# **VA Researchers Take Center Stage at National Virtual Event**

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Each year in May, VA National Research Week marks the innovation and accomplishments of VA researchers on behalf of Veterans. This year's theme is One Team, One Mission. The 2021 Research Week events will highlight the pioneering work of eight awardees studying topics ranging from traumatic brain injury to heart failure.

**Distinctive Awards include:**

* **The John Blair Barnwell Award** hails for a distinguished educator and physician-scientist who devised VA's Army-Navy Cooperative Studies in the Chemotherapy Tuberculosis Program. His work pioneered the multi-site clinical trials model to test treatments for tuberculosis after World War II.
* **The William S. Middleton Award** honors a physician-scientist who served as VA chief medical director from 1955 to 1963. He established the first Advisory Committee on Research and helped initiate thousands of crucial research projects.
* **The Paul B. Magnuson Award** honors the career of a bone and joint surgeon who continuously sought new treatments and devices to assist patients with disabilities. As a VA clinical and research leader, Dr. Magnuson argued for VA to hire doctors, nurses, and dentists outside of the civil service, under what is now known as "Title 38." He also created a system for medical school affiliations to staff VA hospitals with residents, interns, and service chiefs.
* **The Under Secretary's Award** **for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research** recognizes the importance of VA health services research and its vital link to the health care of Veterans and the public.

This year, two virtual events—an awards ceremony and research symposium—will recognize awardees from eight different VA medical centers:

* **Dr. Jeffrey Curtis, Barnwell Awardee 2019 (Ann Arbor):** Dr. Curtis has made many fundamental contributions to understanding chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung defense against bacterial pathogens. He is currently studying the role white blood cells play in pulmonary immunity and diseases like COPD and the mechanisms responsible for clearing away cellular debris in the lungs.
* **Dr. David Oslin, Barnwell Awardee 2020 (Philadelphia)**: Dr. Oslin's research focuses on measurement-based care practices that incorporate genetics. A national leader in integrating mental health care into primary clinics, he has introduced a new mental health training curriculum and co-authored an important paper that introduced the concept of collecting biosamples to study alcohol use disorder.
* **Dr. Miriam Morey, Magnuson Awardee 2020 (Durham):** Dr. Morey is a leading researcher in exercise and aging and developed an exercise and health promotion program for older Veterans called Gerofit. This program provides robust benefits to aging Veterans by increasing their physical fitness, functional status, and overall well-being.
* **Dr. David Cifu, Magnuson Awardee 2021 (Richmond):** Dr. Cifu is a leading VA physician-researcher on combat-related neurotrauma. He is the principal investigator on a VA/DoD comprehensive research network focusing on the long-term effects of combat-related and military-relevant mild TBI. His innovative TBI Model System program examines the recovery course and outcomes of Veterans and active-duty military with TBI following comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation.
* **Dr. Steven Dubinett, Middleton Awardee 2019 (Los Angeles):** Dr. Dubinett studies lung immunobiology, helping to bring new treatments to patients with lung cancer. His work helped inform the National Lung Cancer Screening Trial, which found that participants who received low-dose helical CT scans instead of a standard X-ray had a 15 to 20 percent lower risk of dying from lung cancer. He is currently testing a vaccine to boost the immune responses of patients withnon-small cell lung cancer.
* **Dr. Stephen Plymate, Middleton Co-Awardee 2020 (Puget Sound):** Dr. Plymate'soutstanding scientific achievements in biomedical research have benefited prostate cancer treatment. His work helps clinicians better understand which patients will respond to specific prostate cancer treatments and aids in developing new drug therapies. He is credited with discovering variants in androgen receptor proteins and their role in treatment-resistant prostate cancer.
* **Dr. Michael Zile, Middleton Co-Awardee 2020 (Charleston):** Dr. Zile is an international expert in the study of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. He has helped establish diagnostic criteria to identify this subgroup of heart patients, developed predictors of morbidity and mortality in patients with the illness, and explained disease mechanisms used to create new drugs. Because there are no approved therapies to treat heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, Dr. Zile's work is of great importance to Veterans and patients worldwide.
* **Dr. Matt Samore, VA's Under Secretary for Health Awardee for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research:** Dr. Samore's work has resulted in significant improvements to Veterans' health care, including advances in the use of electronic health record data to improve measurement of prescribing practices and patient outcomes. His work also supports system-wide shifts in antibiotic prescribing and antibiotic stewardship. His research and leadership have effectively decreased inappropriate antibiotic overuse throughout VA.

This year's main virtual event will be a 30-minute TV show featuring the work of all eight awardees, along with Veteran features and a musical tribute. VA ORD invites patients, staff, and the public to watch the National VA Research Week Virtual Award Ceremony at 3 p.m., Wednesday, May 19, by registering here: [www.research.va.gov/researchweek/2021/virtualaward-registration.cfm](http://www.research.va.gov/researchweek/2021/virtualaward-registration.cfm)

For those wanting a deeper dive into the research, we invite you to log onto the research symposium at 3 p.m. on Friday, May 21. You can register for the symposium at this [link](https://veteransaffairsevents.webex.com/mw3300/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&siteurl=veteransaffairsevents&service=6&rnd=0.7998357325082507&main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fveteransaffairsevents.webex.com%2Fec3300%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26%26%26EMK%3D4832534b00000003ed8d23746cd97600200becf34fff6a35d196c6338740fd7be18d1a075f45b176%26siteurl%3Dveteransaffairsevents%26confViewID%3D191140650286079842%26encryptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAAMOrvfStvpgp4O0QSJyyWk9jBcSWpYyqiOIUTO_lG9KWw2%26).