



# NAVREF

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS' RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS

ENVISIONING A NATION IN WHICH VETERANS  
RECEIVE THE FINEST CARE BASED ON INNOVATIVE  
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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# A Message From the CEO

## NAVREF Board of Directors

**Robin Rusconi, JD**  
Executive Director  
*Board Chair*

**Kristen Bourgerie**  
Executive Director  
*Vice Chair*

**Shelley Cobb**  
Executive Director  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

**Stephen Conafay**  
Class B

**Robert Forrester**  
Class B

**Scott Gruber, MD, PhD, MBA**  
Chief of Staff

**Brown McCallum, MD**  
ACOS-E

**Jeffrey Moore, PhD**  
Executive Director

**Kelly Page**  
Executive Director

**Cindy Reutzel, MPA**  
Executive Director

**Paul Russo, MHSA, FACHE, RD**  
Medical Center Director

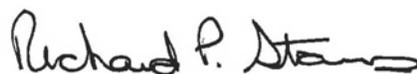
**Mary Sano, PhD**  
ACOS-R

**Priscilla West, MPH**  
Executive Director

Dear Colleagues:

NAVREF's 25th Anniversary Year was a banner year on many fronts. We started the member year in July 2017 confirming the strategic direction recommended during our Board of Directors retreat where we identified 4 priorities—clinical trials, advocacy, mentorship, and policy development. In September we initiated pursuit of fundraising expertise to help supplement or offset revenue from member dues. Each of these initiatives made steady progress during the course of the year and show promise for flourishing in the coming year. Most notably, the addition of Krissa Caroff in March 2017 has turbo-charged our efforts to bring more clinical trials to Veterans, leading to numerous new study opportunities and establishing stronger relationships with industry. We are excited to support the VA's priority to enhance Veterans' access to clinical trials and we are proud to partner with the Association of VA Hematology and Oncology, Cohen Veterans Bioscience, the Lungevity Foundation, and Veterans' Against Alzheimer's to achieve our common goal.

I am looking forward to another exciting year of growth and progress!



**Mr. Richard Starrs**  
NAVREF CEO

## *In Appreciation*

NAVREF cannot succeed without the voluntary contributions of time, energy, and passion from numerous individuals and organizations. The Board of Directors is an extremely dedicated group of leaders with full-time day jobs who still manage to dedicate time and expertise to support research and education programs for Veterans. Leaders from across the nonprofit corporations volunteered to participate on our conference program committee, on our strategic committees, and as exhibitors at our DIA exhibit booth. Every day I see executive directors and senior staff supporting their peers, responding to questions on the Member Forum, and assisting me and the NAVREF staff. This sense of community and comradeship is what makes NAVREF so special. Thank you for your selflessness and dedication to our mission--you keep me energized!

# NAVREF ANNUAL REPORT 2018

The 2017-2018 membership year was incredibly robust with a multitude of growth and change. It was a year aimed at repositioning NAVREF as a leader of our unique non-profit community and as a bridge between VA and Industry. These are just some of the highlights that occurred this year in each of our program areas.



## Member Services and Communications

- Satisfaction with NAVREF's member services and communication has increased **by more than 28%** since 2016.
- NAVREF's new website and community forum demonstrated the greatest increase in satisfaction levels from 2017.
- Mr. Starrs **visited 10 NPCs** this year for a **total of 34 NPC visits** in his first 30 months as CEO, gaining valuable insights into NPC operations and local challenges.



## Education

- The NAVREF monthly webinar series included 17 offerings over the last 12 months with average participation of more than 25 members per session.
- The 25th Annual Conference in Las Vegas was a memorable event with highly-rated plenary and breakout sessions.
- The NAVREF Mentorship Committee formed and developed training materials to educate new executive directors and senior staff on unique elements of the VA-NPC environment.



## Revenue Development

- NAVREF coordinated and disseminated 70 study opportunities over the last 12 months.
- NAVREF formed partnerships with three non-profits to donate funds to cover staffing costs for the Clinical Trial Program Coordinator position supporting VA Office of Research & Development.
- NAVREF partnered with the Association of VA Hematology and Oncology (AVAHO) to provide staff support and expertise related to clinical trials in return for financial support.
- By building collaborative partnerships, NAVREF doubled conference sponsorship revenue in 2017, enabling 10 NPCs to attend via scholarship and enhancing conference offerings.

## Top Highlights

- Overall satisfaction with NAVREF has increased by 20% since 2016. 96% of respondents are "very satisfied with our association" and 100% agree NAVREF responds to questions and needs quickly and efficiently.
- Clinical Trial Initiative – NAVREF partnered with VA's Office of Research & Development on a 2-year initiative to increase access to quality clinical trials for veterans; we kicked off the effort by hosting a successful Stakeholder Summit.
- NAVREF joined forces with AVAHO, Cohen Veterans Bioscience, the LUNgevity Foundation, and VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's to enhance Veterans access to clinical trials and establish a clinical trial program coordinator position supporting ORD.



NAVREF Board Chair, Robin Rusconi, and VA CRADO, Dr. Rachel Ramoni, posing at the 25th NAVREF Annual Conference in Las Vegas



Members of the Clinical Trial Steering Committee at the NAVREF office planning next steps for the summit. Pictured from left to right: Krissa Caroff, Rachel Ramoni, Rick Starrs, Grant Huang, Nisha Hall, Karen Jeans

# Program Highlights from 2017-2018



## Member Benefits

- NAVREF negotiated one year of free membership for all NPCs with the Society for Clinical Research Sites
- NAVREF contracted for free distance learning for any interested NPC or VA research administrators or coordinators through ACRP's highly rated eLearning Program
- NAVREF coordinated for reduced rate Executive Coaching services from Brite Dandelion.
- NAVREF offered best practice consultations to help executive directors and boards apply lessons learned and best practices from across the community.
- NAVREF offered personalized grant seeking services using multiple mechanisms to find the most suitable studies.



Picture of the NAVREF awards given out in 2017. Winners included Ms. Priscilla West, Ms. Alanna Caffas, and Mr. Hawk Tran



## Advocacy and Lobbying

- NAVREF is leading "Friends of the VA" lobbying efforts, which last year helped increase VA research appropriations by \$82M and orchestrated two Hill events highlighting VA researchers.
- NAVREF advocacy efforts triggered several improvements to the oversight review process:
  - ◇ Full Board and ED attendance at exit briefings
  - ◇ A two-week period to review and rebut before findings are finalized
  - ◇ A mechanism to provide anonymous feedback and comments on your review experience.
  - ◇ A formal review of the scope of VA oversight reviews.
- NAVREF advocacy efforts generated ongoing consideration and discussion regarding the role of NPCs in administering NIH and other federal awards.



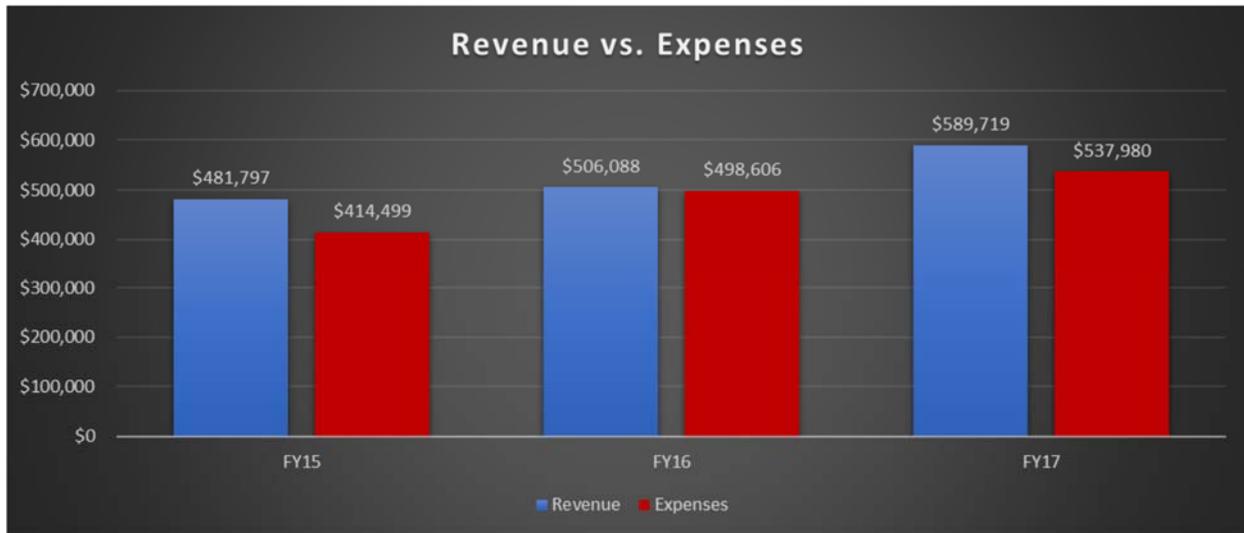
NAVREF Board Chair, Ms. Robin Rusconi, talking with Matt Shick from the Association of American Medical Colleges after testifying at a House VA Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee hearing on May 17, 2018.



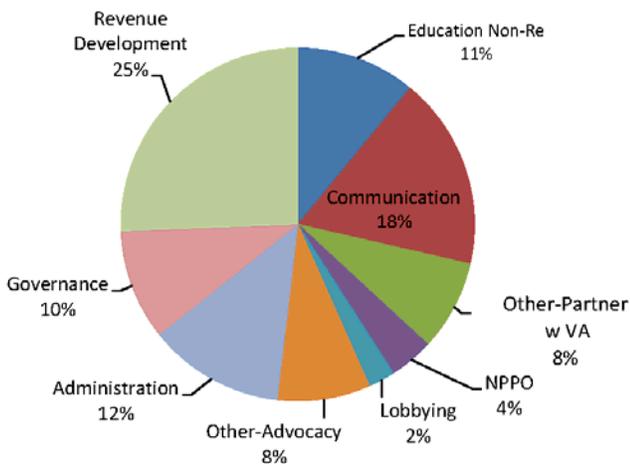
## NAVREF STAFF

We're a small organization with a tight knit team! In addition to NAVREF CEO, Mr. Rick Starrs, the organization is supported by two additional full-time staff members: Ms. Krissa Caroff, Clinical Trials Facilitator, and Mr. Hawk Tran, Operations Officer. Their hard work and dedication to Veterans help support our very special and deserving community.

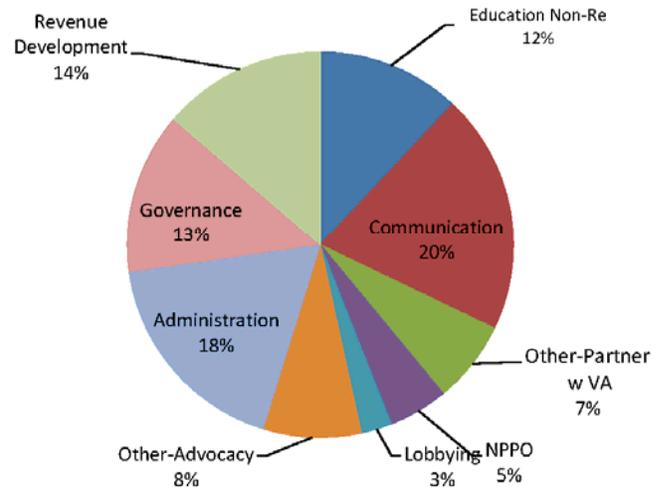
# NAVREF Financials



**Program Allocations  
FY2017**



**Program Allocations  
FY2016**



## On the Horizon For 2018-2019

In July 2018, NAVREF will offer an NPC Training Workshop directed at new executive directors and NPC staff to orient them to the unique world of VA-affiliated nonprofit corporations. NAVREF is proud to continue a new member benefit in conjunction with the Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP); through this arrangement, NAVREF will provide members and affiliates with free e-Learning opportunities through the nation's most trusted provider of education and training for clinical research professionals. NAVREF will begin pursuing a Fundraising Strategy in FY2019 that we hope will lead to new sources of revenue and deliver increased value to the membership, helping to supplement or offset member dues. NAVREF is planning a memorable 26th Anniversary Conference at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City. We will be joined by many ACOS-Rs focused on Teamwork—Partnership--Collaboration! Scholarships will be available to ensure every NPC can attend.