**FOVA Recommendations for FY 2024**

**Department of Veterans Affairs**

**Medical and Prosthetic Research Program – at least $980 million**

The Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) coalition recognizes the demands of many important programs for America’s veterans in the Military Construction, VA, and Related Agencies spending bill, and urges Congress to continue its reliable and robust growth in the VA research program without recissions. FOVA’s FY 2024 recommendation of $980 million for VA research, an increase of $64 million (7%) above the comparable FY 2023 funding level, would enhance the investment in veteran-centric research on a trajectory of meaningful growth above inflation to ensure research progress can keep pace with the increasing demands of improving health for veterans.

Sustained funding growth for research efforts is critical to building upon recent successes in precision oncology and bolstering VA’s participation in the Cancer Moonshot Initiative, increasing clinical trials access, and addressing health disparities, while renewing support for groundbreaking programs like the Million Veteran Program (MVP) and research on chronic and emerging needs of our nation’s veterans. Increased funding for the VA research program will also support recruitment and retention of researchers as they seek to grow research programs in toxic exposures and mental health following new authorities enacted in the 117th Congress and will also allow for additional investments to support the strained IT capacity through computational science purchases to enhance the collection and use of big data. FOVA’s recommendation of $980 million would provide sustained and predictable funding growth for VA research, which is imperative to help ensure the best return on investment in improving the health of veterans and all Americans.

**Physical and Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure**

State-of-the-art research requires an investment in state-of-the-art facilities, technology, and equipment. For decades, appropriations for construction, maintenance, and IT have not provided the resources VA needs to replace, maintain, or upgrade its aging research and IT infrastructure to support the research program. For FY 2024, FOVA recommends the following funding to support physical and IT research infrastructure:

**Major and Minor Construction - at least $100 million**

A 2012 congressionally mandated report found a clear need for systematic infrastructure improvements for VA research laboratories. VA completed a Phase II assessment in 2020 of fewer than one-third of sites inspected in Phase I. Phase II findings show that while certain projects have received funding, significant deficiencies remain. VA estimated more than $200 million was needed to correct all deficiencies identified in the Phase II report, including $99.5 million in Priority 1 deficiencies, representing immediate needs such as life safety hazard corrections. FOVA believes designating funds specifically for research facilities is the only way to make significant improvements. For capital infrastructure, renovations, and maintenance, FOVA recommends at least $100 million for VA research facilities to address the most pressing repairs.

**Office of Information and Technology – at least $22 million**

VA’s Office of Information and Technology (OIT) is responsible for IT development and maintenance for programs including clinical, health management, benefits, security, and research. To advance and modernize the VA research program, OIT funding must be designated specifically for research use on a yearly basis. For FY 2024, FOVA recommends at least $22 million of the OIT budget to be assigned for VA research to support the purchase and maintenance of IT infrastructure, increase data storage and access capabilities, increase data security, increase interoperability with affiliated partners, and transition to more robust and functional cloud computing platforms.

**Organizations Endorsing the FOVA FY 2024 Recommendation**

AcademyHealth

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Ophthalmology

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Director of Psychiatric Residency Training

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges

American Brain Coalition

American College of Physicians

American Dental Education Association

American Gastroenterological Association

American Geriatrics Society

American Heart Association

American Massage Therapy Association

American Physiological Society

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Hematology

American Society of Nephrology

American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics

American Thoracic Society

American Urological Association (AUA)

Arthritis Foundation

Association for Clinical and Translational Science

Association of Academic Physiatrists

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of Minority Health Professions Schools

Association of University Professors of Neurology

Association of University Anesthesiologists

Blinded Veterans Association

Catholic War Veterans of the USA

Clinical Research Forum

Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science

Cohen Veterans Bioscience

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Digestive Disease National Coalition

Dystonia Advocacy Network

Endocrine Society

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

Interstitial Cystitis Association

LUNGevity Foundation

Melanoma Research Foundation

Morehouse School of Medicine

National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists

National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations

National Scleroderma Foundation

NephCure Kidney International

Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Project Sleep

Prostate Cancer Foundation

Pulmonary Hypertension Association

Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation

Sleep Research Society

Society for Neuroscience

Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine