

NIH Launches Clinical and Translational Science Awards

NIH unveiled a national consortium designed to facilitate the transfer of discoveries made in the laboratory into new treatments for patients. Announced on October 3, the consortium will be funded through the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs) Program. Initial awards will provide \$100 million to support 12 research institutions throughout the country.

The CTSA Program—developed after extensive consultation with the scientific community, academia, and private organizations—will encourage the union of expertise and resources and help transform the way scientists conduct clinical and translational research.

“We are not presenting various independent awards, but rather a series of awards that will create a consortium of institutions working together,” says NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni. “These awards represent the first systematic change in our approach to clinical research in the last 50 years. Ultimately, patients will be better served.”

According to Zerhouni, medical successes in the past few decades have enhanced lifespan and shifted the burden of disease. Rather than treating primarily acute, lethal conditions, health care providers increasingly must contend with more protracted and chronic disorders.

To address this and other emerging health care challenges, NIH has developed a series of strategies that have been embodied in the CTSA Program. Through the CTSAs, scientists from diverse backgrounds will become part of an academic “home” in their institutions. Each home will integrate clinical and translational science across multiple

departments, schools, clinical and research institutes, and hospitals. Such integration will help assemble interdisciplinary teams that cover the complete spectrum of research—biology, clinical medicine, dentistry, nursing, biomedical engineering, genomics, and population sciences. Academic homes also will provide support to educate and develop the next generation of researchers trained in the complexities of translating research into clinical trials and ultimately into practice.

With CTSA funding, institutions are planning to design new and improved clinical research informatics tools, forge new partnerships with private and public health care organizations, expand outreach to minority and medically underserved communities, and develop better designs

for clinical trials to ensure that patients with rare as well as common diseases benefit from new medical therapies.

“This consortium will spur innovation, integration, and dissemination, not only among institutions receiving these awards, but also among other organizations involved in health care throughout the country,” says Barbara M. Alving, acting director of NCRR. The CTSA consortium will be led by NCRR as part of the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research.

An additional 52 academic health centers have received planning grants to help them prepare applications to join the CTSA consortium. When fully implemented in 2012, the CTSA Program is expected to provide a total of \$500 million annually to a consortium of 60 academic health centers.

■ A list of the 52 planning grant recipients is available at www.ncrr.nih.gov/ncrrprog/roadmap/CTSA_Planning_9-2006.asp.

■ For more information on the CTSA Program, please visit www.ncrr.nih.gov/clinicaldiscipline.asp.



■ A young participant in a sleep study talks with Carole Marcus, co-principal investigator of a new CTSA grant and director of the Sleep Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The following 12 institutions will receive awards for nearly a five-year period:

- **Columbia University Health Sciences**
- **Duke University**
- **Mayo Clinic College of Medicine**
- **Oregon Health and Science University**
- **Rockefeller University**
- **University of California, Davis**
- **University of California, San Francisco**
- **University of Pennsylvania**
- **University of Pittsburgh**
- **University of Rochester**
- **University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston**
- **Yale University**