

GW HIV/AIDS Institute Announces Awards

GW's HIV/AIDS Institute announced the recipients of this year's GW Collaborative Faculty Awards for Research (GW CFAR), Oct. 22. Since spring 2008 the GW HIV/AIDS Institute has awarded two rounds of Collaborative Faculty Awards for Research, in an effort to promote interdisciplinary, collaborative HIV/AIDS research across departments and institutions; and to provide research seed money for the generation of data and partnerships that will be used to support federal grant applications.

After an extensive review process, projects from the departments of Biochemistry, Microbiology, Immunology and Tropical Medicine, and the Medical Service Veterans Affairs Medical Center were selected for this year's awards.

"Pathogenesis and molecular events related to HIV-1 Vpr and its functional consequences in HIV/AIDS cells," led by Principal Investigator Fatah Kashanchi, PhD, received a \$40,000 award. The project studies the biochemical characteristics and biologic properties of Vprs — HIV accessory proteins that appear to facilitate HIV replication. Increased understanding of Vpr activity could help researchers develop new therapeutic approaches to HIV infection.

"Identifying barriers to health care access and utilization in hospitalized

HIV-infected patients," led by Principal Investigator Angelike Liappis, MD, Medical Service Veterans Affairs Medical Center, received a \$30,000 award. Dr. Liappis and her team will explore the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers faced by the HIV-infected patients cared for in hospitals and will define what factors contribute to their lack of access, engagement and utilization of available primary health care resources.

The deadline for submitting proposals for the next GW CFAR award is Jan. 15, 2009. Eligibility is restricted to HIV/AIDS research and the principal investigator must be a faculty member of the GW HIV/AIDS Institute. At least one co-investigator must be from either the School of Public Health and Health Services or the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The HIV/AIDS Institute encourages faculty members from participating schools and institutions, such as the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Children's National Medical Center, Georgetown University, Howard University and the Washington Hospital Center, to apply, however, they are expected to seek matching funds or in-kind support from collaborating institutions.

SPHHS Professor Monforton Spoils Labor Department "Secret"

Celeste Monforton, MPH, senior research associate, Project on Scientific Knowledge and Public Policy, testified before the House Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Workforce Protections about the Department of Labor's (DOL) proposed rule on occupational health risk assessment. The rule is commonly referred to as the "Secret Rule," because the DOL did not publish a notice of the proposed rule in the Federal Register, and might have completed the rule unnoticed had Monforton not found its title listed on a White House Web site and publicized her finding on the blog *The Pump Handle*.

Monforton pulled no punches when she told Subcommittee Chair Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.), "The Labor Department's proposal is a sloppy piece of work that will impede, not improve, health protections for workers. It is imperative that this Committee use its oversight role to ensure that the promises of the OSH Act and the Mine Act are upheld for the sake of our nation's workers — the individuals who create the wealth for businesses and our entire country."

An analysis of the Department of Labor's effort, "The Department of Labor's Secret Risk-Assessment Rule," is available on *Defending Science.org* at www.defendingscience.org/case_studies/Secret-DOL-Rule.cfm. A statement issued by the Education and Labor Committee regarding its introduction of legislation to block the 'Secret Rule' is available at www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/edlabor_dem/Rel731SecretRule.html.

Monforton's testimony is available at www.defendingscience.org/newsroom/upload/Monforton_Testimony_Risk_Assessment.pdf.

Research

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under unsolicited grants, NIH now combines R01 data with Program Announcements (PAs). Success rates for PAs did not differ appreciably from those for R01's, at least through FY1999 to 2005 when data for PA success rates were reported separately. For FY2004 and 2005, P.A.'s represented 20.4 percent of the combined pool, and for the five prior years the proportion was 15.6 percent.

- For FY2007, first-time and second-time revisions have provided funding for an additional 1,573 and 1,272 grants, and \$321.1 and \$470.5 millions for new grants. For

Type-2 amended applications, these numbers are 932 and 626, and \$352.5 and \$228.3 millions, respectively.

- These figures include Type-1 and Type-2 grants, competing, noncompeting and supplements; grants1.nih.gov/grants/award/research/Research_by_Activity_Code.xls.

H. George Mandel, PhD, professor of Pharmacology and Physiology, GW SMHS, and **Elliot S. Vesell, MD**, Evan Pugh Professor of Pharmacology, and professor of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine.