UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

MAY 23 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (HEALTH AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: 2014 Military Health System Research Symposium

I have reviewed the 2014 Military Health System Research Symposium (MHSRS) scheduled for August 18–21, 2014, at the Harbor Beach Marriott in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This is a mission essential conference critical in providing for medical readiness and clinical currency of MHS personnel in combat trauma and operational medicine that requires specialized skills, which are not routinely practiced in-garrison, through lessons learned from war and deployments. This conference provides for active duty physicians to receive close to 40 percent of their required 2-year continuing medical education (CME) credits that are mission essential for readiness and clinical currency. Past MHSRS events have produced many successful medical treatments and innovative research programs for Wounded Warrior, and eventually civilian populations.

I am satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending in excess of $500,000 on this conference is the most cost-effective option to achieve its compelling purpose. Cost savings efforts have included negotiating significantly reduced audio visual costs from past MHSRS events, eliminating conference brochures, negotiating hotel lodging prices below per diem rates, and reducing the number of government attendees.

I therefore grant a waiver of the prohibition on conferences with a cost in excess of $500,000, and authorize continued planning for this event to proceed in accordance with the Department of Defense Conference Guidance dated November 6, 2013. This approval is contingent on your continued efforts to ensure the best use of government funds and adherence with all applicable policy. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that credit card processing fees are reduced to the greatest extent practicable and arrangements with the conference venue be made to accommodate reduced government attendance without penalty to the government.

My point of contact for this matter is Dr. Terry Rauch. Dr. Rauch may be reached at Terry.Rauch@dha.mil or 703-681-8390. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Jessica L. Wright
Acting