



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

NEWS SERVICES

210 PITTSBORO STREET
CAMPUS BOX 6210
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-6210

T 919.962.2091
F 919.962.2279
<http://www.unc.edu/news>
news@unc.edu

News Release

Embargoed for use: Thursday, May 29, 11 a.m. EDT

New federally funded health initiative to speed benefits of science to North Carolinians

CHAPEL HILL – The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has received a \$61 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant that will help speed up how scientific discoveries directly benefit patients in communities across North Carolina.

UNC is among 14 academic health centers in 11 states to become the latest members of the NIH's Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) consortium. By creating a network of medical research institutions across the nation, the consortium will work to reduce the time it takes for laboratory discoveries to become treatments for patients, engage communities in clinical research efforts, and help train the next generation of clinical and translational researchers. The consortium is led by the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR), a part of the NIH.

The grant will partially fund efforts by the new North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (TraCS) Institute to engage communities across North Carolina in a continuous cycle of knowledge, discovery and dissemination of new ideas for delivering health care.

"This institute will transform the way research is performed in our state," said Dr. William L. Roper, dean of the School of Medicine, vice chancellor for medical affairs and chief executive officer of UNC Health Care. "The initiative will bridge science and clinical practice and speed up the movement of innovations from the laboratory bench to the bedside and the community."

An example of the type of project the grant will make possible is the establishment and operation of community research units, one of which is already successfully operating in Greensboro, N.C. Local physicians will be able to refer patients to these units, giving the patients access to new treatments and therapeutic programs, while also allowing researchers opportunities to better evaluate their effectiveness.

"This is a true partnership in which communities across the state are encouraged and empowered to help advance medical science and improve the health care for all Carolinians," said Dr. Paul B. Watkins, the grant's principal investigator. Watkins is also Verne S. Caviness Distinguished Professor of Medicine in UNC's School of Medicine and director of the Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute.



This initiative is campuswide, drawing on the diverse expertise of doctors and clinicians, biomedical researchers, and a broad spectrum of experts from public health, the social sciences, information technology and other fields.

These sister campuses in the UNC system are also playing roles: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, East Carolina University and UNC Charlotte.

"We have established partnerships with these institutions to enhance outreach to underserved populations, local community and advocacy organizations and health-care providers," said Tony Waldrop, Ph.D., professor of cell and molecular physiology and vice chancellor for research and economic development. "Our new grant will draw on the university's established tradition of community engagement and invigorate a culture of community-based discovery and outreach."

The award was announced at a morning news conference at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center on the Carolina campus. The event coincided with the NIH's announcement of the recipients, details of which were embargoed by the NIH until 11 a.m.

CTSA Web site: <http://www.ctsaweb.org>

Video: To see a video recording of this morning's news conference announcing UNC's Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) from the NIH, go to:
<http://andrews.med.unc.edu/pa/052908.mov>. The video should be available by 1 p.m.

School of Medicine contact: Les Lang, (919) 966-9366, llang@med.unc.edu

News Services contact: Patric Lane, (919) 962-8596, patric_lane@unc.edu