

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Stephen I. Katz, MD, PhD, NIAMS Director, wrote a highly relevant editorial in the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, Volume 19, Number 10, 2004. Dr. Katz reminded us that President Bush declared 2002-2011 as the National Bone and Joint Decade. He stated that one of two women and one of eight men over fifty will have an osteoporosis fracture. It is estimated that in 2000 musculoskeletal conditions cost the nation up to \$254 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity. Although much has been accomplished through NIH funding, Dr. Katz states that major challenges remain: (1) raise awareness about the growing burden of musculoskeletal disorders on society; (2) promote prevention and empower patients through education programs; (3) advance research and training in prevention, diagnoses and treatment; and (4) improve diagnostic and treatment options. Obstacles include: (1) increase the number of physician scientists conducting clinical research; (2) increase the number of scientists who can “bridge the gap between bench and bedside”; and (3) “do a better job of affecting the behavioral changes that will result in better bone and joint health.”

The CMBD, being one of only five funded NIH/NIAMS Research Core Centers, is in an excellent position to respond aggressively to these challenges. A major impact at UAB has been made by the recruitment of Huw Thomas, BDS, MS, PhD, Dean, School of Dentistry. Dr. Thomas, a nationally recognized expert in basic and translational research of dentin and tooth development, has plans, as outlined below, to make major contributions to this multidisciplinary program.

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SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY RECEIVES RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

I am very pleased to announce that the School of Dentistry at UAB has recently received a two year \$2.9 million grant from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) to improve its oral health research infrastructure. The School is one of seven among the nation's 56 dental schools to receive this award. Gregg H. Gilbert, DDS, MBA, Associate Dean for Research and the School of Dentistry's Chair of Diagnostic Sciences is the Principal Investigator and Michael Reddy, D.M.D., D.M.Sc., Chair of Periodontology, serves as Co-Principal Investigator.

The award will serve to enhance oral health research by improving the School's and University's infrastructure. It affords the School a rare opportunity to build upon a series of recent federal, state, local and university initiatives that have created an ideal environment for research development. The main focus of the grant will be to provide funds to attract senior-level scientists in interdisciplinary research areas, who in turn will attract junior level scientists to join them in their research fields. The interdisciplinary strengths that exist across the UAB campus and the willingness of prominent faculty across campus to serve on our Internal Advisory Committee and provide key input during our planning process were significant factors in this success.

We have started our recruitment process with advertisements appearing in national journals within the next month. Our first focus area is in the field of craniofacial biology and regenerative oral medicine. We expect to recruit an individual who will establish a major research program at the School of Dentistry as well as taking a prominent leadership role within the broader UAB research community. As part of our interdisciplinary approach we anticipate significant interactions with investigators in the Center for Metabolic Bone Disease especially in studies of bone biology and metabolism.

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