NIH selects awardees to help speed development of health technologies

The National Institutes of Health has selected three new proof-of-concept hubs to help speed the translation of basic biomedical discoveries into commercial products, such as new drugs, devices, and diagnostics, to improve patient care and enhance health. The hubs are part of the NIH-supported Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hubs (REACH) program and will be funded at $9 million over three years.

REACH is based on an initiative created by the NIH’s National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) called the NIH Centers for Accelerated Innovations (NCAI). These centers are a unique public-private partnership whose objective is to change how to identify and develop innovations with scientific and commercial potential. The effort utilizes industry-style project management to arrive at technologies that are poised to launch. With the addition of the REACH, NIH has created a nationwide network of six centers and hubs to develop best practices in translating academic innovations into products to improve health.

The hubs will foster the development of therapeutics, preventative, diagnostics, devices, and tools that address diseases within the NIH’s mission in a manner consistent with business case development. Each hub will provide funding for feasibility studies and coordinated access to expertise in areas required for early stage technology development, including scientific, regulatory, reimbursement, business, legal, and project management. In addition, the hubs will provide skills development and hands-on experience in entrepreneurship.

"NIH is committed to ensuring that the American people benefit from the many promising discoveries supported by taxpayers," said Dr. Kurt Marek, program director for REACH and the deputy director of the Office of Translational Alliances and Coordination, NHLBI. "The REACH program will accelerate the translation of those discoveries into new drugs, devices, and diagnostics to help patients and improve public health."

The REACH program will take advantage of the NCAI’s established infrastructure and relationships, including partnerships with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the United States Patent Office, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The REACHs and NCAIs will work collaboratively, share resources when appropriate, and develop best practices that will be made available to the public. To enhance the scope and impact of the NIH investment, each REACH has secured non-federal funding equal to or greater than the NIH award and developed partnerships with other regional public and private organizations.

REACH is a trans-NIH program and will be overseen by a committee with representatives from across the agency. NHLBI will manage the effort due to the institute’s experience with NCAI and to ensure collaboration between the programs.

“We are happy to lead the management of the REACH program in concert with our NIH and federal partners,” said Dr. Jodi Black, deputy director, Division of Extramural Research Activities, NHLBI. “In just 18 months, the NCAIs have already learned many lessons about how best to perform proof-of-concept work and we are excited to scale this model to the three new REACH locations.”

The new REACH awardees are:

- The Long Island Bioscience Hub: Stony Brook University, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory, New York
- The University of Louisville, Kentucky
- The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

The existing NCAI awardees are:

- Boston Biomedical Innovation Center: Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston Children’s Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and President and
Fellows of Harvard College

- Cleveland Clinic Innovation Accelerator: The Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine; Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland; Cincinnati Children’s Hospital; The Ohio State University, Columbus; and University of Cincinnati

- University of California BRAID Center for Accelerated Innovation: University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Davis; University of California, Irvine; University of California, San Diego; and University of California, San Francisco

For more information on the NIH NCAI program visit: https://ncai.nhlbi.nih.gov/ncai

For more information, please contact the NIH Office of Extramural Research’s Division of Communications at 301-435-4642 or nhlbinews@nhlbi.nih.gov.

Part of the National Institutes of Health, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) plans, conducts, and supports research related to the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood diseases; and sleep disorders. The Institute also administers national health education campaigns on women and heart disease, healthy weight for children, and other topics. NHLBI press releases and other materials are available online at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

**About the National Institutes of Health (NIH):** NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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