Greetings from IUPUI

As you have heard me say before, IUPUI is the country's leading campus for translating research into practice. This grew from our tradition of preparing graduates to practice their profession and our unwavering commitment to civic engagement. It reflects our belief that research can be translated into practice — whether the research is in studio art or biomedical engineering, anthropology or hematology, communication studies or biochemistry, philanthropic studies or psychiatry.

Thus, IUPUI is proud to serve as the home of the new Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI). It is funded by a five-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical and Translational Science Award of $25 million to the IU School of Medicine. The NIH created the awards to improve the process by which basic science laboratory discoveries become new medical treatments and products.

The Indiana CTSI will implement the NIH initiative with new programs to accelerate translational research, train new translational researchers, interact with community health-care professionals and the public, build research resources and technologies, and leverage health care, business, government, and foundation resources through partnerships.

The statewide collaboration involves university scientists in Indianapolis, West Lafayette, and Bloomington and such community partners as Clarian Health, Eli Lilly, BioCrossroads, Cook Group, Roche, WellPoint, Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Indiana Department of Health, and Marion County Health Department.

Anantha Shekhar, professor of psychiatry in the School of Medicine and IU assistant vice president for life sciences, will direct the Indiana CTSI. He is the principal investigator of a longitudinal study of disease risk factors in Indiana, supported by the Fairbanks Institute, and director of our Neuroscience Clinical Research Center, where many drug development studies are conducted with pharmaceutical and biotech industry partners. Connie Weaver, head of the Department of Foods and Nutrition at Purdue, is deputy director for Purdue, and Bennett Bertenthal, dean of the IU College of Arts and Sciences, is deputy director for IU Bloomington.

NIH officials said the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute is one of the most broadly collaborative of the more than two dozen it has funded to date.

The heart of the CTSI process will be project development teams, composed of researchers with a broad range of relevant backgrounds. The teams will hear proposals from scientists and assign project managers to help move discoveries through the steps necessary to produce new medicines and treatment practices.
One team will focus on translational research in children's health, thus taking advantage of the investigative and clinical expertise in our Wells Center for Pediatric Research and Riley Hospital for Children. The Translating Research into Practice Team will focus on ways to help practicing physicians implement research findings in their clinics. A third team will focus on training scientists who are well versed not only in molecular medicine but also in community-based clinical trials, implementation studies of effective treatments, and economics of health practices.

A key strength of the Indiana CTSI will be the ability to provide community feedback to researchers, enabling them to refine results and improve patient care more expeditiously. This will be accomplished through liaisons with Purdue's statewide extension educators, who will be asked to identify major health issues, help researchers conduct community-based interventions, and study the effects on the population.

The Indiana CTSI builds on investments in research and technology transfer already made, including the 2001 launch of Purdue's Discovery Park, the Lilly Endowment supported Indiana Genomics Initiative, and the Indiana General Assembly's support for research facilities. Receiving the NIH grant is evidence that Indiana is firmly at the forefront in health care discovery and delivery.

Congratulations to CS-Keys for being named Innovation of the Year at the 2008 Techpoint Mira Awards gala! The company, founded by two IU medical researchers, Professors Linda Malkas and Bob Hickey, has translated the discovery of a new biomarker into a patented antibody that may one day be a powerful ally in helping pathologists detect cancer much earlier and by means of a simple blood test—an excellent example of the promise and importance of translational research and a case in point for why the CTSI will be such an important asset for Indiana in swiftly moving other such discoveries to the marketplace.

Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor

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