

ORGANIZATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Lucy McDonald
Brand Resources Group, Inc.
703-739-8343

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS \$6 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR INNOVATIVE RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS RESEARCH

New Fundraising Initiative Addresses Critical Need for Additional Funding to Search for a Cure

ATLANTA, GA (July 12, 2007) - The American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation (ACR REF) has selected 15 experienced researchers from leading institutions to receive an estimated \$6 million from the Foundation's new *Within Our Reach: Finding a Cure for Rheumatoid Arthritis* campaign. The awards are the first funded by the \$30 million national multi-year fundraising effort, which was developed by ACR REF to accelerate innovative research focused specifically on rheumatoid arthritis.

"There have been great strides made in treatment and management of RA, yet there is still much work to be done to find a cure for this disease," says Dr. James R. O'Dell, President of the REF. "Today, more funding needs to be directed towards the kind of RA research that goes beyond treatment only - the kind of RA research that seeks to find a cure through better understanding of the causes of and preventions for this devastating disease. With the guidance of ACR Research and Education Foundation, *Within Our Reach* will allow more of this type of research to be conducted."

The Foundation received 73 grant applications for the first round of research funding and after an extensive peer review process led by more than 40 peer reviewers nationwide, the ACR REF selected the most outstanding proposals with innovative and novel research that is expected to change the future of RA. Grant recipients include:

Innovative Basic Research

Paul Anderson, MD, PhD
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Post-transcriptional Regulation of TNF alpha Production

Robert H. Carter, MD
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Autoantigen-specific B cells in Rheumatoid Arthritis

Gary S. Firestein, MD
University of California - San Diego, School of Medicine
Neural Regulation of Synovial Inflammation

Richard A. Flavell, PhD, FRS
Yale University School of Medicine
Regulation of T cell Function in Collagen-induced Arthritis by IL-10

Gary Gilkeson, MD
Medical University of South Carolina

Role of Sphingosine Kinase I in Inflammatory Arthritis

Joseph Holoshitz, MD
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Functional Characterization of the Rheumatoid Arthritis Shared Epitope Binding Receptor

Elizabeth D. Mellins, MD
Stanford University School of Medicine
MHC Association in Rheumatoid Arthritis: A Novel Hypothesis

John D. Mountz, MD, PhD
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Novel IL-17 Induced Germinal Center Formation and Arthritis-inducing Autoantibodies

Translational Research

S. Louis Bridges, Jr., MD, PhD
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Genetics and Ethnic Differences in C-Reactive Protein as a Biomarker of Radiographic Severity in Rheumatoid Arthritis

David M. Lee, MD, PhD
Brigham and Women's Hospital
IgG Glycosylation and Rheumatoid Arthritis

Antony Rosen, MD
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Anti-PADI4 Immune Responses in Rheumatoid Arthritis: Markers of Disease Propagation

Cornelia M. Weyand, MD, PhD
Emory University
Defects of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Function in Rheumatoid Arthritis

Clinical Practice

Joan M. Bathon, MD
Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center
Rheumatoid Arthritis and Body Composition

Harold E. Paulus, MD
University of California - Los Angeles
Joint MRI to Validate Clinical Remission Criteria in Early Rheumatoid Arthritis

Edward Yelin, PhD
University of California - San Francisco
Disparities in Utilization and Outcomes in Rheumatoid Arthritis

About Within Our Reach: Finding a Cure for Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis affects more than one in every 200 Americans, yet funding to find new treatments and ultimately a cure remains significantly low compared to other

autoimmune diseases. To address the critical need for additional funding and research support, the REF launched *Within Our Reach* in November 2006.

Within Our Reach is the largest private fundraising campaign in the REF's history. It will tap a diverse donor base, and funds raised will support innovative research to learn more about the causes of RA and, ultimately, to find a cure. Since November, the campaign has received tremendous support from the pharmaceutical industry, biotech companies, physicians and patients, raising more than \$17 million. Specific research areas for *Within Our Reach* include:

- **Innovative Research:** Leading to an understanding about the cause of RA and the development of novel drugs
- **Translational Research:** Improving development of methods to repair and replace damaged cartilage and bone
- **Clinical Practice:** Identifying individuals at risk for RA as part of efforts to facilitate prevention and early treatment
- **Novel Clinical Trials:** Addressing unmet needs in the development of new treatments
- **Collaborative Projects:** Leading to large-scale, multi-disciplinary approaches that include innovative, collaborative research groups

“Over time this research will enhance practicing rheumatologists’ ability to characterize various causes of RA, predict onset of the disease, individualize treatment for patients, prevent joint damage and improve joint function,” added Dr. O’Dell. “The new research projects funded by *Within Our Reach* are exciting and needed steps towards improving RA patients’ quality of life, alleviating long-term effects of RA and, ultimately, ensuring that future generations can enjoy life without RA.”

To learn more about rheumatoid arthritis and the campaign, please visit www.WithinOurReach.info.

About ACR Research and Education Foundation

The ACR Research and Education Foundation was established in 1985 as a 501(c)(3) with a mission to improve patients' lives through support of research and training that advances the prevention, treatment and cure of rheumatic diseases. Since its founding, the REF has promoted and advanced the field of rheumatology by funding research, training and education opportunities for clinicians, students, health professionals, researchers and academic institutions. On average, 90 cents of every dollar donated to the REF is used to fund its extensive award and grant program.