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Texas Council on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders

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AUSTIN, TX (Feb. 1) – The Texas Council on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (TCADR) announced Friday that the Texas A&M Health Science Center (TAMHSC) has been elected to full membership and participation in the prestigious Texas Alzheimer's Research and Care Consortium (TARCC).

The TAMHSC will provide expertise in research, care and education that complements existing consortium members – Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, the University of North Texas Health Science Center, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

"This is a great day for our medical research institution to have a role in the advancement of care and cure for this terrible disease that affects so many Texans," said Clint P. Hackney, TCADR vice chair and Texas A&M University alumnus.

TAMHSC faculty currently are studying Alzheimer's development and working on markers for earlier detection, as well as testing specific drugs to prevent or eliminate the disease. Research also is being done on the impact from lifestyle and the environment, outside of genetics and biology.

"We are pleased to be part of the Texas Alzheimer's Research and Care Consortium and share our knowledge and expertise," said David S. Carlson, Ph.D., TAMHSC vice president for research and dean of the School of Graduate Studies. "Alzheimer's not only affects the individual but also puts a tremendous strain on caregivers and our society, and our faculty are committed to finding how to prevent, treat and perhaps even eradicate this devastating disease."

Debbie Hanna, TCADR chair, said the addition of the TAMHSC is an important and responsible step for the state-funded consortium.

"This institution brings much strength to our group that will compliment and value add in many ways," Hanna said. "I am very proud to be a part of this decision."

About the TARCC

Since the first state funding for Alzheimer's research in Texas history was approved in 2005 by the 79th Texas Legislature, \$18 million has been appropriated to fund the TARCC. TARCC has now recruited more than 2,500 volunteers (more than 700 of whom are Hispanic) statewide to participate in cutting-edge research to isolate and identify:

- Genetic factors associated with the onset of Alzheimer's disease, and
- Biological markers for inflammation, cardiovascular disease, risk factors for heart disease and failure to control blood sugar (diabetes) that impact the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease.

TARCC seeks almost \$10 million in funding for the 2013 biennium to support Alzheimer's research and education initiatives by the consortium.

TARCC has established a large shared Texas Alzheimer's DataBank that includes standardized clinical, neuropsychiatric, genetic and blood biomarker data on Alzheimer's patients, individuals diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment and healthy control subjects who are seen at each of the TARCC member sites. Importantly, samples and data from TARCC participants are collected annually at follow up visits. The longitudinal nature of the TARCC study is a key strength, allowing analysis of disease progression.

Consortium members will also have access to research funding through the Darrell K Royal Research Fund for Alzheimer's Disease is a designated/fiscal sponsorship fund of the Dallas Foundation, a 501c3 public charity.