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News Release

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VA Partners with Prostate Cancer Foundation to Expand Clinical Research

Approximately 12,000 Veterans Are Diagnosed Annually with Prostate Cancer

WASHINGTON – As a national leader in oncology advancement and as the largest integrated healthcare system in the nation, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced an important and substantial partnership with the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) to prevent, screen and promote research to speed the development of treatments and cures for prostate cancer among Veterans. Announcement of the partnership was made during Launch Pad: Pathways to Cancer InnoVAtion, a joint VA/PCF summit held today that brings together world-class oncology experts, corporate and nonprofit partners to discuss research, big data, technology and clinical solutions to advance screening, diagnostics and care coordination for cancer and to promote the implementation of best practices across the VA healthcare system.

As part of the summit, PCF announced a \$50-million precision oncology initiative to expand prostate cancer clinical research among Veterans to speed the development of new treatment options and cures for prostate cancer patients. The agreement signed today is the first partnership between PCF and VA, and it comes at a time when an estimated 12,000 Veterans each year are diagnosed with prostate cancer, making it the most frequently diagnosed cancer among Veterans. In particular, African-Americans are 64 percent more likely to develop prostate cancer compared to any other race or ethnicity and 2.4 times more likely to die from the disease.

“Fighting and treating cancer among our Veterans is a team effort, which is why this Launch Pad event and this partnership are so important,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. To effectively serve our Veterans and to keep VA on the cutting edge of medical research, we need government, corporate, and non-profit organizations working together. We are truly grateful to the Prostate Cancer Foundation for this important show of support. Our work together will save Veterans’ lives.”

The goals of the PCF partnership are to increase the number of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) investigators applying to PCF for funding; increase the number of VHA facilities involved in precision medicine/prostate cancer clinical trials; increase the number of Veterans enrolled in studies, providing veteran specimens or data used in studies as well as increase the number of minorities enrolled in PCF studies; and increase the number of early career scientists working on prostate cancer research.

“Our goal is to increase our scientific understanding of prostate cancer among Veterans and to kick-start the development of precision medicine treatments for them, as well as the general population,” said Jonathan W. Simons, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, PCF. “This agreement will open new doors for the research community to work with Veterans facing a life threatening disease and ultimately reduce the disease burden on America’s Veterans.”

VA has a long history in cancer prevention and research. VA's cancer research portfolio supported 262 active projects with \$53.5 million in fiscal year 2016, toward understanding and preventing cancers prevalent in the Veteran population. In addition, VA research also has ongoing collaborations and data-sharing with other public agencies, and profit and non-profit corporations to enhance cancer research, including studies that support the national Precision Medicine Initiative.

For more information about the Launch Pad event, visit <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/33183/launch-pad-event-brings-together-greatest-minds-in-cancer-care>

For more information about VA research, including cancer innovations, visit <http://www.research.va.gov/>.