

News Release

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Iowa City Veterans Affairs Medical Center Named Research Center for Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss

IOWA CITY, Iowa -- The Iowa City Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center was granted status as a VA Research Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss under the VA Research and Development program, Rehabilitation Research and Development (RR&D) Service. With this special designation as an RR&D Research Center comes \$5 million in federal funding over the next five years, for research focused on prevention and treatment of visual impairments.

“The pioneering research conducted at this Center will greatly advance vision research and produce new eye care innovations and treatment regimens,” said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA’s Acting Under Secretary for Health. “This award helps to retain and attract the brightest minds from academia, industry, and medicine into the VA healthcare system and develop new researchers in the field.”

Research at the Center will focus on the early detection of potential blinding disorders including retinal disease, glaucoma, and traumatic brain injury. Researchers will also test new ways of determining the earliest signs of progression and response to treatment to develop new treatment innovations. Areas of exploration include the use of telemedicine and computer aided diagnosis for the detection of eye disease, as well as neuroprotection and neurotrophic growth factors for prevention and healing.

Iowa native, Randy Kardon, M.D., Ph.D., is the Center’s first director. Dr. Kardon has been affiliated with VA and has been on the faculty of the University of Iowa, College of Medicine since 1989. A tenured professor of ophthalmology, Dr. Kardon also serves as director of neuro-ophthalmology and holds the Pomerantz Family Chair in Ophthalmology at the University of Iowa.

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Iowa City Research Center 2/2/2

Michael Abramoff, M.D., Ph.D., a retinal specialist at the Iowa City VA Medical Center and also a tenured Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, and of Electrical and Computer Engineering, at the University of Iowa, will serve as associate director of the Center.

The Center will be located in a new research building, currently under construction, on the Iowa VA Medical Center campus.

Researchers with the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Center of Excellence for the Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss

Director: Randy Kardon M.D. Ph.D.

Associate Director: Michael Abramoff M.D. Ph.D.

Iowa City Department of Veterans Affairs and Iowa State University:

Sinisa Grozdanic DVM Ph.D. College of Veterinary Medicine, Ophthalmology Division

Tatjana Lazic DVM Ph.D, College of Veterinary Medicine, Pathology Division

Matt Harper DVM Ph.D. College of Veterinary Medicine, Ophthalmology Division

Don Sakaguchi Ph.D. Genetics, Development and Cell Biology

Iowa City VA Medical Center and University of Iowa

Milan Sonka Ph.D. Chairman, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Ophthalmology

Mona Garvin Ph.D. Electrical and Computer Engineering,

Joseph Reinhardt, PhD, Biomedical Engineering

Pieter Poolman Ph.D. Department of Ophthalmology

Miriam Bridget Zimmerman Ph.D., College of Public Health

Young Kwon M.D. Ph.D. Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Emily Greenlee M.D., Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Reid Longmuir M.D., Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Thomas Oetting M.D., Director of VA Ophthalmology Division

Steve Stasheff M.D. Ph.D. Pediatric Neurology

Michael Wall M.D. Ph.D. Departments of Neurology and Ophthalmology

Chris Johnson Ph.D. Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Zuhair Ballas M.D. – Immunology, Internal Medicine

Markus Kuehn Ph.D. Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Michael Anderson Ph.D. Departments of Ophthalmology and Molecular Physiology and Biophysics

Ana Recober M.D. Departments of Neurology and Molecular Physiology and Biophysics

Andrew Russo Ph.D. Director of Biosciences Program, Molecular Physiology and Biophysics

Susan Anderson B.S. Program Specialist, Department of Ophthalmology

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Center Collaborators

Don Hood Ph.D. Columbia University, Department of Psychology

Joseph Rizzo M.D. Ph.D., Boston VA and Harvard Medical School; VA Center of Excellence for Innovative Visual Rehabilitation

Glenn Cockerham M.D., Chief Ophthalmology Service, Palo Alto VA

Kimberly Cockerham M.D., Neuro-ophthalmology, Palo Alto VA

Kathleen Digre M.D. Director of Neuro-ophthalmology and Center of Excellence of Women's Health, University of Utah and VA, Salt Lake City, Utah

Lynn Gordon M.D. Ph.D. Neuro-ophthalmology, UCLA Medical Center and VA, Los Angeles,

Mary Lawrence M.D. Director of Ophthalmology, Minneapolis VA Medical Center

Nathan (Troy) Tagg M.D. Director of Neuro-ophthalmology, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. and National Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Md.

Don Gagliano COL, MC Director of National Vision Center of Excellence, Washington, D.C.