

VA

RESEARCH CURRENTS

Research News from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

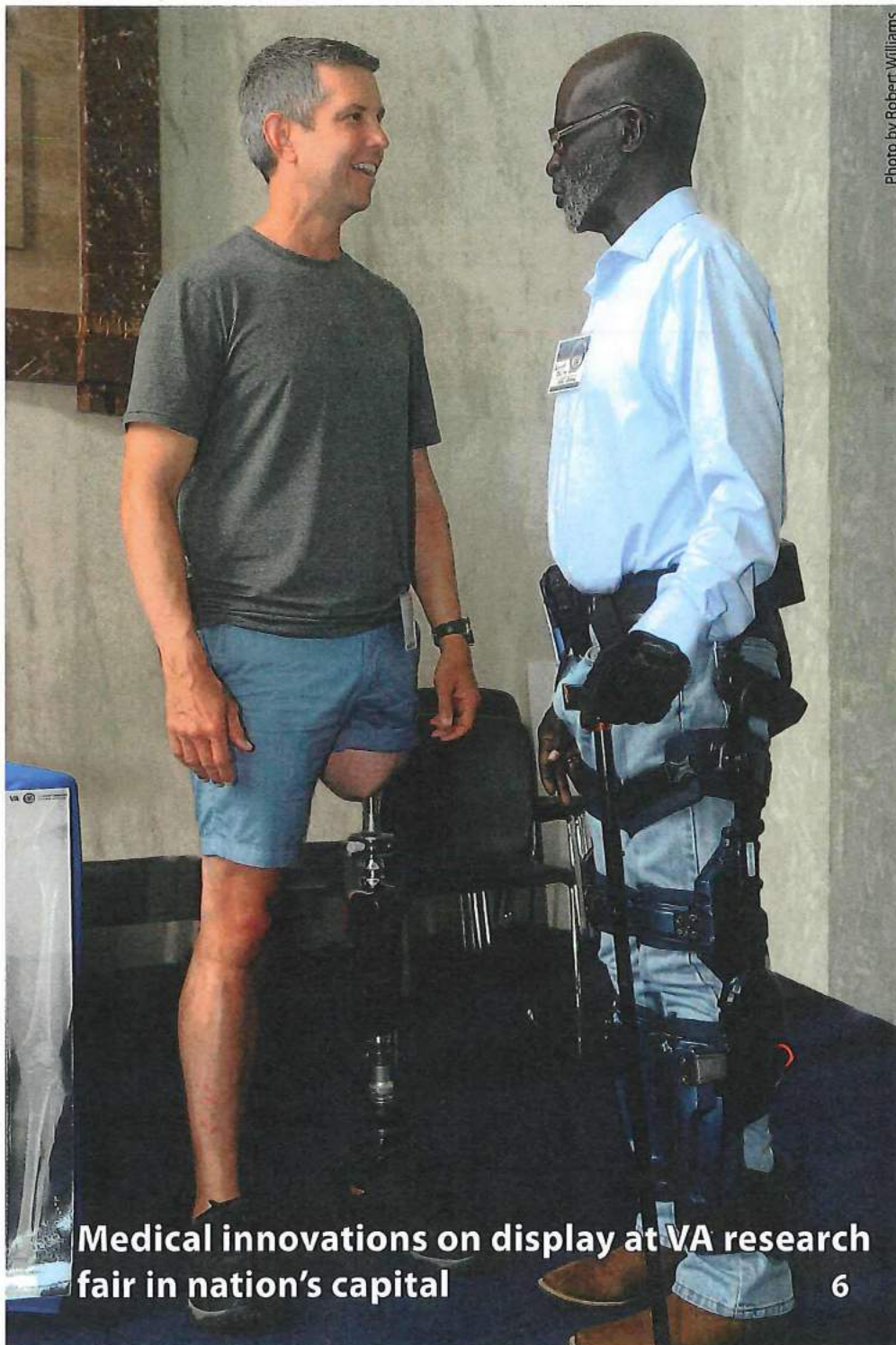


Photo by Robert Williams

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Dr. Rory Cooper (seated) demonstrates the MEBot wheelchair, which can climb curbs.

Medical innovations on display at VA research fair in nation's capital

VA scientists descended on Capitol Hill to showcase medical research advances aimed at improving the lives of Veterans.

More than 20 scientists took part in a VA research fair on June 19, exhibiting a myriad of innovations in the foyer of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

The exhibitions touched on topics that are critical to Veterans: the chronic effects of neurotrauma; VA's Million Veteran Program (genomics); pain and opioid research; PTSD; prosthetics; rehabilitation engineering; spinal cord injury; suicide prevention; technology transfer for VA discoveries; translating research into practice; traumatic brain injury (TBI); VA clinical trials; Vietnam Veterans' research; and female Veterans' research.

Then Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke and then Veterans Health Administration Executive in Charge Dr. Carolyn Clancy, as well as congressional staff members and representatives from Veterans' organizations, were on hand to see the display of VA ingenuity.

"VA research is playing a key role in our efforts to transform health care for the Veterans we serve," Clancy said. "VA research drives the innovations that improve the lives of Veterans, like advanced prostheses, telehealth, and better treatments for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. This is a small sample of the entire population of VA researchers but carefully selected."



A variety of new prosthetic devices were on display at the event.

Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research hosted the event, which was organized by VA's Office of Research and Development. The Friends of VA is a nonprofit group that helps Veterans receive high-quality health care, hosts events that highlight VA's research successes.

VA chief research and development officer Dr. Rachel Ramoni introduced the accomplished group of researchers.

One of the researchers was Dr. Joanne Kirchner. She's a psychiatrist at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System who is involved with the Quality Enhancement Research Initiative, a team-based behavioral health care program.

"This is a very good way to convey the story of what we do as VA researchers," Kirchner said. "This is a better way to answer the questions of the people who are concerned with what's going on with Veterans."

At least three disabled Veterans attended the event to discuss technologies or forms of therapy that they are involved with through VA research.

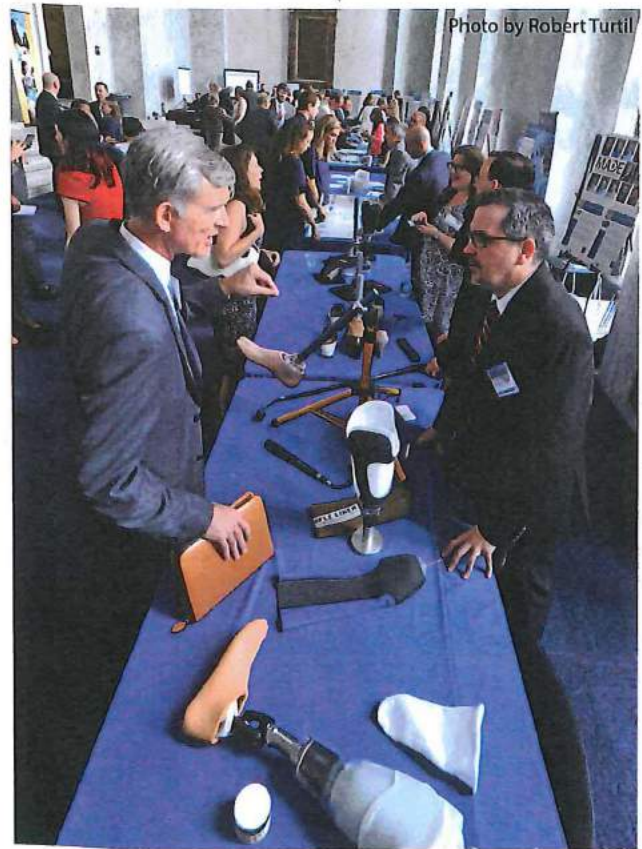
Navy Veteran Joseph Bailey Jr., demonstrated use of a powered walking assistance device called the Keeogo. The device can only be used by people with some walking ability. Bailey, who has spinal stenosis, said he can walk up and down inclines and run in short steps while using the Keeogo.

Army Veteran Millard Landis spoke about his participation in a VA study that examines whether

a mindfulness training program provided as part of routine diabetes care helps to alleviate anxiety and improve diabetes outcomes. Landis, who has Type 2 diabetes, said the program has helped keep his blood sugar level down by eliminating stress. He described it as a form of meditation.

Landis takes part in the mindfulness program at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. He praised the VA for what it has to offer.

"I'm proud of the treatment that I've gotten at the Pittsburgh VA hospital," Landis told the crowd. "I don't think anything needs to be fixed in the VA system. I think people should just continue to pay attention to it and believe in it."



Dr. Andrew Hansen (right) is a prosthetics researcher at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.