

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
DEPLOYMENT HEALTH: OEF/OIF VETERAN RESEARCH ISSUES**

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Office of Research and Development (ORD) announcement encourages innovative research for veterans returning from Afghanistan (OEF-Operation Enduring Freedom) and Iraq (OIF-Operation Iraqi Freedom).
2. **SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** Focuses interest in deployment health issues more explicitly on OEF/OIF veteran issues.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Research and Development (12A) is responsible for the contents of this VHA announcement. Questions may be referred to Martha Bryan, EdD at 202-254-0251 or martha.bryan@va.gov.
4. **RECISSION:** ORD and Health Services Research and Development Service Program Announcements on Deployment Health Research (October 18, 2002 and June 20, 2005, respectively).

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

June 13, 2006

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

DEPLOYMENT HEALTH RESEARCH: OEF/OIF VETERAN RESEARCH ISSUES

1. **Purpose**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Research and Development (ORD) continues to encourage innovative research that is important to veterans. This program announcement emphasizes the need for research addressing the health care needs of veterans returning from Afghanistan (OEF-Operation Enduring Freedom) and Iraq (OIF-Operation Iraqi Freedom). Scientifically meritorious proposals addressing such issues are sought. Proposals may be submitted to VA's Biomedical Laboratory Research Service (BLR&D), Clinical Science Research and Development Service (CSR&D), Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D), or Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D).

2. **Background**

Veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan come with a broad range of injuries and illnesses that require some new approaches and present new challenges for veteran health care and for research. Soldiers are surviving major injuries and multiple amputations, with vital organs protected by body armor, and prompt, effective care in the field. Many are highly motivated to resume service or other functional activities. Severe blast injuries cause serious disabilities such as blindness, deafness, spinal cord injury, and/or cognitive impairment. Post-traumatic stress syndrome remains a major problem. VA is responding to the newest generation of returning combat veterans with active outreach, coordination of care, and recognition of their unique injuries and problems, including the special chronic care needs of this new generation of veterans. VA researchers also are responding and ORD continues to encourage innovative research to address this group's challenges, as articulated in this program announcement.

3. **Sample Research Issues**

Research considered responsive to this announcement and of interest to VA's Office of R&D, is described below.

Biomedical Laboratory and Clinical Science Research and Development Services (BLRD/CSR&D). Proposals submitted to BLR&D or CSR&D should focus on the etiology, pathogenesis, and/or genetics of illnesses and injuries prevalent among OEF/OIF veterans; research on new treatments is encouraged. Topics such as wound healing, polytrauma, neurotrauma, burns, fracture repair, pain, or mood and anxiety disorders may be responsive

to this announcement; appropriate patient populations and/or animal models should be fully described. Proposals employing novel concepts or approaches are especially welcome.

Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D). Proposals submitted to HSR&D should assess treatment effectiveness or quality, in terms of patient- or system-level outcomes. Important issues include patients' physical, emotional, and cognitive recovery and reintegration into the community post-deployment, and their overall quality of life. Relevant patient-outcome and health systems issues could focus on: effective treatments and management of acute pain and prevention of chronic pain with complex injuries; early identification of and interventions with post-traumatic stress disorder and other neurological and mental health conditions that will lead to effective recovery and reintegration into the community; evaluation of the rehabilitation treatments and long term care (including informal caregiver issues) for the complex injuries of veterans involving vision, hearing, mobility and neurological losses; effective care for the unique needs of the increasing numbers of women veterans in the OEF/OIF conflict, including stresses of combat and sexual harassment and assault; measurement of the quality of care in inpatient settings and in transitions between acute care and other delivery settings of OEF/OIF veterans; exploring the economic effects of alternative strategies for promoting patient self management and behavioral change.

Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (Rehab R&D). Rehab R&D is interested in studies that seek to improve or restore function through innovative therapies, interventions and/or devices. Studies that also seek to improve the ability to obtain and maintain employment, increase participation in family and social activities, improve overall quality of life, or address issues of long term care and caregivers are of interest. Specific disorders and disabilities to consider are vision and/or hearing loss, tinnitus, traumatic brain injury, mental health conditions, spinal cord injury and limb loss.

5. **Eligibility**

Eligibility to submit proposals will follow the same rules established by the individual ORD service for submission of investigator-initiated proposals.

6. **Application Preparation and Submission**

Proposals can be sent to any of the four ORD Services. The same proposal cannot be sent to more than one ORD Service at the same time. Please follow the submission and funding guidelines of the ORD Service to which the proposal will be submitted. Visit the following website for the latest submission deadlines, forms, and Handbooks for each of the four ORD Services: <http://www.research.va.gov>.

7. **Due Date**

Research proposals may be submitted through Fiscal Year 2008 for any of the regular merit review receipt dates established by the relevant Service as outlined on the ORD web site at <http://www.research.va.gov/funding/process/submission-calendar.cfm>.

8. Review

Established deadlines and review procedures for each ORD service apply. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of scientific quality, significance and innovation of the research question(s), rigor of the methodological approach, and feasibility.

9. Inquiries

For further information, please direct all questions regarding this program announcement including questions about areas of research investigation, eligibility, application preparation funding, and review to the individuals identified below for each ORD Service:

Biomedical Laboratory R&D: William Goldberg, PhD at 202-254-0294 or william.goldberg@va.gov.

Clinical Science R&D: William Goldberg, PhD at 202-254-0294 or william.goldberg@va.gov.

Health Services R&D, Martha Bryan, EdD, 202-254-0251 or martha.bryan@va.gov.

Rehabilitation R&D: Nancy Maher, PhD at 202.254.0201 or nancy.maher@va.gov

10. Expiration Date

This solicitation will be updated or expire by the last day of September 2008.



Joel Kupersmith, MD
Chief of Research and Development Officer