

**American Federation for Aging Research Receives Funding for  
2010 Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program  
Program Targets Shortage of Physicians and Researchers Specializing in Geriatric Medicine**

NEW YORK, NY— The “graying of America” taking place across the country and over the course of the next twenty years is creating significant challenges in such areas as caregiving, housing—and also, significantly, in the medical profession, according to leading experts. At present, there are approximately 7,600 board-certified geriatricians in the U.S., which represents one geriatrician for every 2,500 Americans aged 75 or older. However, due to the projected increase in the number of older Americans, by 2030, this ratio is expected to drop to one geriatrician for every 4,254 older Americans.

To address the physician shortage, the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) has created the Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program, which is dedicated to finding ways to attract more physicians to the field of geriatric medicine and research. The program, which is funded through a forward-thinking public-private partnership model, announced today that, as a result of a new \$220,000 grant from MetLife Foundation, it will be able to increase its medical student training by approximately 40 percent this year, bringing the number of students that will receive financial support through the program to 104.

“The shortage of physicians specializing in geriatric medicine and age-related research today is an issue that certainly needs attention,” states Stephanie Lederman, executive director of AFAR. “The MSTAR program provides the funding and exposure for medical students to consider training in the field and begin to fill this very critical need.”

The major sponsors of MSTAR are the John A. Hartford Foundation, MetLife Foundation and the National Institute on Aging (NIA), with additional support provided by several other funders. MetLife Foundation joined the partnership in 2009. The MetLife Foundation funding will allow 40 additional students to pursue training in geriatric medicine and age-related research this year.

The MetLife Foundation grant will enable the medical students to participate in research, education and clinical training programs in age-related health and diseases at NIA-funded national training centers and at some of the nation’s top-tier research facilities and academic institutions. The short-term scholarships, ranging from 8 to 12 weeks, provide students with monthly stipends of approximately \$1,750. The program is intended to introduce medical students to the rapidly growing field of geriatric medicine, and to pique their interest in pursuing careers in age-related diseases and conditions.

“We are pleased to fund this worthwhile program, which helps physicians in their early years of medical education receive mentoring and training in the important field of geriatric medicine,” says Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “AFAR’s effort to attract more physicians to this field is important, especially at a time when the need for age-related health practitioners is reaching a critical phase.”

"I now understand how different it is caring for older adults, and I feel like what I learned over the summer is going to help me better care for the older adults in my practice," explains 2009 MSTAR student Christina Metzler, from UCLA. "Also, the MSTAR program gave me the tools to know how I can balance a medical, clinical, and research career." Amy Unterman, a medical student at Johns Hopkins University, describes how her 2009 MSTAR award solidified her career path: "Taking part in the MSTAR Program has given me a broad range of experiences that allowed me to see what I really liked and did not like. It turned out that the program only solidified my interest in what I've loved all along: geriatrics."

Since 1994, MSTAR has trained a total of 1,457 students from over 100 medical schools throughout the United States. Students apply directly to AFAR, which dispenses scholarships to selected students.

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### **About AFAR**

Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging and age-related medicine. Cognizant of the shortage of physicians and researchers dedicated to the bioscience of aging, AFAR pursues grants from foundations, corporations and individuals to fund important research into age-related health and diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, dementia, and other illnesses. AFAR funds physicians and scientists probing the fundamental mechanisms of aging, as well as specific diseases associated with aging populations. For more information visit AFAR's website at [www.afar.org](http://www.afar.org). For a listing of the 2010 MSTAR awardees go to <http://afar.org/grantee-list.html#10>.

### **About MetLife Foundation**

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation has been involved in a variety of aging-related initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental fitness, health and wellness programs and civic involvement. More information about the Foundation is available at [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).