Million Veteran Program:
A Partnership with Veterans

Fall 2013
VA Research History

• 1946 - Tested treatments for tuberculosis
• 1958 – Invented the cardiac pacemaker
• 1968 – Performed the first successful liver transplant
• 1970 – Performed the first study demonstrating that treatment of hypertension lowers risk of cardiovascular disease
• 1977 – Rosalyn Yalow, Bronx VA, wins Nobel Prize in Medicine for developing the radioimmunoassay for measuring insulin levels
• 1984 – Developed the nicotine patch
• 1998 – Ferid Murad, Palo Alto VA, wins Nobel Prize in Medicine
VA Genomic Medicine Program

- VA established the Genomic Medicine Program (GMP) in 2006 to examine how the growing field of genetics could:
  - Optimize medical care for Veterans
  - Enhance development of tests and treatments for diseases that affect Veterans

- The Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a research initiative under GMP that will create a database for researchers to access to conduct future genetic and health studies
MVP Purpose

• Safely collect genetic, military exposure, lifestyle and health information from Veterans
  – Collected data will be used by approved researchers to study how genes affect common diseases (ex. diabetes, cancer, heart disease) as well as military-related illnesses (ex. PTSD)

• Become one of the largest research programs in the world
  – As many as one million Veterans expected to enroll over a 5-7 year period

• Improve health care for Veterans and all Americans
Why Study Genes?

• Genes are the instruction manual for our bodies
• Small differences in our genes...
  – Determine our physical traits (ex. eye & hair color)
  – Explain why some individuals develop diseases and others do not
  – Affect how we respond to medicines and treatments
  – Interact with our environment and lifestyle factors to influence our risk for disease
• Studying genes, in combination with health, lifestyle and environmental data, will help researchers better understand how genes influence disease
MVP Research

• Individual data collected through MVP may be used in a number of research studies

• Research findings based on MVP could lead to new ways of preventing and treating illnesses by answering questions such as:
  – Why does a treatment work well for some Veterans but not for others?
  – Why are some Veterans at a greater risk for developing an illness?
  – How can we prevent certain illnesses in the first place?
MVP Recruitment

- Approximately 50 participating VA Medical Centers
  - Plans to expand to additional sites in FY13 and nationwide in future
- Enrollment will occur over a 5-7 year period
  - Target = 1 million Veterans; 18/participants/day/site
  - As of April 17, 2014, 264,620 enrolled Veterans!
- Centralized recruitment
  - Mailings
  - MVP Information Center
    - Toll-free number: 866-441-6075
    - Website: www.research.va.gov/MVP
MVP Participation

• Any Veteran who is enrolled in the VA Health Care System and receiving care at a participating VAMC can participate
  – The choice to participate (or not) is entirely voluntary and will not affect Veterans’ access to health care or benefits

• Participation involves:
  – Filling out surveys through the mail (short Baseline Survey & optional Lifestyle Survey)
  – Completing a one-time study visit at a participating VAMC to provide a blood sample for genetic analyses (~20 minutes)
  – Allowing ongoing access to medical records by authorized MVP Staff
  – Agreeing to future MVP contact
MVP National Enrollment

Age

- 18 to 29: 2%
- 30 to 39: 1%
- 40 to 49: 10%
- 50 to 59: 19%
- 60 to 69: 0%
- 70 to 79: 1%
- 80 to 89: 7%
- 90 to 99: 17%
- 100+: 40%
- Missing: 3%

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
MVP National Enrollment

Race

- White: 77%
- Black: 2%
- Asian: 2%
- American Indian: 2%
- Other: 3%
- Multiple Chosen: 1%
- No Response: 1%

Gender

- Female: 8.07%
- Male: 89.33%
- Missing: 2.6%
MVP National Enrollment

Service Era

- September 2001 or later (8%)
- August 1990 to August 2001 (including Gulf War) (12%)
- May 1975 to July 1990 (19%)
- August 1964 to April 1975 (Viet Nam Era) (11%)
- February 1955 to July 1964 (1%)
- July 1950 to January 1955 (Korean War) (0%)
- January 1947 to June 1950 (3%)
- December 1941 to December 1946 (WWII) (7%)
- November 1941 or earlier (3%)

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
MVP Study Visit

• The MVP study visit takes roughly 20 minutes
• MVP participants meet with MVP local study staff (Research Assistant or Research Coordinator) to:
  – Review MVP Informed Consent document
  – If consent is signed, Veteran provides one tube of blood
Patient safety and information security are top priorities

MVP has many safeguards in place to ensure Veterans’ information is secure:

- All samples stored in a secure, state-of-the-art VA biorepository
- All samples and health data labeled with a bar code instead of name, address, social security number, or birth date
- Researchers who are approved to analyze samples will not be able to link the code to a particular Veteran
  - Only a few authorized VA users will have access to the key to the code, which will be kept in a secure VA location
Additional Safeguards

• VA Central Institutional Review Board
  – Initial and ongoing review of all aspects of MVP study design, implementation, and operation
  – Access to data and samples for research projects will be granted only after rigorous scientific peer review and specific new IRB approval

• Certificate of Confidentiality
  – Researchers can rely on the Certificate to deny requests for information that would identify participants

• Federal and state laws to protect against genetic discrimination
  – Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA)
MVP (The Million Veteran Program) is a National research initiative to create one of the world’s largest databases of genomic, military exposure, lifestyle and health information.

MVP will lead to better prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illnesses in Veterans, ultimately, improving health care.

MVP is currently enrolling at ~50 VA Medical Centers, with plans to expand nationwide.

MVP will allow current Veterans to help transform health care, not only for themselves, but for future generations of Veterans and non-Veterans.
MVP Contact Information

For more information

Visit: www.research.va.gov/mvp

Call: 857-364-5759 or 866-441-6075 (toll-free for Veterans)
Million Veteran Program

• For More Information
  – Visit www.research.va.gov/mvp
  – Call 857-364-5759

DROP-INS WELCOME!

• VA Puget Sound Locations
  – Seattle: Building 1, Room 113C
  – American Lake: Building 81, Primary Care Clinic Waiting Area