Atlanta VA Rehab R&D
Center of Excellence for Visual & Neurocognitive Rehabilitation
CVNR
Spring 2013

FOSTERING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF VETERANS THROUGH RESEARCH IMPACTING VISUAL AND/OR NEUROCOGNITIVE FUNCTION

Special Edition

ATLANTA VAMC REHABILITATION R&D CENTER OF EXCELLENCE RENEWED!

To let you know some exciting news about our Center of Excellence, we are going to veer from our usual newsletter format. Perhaps you noticed a change in our title and logo! Well, we are very pleased to announce that the Department of Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation Research and Development (R&D) Service recently awarded the Atlanta VA Rehabilitation R&D Center $4.5 million to renew this Center of Excellence. We are now known as the **Center for Visual and Neurocognitive Rehabilitation (CVNR)**.

The CVNR is one of only 16 Rehabilitation R&D Centers across 147 VA Medical Centers country-wide. This Rehabilitation R&D Center of Excellence is a national mark of distinction for the Atlanta VA Medical Center, earned via a rigorous and competitive application process. The researchers at the CVNR are committed to fostering the best possible health and well-being of Veterans by conducting cutting-edge research in rehabilitation of visual and neurocognitive problems. We proudly serve as a resource for Veterans, their family members and the rehabilitation community at large.

The CVNR brings together vision and brain expertise to conduct research informing health care approaches and rehabilitation solutions. The combination of innovative brain research with our long-standing leadership in vision research offers the Veterans Health Administration an invaluable resource for developing evidence-based, patient-centered therapies to improve brain and visual dysfunction that results from injury and/or disease. CVNR discoveries and developments are applicable to millions of non-Veterans as well.

The reasoning behind bringing vision and brain research together is the fact that our eyes and brain are connected and work together. So it is not surprising that injuries and

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CVNR funding renewed! *(continued from page 1)*

conditions that affect the brain may also affect vision and vice versa. Health conditions that impair vision and cognition are more common in aging and unfold alongside typical changes due to aging. Since our Veteran population is growing older, research that addresses impairments in both vision and cognition can shed light on the best ways to protect, restore and optimize everyday function. Our brain and vision researchers work closely with our community researchers and clinicians to develop and implement innovative rehabilitation therapies for Veterans who have already lost some of their vision and/or have neurological conditions with a visual or cognitive component. This comprehensive approach requires a detailed understanding of how visual information is processed by the aging brain.

The CVNR research program has three main areas of focus: (1) **Visual Rehabilitation**, a long-standing strength of this Center of Excellence, is led by CVNR Director, Krish Sathian, MD, PhD and targets rehabilitation of visually impaired Veterans. (2) **Neurocognitive Rehabilitation,** led by Bruce Crosson, PhD, studies the domains of memory, language, spatial perception and motor planning, particularly in older Veterans. (3) **Retinal & Neural Repair**, led by Machelle Pardue, PhD, explores the mechanistic basis of visual and neurocognitive rehabilitation to complement studies of rehabilitative interventions in Veterans.

We realize that the accomplishment of the CVNR's renewal would not have been possible without the input and assistance of many dedicated affiliates, collaborators, administrators and staff. We extend our gratitude to our Atlanta VAMC partners in the Ophthalmology and Low Vision Clinics, as well as in PM&R, Neurology and Geriatrics; our local administrators in Research; the Atlanta VA Medical Center administration; our Atlanta Advisory Board; the Birmingham/Atlanta VA Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center; our national VA collaborators; our academic affiliates: Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia State University; and our community partners: Georgia Radio Reading Service and the Center for the Visually Impaired.

And last, but certainly not least, we wish to thank the many people who—throughout our history—have participated as research participants in our studies. Without your willingness and dedication, none of the advances we've made and hope to make in the future would be possible. Your service to this important endeavor is never forgotten!

Thank you, all!

VA Research WEEK MAY 13-17 2013

VA Research Inspires

www.research.va.gov

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Atlanta VA Medical Center

Patient Centered Care...Second to None...One Veteran at a Time

VA Research Inspires

Striving to provide the best care for today's Veterans

VA aims to enroll 1 million Veterans into the Million Veteran Program

The Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a national, voluntary research program. It is designed to help researchers better understand how genes affect health and illness, with the goal of improving health care for Veterans. MVP aims to be one of the largest programs on genes and health in the United States, with an expected enrollment of one million Veterans over the next five to seven years.

Please join us for VA Research Day at the Atlanta VA Medical Center on Tuesday, May 14th from 10AM-2PM.

Research Day Activities:

- Ground Floor Atrium: Research poster session
- Main Floor: Movement Lab, room 1C601B. Demonstrations to be held.
- 11th Floor: Clinical Studies Center, room 11C119 - learn about opportunities to participate in VA Research
- 11th Floor: Million Veteran Program (MVP), room 11C161
- 12th Floor: Open House for the Center for Visual and Neurocognitive Rehabilitation

VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Center for Visual and Neurocognitive Rehabilitation

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PLEASE JOIN US!

CVNR OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY, MAY 14 10AM—2PM

Atlanta VAMC 12th Floor

- ☆ MEET THE RESEARCHERS AND STAFF
- ☆ TOUR THE CENTER
- ☆ VIEW DEMONSTRATIONS

★ 1:00—2:00 PM — MEET & GREET RECEPTION ★