

VA Research Newsletter

FROM THE CHIEF OF RESEARCH



The Summer Olympics offer a reminder of what can be accomplished when we commit to goals that we are passionate about. In that spirit of accomplishment, this month we pay tribute to a local neurology legend who recently passed away, Dr. Ken Heilman. Also in this newsletter are updates on neurorehabilitation research as well as initiatives that support our clinical and animal research programs. For guidance on conducting VA research, visit our [webpage](#). We look forward to working with you! - David Clark, Associate Chief of Staff for Research Service

FEATURED INVESTIGATOR



Dr. Dorian Rose, PhD, PT has been a Research Scientist with the Brain Rehabilitation Research Center at Malcom Randall VAMC since 2008. She is also a Research Professor in the UF Dept. of Physical Therapy where she teaches in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and mentors PhD students in the Rehabilitation Science PhD program. Dr. Rose is also a Research Scientist with Brooks Rehabilitation in Jacksonville, FL. Dr. Rose's interests as a researcher, clinician and educator are in adult neurorehabilitation, particularly people who have experienced a stroke. She studies intervention strategies based on principles of neuroplasticity and motor learning, for the recovery of upper extremity motor function and gait function, as well as respiratory health. Her work also examines post-rehabilitation ambulation in the home and community, as well as lab-based measurement of 3-dimensional biomechanics and neurophysiological recordings during motor tasks in the VA Human Motor Performance Lab. Dr. Rose was recently recognized by the American Physical Therapy Association as a Catherine Worthingham Fellow.



FEATURED RESEARCH STAFF



Juliana Venetucci began working with VA Research Service in 2017 with the Million Veteran Program (MVP), a national research program investigating how genetics, lifestyle, and military experiences affect health and wellness in Veterans. After graduating from UF in 2018, she was hired as a Research Coordinator with NFFRE, where she worked with Dr. Sriram and the pulmonary team to complete over 20 clinical trials. During this time, Juliana also returned to UF to obtain a master's degree in Microbiology and Cell Science. Juliana was part of the research team that conducted the Johnson & Johnson COVID Vaccine trial, helping the MRVAMC become the #3 site in overall enrollment and #1 in diversity, earning recognition as a "COVID-19 Vaccine Champion" and a "COVID Award". Currently, Juliana serves as the Lead Research Coordinator for VA Research Service. In this role, she developed and maintains the Research Coordinator Guidebook (located within the [research webpage](#)), which is packed with helpful information. For advice on managing day-to-day operations of a research study, Juliana is here to help!



AAALAC ACCREDITATION

The animal research program at NF/SG Veterans Health System has successfully achieved re-accreditation by AAALAC (*Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care*). Our program sailed through the review with great success, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Matthew Schiefer (Veterinary Medical Unit Director), Dr. Harvey Ramirez (Veterinarian), Massimo Pascalli, Cynthia Sanders, and Paola Villalobos (Animal Care Technicians), Dr. Prodip Bose (IACUC Chair), Dr. Kamal Mohammed (Safety Officer), and Tiffany Ramsey (Research Committee Manager). NF/SG researchers who work with animals can access nearly 40 Standard Operating Procedures documents from the IRBNet Forms and Templates library, to support best practices and compliance.



IN MEMORY OF DR. HEILMAN

Dr. Kenneth Heilman had a tremendous impact on the field of neurology and on the local neuroscience community, as documented at the following links ([#1](#), [#2](#), [#3](#)). There are countless anecdotes from those who had the pleasure of working with him. Here are just a couple from current Research Service employees:

From Danielle Leader, Program Specialist: *"I worked with Dr. Heilman in the GRECC. His office was covered with photos of his grandchildren. I remember that he could draw well - his lectures were wonderful, he used to sketch the brain structures as he spoke."* From John Williamson, Research Scientist: *"Ken recruited me here. I consider him to be a friend. He was complex, kind, and interesting. He brought a lot of great people to Gainesville and was a significant factor in shaping both behavioral neurology and clinical neuropsychology as fields. The willingness to entertain a breadth of topics, to find threads that unite, and branch into new directions sustained a long career along many roads less traveled. He also never stopped. I visited him at his home a few weeks ago. The discussion quickly deviated into science. "What's the hypothesis?" (insert thick Brooklyn tones here)."*



Service & Reception

Cade Museum
August 24th
5:30 pm

VA RESEARCH SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

Clinical Studies

104

Human subject and
medical record research



Proportion of Clinical and
Preclinical Research Studies

Preclinical Studies

25

Animal and bench research

Investigators

52

Coordinators and Administrators

43

Research Affiliates

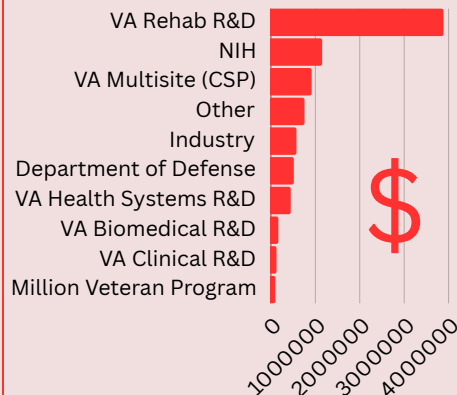
218

Interagency Agreements or
Non-compensated Employees
(UF and NFFRE personnel)

Annual Research Expenditures

**\$9.7
million**

Fiscal Year 2023



Projects funded by US Department of Veterans Affairs

40

Active during Fiscal Year 2024

Research Space: Square Feet

30,287

Research Space: # Rooms

160

Research Equipment

1,367

Pieces of equipment