

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System <http://www.northflorida.va.gov/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 10, 2017

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Gainesville VA scientist recognized by White House as one of nation's best

Joshua Yarrow, PhD, a VA research health scientist specializing in physiology and kinesiology, was named by President Obama this week as one of 102 scientists and researchers selected to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers.

“I congratulate these outstanding scientists and engineers on their impactful work,” President Obama said. “These innovators are working to help keep the United States on the cutting edge, showing that Federal investments in science lead to advancements that expand our knowledge of the world around us and contribute to our economy.”

According to a White House press release, “The Presidential Early Career Awards highlight the key role that the Administration places in encouraging and accelerating American innovation to grow our economy and tackle our greatest challenges. This year’s recipients are employed or funded by the following departments and agencies: Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution, and the Intelligence Community. These departments and agencies join together annually to nominate the most meritorious scientists and engineers whose early accomplishments show the greatest promise for assuring America’s preeminence in science and engineering and contributing to the awarding agencies’ missions.”

Yarrow, who has been with the VA since 2009 and serves as an assistant scientist at the University of Florida, was one of only three scientists from across the VA to be tapped for the prestigious award. Yarrow’s research is funded by the VA and focuses broadly on determining how the nervous and endocrine systems interact with musculoskeletal tissue to regulate bone and muscle maintenance in adulthood. His team is currently conducting the second phase of a randomized clinical trial evaluating the safety/efficacy of testosterone plus finasteride therapy on neuromuscular function and metabolic health in men with ambulatory dysfunction

subsequent to motor-incomplete spinal cord injury (SCI). If successful, the research has the potential to significantly improve quality of life for Veterans and non-veterans with SCI.

“I am truly humbled to be selected as a recipient of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers,” Yarrow said. “This award reflects largely on the mentorship that I received from Drs. Stephen Borst, Thomas Wronski, and Prodip Bose; the dedication of my lab members, including Ms. Christine Conover and others; the support provided by VA and the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System; and the guidance of my collaborators and colleagues at VA and the University of Florida. My hope is that this award raises awareness of Veterans’ health issues and of the important role that VA Research Service plays in addressing these concerns.”

The awards, established by President Clinton in 1996, are coordinated by the Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President. Awardees are selected for their pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology and their commitment to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education, or community outreach.

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