

HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
Elaine Baldwin
(301) 496-5717

Robert E. Windom, M.D., assistant secretary for health, has announced that 7 Centers for AIDS Research (CFARs) are being established by universities receiving new 5-year grants from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). The CFARs will promote the development of new scientific knowledge about AIDS, with the ultimate goal of improving the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of AIDS. The total costs for the first year are \$6.7 million.

The CFAR program is unique because it is designed for groups of investigators who have established reputations for excellence in AIDS research and who are already receiving funds for AIDS-related research from NIAID and other Institutes at the National Institutes of Health. The awards provide core support for consolidating and focusing the AIDS research activities at their universities.

Scientists estimate that more than 1 million Americans are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of AIDS. Approximately 74,000 Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS since 1981, and nearly 60 percent of them have died. At present, only one antiviral drug, AZT, is approved for the treatment of AIDS, and it is not a cure.

Current scientific opinion recognizes that the epidemic of HIV infection requires a multidisciplinary approach involving a wide spectrum of basic, preclinical, clinical and applied

(MORE)

(2)

research. The directors of the CFARS are expected to provide strong leadership in facilitating creative, interactive AIDS research activities among a variety of laboratory and clinical investigators.

Each director has been assured by his parent institution that the CFAR will be recognized as a major element in the institution's organizational structure. Each CFAR director has also received a firm commitment from the institution to provide necessary personnel, facilities and space for research projects. Laboratory and clinical equipment or services that will be shared by a number of investigators engaged in AIDS research may be funded by the center grants. Funds are available for upgrading laboratories and providing proper containment facilities for working with HIV and related retroviruses.

In addition, CFAR funds are available to support salaries and research costs both for new investigators at the parent institution who have not previously received major grants or contracts, and for investigators newly recruited to the institution. Such monies would be available for a limited time. NIAID has requested that special efforts be made to attract and support qualified minority and women scientists.

The CFAR directors are: Stephen Byrn, Ph.D., Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind.; Murray Gardner, M.D., University of California, Davis; King Holmes, M.D., University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.; Eric Hunter, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham; Thomas Merigan, M.D., Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.; Arye Rubinstein, M.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, N.Y.; and Paul Volberding, M.D., University of California, San Francisco.

#

October 13, 1988