

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Oct. 24, 2019

## VA Secretary recognizes winner and finalists of the Under Secretary for Health Robert L. Jesse Award for Excellence in Innovation

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) presented the inaugural Under Secretary for Health Robert L. Jesse Award for Excellence in Innovation to [Dr. Thomas Osborne](#), Dr. Thomas Osborne, director of the VA National Center for Collaborative Healthcare Innovation (NCCHI) and the Chief Medical Informatics Officer (CMIO) at VA Palo Alto Health Care System, at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) [Innovation Experience](#) Oct. 23 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

This award recognizes and honors VA employees who have demonstrated excellence and enabled the discovery and spread of health care innovation that exceeds expectations, restores hope and builds trust.

“Dr. Robert Jesse was an incredible innovator and leader and his innovations and reforms in VA emergency care led to significant improvements in the quality of care provided across the VA health care system,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “I would like to thank the Jesse family for their permission and support in using Dr. Jesse as the namesake for this award and congratulate Dr. Osborne for his contributions to VHA’s role as a leader of health care innovation in the U.S. and the world.”

The two award finalists, recognized for their tireless pursuit of excellence in innovation, were [Kathleen Frisbee](#), executive director of Connected Health under VHA’s Office of Connected Care and [Dr. Beth Ripley](#) who also holds a doctorate in neuroscience and serves as a senior innovation fellow and radiologist from VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

The winner and finalists were selected by a committee composed of leadership from across VHA. The committee selected participants on a variety of criteria, including vision, community involvement/service, interpersonal effectiveness and Veteran-centric outcomes.

[VA and the VHA Innovation Ecosystem \(VHA IE\)](#) are the catalysts for the advancement of care delivery and service through mission-driven innovation. VHA IE includes the VHA Innovators Network, Diffusion of Excellence, Care and Transformational Initiatives, and the VHA Innovation Community. These programs aim to identify and scale innovation and promising practices across VA by empowering and enabling employees.

###