May 2005

Maine Medical Center
Research Institute

Research For Life

In this issue:

New Research Strategic Plan Calls for Significant Increases in Research Programs

Maine Medical Center and the Research Institute have announced Board of Trustees approval of a new research strategic plan that envisions continued growth of the research enterprise over the next five years. This is an affirmation of our success in attracting highly successful scientists and significant external funding.

MMCRI has grown over the past seven years from a $2M/year to a $15M/year budget, and is the recipient of two Center of Biomedical Excellence grant awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Clinical research has grown to 290 ongoing clinical trials involving more than 3,000 patients. Our expansion anticipates growth from 12 full-time investigators to about 25.

One focus will be clinical and translational research, with a doubling of the entire enterprise. Our growth of clinical and translational research is in accord with a new thrust at the NIH to facilitate bench-to-bedside-to-practice translation of biomedical science. Already, our Research Institute has joined a prestigious group of New England medical schools and research organizations to form the New England

Research Center, which seeks NIH funding. If we meet the goals outlined in our strategic plan, we will be on track to plan a ~50% expansion of our existing research building in Scarborough in the next three years.

Everyone associated with MMCRI can take pride in this vote of confidence by the Board of Trustees. It is a reward for our success and a challenge for the future. We will look back on this event as a crucial turning point in the history of Maine Medical Center, and a major event for science in Maine.

Robert Friesel, Arthur Lage, Ilka Pinz, and Kenneth Ault at the ribbon cutting ceremony.
For more information about our MRI facility, contact Dr. Ilka Pinz at pinzi@mmc.org.

New MRI facility opens

On April 14, MMCRI celebrated the opening of our magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) facility. MRI involves measuring signals emitted from atomic nuclei in response to radio waves. While the typical MRI magnet used in hospitals and clinics has a magnetic field strength of about 1.5 Tesla, our magnet is 5 times stronger with 7 Tesla, about 140,000 times the magnetic field strength of the earth. With this field strength, our superconducting magnet allows a resolution of 0.1mm.

Because MRI is a noninvasive imaging method, the system will allow longitudinal studies of various diseases ranging from tumor morphology to angiography and cardiac applications. With a bore size of 15.5cm, mice and other small rodents can be analyzed. Analysis of anatomy as well as functional measures of a tissue, such as perfusion and oxygenation, can be performed. This is the first research MRI of this capacity in Maine, and our facility will be available to researchers throughout the northern New England region.

To join our mailing list, contact Barbara Peaslee at (207) 885-8122 (peaslb@mmc.org).
To help support our research mission, contact Rebecca Doucet at (207) 662-2925 (doucer@mmc.org).

Maine Medical Center
Research Institute
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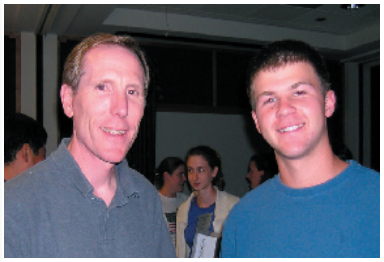
Visit our website at www.mmcri.org

Congratulations to the Recipients of our Summer Student Research Fellowships!

Student	Current School	Hometown
Kate Sawyer	Brandeis Univ., MA	Buxton, ME
Melissa Cobleigh	Smith College, MA	Portland, ME
Anna Eisenstein	Middlebury College, VT	Auburn, ME
Michael Erkkinen	Amherst College, MA	Yarmouth, ME
Emily Frank	Dartmouth College, NH	Brunswick, ME
Robin Caron	Saint Joseph's College, ME	Portage, ME
Christopher Hooper	Lawrence Univ., WI	Falmouth, ME
Ponnila Samuel	Bowdoin College, ME	Biddeford, ME
Joshua Himmelfarb	Wayneflete School, ME	Falmouth, ME
Heidi Tait	Univ. Southern Maine, ME	Portland, ME
Hillary Glick	Tufts Univ., MA	Portland, ME
Heather Adorr	Univ. Virgin Islands, VI	South Portland, ME



Mike Erkkinen (right) will be joining Doug Spicer (left) for a research project this summer.

Our summer student research program is a challenging, 10-week long experience that allows students to partipate in basic or clinical research. This year we had 60 applicants, and we were able to accept 12 students. Our class of 2005 shows our commitment to nurturing the education and careers of students from Maine. These summer internships are supported in part by a grant from the Corning Foundation.

Thank you to Ingrid Haiijer at Corning Life Sciences for her help in securing critical funding to help support two interns this summer.

Community support helps MMCRI bring the latest scientific discoveries to patients' bedsides and improve the quality of care they receive. If you or your company is interested in supporting any of our programs, please contact Rebecca Doucet, Research Development Officer, at (207) 885-8108 or doucer@mmc.org.