serve.”

We join the BREF family when we all say that “we will miss you, Dave, but we hope that we are making you proud!”

If you are interested in attending services or information on sending your condolences, please feel free to reach out to NAVREF.

