U of M awarded $51 million, joins national consortium of Clinical and Translational Science Award recipients

Funding aims to ensure community benefits from research discoveries more directly and quickly

Contact: Justin Paquette, Academic Health Center, 612-626-7037, jpaquett@umn.edu
Nick Hanson, Academic Health Center, 612-624-2449, hans2853@umn.edu

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (June 14, 2011)—The University of Minnesota has been awarded a $51 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – the largest single-institution NIH award ever received by the University.

With the award, the U of M joins the renowned CTSA consortium, a national network of institutions working to increase joint research efforts between universities and the community and the efficiency and speed at which the results of clinical trials translate into new treatments, cures and improved health outcomes.

CTSA sites also train a new generation of researchers to engage early in collaborative efforts surrounding clinical research, and to focus on the training needs of both the universities and the communities alike. The CTSA consortium now represents 30 states and the District of Columbia.

“Successfully competing for the CTSA is a major victory for the University of Minnesota,” said President Robert H. Bruininks. “This is just the latest example of the ways in which the extraordinary knowledge and productivity of our talented faculty and staff garner new resources, discover new knowledge, and develop real solutions to health concerns in Minnesota, across the nation, and around the world. I am proud of the hard work and dedication our people have exhibited to bring this transformative award to fruition.”

For the U of M, the award confirms both the success and future promise of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI).

For the last five years, the U of M has invested substantial resources in the CTSI to actively engage U of M faculty and staff with community partners in the clinical trials and research process.
“Our CTSI provides the underpinning support necessary to exponentially expand our infrastructure and training capacity and push new discoveries forward faster,” said Bruce Blazar, M.D., CTSI director and leader of the CTSA program at the U of M. “Ultimately, this award is about capitalizing on the most promising research and putting findings into practice to improve the health of our patients and communities.”

**Building on the University’s strengths**

In addition to maximizing community involvement, the $51 million CTSA grant will support both new and existing University programs designed to push new treatments, therapies and clinical trials outcomes to patients faster, offering more immediate benefits from discoveries.

According to Aaron Friedman, M.D., Vice President for Health Sciences and dean of the Medical School, the CTSA will also tie together research taking place across focus areas known as the University’s *Corridors of Discovery*: cancer, cardiology, diabetes, infectious diseases and brain sciences.

“With this distinguished grant award, the NIH recognizes the strength of our University’s clinical research enterprise and our extraordinary capacity to translate scientific breakthroughs into improved health and well-being,” said Friedman. “The CTSA provides a catalytic opportunity to build on the fine foundation already in place at UMN and across the state of Minnesota.”

The CTSA will also leverage work taking place in other University programs, with our community partners, as well as with CTSA partners across the region and nation, maximizing the potential impact.

“Success of the CTSA program depends on collaboration among our researchers across a number of disciplines, schools and programs,” said Tim Mulcahy, vice president for research. “Our University’s receipt of this award acknowledges our commitment to a patient-centered and more efficient model for clinical and translational research, as well as our focus on getting promising research to our patients quickly. We’re excited to contribute our strengths to the national consortium effort.”

**About the CTSI**

The mission of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) is to improve the health of our communities by integrating the University of Minnesota’s Academic Health Center and other University resources with community partners to create a comprehensive statewide network for clinical and translational science. The Institute was launched in April 2009 to serve as the academic home and as a fulcrum for facilitating deep community-UMN engagement in clinical and translational science (CTS) research.