

New Stimulus Research Funds Push UNMC total to more than \$5 million

The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) has received nine additional grants, totaling more than \$2 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The \$2 million funding for biomedical research will provide funding for up to 15 jobs within the recovery time frame that extends to September 2010.

These awards arrive on the heels of a previous announcement of more than \$3.1 million, bringing UNMC's stimulus funding to more than \$5.1 million.

Tom Rosenquist, Ph.D., UNMC's Vice Chancellor for Research, applauded the Stimulus program and the UNMC researchers' efforts to seek the one-time funding.

"Nebraskans can all be proud and pleased with the success of the UNMC research community, as our scientists have competed against all other health sciences centers nationally, and have brought new jobs to our state. Not only are these dollars an economic boon, but the added manpower will allow our scientists to expand research exploring find new therapies for cancer, respiratory disease, heart diseases, obesity, and neurodegenerative disorders."

Award recipients and their studies include:

- **Hamid Band, M.D., Ph.D.**, Professor & Director of the Center for Breast Cancer Research, received \$348,002 to enhance understanding of cancer development with the hopes of creating new therapeutic agents against cancer.
- **Surinder Batra, Ph.D.**, Professor, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, received \$133,919 to understand the spread of lethal pancreatic cancer cells, in order to develop novel therapeutics for advanced stage patients.
- **Pi-Wan Cheng, Ph.D.**, Professor, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, received \$185,625 to develop therapies for lung and gastrointestinal diseases.
- **Jill Poole, M.D.**, Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine, received \$106,660 to study and prevent lung disease from chronic agricultural dust inhalation, with the hopes of uncovering new therapies for farmers with respiratory disease.
- **Angie Rizzino, Ph.D.**, Professor, Eppley Institute, received \$111,375 to examine the molecular mechanisms used to convert adult cells to adult stem cells.
- **James Turpen, Ph.D.**, Professor, Genetics, Cell Biology and Anatomy, received two grants totaling \$812,307 to study the genes and factors contributing to obesity, and to provide training opportunities in chemistry and biology to undergraduate and graduate students.
- **Feng Xie, M.D.**, Research Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine, received \$188,363 to develop non-invasive treatment to improve the outcome of patients suffering from heart conditions and stroke.
- **Jialin Zheng, M.D.**, Professor, Pharmacology & Experimental Neuroscience, received \$144,460 to identify new therapeutic strategies for treating HIV-1 associated dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders.

Earlier stimulus awards are funding research in treating staph infections, Alzheimer's disease, autism, lung and respiratory diseases, cataracts, and chronic heart problems. UNMC's stimulus award recipients are listed at <http://www.unmc.edu/federalstimulus/30.htm>.