



News Release:

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**HHS and MRDC-TATRC Partner to Forge the Future of Telehealth
Cloud-based Technology to Support National COVID-19 Surge Response, Future Disaster Operations**

For Immediate Release – October 22, 2020

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command’s (USAMRDC) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) have established a four-year memorandum of understanding (MOA) to fund the acceleration and scale up of “anywhere to anywhere” National Emergency Tele-Critical Care Network (NETCCN). The telehealth platform will be deployed immediately as part of COVID-19 operational support in U.S. hotspots.

The agreement between HHS’ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and DoD’s U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command’s Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) provides \$45 million in initial funding for the transition of the NETCCN platform from a TATRC research and development effort to an ASPR-led operational deployment solution.

NETCCN is a cloud-based, low-resource, stand-alone health information management system that facilitates coordination of flexible and extendable “virtual critical care wards.”

Based on cellular communication networks, mobile technologies and cloud computing, NETCCN teams consist of critical care clinicians and technology partners who are collaboratively developing cloud-based, low-resource, stand-alone health information management systems for the creation and coordination of flexible and extendable “virtual critical care wards.” These high acuity, virtual wards bring high-quality critical care capability to nearly every bedside, be it healthcare facilities, field hospitals, or other locations that lack adequate critical care expertise and resources necessary for care of severe COVID-19 illnesses.

“NETCCN represents the future of disaster response and, for that matter, healthcare,” said Dr. Robert Kadlec, HHS’ Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. “In the past, not having enough critical care specialists or other qualified clinicians to provide care in a large-scale emergency required physical deployment of clinicians to where they were needed. Adding virtual care solutions to our response portfolio accelerates and expands our ability to respond to hot spots and defeat COVID-19 as well as other future emergencies.”

The MOA announced today between ASPR and TATRC is effective through September 28, 2024. The agreement also creates a collaborative partnership between ASPR and TATRC for studying and improving the impact of digital health applications that support disaster healthcare.

“TATRC and the military have extensive experience in delivering care and virtual care to frontline caregivers on the battlefield and in the most austere conditions. This partnership not only brings this experience to the fight against COVID, but establishes a learning ecosystem through which we can apply lessons learned to advance our national response capabilities and care for our soldiers around the globe,” said BG Michael Talley, Commanding General of MRDC.

About TATRC:

U.S. Army's Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center's (TATRC) 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 HHS, ASPR, and NDMS:

HHS works to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans, providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services. The mission of ASPR is to save lives and protect Americans from 21st century health security threats. Within ASPR, NDMS provides health and health-related services in response to disasters and military contingencies. NDMS deploys medical response teams, coordinates response logistics, provides patient movement and tracking, and partners with the civilian healthcare system to provide definitive care.

For more information on ASPR and NDMS, please visit: <https://www.phe.gov/about/aspr/Pages/default.aspx>.