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Military, Civilian Trauma Convene for Advanced Combat Surgical Readiness Training

Bethesda, Md. – Military and civilian trauma experts from around the country convened for a three-day training event to reinforce vascular, plastic and orthopedic surgical skills for advanced combat surgical readiness. The program also provided an opportunity to share trauma rehabilitation best practices, both within the military and civilian sectors.

More than 30 trauma surgeons and experts in vascular, orthopedic, trauma, and plastic surgery met June 27-29, 2023, for the biennial Federal Advanced Skills Training-Limb Trauma (FAST-LT) at the Uniformed Services University (USU). The FAST-LT 2023 event was led by the Defense Health Agency's Extremity Trauma and Amputation Center of Excellence in collaboration with USU and the DoD's Joint Trauma System.

"The FAST-Limb Trauma symposium is important and significant, not just because we are reviewing combat casualty care best practices and teaching those techniques to surgeons, but because we are doing so in an interdisciplinary fashion – with vascular, reconstructive, and orthopaedic experts teaching surgeons across all specialties what they need to know to ensure our wounded warriors get the best care downrange," said Dr. Benjamin "Kyle" Potter, chair of the Department of Surgery at USU and one of the training organizers.

"Although at the beginning of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the care available was not much different than the care provided to Senator Kerrey during the Vietnam era, the lessons learned from 15-plus years of conflict have driven significant advances in treatment and rehabilitation for extremity injuries, many of which were developed by those here at the Uniformed Services University," added Dr. Eric Elster, Dean of USU's School of Medicine.

The symposium included a keynote address delivered by former Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, followed by presentations on advancements in using platelet-rich plasma for limb salvage, advanced treatments for trauma patients, and best practices in prosthetics, among others.

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences: The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation's federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. USU also has graduate programs in oral biology, biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research. The University's research program covers a wide range of areas important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.