

## Plenary Session Speaker Bios

**Mindy L. Aisen, MD**  
**Deputy Chief Research and Development (R&D) Officer**  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**

Mindy L. Aisen, M.D. became the Deputy Chief R&D Officer (CRADO) in May 2003. She was appointed the Director of VA Rehabilitation R&D Service September 1998 and assumed the additional role of Director of Technology Transfer for the Office of R&D in February 2000. As Deputy CRADO, she is the chief operating officer of a \$1.2 billion research organization that operates in more than 110 locations nation-wide. She is committed to improving the quality of life of veterans through a wide spectrum of research activities including bench research, studies on amputation, spinal cord injury, vision impairment, hearing loss and disabilities associated with aging. She has expanded the traditional borders of rehabilitation research to include, not only areas which can increase functional independence through compensatory strategies, but areas which can lead to genuine functional restoration; neural regeneration, cognitive rehabilitation and pharmacological approaches.

VA's rehabilitation research program includes an intramural program of investigator-initiated research, twelve Rehabilitation R&D Centers of Excellence across the country, and the *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, of which Dr. Aisen is Editor-in-Chief. Under Dr. Aisen's leadership the entire VA Research and Development Technology Transfer program has grown and taken on an increasingly active role in assuring that medical discoveries, including orphan technologies, do in fact move from "bench to bedside".

Dr. Aisen received her undergraduate degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She completed her residency at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center before joining The Burke Rehabilitation Center to serve as the Director of Spinal Cord Injury Service in 1987. Prior to her work at Burke, Dr. Aisen was an attending Neurologist with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Multiple Sclerosis Research and Training Center. She also was Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology and Rehabilitation at Cornell University Medical College. She is board certified in neurology and neurorehabilitation.

Dr. Aisen has been a member of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation since 1994 and currently served as President of that society from 2001 - 2003. In addition, she has served as Chair of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation Research Committee (1994-1998), Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Neurologic Rehabilitation* (1995-1998), member Scientific Advisory Board of Paralyzed Veterans of America (1997-1999) and member Grant Review Panel, National Multiple Sclerosis Society (1997-2000). In 2004 she was elected fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering.

# Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop

## **Robert L. Ruff MD, PhD**

**Acting Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service  
Department of Veterans Affairs**

R. Louis Ruff, M.D., Ph.D. is a neurologist and biophysicist who is interested in Neuro-Rehabilitation. He is board-certified in Neurology and Spinal Cord Medicine. He received his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Washington. He is a Professor of Neurology, and vice-Chair of the Neurology Department at Case Western Reserve University. He was Chief of the Spinal Cord Injury & Dysfunction Service at the Louis Stokes Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Cleveland. He was the Medical Director of the FES Center in Cleveland, which is a VA Rehab Research Center of Excellence. Dr. Ruff is the Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*. Dr. Ruff was the Associate Editor of the journal *Neurology* from 1994 through 1996. He is also on the Editorial Board of *Muscle & Nerve*.

## **John G. Demakis, MD**

**Director, Health Services Research and Development Service  
Department of Veterans Affairs**

Dr. Demakis is a graduate of the University of Illinois School of Medicine in 1962. He did his residency in internal medicine and fellowship in cardiology at the Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

Dr. Demakis served as Assistant Chief of Medical Service at the Hines VA Hospital from 1972-1976. In 1976, he became one of the first Associate Chiefs of Staff for Ambulatory Care in the VA also at Hines. He served in this capacity for the next 18 years. He also served on the National Field Advisory Group for Ambulatory Care for 14 years.

In 1982, Dr. Demakis became the first director of the Midwest Center for Health Services and Policy Research. He served in this capacity until 1998 when he accepted the position of National Director of the Health Services Research and Development Service. He also served as co-Director of the Center for Cooperative Studies in Health Services at Hines and Acting ACOS for Research and Education also at the Hines VAMC.

Dr. Demakis is a professor of medicine at the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine of Chicago. His research interests have included primary care and ambulatory care and data base systems. Most recently he was principal investigator of a large cooperative trial evaluating the effectiveness of computerized guidelines in VA general medical clinics.

He has also been involved with the development and evaluation of the VA's National Surgical Quality Improvement Program.

# Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop

**Paul F. Pasquina, MD, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army**  
**Chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation**  
**Walter Reed Army Medical Center**

Dr. Pasquina is board-certified in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation as well as Pain Medicine and Electrodiagnostic Medicine. He is also fellowship trained in Sports Medicine. He received his military commission from the United States Military Academy at West Point and Medical Education at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. He is currently the Residency Program Director and Chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at WRAMC. He also serves as the Medical Director for the Amputee Care Program and Director of the 3-D Motion Analysis Lab at WRAMC.

Dr. Pasquina has published multiple articles and book chapters ranging from sports medicine to graduate medical education. His research interests are varied, however, currently are focused on injured soldiers returning from combat. In addition to his clinical and teaching activities, he has served as Chairman of the Performance Improvement Committee and as the Physician Advisor to the U.S. Army North Atlantic Regional Command for Performance Improvement and Risk Management. In this capacity he has helped to develop several Institutional Policies promoting patient safety and patient rights.

**Joseph M. Czerniecki, MD**  
**Associate Director, VA Research Center of Excellence in Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetic Engineering**  
**Professor of Rehabilitation**  
**University of Washington Department of Rehabilitation Medicine**

Dr. Czerniecki completed his medical school training at the University of British Columbia, Canada and his residency training at the University of Washington, in Seattle. He is a board certified specialist in both Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, as well as Electrodiagnostic medicine. He is a clinical expert in the rehabilitation of the amputee and is currently the Co-Director of the Preservation Amputation Care Team at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle. He has been invited both nationally and internationally to present on many different facets of amputee rehabilitation. He has participated in editorial functions of a number of medical journals as well as in grant review panel functions for the NIH and NSF.

He is a Professor of Rehabilitation at the University of Washington, and the Associate Director of the VA Research Center of Excellence in Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetic Engineering, the only VA funded research center that deals with enhancing our understanding of issues that contribute to amputation risk in individuals with diabetes as well as the care and rehabilitation of individuals with amputation. In addition to research center funding he has been the PI or Co-PI on a number of federal grant awards. His research interests primarily involve the enhancement of amputee function through understanding of the biomechanics of prosthetic components.

# Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop

## **Frederick Downs, Jr.**

**Chief Consultant, Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service Strategic Health Care Group  
Department of Veterans Affairs**

Frederick Downs, Jr., is the Chief Consultant of the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service, Strategic Health Care Group, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Headquarters, Washington, D.C. He manages a nationwide \$752 million program that furnishes assistive aids and services to 1.5 million veterans with disabilities including spinal cord injury, blindness, traumatic brain injury, amputations, and all other physical disabilities VA-wide.

In addition to his VA duties, Fred has worked on special assignments for the Department of Defense and the Agency for International Development (AID) to develop prosthetic projects in areas of civil conflict. He has made numerous trips to Mexico, Egypt, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. From 1987 to 1992, he was a key member of the humanitarian team established by General John W. Vessey, Jr. Presidential Envoy to Vietnam on POW/MIA Affairs.

Fred received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration (1970) and Masters in Business Administration (1971) from the University of Denver. Fred was in the U.S. Army from 1966 through 1969 where he served as a platoon leader in Vietnam.

Fred was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at Fort Benning Infantry School in October 1985. In 1994, he was the recipient of the Citation of a Layman for Distinguished Service, the highest award the American Medical Association bestows on a non-physician. In March 1997 he received the University of Denver Alumni of the Year Award.

## **Robert S. Gailey, PhD, PT**

**Associate Professor, Department of Physical Therapy  
University of Miami School of Medicine**

Dr. Gailey is an Associate Professor at the University of Miami, School of Medicine, Department of Physical Therapy where he has taught, practiced clinically and conducted research for the past 20 years. He has authored numerous publications and has continued research efforts directed toward: evidenced based amputee rehabilitation, the biomechanics and metabolic cost of prosthetic gait, functional assessment and athletic pursuits of the amputee as well as other athletes with disabilities across the life span. He remains active with many organizations including the Amputee Coalition of America and the American Physical Therapy Association. He also participated as a member of the United States Disabled Sports Medial Team in several World Championship and Paralympic Games and continues to work with some of the most elite athletes with disabilities from around the world.

# Traumatic Amputation QUERI Workshop

## **Brian S. Mittman, PhD**

**Acting Associate Director, Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI)  
Department of Veterans Affairs**

Brian S. Mittman, PhD, is a Senior Social Scientist at the VA HSR&D Center of Excellence in Los Angeles, the Center for the Study of Healthcare Provider Behavior, and a Visiting Professor in the Department of Health Services at the UCLA School of Public Health. Since September 2002, he has served as Acting Associate Director of the VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI). Dr. Mittman's training includes a Master's Degree in Sociology from Stanford University and PhD in Organizational Behavior from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. His research interests focus on system- and practitioner-targeted methods for clinical quality improvement, including clinical practice guideline implementation and the design and implementation of innovative models for care delivery. Dr. Mittman's teaching experience includes Masters, Doctoral, and Executive education courses at the UCLA Anderson School of Management, UCLA School of Public Health, UCSD School of Medicine, and the RAND Graduate School of Policy Studies. These courses cover topics ranging from general organization and management, to strategic management, quality improvement and technology assessment in healthcare.

## **Mark Helfand, MD, MS**

**Staff Physician, Portland VA Medical Center  
Director, AHRQ Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center  
Oregon Health & Science University**

Dr. Helfand received his MD and MPH degrees from the University of Illinois School of Medicine in 1984. He then completed a residency in internal medicine, a fellowship in health services research, and an MS degree at Stanford University School of Medicine. Dr. Helfand is board-certified in internal medicine and in critical care. He has been a staff physician at the Portland VAMC since 1990. Dr. Helfand has been a member of the national VA Clinical Practice Guidelines Council since its inception, and served as a member of the VA-DOD Guidelines Council for 3 years.

Dr. Helfand's research interests include cancer screening, diagnostic technology assessment, clinical prediction rules, practice-based research networks, and therapeutic drug evaluations. He also has a longstanding interest in trauma care. From 1990-1995 he served as a co-investigator and research methodologist on a series of CDC-funded studies of rural trauma care systems. Since 1997 Dr. Helfand has directed the AHRQ-designated Evidence-based Practice Center at Oregon Health Sciences University and affiliated institutions, including the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research and the Portland VAMC. The Oregon EPC has conducted systematic reviews to support clinical practice guidelines from the US Preventive Services Task Force, Institute of Medicine, and the National Institutes of Health. EPC reports have also been used to develop research agendas by several agencies. In 1998 and 1999, under his direction, the Oregon EPC prepared evidence reports on rehabilitation for traumatic brain injury in adults and children.