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News Release

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“Discovery and Collaboration for Exceptional Health Care”
Research Week Celebrates VA Investigators’ Achievements and Affiliations

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is celebrating exceptional care for Veterans this week, May 2 – 6 as part of the nationally recognized Research Week. This year’s theme, “Discovery and Collaboration for Exceptional Health Care,” celebrates two crucial elements of VA research: dedicated follow-through on important research findings to optimize medical therapies for Veterans and others; and vital research and care collaborations between VA and academic institutions, other government agencies, and health-related industry.

“VA has a legacy of extraordinary achievement in research and development,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “These achievements keep us on the cutting edge of health care and ensure we can provide, to all generations of Veterans, the very best care and services which they have earned through their service to the Nation.”

“At the foundation of VA’s collaborative system of world-class care is VA research—finding the answers to Veterans’ needs and advancing the nation’s medical knowledge,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert A. Petzel. “Our continued partnerships with our academic affiliates allow VA to expedite translation of research from bench to bedside, ensuring the best care for our Nation’s Veterans.”

In today’s economic climate, the partnerships being recognized during Research Week are especially crucial for leveraging resources and maximizing the yield from research investments. “We are proud to join forces with others who share VA’s passion for making life better for Veterans and all Americans,” said VA Chief Research and Development Officer Dr. Joel Kupersmith. “Partnering with research organizations and academic partners means breakthrough findings come faster and will swiftly translate into life-improving therapies for our Veterans.”

The theme of Research Week 2011 marks the 65th anniversary of Policy Memorandum No. 2, an historic agreement which allowed VA to affiliate with medical

schools. VA and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) have further strengthened their working relationship through a data and information-sharing agreement. The new agreement standardizes data security requirements and processes across institutions, helping to speed the pace of research and introduction of new treatments into practice. “This agreement is the latest example in the VA’s rich, and productive history working with the nation’s medical schools to bring about new advances,” said AAMC Chief Scientific Officer Ann C. Bonham, who holds a doctorate. “At the same time, it requires adherence to the highest standards of privacy protection.”

In addition to Research Week activities nationwide at VA medical centers and partner organizations, on May 5 at VA Central Office in Washington, DC, distinguished speakers will present their perspectives on VA’s achievements in health research. Presenters will include several Veterans, as well as Kupersmith; VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich; and Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and Services Madhulika Agarwal, MD, MPH. Guest speakers will include Bonham; Col. Greg Gadson, Army Wounded Warrior Program Commander; E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs and Dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine; Gregg Zoroya, *USA Today* reporter; and Stephen Cochran, Veteran and country music singer-songwriter, who will moderate a panel of Veterans discussing their participation in VA research.

Information about Research Week activities being held at VA Central Office and across the country is available at <http://www.research.va.gov/researchweek>.

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