

Presentation 15 – Brian Schuster

	<p>Report to Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses April 2005</p> <p>Brian G. Schuster, MD FACP Director, Clinical Science Research & Development Department of Veterans Affairs</p>
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	<p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What is ORD?■ What is Deployment Health Research and where does PGWI fit?■ Report on current PGWI research.■ Plans for PGWI research.■ Future Directions.
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	<p>ORD Research Services</p> <p>Intramural Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Biomedical: basic biology and physiology■ Clinical: clinical research, treatment trials including multi-site cooperative studies■ Rehabilitation: recovery of function■ Health Services: healthcare outcomes, costs
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	<p>ORD Research Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Further understand and treat consequences of deployment, including the illnesses affecting Gulf War veterans.■ Positively affect clinical care outcomes through rigorous scientific investigation.
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Funding Opportunities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Merit/IIR mechanism■ Training programs■ Cooperative Multi-Site Studies■ Center Based Research Activities

Deployment Health	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The deployment health research (DHR) portfolio is a major priority for ORD in meeting our goal of supporting research relevant to veterans' healthcare needs.

Deployment Health	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Research involving subjects who were deployed to foreign military conflicts, such as Persian Gulf War I.■ Basic research designed to improve our understanding of problems related to deployment.

Deployment Health	
	<p>DHR portfolio includes the following subject categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pre-VietnamVietnam EraPersian Gulf War IOperation Enduring FreedomOperation Iraqi FreedomOther DeploymentsDeployment Related Research

Persian Gulf War I	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Illnesses (Dx and no Dx) affecting Gulf War veterans present a significant healthcare problem.■ ORD continues to support an active research program to better understand and treat Gulf War illnesses.

Coordination	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ ORD is working with other federal funding agencies to develop a research agenda and meet reporting requirements for illnesses affecting Gulf War veterans.

Deployment Health Working Group Research Subcommittee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ DoD, HHS and VA representatives.■ Coordinate research efforts on Gulf War.■ Provide and share information regarding funding.

Gulf War Report to Congress	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Updates from HHS and DoD on Gulf War research continue to be sent to VA ORD for production of the annual report.

Collaboration	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ With the RAC GWVI, ORD has been working to advance knowledge about GW illnesses by expanding opportunities for research funding and by active portfolio management.

Results of 2004 GW RFA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 14 <u>additional</u> Merit Reviews starting in FY 2005: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brain & Nervous System 7 - Pyridostigmine Bromide 1 - Symptoms & General Health 2 - Diagnosis 1 - Immune Function 2 - Treatment 1

Current PGWI Studies by Topic FY05	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brain & Nervous System 15 ■ Environmental Exposures 10 ■ Epidemiology 6 ■ Immune Function 1

Current PGWI Studies by Service FY05	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Biomedical 15 ■ Clinical 14 ■ Health Services 2 ■ Rehabilitation 1

Current PGWI Studies by Type FY05	
■ Epidemiology	6
■ Treatment	5
■ Pathophysiology	21
■ Etiology	1

Planned Efforts: FY05
■ Ongoing funding mechanisms including Deployment Health Initiative.
■ HSRD Solicitation for Deployment Health Research.
■ RFA for Research directed to understanding illnesses affecting Gulf War veterans.

FY 2005 RFA
■ Published March '05.
■ Studies may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Long-term health effects of hazardous substances to which Gulf War veterans were exposed during deployment.

FY 2005 RFA
- Improvements in understanding pathophysiological processes and identifying biomarkers associated with GWI's.
- Epidemiologic investigations of diagnosed conditions.

FY 2005 RFA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Studies of the health of GW veterans' family members.- Integration and utilization of current data resources.■ PTSD proposals are considered under other funding opportunities.

FY 2005 RFA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Proposals that address treatment issues will be given priority.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identification of new treatments that provide benefit to ill veterans.- Evaluate the effectiveness of treatments currently utilized.- Investigate biological mechanisms that are amenable to treatment.

FY 2005 RFA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Principal Investigators may request up to 3 years of funding.■ Budget of \$200,000 per year.■ Proposals are due <u>June 30, 2005</u>.

FY 06 Projected	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Current commitments ~\$9 M.■ Planned Funding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ~\$3M RFA.- ~\$1M Treatment Center.- ~\$1M Neuroimaging studies.- ~\$575K New HSRD Projects.- ~\$250K New RRD Projects.■ FY 06 Total: ~\$15.3 M.

Related Research Funding

- ALS Research ~\$3M.
- PTSD Research ~\$3.3M.
- Deployment Related ~\$32M.
e.g.: Hearing loss, wound healing,
IBS, other toxic exposures, lung
cancer, etc..

Begin Discussions about Center for Treatment

- Meeting planned for April 20.
- Brainstorm how to make best use of
resources for identifying, validating
and implementing the treatment of
illnesses affecting Gulf War veterans.

Gulf War Portfolio Manager

- Position has been posted.
- Plan to hire is as soon as possible.

Future Directions

- Focused Research Areas:
 - Target a few specific high priority issues.
 - Issue multiple, specific RFAs rather than
large broad efforts.
 - Develop and follow specific cohorts.

Future Directions

- Improve information exchange between VHA and DoD.
- Share information with other federal funding agencies to advance the state of our knowledge.

