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## NEWS & VIEWS

### Joseph H. Lynch

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Chinese general Sun Tzu said, “Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.” Even though The Art of War’s chapter list failed to include “medical research”, the battle for health is a state of conflict in which strategy and tactics are key components for victory.

Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland’s 59th Medical Wing Science and Technology division (59 MDW/ST) is all too familiar with this battle! Providing strategic leadership, clinical investigations, and translational research to advance medical care and capabilities across the global health system are components of the unit’s mission. So, when the unit needed to fill the lead position within its Office of Research and Technology Applications (ORTA) in 2018, choosing an avid chess player who was well-versed in tactical strategy was a no-brainer. Enter Joseph Lynch.

Lynch is a retired Air Force Medical Service Corps Officer who held many positions during his nearly 30 years of service, one of which was an administrator for a mid-size medical clinic unit. As a civilian, he worked for the 59th MDW to oversee and initiate their medical contracts, ultimately becoming a program manager within the 59 MDW/ST. This journey and battle-tested experience has made his transition to the ORTA much akin to a pawn promotion.

Lynch leads the 59 MDW ORTA, which is responsible for developing collaborative interactions with industry, academia, and other government entities through an Air Force program called Technology Transfer and Transition (T3). Lynch’s six-member team is dedicated to developing a “one-stop shop” of T3 processes for supporting over 200 clinical researchers at various San Antonio research sites.

“[We are] enabling research partnerships with the Battlefield Health and Trauma Research Institute, Center for the Intrepid, the Tri-Service Research Lab and academic collaborations with the University of Texas at San Antonio, University of the Incarnate Word, and the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, to name just a few,” details Lynch. “Overall, we have agreements with 30 small businesses, 21 universities in our active portfolio, and another 20 pending agreements in draft.”

His ORTA recently secured an \$1.5M AFWERX Small Business Innovation Research award for Embody, a small sports medicine company who partnered with the 59 MDW, enabling the company to acquire additional funding from the medical wing for research on the evaluation of MicroBrace technology to enhance joint biomechanics and bone ligament quality in an ACL repair.

His ORTA also supports the management of intellectual property generated through medical research by facilitating patent reviews, providing consultations to clinical researchers, and coordinating

licensing inquiries with Air Force legal staff. The team understands the value of this medical research and the methods or materials being produced, and is eager to share lessons learned with potential partners. “Our team is very proactive by providing training on the importance of identifying and securing potential intellectual property,” Lynch says.

Lynch’s ORTA team is anchored by Tom Gardner, Lisa Lott, David Sharon, Scott Walter, and Jim Weissmann. “The highlight of my job is working with such great people and helping them achieve their research goals. We have a great ORTA team who work together as one,” Lynch reveals. His team has formed a professional bond focused on collaborating with medical partners for the greater benefit to the public.

Lynch holds the partnering opportunities afforded to him in high regards. “Working with medical researchers both from the military and the partnerships we garner from the many universities, foundations, and companies has been a pleasure,” states Lynch. “The ORTA community is small, and you get to meet many knowledgeable people who offer their assistance.”

A recent partnering success, as highlighted by Lynch, was an Operation Warp Speed Covid-19 clinical trial that required a first-ever joint agreement between Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center/Brooke Army Medical Center and the Geneva Foundation. This joint agreement proved instrumental in the drafting of two Cooperative Research and Development Agreements.

Success, however, does not come without challenges. “One of the biggest challenges has been the transfer of medical care oversight from the Department of Defense to the Defense Health Agency (DHA), [while] still providing top-quality support to our researchers and customers,” explains Lynch. For a chess enthusiast such as Lynch, though, overcoming challenges is merely one’s ability to employ effective tactics. After all, the most powerful piece on the board can be ousted by the weakest; and, if played strategically, the weakest piece on the board can become the most powerful.

*To learn more about the 59th Medical Wing Science and Technology Office of Research and Technology Applications, please visit the [59 MDW/ST ORTA](https://www.usaf.af.mil/59mdw-st-orta) website, or send an e-mail request to [usaf.jbsa.59-mdw.mbx.59-mdw-st-technology-transfer-office@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.jbsa.59-mdw.mbx.59-mdw-st-technology-transfer-office@mail.mil).*



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