On March 17, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing to discuss the status of implementation of the VCE and Military Eye Trauma Registry, which were authorized in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The VCE/Injury Registry, a DOD program that coordinates with the VA, is a provision of the Military Eye Trauma Treatment Act sponsored by Cong. John Boozman (R-AR) that was included in the NDAA and supported by NAEVR.

From FY2006–2008, eye and vision research competed against 20 other areas of research for a $50 million pool of peer reviewed funds within the Peer Reviewed Vision Research Program (PRMRP) in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP). TATRC and CDMRP are ‘sister’ agencies within the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USMRMC).

### House to DOD:

**“Fully Implement the Vision Center of Excellence”**

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In response to testimony by sight-impaired veterans about lack of a coordination of care between the DOD and VA, VCE Director Colonel Donald Gagliano, M.D., stated that the VCE could serve as a trailblazer in coordinating a seamless transition, especially with respect to medical records, since the Injury Registry would track records longitudinally and bi-directionally. He added that the Registry will also drive appropriate research, especially that funded by the DOD’s Peer Reviewed Research-Vision program.

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**Significant Developments in Defense-Related Vision Research Funding**

**DOD’s TATRC Managing $4 Million in FY2009 Peer Reviewed Research-Vision**

The Department of Defense’s (DOD) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), which has extensive experience with vision research, is managing the $4 million Peer Reviewed Research-Vision line item included in FY2009 Defense appropriations, which was advocated by NAEVR.

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**Defense Vision Session at ARVO**

NAEVR will host a Monday, May 4, Defense-related Vision Research Briefing at the ARVO Annual Meeting, 7:30-8:30 am in Room 301 of the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center. Every academic institution should attend to hear about the FY2009 TATRC Program Announcement and other funding opportunities.

**CDMRP and DRMRP Announce Initial Awards**

In January, the CDMRP announced its FY2008 awards, which include 6 grants to vision researchers, valued at $10-12 million, in Advanced Technology/Therapeutic Development, Clinical Trials, and Translational Research. At press time, the Deployment Related Medical Research Program (DRMRP), a new mechanism created by the mid-year FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, had just issued an announcement, also including vision awards. NAEVR has posted these awards on its Web site.