

update

AUGUST 5 THROUGH AUGUST 19, 2009

Upstate Medical University receives nearly \$2 million in stimulus funding

Upstate Medical University has received nearly \$2 million in funding since April 1 through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The funding is earmarked for four research investigations into multiple sclerosis, heart disease, the olfactory system and schizophrenia. The funding will be used in part to create new research positions at Upstate to stimulate the area's economy.

"This funding for biomedical research is a wise investment in the Central New York economy," said U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer. "Not only will these federal dollars help New York institutions tackle our biggest health issues, but we will be creating research and teaching positions in the region." Sen. Schumer announced the most

recent funding initiatives in a press release issued jointly with U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand last month.

- Paul Massa, PhD, serves as principal investigator for a genetic study of multiple sclerosis. Joining Dr. Massa in the project are Upstate faculty members Burk Jubelt, MD, of the Department of Neurology; Scott Blystone, PhD, of the Department of Cell and Development Biology; and Andras Perl, MD, of the Department of Medicine. Dr. Massa's total ARRA award of \$706,500 will span two-years. "The ARRA funds will be used to hire three additional researchers to work on this project over the next two years and hopefully beyond," said Dr. Massa, professor of neurology.

According to Dr. Massa, many diseases of the human central nervous

system (CNS) are caused by inflammation.

"Inflammation in the CNS is caused by cells called leukocytes that enter the CNS from the blood for unknown reasons and release toxic molecules that damage the brain. In the human disease multiple sclerosis (MS), leukocytes move into the brain and cause inflammatory damage to a part of the brain called myelin, which results in severe neurological symptoms," said Dr. Massa.

To discover why this happens, Dr. Massa's team is studying an enzyme expressed in leukocytes called SHP-1, shown to protect against inflammation of myelin in animal models of MS and most recently shown to be deficient in leukocytes of MS patients.

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John McCabe, MD, named chief executive officer of University Hospital

John McCabe, MD, who has served in various key leadership positions at Upstate Medical University during his 22-year association with the university, has been named chief executive officer of University Hospital and senior vice president for hospital affairs. Dr. McCabe has served as interim chief executive officer since June 1. The appointment, effective immediately, was announced by Upstate President David R. Smith, MD.

"John has been an outstanding leader at Upstate Medical University and has brought distinction to all the areas he has guided at the university,"

said Dr. Smith. "The multifaceted leadership he brings to this position with his outstanding knowledge of clinical issues, academic medicine, hospital finances, our role in the SUNY system and throughout the region, will serve University Hospital and the public well as we move forward on many issues."

"John's success as a leader and his ability to articulate a vision and build successful teams to implement that vision is a chief skill of his that will benefit this institution greatly," Dr. Smith added.



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John McCabe

Calendar—*continued from page 1*
Bldg.

Thursday, Aug. 20
SUNY Upstate New Employee Orientation. 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: TBA.

60-Day Retention Program. 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. or 3:45 to 4:45 p.m. 1403 University Hospital.

Medicine Grand Rounds. 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. 1159 Wsk. Hall.

Orientation Program:

President's Welcome Convocation. 9 a.m. Oncenter Ballroom, 800 S. State St., Syracuse.

Orientation Program: Parents' and Family Day Program. 10:30 a.m. Oncenter, 800 S. State St., Syracuse.

College of Medicine White Coat Ceremony. 3:30 p.m. Oncenter Ballroom, 800 S. State St., Syracuse.

Vascular Conference. 5 p.m. 8800 University Hospital.

WebCAIS for Travel RNs. See 8/6 listing.

College of Nursing White

Coat Ceremony. 5:30 p.m. Ninth Floor Auditorium, Wsk. Hall.

Friday, Aug. 21
SUNY Upstate New Employee Orientation. 7:30 a.m. to noon. Location: TBA.

Workshop. "Upstate Stars Recognition Program." 10 to 11 a.m. 1328B University Hospital.

Clinical Hands-on Practice Orientation (CHOP). See 8/7 listing.

• **Mass.** See 8/7 listing

Saturday, Aug. 22
• **Mass.** See 8/8 listing.

Sunday, Aug. 23
Healthlink on Air. See 8/9 listing.

• **Mass.** See 8/9 listing.

Orientation Program: College of Medicine Dinner With a Doctor. 3 p.m. Depart from C.A.B.

Orientation Program: College of Graduate Studies Dinner With a Research Scientist. 3 p.m. Depart from C.A.B.

Colleges of Health Professions and Nursing Dinner With Faculty. 5 p.m. Ninth Floor Dining Room, Wsk. Hall.

• Broadcast live from the Chapel on in-house Channel 40.

Watch "Upstate Magazine" on Staff ED TV channel 62 by visiting upstate.edu/edcom/upstatemag.

Stimulus funding—*continued from page 1*

"We will analyze possible genetic defects that lead to SHP-1 deficiency and whether correction of abnormal SHP-1 deficiency will decrease inflammatory activities of leukocytes in MS," said Dr. Massa.

• Jeffrey Amack, PhD, assistant professor of cell and developmental biology, received a two-year ARRA award of \$691,110 to advance research and treatment for heart related birth defects. The funding in part will support the addition of a post-doctoral fellow to assist in the investigation. Dr. Amack's study particularly focuses on how organs, in particular the heart, take shape during embryonic development. His laboratory is using zebrafish as a model vertebrate embryo to study the genetics and cell biology of organ morphogenesis.

• Barry Knox, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology and ophthalmology at Upstate, is the co-principal investigator for Upstate for a multi-site study of the olfactory system. Also serving as Upstate co-principal investigators are Steven L. Youngentob, PhD, professor of neuroscience and physiology at Upstate and Gino Cingolani, PhD, formerly of Upstate Medical University. His two-year ARRA award of \$431,750 will be used in part to hire an additional

researcher for the project. According to Dr. Knox, there is a growing demand to understand the structural basis for the selective binding of molecules like hormones or odorants to their membrane protein receptors. "This is particularly important for rationale drug design and producing molecular detectors," said Dr. Knox. The project is aimed at elucidating the three dimensional structure of olfactory receptors, a large family of proteins that detect a wide variety of molecules with diverse molecular structures. The long-term goal of the research project is to determine the structure of olfactory receptors at the atomic level using x-ray crystallographic techniques to understand how odorants interact with these specialized receptors.

"Having even one structure, in hand, would open up many possibilities to study other odorant receptors using homology modeling," said Dr. Knox. "The proposed research is significant because the preliminary data generated from this work is expected to open a line of investigation that will advance and expand our understanding of the molecular factors important to odorant molecule/receptor interactions."

• Serving as Upstate's principal investigator for a multi-site investigation titled, "Genetic Study of Schizophrenia in Oceanic Palau," is Marina Myles-Worsley, PhD, of

Upstate's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Her research study has received a one-year ARRA supplement award of \$108,864.

The principal objective of the parent study is to identify genetic variation that underlies liability to schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders in the isolated island nation of Palau. The supplement will fund additional genotyping and validation experiments to be conducted by Frank Middleton, PhD, director of the Core Microarray Facility, to further explore genetic variants that have been identified in Palauan families with schizophrenia.

Upstate Update

Issue:
Aug. 19 to Sept. 2
Deadline:
Aug. 10

Issue:
Sept. 2 to 16
Deadline:
Aug. 24