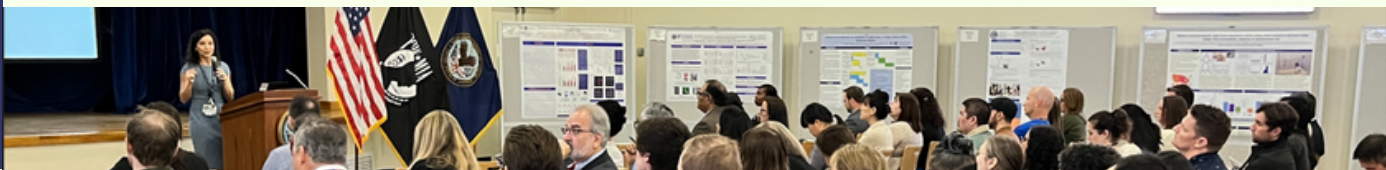


NOVEMBER
2025

NORTH FLORIDA/SOUTH GEORGIA VETERANS HEALTH SYSTEM

VA Research Newsletter



FROM THE CHIEF OF RESEARCH



VA Research Day is this Thursday, November 6th! See below for a preview. Stay tuned for details about an upcoming Open House for our new Clinical Trials Center, and within the next several months we also anticipate the opening of our new Biomedical Laboratory Facility. There is palpable momentum in VA Research Service, and we have much to be thankful for as we enter the Thanksgiving season! For guidance on conducting VA research, please visit our [webpage](#).
-David Clark, Associate Chief of Staff for Research

FEATURED INVESTIGATOR



Scott Berceli, MD, PhD is Section Chief of Vascular Surgery at the Malcolm Randall VA Medical Center and Professor of Surgery and Bioengineering at UF. He received his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, followed by his MD and PhD in Chemical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. He then completed his residency in General Surgery at the Harvard-Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and subspecialty training in Vascular Surgery at the University of Washington. Dr. Berceli's primary research interest focuses on the role of physical hemodynamic forces on modulating biological adaptations of arteries and veins. He works with a multi-disciplinary team of physicians, vascular biologists, engineers, and mathematicians to study vascular remodeling. Clinically, he applies this knowledge to the problem of dialysis fistula maturation failure. This is when a new arterial-venous connection (surgically created to support dialysis treatment) fails to properly mature. Dr. Berceli's research has been funded by VA and NIH for over twenty years. He has held various administrative roles within VA Research Service, including fifteen years as a member of the Research and Development Committee, including a five-year term as committee Chair. Dr. Berceli has extensive research mentoring experience, including as PI of an NIH T32 award (Interdisciplinary Training for Vascular Surgeon Scientists) and as PI of an NIH T35 award that funds the UF Medical Student Research Program.

FEATURED RESEARCH STAFF

Helen Vaillancourt has been with Research Service since 2008, and is the longest tenured member of our administrative team. Helen has survived and thrived through many transitions of VA policy and leadership, and is our local "historian" for leveraging knowledge of the past to optimize present day decision-making. Through the years, she has undertaken several significant projects, one of which is in-depth management of the onboarding process for new employees. Onboarding of federal employees is a complex and seemingly ever-changing process, but Helen uses her resourcefulness to get the answers we need. Another significant project was becoming the lead for the annual planning and execution of VA Research Day. She has been the driving force for Research Day preparations for nearly 15 years. Her attention to detail ensures that the event is professional, educational, and enjoyable for all attendees. To Helen, the research employees who answer the call to help with setting up, hosting, and cleaning up are like cavalry coming in! She is also appreciative of the presenters and other research personnel who share their time and accomplishments supporting the health of Veterans.

VA RESEARCH DAY PREVIEW

Research Day is Thursday November 6th from 8:30am – 1pm in the Auditorium of the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. This year will be bigger and better than ever, as we celebrate 100 years of VA research! We look forward to a keynote presentation from Dr. Michael Jaffee, Chair of the UF Department of Neurology. Dr. Jaffee served 21 years in the United States Air Force (USAF), retiring at the rank of colonel in 2013. His USAF career included wartime service as the chief of medical staff for the largest U.S. military hospital in Iraq and as the USAF surgeon general neurology consultant. He also served on two White House-appointed panels of the Defense Health Board and as the national director of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. We will have 18 "lightning talks" from Principal Investigators, followed by a poster session (30 posters). There will be breakfast snacks catered by the VA Canteen, a lunch buffet catered by Moe's Southwest Grill, and a celebratory cake. Hope to see you there!



CENTURY OF
DISCOVERY



VA RESEARCH SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

Clinical Studies

119

Human subject and
medical record research



Proportion of Clinical and
Preclinical Research Studies

Preclinical Studies

25

Animal and bench research

Principal Investigators

53

With active projects

Research Staff and Administrative Staff

40

Research Affiliates

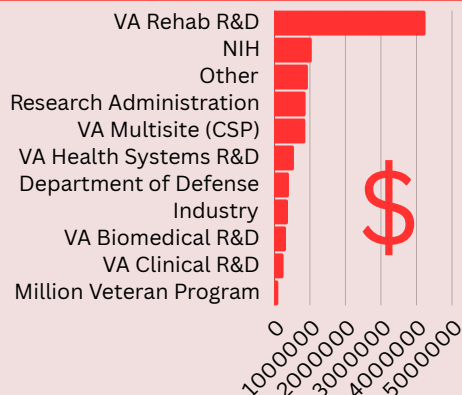
138

Interagency agreements or
non-compensated employees
(UF and NFFRE personnel)

Annual Research Expenditures

**\$10.04
million**

Fiscal Year 2024



Projects funded by US Department of Veterans Affairs

27

FY25, Year to Date

Research Space: Square Feet

28,595

Research Space: # Rooms

167

Research Equipment

1,522

Pieces of equipment