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- UAB secures \$5.24 million, 5-year grant
- Will boost research on developmental disabilities
- One of only 12 in the nation

UAB WINS \$5.2 MILLION GRANT TO STUDY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – UAB’s (University of Alabama at Birmingham) Civitan International Research Center is one of 12 institutions in the nation to receive a \$5.24 million grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to spur new research into developmental disorders. The five-year grant will create the UAB Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center (IDDRC), which will promote research that may lead to new ways to treat conditions such as autism, Rett Syndrome, cerebral palsy, behavioral disorders or rare genetic diseases.

“This award demonstrates that UAB is recognized nationally as a leader in research on intellectual and developmental disabilities,” says Alan Percy, M.D., medical director of the Civitan International Research Center (CIRC) and principal investigator. “This funding greatly expands opportunities for much needed research in developmental disabilities and involves a multidisciplinary cadre of researchers across UAB.”

Percy is joined in leading the IDDRC by Harald Sontheimer, Ph.D., director of the CIRC and the UAB Center for Glial Biology in Medicine, and Bruce Korf, M.D., chair of the UAB Department of Genetics.

The new center takes the place of the UAB Mental Retardation Research Center. The IDDRC will house 74 investigators from 7 UAB schools and 19 departments currently involved in 60 research projects.

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“The center objectives include fostering new collaborations among these scientists and clinicians, while attracting new investigators to the field,” said Sontheimer. “The center will also strengthen interdisciplinary research training regarding intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

The center will feature four cores that investigators can tap for needed resources and assistance, including a recombinant technology core, neurobiology imaging and tissue processing core, a developmental genomics core and an administrative and biostatistics core.

Established in 1963 by Congress as "Centers of Excellence" for research in mental retardation and developmental disabilities, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRCs) [formerly known as Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (MRDDRC)] represent the nation's first and foremost sustained effort to prevent and treat disabilities through biomedical and behavioral research.

IDDRCs also contribute to the development and implementation of evidence-based practices by evaluating the effectiveness of biological, biochemical, and behavioral interventions; developing assistive technologies; and advancing prenatal diagnosis and newborn screening.

Detailed information about the UAB IDDRC including a list of researchers and their projects, as well as IDDRC related news and video can be found at www.mrrc.uab.edu.

-www.uab.edu/news-