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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TEXAS SENATE HONORS JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
FOR HER COMMITMENT TO EXPANDING ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH**

*Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium Adds Fifth Institution to Expand Reach to South Texas...
Announces New Alzheimer's Research Focus on Hispanics*

AUSTIN, TX. – The **Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium (TARC)** has added a fifth institution—**The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio**—and is creating a special research focus on the impact of Alzheimer's on Hispanics.

The announcement came shortly before the Texas Senate planned to honor **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor** for her service on the nation's highest court and for her commitment to expanding Alzheimer's disease research.

"We are deeply honored to have this opportunity to honor Justice O'Connor for her extraordinary contributions to our country, both from the bench and in the arena of Alzheimer's advocacy. As a member of the nation's Alzheimer's Study Group, Justice O'Connor has used her personal experience in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's to become a powerful champion for doing more to meet the needs of Alzheimer's patients and caregivers," said **Lt. Governor David Dewhurst**.

Jim Hinds, TARC Project Coordinator, said the five Texas medical research institutions participating in the TARC will expand their collaborative Alzheimer's research over the next two years into the links between Alzheimer's and cardiovascular disease, diabetes, inflammation and other factors.

"Almost 340,000 Texans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Without research breakthroughs, this disease will reach epidemic proportions in Texas by 2050," Hinds said.

"The fastest-growing segment of the Texas population is Hispanic, making it imperative that we address their susceptibility to Alzheimer's disease," said **Dr. Rachele Doody**, M.D., Ph.D., Effie Marie Cain Chair in Alzheimer's disease research and Professor of Neurology at Baylor College of Medicine. "Hispanics are underrepresented nationally in Alzheimer's research—and we have an opportunity in Texas to lead the country in this work."

Dr. Doody said, "Justice O'Connor's generosity in speaking to the nation about her own experience in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's provides an insight into the enormous challenges that hundreds of thousands of Texas caregivers face every day. Research holds the greatest promise of meeting the Alzheimer's challenge, which affects 5.3 million people in the U.S. alone."

Collaborating through the TARC to better diagnose, treat, slow progression, and ultimately prevent Alzheimer's disease are: **Baylor College of Medicine**, Houston; **Texas Tech University Health Sciences**

Center, Lubbock; University of North Texas Health Science Center, Fort Worth; and The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas; and The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Texas lawmakers appropriated the first state funds for the Texas Alzheimer’s Research Consortium in 2005—an investment that is already yielding advances in AD detection and is closing the gap in predicting risk for developing Alzheimer’s.

As reported last fall in the *Archives of Neurology*, TARC researchers have succeeded in identifying a simpler, more accurate way to measure smaller incremental changes in dementia progression—potentially making it possible to differentiate between Mild Cognitive Impairment (pre-dementia) and very early Alzheimer’s disease and to tailor therapies to delay AD onset.

The TARC has established the **first Texas bio-bank** of blood tissue data stored for future research as well as a centralized **Texas Alzheimer’s DataBank** of uniformly collected clinical, neuropsychological and laboratory data on the original 800 volunteers recruited for its Alzheimer’s research studies.

Dr. Stephen Waring, DVM, Ph.D., TARC Scientific Coordinator and Associate Professor of Epidemiology at The University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston, said:

“With the addition of UTHSC-San Antonio to the TARC, Texas has an unprecedented opportunity to quickly assemble the nation’s only large, well characterized body of Caucasian and Hispanic/Mexican-American Alzheimer’s research subjects—making Texas highly competitive for National Institute of Health grants to target Alzheimer’s research to an underserved, at-risk Hispanic population.”

Dr. Donald R. Royall, M.D., Chief of the Division of Aging & Geriatric Psychiatry at UTHSC-San Antonio, said his institution will aggressively recruit many of the Mexican American research volunteers who participated in the recently ended San Antonio Longitudinal Study of Aging and encourage their participation in the TARC’s Alzheimer’s studies.

“We already have historical data on their diabetes and cardiovascular risk factors, making their recruitment for Alzheimer’s research all the more valuable,” Royall said. UTHSC-San Antonio serves 32 counties, extending from Bexar County to the Texas-Mexico border.

Over the next biennium, the Texas Alzheimer’s Research Consortium plans to expand recruitment of research volunteers to include persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment and to replace research participants lost to attrition.

Research volunteers receive a free study-related baseline evaluation and annual biomarker, genetic and psychometric examinations at a TARC institution—with a stipend to defray travel and other costs to ensure Alzheimer’s patients can make their clinic visits.

For more information and to find out how to volunteer for research studies, visit the TARC’s website at www.txalzresearch.org.

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