

Indiana Physician Scientist Initiative

To capitalize on the unique skills that skilled investigators with medical degrees bring to scientific research the Indiana University School of Medicine has created the Indiana Physician Scientist Initiative, supported by a \$60 million grant from the Lilly Endowment.

The program will boost the school's translational research capabilities while providing the resources necessary to support the addition of 20 or more established physician researchers at the school.

Physician scientists not only can bridge the laboratory to the clinic and vice versa, but they are also the role models for future physician scientists. Due to the breadth and depth of their training, they have a distinct competitive advantage in the quest for NIH-supported research funding. In essence, physician scientists are and will increasingly be the foundation upon which medical schools build their research enterprise.

Moreover, as the pharmaceutical industry evolves to a new model in which substantially less basic research is conducted in house with an increased reliance on academia for discovery of promising therapeutic agents and a higher level of clinical validation, academia is faced with both responsibility and opportunity to extend research findings farther into clinical testing than ever before. Physician scientists are uniquely trained to fill this role.

In addition to recruiting physician researchers to the school, the Physician Scientist Initiative will:

- Place \$10 million in an endowment to strengthen the school's MD/PhD education program – the **Medical Scientist Training Program**.
- Invest \$8 million in the Indiana Biobank, which will house the biological samples necessary to conduct modern biomedical research and to support specialists needed to manage Biobank data.
- Provide \$2 million to expand the school's international programs, building on its clinical and research programs in Kenya.
- Invest \$2 million in **ITRAC**, a program that works with scientists to map out in detail the steps necessary to take a scientific discovery from the laboratory to testing in patients.

David Wilkes, M.D., executive associate dean for research affairs at the school of medicine, will direct the Indiana Physician Science Initiative.

PSI Investigator:
Helmut Hanenberg, M.D.



Dr. Hanenberg, M.D., a specialist in Fanconi anemia from Heinrich Heine University School of Medicine in Düsseldorf, Germany, is working to make gene therapy a reality for this inherited bone marrow failure syndrome and also for other hematopoietic disorders. Gene therapy offers potential advantages over bone marrow transplants, which in Fanconi anemia patients often give rise to secondary tumors years later.

PSI Investigator:
Rebecca Shilling, M.D.



A pulmonologist from the University of Chicago, Dr. Shilling's research focus is on the chronic rejection process that plagues many recipients of lung transplants. The process often leads to scarring in the lungs' small airways and failure of the transplant in as few as five years – a process for which there is not now an effective treatment.

Postdoctoral Programs



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