

NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK

STATE OF MONTANA

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Governor Bullock Announces Bio-Medical Research Grant Award to McLaughlin Research Institute

Funding will help establish research capabilities at a Montana Center for Aging Research and Memory Care

(HELENA) – Governor Steve Bullock announced the award of \$904,500 dollars in grant funding to the McLaughlin Research Institute (MRI) for Biomedical Sciences to help establish a Montana Center for Aging Research and Memory Care (“Center”) through the Montana Department of Commerce Bio-Medical Research Grant Program. The Center will be an alliance between MRI and Benefis Health System in Great Falls. The research conducted by members of the Center focuses on the study and treatment of memory disorders and neurodegenerative diseases arising from Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases.

“The time to invest in the research of tomorrow is now,” said Governor Steve Bullock. “The research that will be conducted as a result of this funding is poised to change the landscape of health care for millions of patients across Montana and the nation struggling with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and other brain diseases. I’m proud that the State of Montana is continuing to support the McLaughlin Research Institute.”

“The economic impact of the State’s investment will be felt for years to come,” said Department of Commerce Director Meg O’Leary. “In addition to advancing patient care and research, it will provide new jobs and educational opportunities to the Great Falls community. This project is an outstanding asset to Montana.”

MRI and Benefis Health System agreed to this joint project last year. The collaboration, which marks one of the first in the country between an independent non-profit research institute and a not-for-profit community health system, was proposed to address the growing problem of dementia in American seniors. The Montana Center for Aging Research and Memory Care pairs the hospital’s excellence in health and elder care with the research institute’s extensive background in the study of the molecular and genetic causes of human dementia and neurodegenerative diseases.

Specifically, the funding will enable current research findings to be translated into patient care and treatment. Dementia patients, both locally and nationally, will benefit from this model. State funds will be used for: the implementation of cutting-edge technologies; the purchase of updated research laboratory equipment and other supplies; the compensation packages for seven (7) lead scientists, postdoctoral fellows, research assistants and support staff; and support for the animal resource center.

“The funding we have received from the State is invaluable to advancing the mission of the McLaughlin Research Institute,” said MRI Director and Professor George Carlson, PhD. “The establishment of the Center, and our partnership with Benefis will inform and accelerate our research to understand, prevent and treat neurodegeneration.”

House Bill 2, passed by the Legislature in 2013, appropriated \$1.0 million for the Montana Department of Commerce to grant funds to qualified applicants to conduct bio-medical research in Montana. The grant funds can be used to expand, renovate, and purchase equipment for bio-medical research and to expand infrastructure that will enhance the scientific collaborations between independent, non-profit researchers and researchers in the Montana University System.

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