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NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
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Governor Bullock Announces Bio-Medical Research Grant Award to Billings' Health Partners
Funding will support the newly-established Crohn's Disease Collaborative Research Center

(BILLINGS) – Governor Steve Bullock and Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary announced the award of \$95,500 dollars in grant funding to St. Vincent Healthcare Foundation to expand the Crohn's Disease Collaborative Research Center of the Greater Rocky Mountains through the Montana Department of Commerce Bio-Medical Research Grant Program.

The Center is a partnership between St. Vincent Healthcare and Montana State University Billings to provide care and treatment of patients with Crohn's disease and to create a research center for the study of the disease. There are estimated to be as many as 3,000 patients in Montana suffering from Crohn's disease, with an additional 200 new patients diagnosed each year.

"The impact of Crohn's disease is substantial to the patient, their families, the community, and our health care system," said Governor Steve Bullock. "I am proud to support the efforts of these two great Montana institutions coming together to expand their research capabilities in hopes of increasing the quality of care for Crohn's disease patients in Montana."

The long-term research goals of the Center are to identify the involvement of bacteria as agents of Crohn's disease, develop diagnostic tests to detect specific subpopulations of patients, and to develop new targeted treatments in these patients. The grant award will be used to purchase research equipment and help fund the costs of hiring a laboratory technician to assist in the overall project.

"We are thrilled to receive this funding to help further our efforts with the Crohn's Disease Collaborative Research Center," said Michael Dowdy, Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at St. Vincent Healthcare. "We are committed to supporting the activities of the

Center, and are moving full-speed ahead to firmly establish these state-of-the-art research and treatment programs.”

“MSU Billings is perfectly positioned to help foster these relationships in the future,” remarked MSU Billings Chancellor Rolf Groseth. “Our proximity to Montana’s medical corridor, coupled with the construction of our new allied health and science building, makes Billings an attractive location for health and medical research.”

This partnership is on display in Billings, where Dr. Roderick Chiodini, who is working in the laboratories at MSU Billings, and Dr. Will Chamberlin of St. Vincent’s are jointly unraveling the mystery of Crohn’s Disease.

House Bill 2 was passed by the Legislature in 2013 and 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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