

VETERANS UPDATE

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VA COMPLETES NEARLY HALF BLUE WATER CLAIMS



The USS Vogelgesang, a destroyer that served off of Vietnam from July 28 to Nov. 10, 1966, providing antisubmarine defense, and naval gunfire support for troops. (U.S. Navy Photo)

VA announced Oct. 26 that it has decided more than 34,000 Blue Water Navy disability claims, under the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which extends the presumption of exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

As of Sept. 30, VA has processed 34,415 — 48% — of 69,570 claims received, of which 24,328 have been granted, awarding more than \$664 million in retroactive benefits to eligible Veterans and families.

“It’s important we ensure Blue Water Navy Veterans and their families receive the benefits they’ve earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

UPCOMING EVENTS

In-person events are being rescheduled due to COVID-19.

Nov. 10, Veterans Day Observance, 1 p.m., Facebook Live, <https://www.facebook.com/VAProvidence>

Nov. 18, Veteran Town Hall, 5:30 - 7 p.m., phone meeting, 404-397-1596, code 1992438680#

Wednesdays in November, Women Veteran Networking Group, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m., phone meeting, 800-767-1750, code 36090#

To learn more about Agent Orange exposure and VA disability compensation call 800-827-1000 or visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS, MASK-UP IN PUBLIC

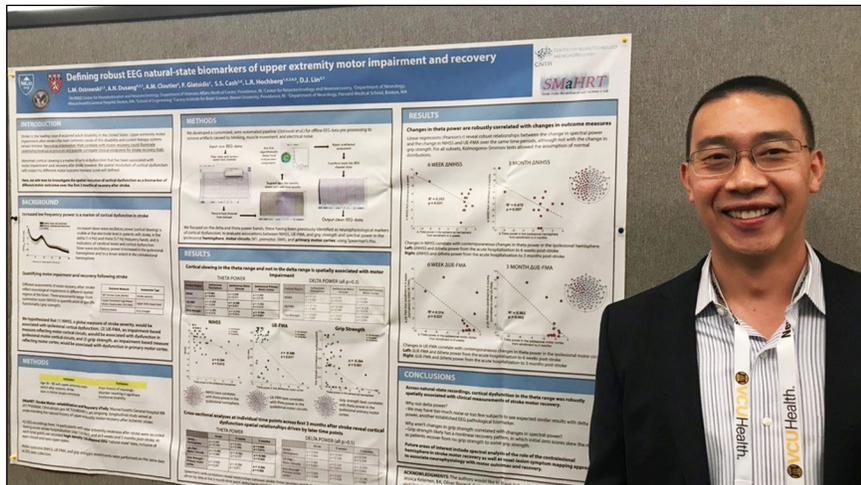
Protect your fellow Veterans, yourself and others from COVID-19; cover your mouth and nose when you go out in public, and stay six feet apart from others.

Other tips to protect yourself include washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being out in public, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>



BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE RESEARCH FOR STROKE



Dr. David Lin, a neurologist and researcher with the VA RR&D Center for Neurorestoration and Neurotechnology, with a poster about his research during the American Neurological Association's annual meeting, October 13-15, 2019, in St. Louis, Mo. (photo courtesy of Dr. David Lin)

A new study by the VA Office of Rehabilitation Research and Development, or RR&D, Center for Neurorestoration and Neurotechnology, or CfNN, aims to provide insight into the future potential use of brain-computer interface neurotechnologies to restore upper limb function and ultimately improve outcomes for Veterans with stroke.

Dr. David Lin received a VA RR&D Career Development Award in September for his project, "Targeting Neuroplasticity with Brain Computer Interfaces to Maximize Motor Recovery for Veterans after Stroke."

Lin is a neurologist and core investigator with CfNN, which is located at the Providence VA Medical Center, director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Neurorecovery Clinic and an instructor in neurology at Harvard Medical School.

"The opportunities at VA and CfNN to advance the science of neurorehabilitation are world class and unparalleled," said Lin. "I'm excited and inspired to contribute to advancing Veterans' Health."

This \$400,000 award will fund a 2-year project to further investigate and develop novel therapies for restoring function and improving quality of life for Veterans with severe motor disabilities due to stroke. By measuring the changes in brain activity of people with stroke and resulting arm weakness as they attempt to move a robotic arm, Lin will analyze the relationship between limb movements and the changes in brain connectivity that occur during recovery.

"The Providence VA and CfNN are thrilled to welcome Dr. Lin," said Dr. Leigh Hochberg, director of CfNN, neurologist at the Providence VA Medical Center, Professor of Engineering at Brown University, and neurointensivist at Massachusetts General Hospital. "He's a superb clinician-scientist, and he is already helping to create the next generation of restorative neurotechnologies for Veterans and others with stroke."

The VA Career Development Program was established to attract, develop, and retain talented scientists working to improve Veteran health, care and quality of life. The VA Providence Healthcare System

VA



Providence Healthcare System
830 Chalkstone Ave
Providence, RI 02908
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):
401-457-3336

Pharmacy Call Center:
866-400-1241

Office of Community Care
401-273-7100 ext. 13015

Account Balances:
401-457-3344

VA Benefits Information
800-827-1000

Website:
www.providence.va.gov

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has a robust research program comprising more than 260 projects ranging from basic science, clinical trials, health services and rehabilitative research focused on improving Veterans' health.