



# NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE

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## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST DISCUSSES PIONEERING INNOVATION IN VIRTUAL REALITY THERAPY FOR NEW MUSEUM EXHIBITION

**May 16, 2012, Silver Spring, Md.:** Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCIA, executive vice president of the Virtual Reality Medical Center, recently shared stories of using virtual reality technology to treat soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, for a new multimedia exhibit installation at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

In a video interview, Wiederhold explained that her organization was originally using virtual reality computer simulation technology to treat patients with phobias, panic disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder from being involved in motor vehicle accidents. However when soldiers began being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, the technology was adapted to not only treat soldiers coming back from the battlefields, but also to prepare troops getting ready to go into battle.

“With innovations we’ve done a very good job with body armor,” she said. “But we haven’t done as good a job with mental armor. So we need to mentally prepare the patient for what they’re going to face when they go into the battlefield.”

She said virtual reality technology has been used in behavioral health care for the last 15 years by groups around the world. In the case of treating a soldier, the technology works through the use of a pair of virtual reality goggles that let the patient either see a situation they have encountered before or a situation they could experience while on the battlefield. Wiederhold is also a clinical psychologist and president of the Interactive Media Institute.

Wiederhold was the recipient of the 11th Annual Satava Award at the 2005 [Medicine Meets Virtual Reality](#) (MMVR) conference. MMVR serves as an international forum for physicians, computer scientists and educators to present research on data-centered solutions to health care problems. Dr. Wiederhold was honored for her continuous effort to further the application of advanced technologies and Virtual Reality (VR) for patient care.

“The Museum collects items from all of the recipients of the Satava Award, named for Richard Satava, M.D., F.A.C.S., as they represent the vision, commitment and accomplishments of entire communities of researchers pushing the boundaries of applying computational resources to medicine and health care,” said Adrienne Noe, NMHM director.

Virtual reality goggles are paired with Wiederhold’s interview in the Museum’s new multimedia installation, which features video interviews from doctors, researchers and veterans describing the challenges they have met in their careers and on the battlefield, and the ongoing innovation that is at the very core of military medicine. As each interviewee speaks, an object associated with their work will be illuminated. The multimedia installation was developed by the National Museum of Health and Medicine and GTOO Media, a Silver Spring, Md.-based firm that specializes in exhibit media design services. GTOO is partnered with Gallagher & Associates, a museum planning and design firm with offices also located in Silver Spring, Md., which designed the Museum’s new exhibit installation.

### About the National Museum of Health and Medicine

- The National Museum of Health and Medicine, a Department of Defense museum established in 1862 as the Army Medical Museum, inspires interest in and promotes the understanding of medicine—past, present, and future—with a special emphasis on tri-service American military medicine. As a National Historic Landmark recognized for its ongoing value to the health of the military and to the nation, the Museum identifies, collects, and preserves important and unique resources to support a broad agenda of innovative exhibits, educational programs, and scientific, historical, and medical research. NMHM is located at 2500 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910. For more information, visit [www.nmhm.washingtondc.museum](http://www.nmhm.washingtondc.museum) or call (301) 319-3300.

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