**President’s Message**

**NAEVR Expands Its Advocacy Voice**

At Key Domestic and International Events

NAEVR’s message about the value of vision research has resonated at numerous events here in the United States and at international venues.

NAEVR had a significant presence at this year’s ARVO Annual Meeting with the NAEVR Central booth that was prominent in the exhibits area and the standing room-only defense vision session at which representatives of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) announced $10 million in awards. That level of funding is not only testimony to the quality of the proposals submitted by our community, but to NAEVR’s advocacy efforts that got a dedicated Peer Reviewed Medical Research-Vision line item in defense appropriations, starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009. With the announcement of the awards, NAEVR has been educating its Capitol Hill champions about the unique nature of this research into immediate battlefield vision needs not addressed elsewhere in an effort to secure FY2011 funding at $10 million. I wish to thank TATRC Director Colonel Karl Friedl, Ph.D. for having his team so accessible to researchers throughout the meeting such that they could learn more about this funding opportunity.

NAEVR’s written testimony to Congressional appropriators supporting FY2011 funding increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Eye Institute (NEI) was amplified when, shortly after ARVO, Neil Bressler, M.D. (Wilmer Eye Institute/Johns Hopkins) gave Citizen Witness testimony at a House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee hearing. As Chair of NEI’s Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research (DRCR) Network, Neil brought immediacy to the value of vision research by relating just-released results of a DRCR-funded comparative effectiveness study demonstrating better vision from a drug/laser treatment than with laser treatment alone for diabetic macular edema. During this tough appropriations cycle, Members of Congress and their staffs are especially responsive to such tangible examples of the benefits of investment in research.

NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky gave compelling testimony at two key NIH events. In May, at the meeting of NIH’s Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB), he opposed merging or clustering of NIH Institutes and Centers and their budgets, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a dedicated NEI line item. NAEVR remains one of the few advocacy groups still vigilant on this issue. In June, he also spoke at the first Stakeholders Meeting of the NIH/Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Joint Leadership Council, describing the past collaborations between NEI and FDA that resulted in the series of Endpoints Symposia on age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and patient-reported outcomes. Thanks to the leadership of NEI Director Paul Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., this is just one of many examples of joint agency efforts.

At the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC) in Berlin, Germany, Jim spoke during this tough appropriations cycle, Members of Congress and their staffs are especially responsive to tangible examples of the benefits of investment in research.

I appreciate the commitments that members have made to support NAEVR and AEVR in 2010.

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Left to right: Dr. Ryan and Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Executive Director Joanne Angle with NAEVR’s James Jorkasky in the ARVO booth at the World Ophthalmology Congress. Dr. Ryan served as the Scientific Program Committee Chair for WOC 2010.

James Jorkasky (second left) with European Vision Institute (EVI) representatives Eberhart Zrenner, M.D., Thomas Wheeler-Schilling, Ph.D., and Philipp Hunger, all from the Institute for Ophthalmic Research at the University of Tuebingen.

far more complex due to potential funding opportunities at the European Union, country, and state level, as well as varied cultural attitudes about the relationship between the private and public sectors. I share Jim’s enthusiasm for future exchanges as the global research community seeks the funding necessary to address the vision impairment and eye disease challenges of the Decade of Vision 2010–2020.

Contributor Report

National Alliance For Eye And Vision Research
Alliance For Eye And Vision Research