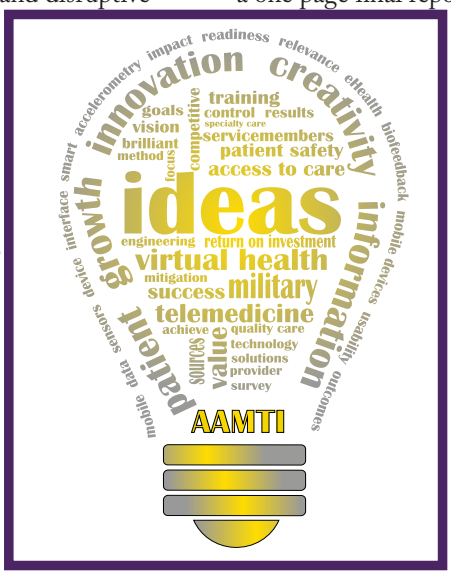
AAMTI RIF: In Search of Cutting Edge Innovation

The AMEDD Advanced Medical Technology Initiative (AAMTI) is continuously seeking innovation. What is the definition of innovation? According to the Merriam Webster, it is "a new idea, method, or device." The business dictionary states that "innovation involves deliberate application of information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources." As the availability of new and disruptive technologies flood the market at ever-increasing speed, a nimble and focused method of identifying and demonstrating technologies and their impact on cost, access, quality, and safety of care (and medical readiness) becomes imperative. Determining how to accumulate crucial information on the latest innovations, evaluate them in a meaningful way and in turn, provide actionable information on the latest medical technologies, is the constant quest of the AAMTI program.



The AAMTI program has under gone a reassessment in the last year and will undergo realignment in the next year. The program was developed in 2000 and managed by TATRC, to support entrepreneurship and innovation within the AMEDD, by providing a funding path for small scale evaluations of great ideas, processes and products that come directly from military and civilian personnel in our medical treatment facilities. Supported by the Defense Health Program Operation and Maintenance funding the AAMTI program is not for research evaluations, but for the piloting of existing, commercial off-the-shelf technologies and government off-the-shelf products in AMEDD facilities. The AAMTI program fills the void between large scale acquisition efforts and traditional small scale research in that it allows for products that have been previously proven valuable in the civilian sector to be piloted within a unique military environment. Traditionally, the AAMTI program funded 20-25 projects per year that were around $250,000 or less, with each project having an 18-month evaluation cycle. Transitioning those great ideas into wide-spread adoption of products or processes has been the greater challenge.

In 2017, the AAMTI program, introduced the Rapid Innovation Fund (RIF) program as an optional program to the traditional AAMTI-funded projects. Unlike the traditional AAMTI projects, the AAMTI RIFs support projects that are under $35,000 and must be completed in 6 months or less. Because the traditional AAMTI projects allowed for an 18-month window of execution, traditional AAMTI projects did not provide information quickly enough on the technology forefront. The compressed assessment and reporting schedule that the RIF-funded projects provide, allow for distributable and actionable information in a much more opportune timetable.

Last year, the AAMTI program funded 15 Rapid Innovation Fund projects worth over $400,000, with each of the funded projects all under $35,000. Each funded project is required to provide a one page final report within 6 months of award, providing the uniqueness of the technology, methods of evaluation and recommendations for wider adoption or further evaluation in the AMEDD. Unlike the traditional AAMTI program, the RIF model gives a stronger chance of getting cutting-edge, innovative ideas expeditiously into the hands of leadership with its 6-month evaluation component. A great example of an AAMTI-funded project is the Moulage Tattoo project featured on page 8 of TATRC Times. This was the very first AAMTI funded RIF project, and is a shining example of what can be accomplished at the $35K price point by enthusiastic and creative innovators.

In the upcoming year, the AAMTI program has set an ambitious goal, which is to fund 80 RIF projects. One page summaries of the findings of each of the funded AAMTI RIF projects will be available for leadership in an e-book format. These summaries will also be available to AAMTI submitters to prevent duplication of future efforts.

As a reminder, AAMTI RIF projects must support the overall original intent of the AAMTI program by demonstrating advanced medical technologies and their impact on cost, access, quality, and safety of care and / or medical readiness. These AAMTI RIF projects provide senior AMEDD leadership with medical tech-watch capabilities on the newest products that are commercially available on the market today and continue to encourage medical technology entrepreneurship by our leading innovators at our military medical treatment facilities. Shifting the AAMTI program to a rapid innovation model provides improved reporting on cutting edge technologies, fills the void between acquisition and research and promotes products that should be recommended for further evaluation or adoption at a larger scale.

If you have a great idea and want to apply for AAMTI RIF support, more information can be found at www.tatrc.org under the AAMTI Program. The AAMTI Program POC is Ms. Holly Pavliscsak who can be reached at holly.h.pavliscsak.ctr@mail.mil or 240-566-2378.