

For Immediate Release

Innovative Collaborative Research Network to be Led by Wake Forest, with AFAR
National Institute on Aging Award Seeks to Spur Interdisciplinary Research

April 25, 2018 (New York, NY) – The National Institute on Aging (NIA) at NIH has awarded funds, expected to total \$2.5 million over three years, to the Wake Forest School of Medicine, with a subcontract to the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), to organize and coordinate a new NIA Research Centers Collaborative Network (RCCN).

Established under a cooperative agreement with Wake Forest, the new research network will bring together scientists from six NIA center programs focused on addressing a wide range of issues affecting older adults. The RCCN will spur multidisciplinary efforts in aging research across the NIA centers through five complementary strategies: conferences, pilot programs, early career faculty education, web-based resource identification tools, and fundraising/ proposal development.

Stephen B. Kritchevsky, Ph.D., co-director of the Sticht Center for Healthy Aging and Alzheimer's Prevention at the Wake Forest School of Medicine and principal investigator of the Wake Forest Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC), will serve as co-principal investigator for the network with Stephanie Lederman Ed.M., AFAR's executive director. Wake Forest OAIC will be primarily responsible for the network's scientific endeavors and outreach to the aging research community, while AFAR will be primarily responsible for the administrative functioning of the network, including planning conferences and webinars and grants.

"AFAR is honored to partner with the OAIC and the NIA to foster new collaborations between diverse center programs to address common problems," Lederman said. "Since its founding more than 35 years ago, AFAR has recognized that helping people live healthier and longer lives requires building bridges across disciplines."

The six NIA center programs in the RCCN consist of 83 individual centers and five coordinating centers. They are:

- **Alzheimer's Disease Core and Research Centers**, focused on neuroscience, with 31 centers. The University of Washington serves as coordinating center for this program.
- **Centers on the Demography and Economics of Aging**, focused on behavioral and social research, with 11 centers. The University of Michigan serves as coordinating center for this program.
- **Nathan Shock Centers for Excellence in the Biology of Aging**, with six centers. AFAR serves as the coordinating center for this program.
- **Older Americans Independence Centers**, focused on geriatrics and gerontology, with 15 centers. Wake Forest School of Medicine serves as the coordinating center for this program.
- **Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research**, focused on behavioral and social research, with seven centers. UCLA serves as coordinating center for this program.
- **Roybal Centers for Translational Research on Aging**, focused on behavioral and social research, with 13 centers. This program has no designated coordinating center. The University of Illinois at Chicago is filling this function at present.

"Each of these NIA centers brings important expertise and perspectives needed to address important problems facing an aging society," Kritchevsky said. "By creating networks across geographical and disciplinary boundaries to foster purposeful interaction across programs, the RCCN can enable scientists to realize synergies and insights to improve the health of older adults in unexpected and creative ways."

While the six center programs have made significant contributions to the field of aging research over the years, the RCCN will help them broaden their scope and effectiveness.

"We hope that the RCCN will serve as a catalyst for collaboration that will spark cross-disciplinary insights," said Basil Eldadah, M.D., Ph.D., chief of the Geriatrics Branch at the NIA. "As we more fully understand aging as an integrated process with physical, neurological, social, and behavioral aspects, it's more important than ever that scientists across our research centers work together to find more effective ways to help Americans live healthier as they grow older."

About AFAR: The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to support and advance healthy aging through biomedical research. Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging and age-related medicine. To address the shortage of physicians and researchers dedicated to the science of healthier aging, AFAR funds physicians and scientists probing the fundamental mechanisms of aging, as well as specific diseases associated with aging populations at critical points throughout their careers. Learn more at www.afar.org or follow AFARorg on Twitter and Facebook.

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