



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 2009

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VA Enhancing Brain Injury and Recovery Lab for Veterans Suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries

WACO, Texas – To improve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s capabilities to conduct research that will benefit America's Veterans and their families, VA will combine its Brain Injury and Recovery Laboratory in Austin, Texas, with the VA's Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans in Waco, Texas.

“This move will place our laboratory in an ideal location that will allow us to better serve our nation's military families and Veterans,” Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health, said. “This program consolidation will enable VA to meet its mission of better understanding brain injuries and to help Veterans recover from such injuries.”

Moving the laboratory will allow Veterans easier access to VA hospitals in Waco and in Temple, Texas, and will also enable them to work with servicemembers stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas—the largest U.S. Army installation in the world. Researchers will also have access to the world's most powerful research magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, which is located in Waco at the Center of Excellence. All researchers currently working in Austin have started research either at the Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans or at other research facilities at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System in Temple.

The Waco VA Medical Center has several construction projects scheduled in the future, which will further enhance the capabilities of the Center of Excellence. “This groundbreaking research project is an important part of realizing our goal of making the Waco VA a world-class PTSD and mental health care research center,” Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Waco) said in a January 2008 [Research and Development Article](#). “It is one of the few programs in the country focused on the links between genes and brain anatomy in the development of PTSD and mental illness in our combat soldiers.”

VA looks forward to fulfilling this commitment to our Veterans with this new program enhancement. For more information please go to www.heartoftexas.va.gov or contact Diana Struski at 817-739-3989.

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