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## HSSC Awarded \$4.8 Million Go Grant

*National Institutes of Health Awards \$4.8 Million Grant to the Center for Healthcare Quality.*

COLUMBIA, S.C., October 5, 2009 - - Patients who want to participate in potentially life-saving clinical research trials in South Carolina will find it easier to do so, thanks to a \$4.8 million federal grant to the University of South Carolina's Center for Healthcare Quality.

The funding, from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the federal government's largest funder of medical research, will accelerate the development of a statewide internet-based research network that will enable patients to identify and volunteer for clinical research trials in the state, receive notifications of future research trials related to their condition and protect their personal health information. The Research Permissions Management System also will help enable researchers to manage legal, ethical, social, and bioinformatics requirements.

Called a Grand Opportunity (GO) Grant, the multi-million dollar grant is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Dr. Jay Moskowitz, who is based at USC, is the grant's principal investigator and the Center's endowed chair in Translational Research. Dr. Iain Sanderson, a co-investigator based at MUSC, is the Center's endowed chair for Medical Informatics.

Moskowitz, who also is president and CEO of Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC), said the GO Grant will give people suffering from serious disease more treatment options. "For people with life-threatening illnesses like cancer, clinical research trials are often the last bastion of hope. Increasingly, patients and their family members are looking to the Internet for a medical lifeline. It is our goal to extend the lifeline and to more people in and outside of South Carolina with the statewide Research Permission Management System," he said.

"With this system, patients will soon be able to find clinical trials at HSSC partner organizations, provide informed consent, protect their privacy, and receive notification of future trials related to their condition. They also will have the option of donating discarded tissue samples to research studies that will then help other people."

The Center for Healthcare Quality is a Center of Economic Excellence (CoEE) established in 2006 with state funds from the South Carolina Education Lottery and a private match from Health Sciences South Carolina made possible by The Duke Endowment. Partners in the Center include South Carolina's largest research universities—Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and the University of South Carolina (USC)—and the state's largest health systems—Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center, Palmetto Health and Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

USC President Harris Pastides called the NIH GO Grant award a major victory for South Carolina and leaders who have joined forces to elevate the state's economic wellbeing and its public health.

"The South Carolina General Assembly created the CoEE Program in 2002 with the vision of transforming our state's economy by investing in research that can be commercialized," Pastides said. The NIH award of \$4.8 million to the Center for Healthcare Quality is a tremendous endorsement of this vision and, frankly, would not have happened had it not been for the statewide collaboration between universities and health systems through the CoEE Program. The investment in the Research Permissions Management System will not only benefit patients and researchers, it will also create new, well-paying jobs for those required to implement and maintain this new information technology system."

Each year the NIH invests more than \$28 billion in extramural medical research performed mainly at universities. More than eighty percent of are competitive grants. The GO Grants are a special, limited category of awards offered through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and are specifically for research and research infrastructure projects like the statewide health information technology (HIT) system currently under construction through the HSSC-supported Center for Healthcare Quality.

Sanderson helped assemble a team of experts to assist with the grant-writing process. The team included researchers from MUSC, USC and Clemson, along with consultants from Recombinant Data Corporation, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and Duke University. "NIH grants are highly competitive; we assembled the 'A Team' so that South Carolina so that our grant submission was clearly the best it could be. The Research Permissions Management System that we will soon begin building is just the tip of the iceberg of what will be a comprehensive HIT infrastructure that will enable more research, attract more external investment, create more jobs in our state, and improve public health," Dr. Sanderson said. "Our hope is that this is just the first of many NIH grants."

Added Dr. Moskowitz, "The CoEE Program, The Duke Endowment, and HSSC are critical catalysts for positive change in South Carolina. That the NIH recognizes this and has invested \$4.8 million in our state's health IT infrastructure is powerful validation of the vision of transforming South Carolina's economy and public health through research."