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'MEET THE NETCCNS' –
THE NINE CLINICAL, TECHNICAL TEAMS FORGING THE FUTURE OF
TELE-CRITICAL CARE FOR COVID-19 AND BEYOND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Through the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium, Other Transaction Authority, the Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center has awarded nine teams for Phase 1 of the NETCCN project, which commenced on June 15, 2020. The Request for Prototype Proposal was posted on March 30th, and received 78 extended whitepaper submissions. These submissions were down-selected to sixteen and then ultimately nine within a noteworthy 14 days. This first of its kind, MTEC proposal vehicle calls for additional, subsequent, milestone-driven down-selects beyond the initial award phase based on vetted deliverables. Through a well-planned, step-wise approach, the NETCCN project has funded an initial Phase 1 cohort of nine teams consisting of healthcare organizations and technology vendors to rapidly, iteratively, and collaboratively prototype, test, and refine tele-critical care and data visualization solutions to support local, regional, and ultimately national COVID-19 care and situational awareness. Project kickoff occurred within a week of award, with the initial deliverables due within 15 days of kickoff. This unprecedented turnaround time on RPP submission reviews, award, and project execution has required enormous effort, and partnership, between TATRC, MTEC, and our agency partners.

"COVID-19 presents a situation where critical care resources can be overwhelmed by patient volume. Even if enough equipment is made available, there are not enough critical care trained clinicians to manage all of the critically ill patients during a national emergency, especially in rural and austere locations. The NETCCN project seeks to deliver this capability from anywhere to anywhere leveraging our existing mobile networks," said COL Jeremy Pamplin, TATRC Director.

TATRC Science Director, Mr. Matt Quinn, also sees the value of this innovative program and stated, "The COVID pandemic is stressing our healthcare system in many ways we've never seen before. There are simply not enough qualified clinicians and other staff where we need them. We called on the Nation to propose platforms to address this fundamental challenge. The path ahead will be challenging, but we are proud to be working together to contribute our part in the fight against COVID-19."

About the Nine Awardees for Phase 1:

Avera Health (https://www.avera.org/)

Avera eCARE, based in Sioux Falls, S.D, offers one of the largest and most comprehensive virtual health networks in the world – partnering with health care systems, rural hospitals, outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities, assisted livings, schools, correctional facilities across 32 states. Avera eCARE services span the entire inpatient and outpatient continuum, including tele-critical care coverage of 300 ICU beds and virtual support of 190 emergency rooms in their critical care delivery. Avera eCARE has teamed with ViTel Net, a telehealth technology leader for over 30 years. ViTel Net's platform delivers care across the continuum – from patient homes for COVID-19 population management to ICU beds in both rural and field hospitals for delivery of critical care expertise. Together, they are developing a full service clinical telemedicine platform to seamlessly partner with bedside caregivers in the delivery of critical care, across a variety of settings. The browser-based teleconsultation and documentation technology will make best use of limited resources in austere environments, and use standardized protocols and communication tools to reduce care variability and improve outcomes.

Deloitte Consulting, LLP (https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en.html)

Led by Srini Attili and Shaun Rangappa, MD of Deloitte Consulting, Team Deloitte brings extensive technical and clinical experience in designing, delivering, and scaling mission-critical healthcare and government systems. The success of NETCCN is heavily dependent on rapidly delivery of proven commercial products. Hence, Team Deloitte has integrated multiple partners in providing its proposed solution. Team Deloitte understands the criticality of NETCCN and its life-saving significance. The team is built to rapidly execute on the NETCCN vision and help pave the road to NETCCN initiation and maturity.

Expressions Network, LLC (https://expr.net/)

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that surges of patients can quickly overwhelm healthcare infrastructure, including facilities and healthcare professionals. A national telehealth network is required to support and extend critical healthcare expertise and provide an immediate digital outreach of triage and healthcare to patients and potential patients in order to fill critical resource gaps in the broad spectrum of healthcare specialties in areas heavily impacted by surging healthcare demands. Expression Networks, and project team members Mercy and Active Innovations, will rapidly deploy a proven mobile application for patient monitoring and communication with virtual clinical resources that can monitor, navigate and treat patients in any environment. The NETCCN demonstration will show the scalability, flexibility, and availability of the multi-tier virtual care system operating in a live environment with hundreds of patients and providers throughout the United States.

The Geneva Foundation (https://genevausa.org/)

The Geneva Foundation and the Telemedical Research for Operational Support program of Madigan Army Medical Center will create the Disaster Telemedicine Response System, a distributed, comprehensive tele-critical care system. Under the direction of Principal Investigator, LTC Christopher Colombo, they have assembled a diverse team of multi-disciplinary experts with collaborators at DocBox Inc., Omnicure Inc., Massachusetts General Hospital's Medical Device Interoperability and Cybersecurity Program, and the Society of Critical Care Medicine. DISTRESS represents a solution for clinical, informational, technical, training and deployment aspects of NETCCN, developing a comprehensive, modular, and flexible NETCCN framework with a near patient, local, regional, and national TCC infrastructure to provide urgently needed assistance during natural disasters, mass casualty events or other medical emergencies.

Oregon Health and Science University (https://www.ohsu.edu/)

OHSU will expand its existing virtual intensive care unit platform to establish the new emergency critical care network. "This will allow us to lead the effort in Oregon to connect rural areas to the expertise in our academic health center through easily deployable technology," said Matthias Merkel, M.D., OHSU senior associate chief medical officer for capacity management and patient flow. OHSU leaders envision developing the platform so that OHSU can use it to help manage critically ill patients in far-flung areas across Oregon during a disaster and adding to the expanding options with OHSU virtual critical care. "Perhaps the greatest power of digital in health care is its ability to give clinicians the right patient information they need, when and how they need it," said Anders Wold, president and chief executive officer of GE Health Care Clinical Care Solutions. "If there's another natural disaster or a pandemic, we'll have this national critical care network available to be used by FEMA or the Department of Defense," said David Zonies, M.D., associate chief medical officer for critical care services at OHSU.

Medical University of South Carolina (https://web.musc.edu/) fergush@musc.edu

Portable Remote Operational Wireless Enabled Surge Specialist ICU, the approach recommended by a team skilled in bioinformatics, telehealth, and critical care experts at the Medical University of South Carolina, is designed to scale and create a coordinated system of care for patients with COVID-19 that is integrated tightly within regional health care networks. Prowess-ICU will provide comprehensive solutions to addressing COVID-19 surge capacity, from remote home monitoring of those who test positive up to austere and advanced ICUs for sicker patients. Dr. Dee Ford also sees the potential innovation possibilities. "How we would deploy a thousand beds in a major urban center is an important component of any COVID-19 response. But equally important is how we would deploy eight or twelve beds in a rural underserved community to make sure its members are getting the support they need. We've been intentional about how we think through those kinds of health disparities issues."

Philips North America (https://www.usa.philips.com/)

Philips North America's Corporate Technologies group conducts R&D and partners with outside groups to feed the development pipeline for the other units. "To ensure that we are advancing healthcare delivery to every corner of our country, while ensuring we are prepared in times of national crisis, public-private partnerships with forward thinking agencies are crucial," said Vitor Rocha, Chief Market Leader for Philips North America. "Through programs such as NETCCN, we can extend care to where it is needed most, when it is needed most."

Unissant, Inc (https://www.unissant.us/)

Unissant is a data-driven and cyber security services provider with expertise in healthcare and health IT, finance, national security, and energy. The company delivers innovative solutions to assist government agencies and private sector businesses in tackling their biggest challenges. "This is a critical national effort," said Kenneth Bonner, President of Unissant. "Our cloud-based solution, utilizing an existing COTS solution from IseeYouCare, will bring high-quality data-driven critical care capability from anywhere to anywhere during a national disaster, whether to the bedside at a healthcare facility, field hospital, gymnasium or home." Per Robert E. Higgs, Founder and CEO of ISeeYouCare, "ISeeYouCare has been preparing for this very moment for a decade or more. We stand ready to answer the call to serve our country on this all-important mission."

University of Pittsburgh (https://www.pitt.edu/)

UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh bring together a unique combination of technology developers, intensive care providers, and thought leaders in acute care delivery. Building off a highly-successful platform developed to support the UPMC Health System and hospitals in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team will rapidly develop, deploy, and test a novel web-based application for use in the NETCCN while also outlining detailed plans for a scalable interdisciplinary critical care staffing model for use in the system. "As we continue to fight COVID-19, we must also prepare for future national emergencies. We look forward to identifying innovative ways to bring critical care to remote communities across our country so they have access to care when they need it most," said Jeremy Kahn, M.D., M.S., professor of critical care medicine and health policy and management, University of Pittsburgh Division of Critical Care Medicine.

The NETCCN Sponsors Office Technical Representative (SOTR) is Ms. Jeanette Little from TATRC.

About TATRC
U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command's Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center is engaged in essential medical research focused on advanced medical technologies and is dedicated to bringing innovative telehealth solutions to the Warfighter and the Military Health System. TATRC fosters research on health informatics, telemedicine/m-Health, medical training systems and computational biology to address gaps in DOD medical research programs and military healthcare. For more information on TATRC, please visit: https://www.tatrc.org/www/resources/covid-19.html.

About the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium
The Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium is an enterprise partnership in collaboration with industry and academia to facilitate research and development activities, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command and other DOD agencies in the biomedical sciences (including but not limited to drugs, biologics, vaccines, medical software and medical devices) to protect, treat and optimize the health and performance of U.S. military personnel. For more information on MTEC, please visit: https://www.mtec-sc.org/.