



U.S. Department  
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# News Release

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## **VA Launches Innovation Creation Series to Improve Quality of Life for Veterans**

*Reaches out to Leaders in Technology and American Public to*

*Help Innovate Solutions to Improve Care*

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WASHINGTON D.C. – Can you imagine losing the ability to use everyday objects like your phone, typing on a computer or even enjoying a beloved hobby like photography? These are just a few of the challenges that Veterans and civilians with disabilities such as amputations and tremors face every day – and these are the challenges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to help solve. Through the launch of VA's Innovation Creation Series for Prosthetics and Assistive Technologies, VA invites all designers, engineers, and problem solvers alike, to help us find creative ways to solve these challenges.

The VA Innovation Creation Series aims to accelerate the development of personalized technologies to improve care and quality of life for Veterans.

“VA has long been at the forefront of research and technology, discovering new ways to give our Veterans the best care possible,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “We’re reaching out to technology leaders in the corporate world and to the public in order to find creative new solutions to help transform care and quality of life not only for our Veterans, but for the public at large. The innovations that come out of this challenge will benefit the Veterans we care for and will be open source to help advance American medicine.”

The launch of the VA Innovation Creation Series will take place May 15th, from 4:30pm to 8:00pm, at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, in Palo Alto, CA. During the event, participants will learn how technology can improve the lives of people with disabilities from Veterans themselves and leaders in the field to include:

Marine Veteran Oscar “Oz” Sanchez, Paralympic gold medalist;

- Stephanie Santoso, White House *Maker-In-Residence*;
- Dr. Davud Sirjani, chief of Ear, Nose, and Throat Surgery at VA Palo Alto;
- The [eNABLE](#) leadership team, representing a global network passionate about the social good of 3D printing

Some of the Challenges we are looking for the public’s help to solve come directly from our Veteran patients, they are:

- Challenge #1: Develop novel upper and lower extremity devices at the end of prosthesis for daily use
- Challenge #2: Create a medication pillbox that allows the flexibility to hold medications that need to be taken up to 8 times a day with a reminder system for each time medication needs to be taken
- Challenge #3: Create a device that can dampen tremors when someone is performing fine motor tasks
- Challenge #4: Design a device to remotely change the speed and grip strength of a prosthetic device for our Veterans with upper extremity injuries
- Challenge #5: Create a way to reassign motions and buttons on gaming controllers to provide alternative access for veterans who are using them in therapy to improve eye hand coordination, fine motor control and/or range of motion.

The VA Innovation Creation Series will accept proposed solutions submitted to <http://www.innovation.va.gov/challenge/> through the end of June. The Series will culminate in a two-day “Make-a-thon” event at Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA July 28-29, where the designs submitted by the public online will be built and tested to showcase how they could meet the needs of Veterans. Joining us at these events will be The Ipsos Girls’ Lounge “Pop Up,” which will be focused on celebrating female Veterans, scientists, technologists and engineers. The pop-up can be found at the events in Palo Alto on May 15, in Washington D.C. for the National Maker Faire June 12-13 and at the Make-a-thon finale July 28-29.

This launch event serves as a call to all solvers to submit their ideas. More information is available on the VA Innovation Creation Series website at <http://www.innovation.va.gov/challenge/>. Press and participants are encouraged to reserve their space at the events by visiting <http://bit.ly/1zHRxa7>

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