

## Partnership forged with Mann Foundation to advance BION<sup>®</sup> technology

Rehabilitation is both transforming and expanding as a science, where cutting edge micro- and nanotechnology may, indeed, be the new assistive technology. This is why Rehabilitation Research and Development (RR&D) Service is pleased to announce a newly formed partnership with the Alfred E. Mann Foundation (AMF) to explore BION<sup>®</sup> technology, a wireless and implantable microstimulator, and the potential it holds for rehabilitation. This is an exciting opportunity to merge platform technology and clinical research to enhance the quality of rehabilitation and make available cutting-edge therapies to veterans.

AMF, a nonprofit corporation based in California, advances medical innovations. They have made major technological contributions to numerous assistive devices and therapies including Cochlear implants, neuromuscular stimulation, and long-life cardiac pacing systems.

### **BION Technology**

A BION, about the size of a grain of rice, is programmed externally. The microchip delivers digitally controlled and regulated pulses that interact with the muscular system, activating nerves.

A BION, because of its size, can be implanted by injection by any physician in an outpatient setting, reducing clinical costs. BIONs also have numerous benefits for the veteran population, including decreased risk of infection, skin breakdown, or tissue damage. BIONs hold the promise to improve functioning in veterans receiving rehabilitation services for motor rehabilitation, bowel and bladder control, swallowing and vocal control difficulties, cardiorespiratory conditioning, pain control, and prevention of deep vein thrombosis.

### **Solicitation for Proposals**

The RR&D Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, will review proposals for BION research during the July 2003 merit review. Principal and coprincipal investigators must have PhD and/or MD degrees and hold at least a five-eighths VA appointment. Awards are capped at \$250,000 for up to three years. For more information on submission of BION proposals, contact Danielle M. Kerkovich, PhD, by email at [Danielle@vard.org](mailto:Danielle@vard.org) or call 202-254-0258.

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