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\$900,000 Awarded to Irish Scientists Studying the Role of Aging Processes on Nerve Function and Inflammatory Disease

Largest Academic Prize in Aging Research Could Yield Greater Understanding of Aging's Effects on Cognition, Falls, Type II Diabetes, and Cardiovascular Diseases

NEW YORK, May 15, 2009 – The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) are pleased to announce the 2009 recipients of the Paul Beeson Career Development Awards in Aging Research for the Island of Ireland. This grant program, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and under the direction of the American Federation for Aging Research in collaboration with The Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland, advances the work of leading early-career physician-scientists throughout the Island of Ireland, cultivating lifetime careers in aging-related science and medicine.

Chie Wei Fan, MB, MRCPI, MD, Clinical Director of Technology Research for Independent Living Clinic and Senior Research Fellow, St. James' Hospital, and Ronan Mullan, MB ChB, BSc, PhD, Specialist Registrar in Rheumatology and Internal Medicine, University College Dublin, are the recipients of the Beeson Award in Ireland, which was first launched in 2007. They will each receive a grant of \$450,000 to fund their research over a three-year period. Dr. Fan's research, *Age-related Autonomic Dysfunction and its Impact on Cognition, Gait and Falls*, will investigate how age affects the autonomic nervous system, and its influence on the cognitive and motor skills of older adults. Dr. Mullan's Research, *Acute Phase Serum Amyloid-A (A-SAA) in Ageing, Arthritis and Obesity- Potential Common Mechanism for Cardiovascular Disease*, will seek to understand the role A-SAA—a plasma protein that is associated with many inflammatory diseases—plays in rheumatoid arthritis, type II diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in an aging population.

The rapidly expanding aging population in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland requires a forward-thinking approach to tackle the healthcare strain in the years ahead. Geriatrics research and training is a necessary investment to address the special needs of an aging population. Leading physician-scientists are needed in Ireland to advance scientific knowledge, as well as transform research in order to improve the health care and independence of older adults.

"The work of our Beeson Scholars is dramatically changing the landscape of aging research, training and clinical care," said Stephanie Lederman, Executive Director of the American Federation for Aging Research. "The success of the Beeson Program in Ireland is demonstrated by the quality of this year's recipients. They and their fellow Beeson Scholars in Ireland and the United States will greatly impact the health and quality of life of older adults."

“I am delighted that we have been able to award Beeson scholarships to two such outstanding clinical scientists,” said Robert Stout, MD, from the Queen’s University Belfast and Chair of the Beeson Island of Ireland Committee. The success of the previous three awardees in driving ground-breaking research has been clear: “The Beeson Ireland program has thus provided a strong impetus to academic study on aging in the island of Ireland. I am confident that the Beeson Ireland Scholars will be future leaders of research, teaching and clinical practice in aging.”

As 2009 Scholar Chie Wei Fan says, the Beeson Program, “creates enormous opportunity for Irish researchers to share and sharpen research concepts with leading experts and provide for collaborative research with other networks of universities.”

The Paul B. Beeson Career Development Awards in Aging Research Program was created in 1995 to address a critical need for more physicians trained in geriatrics and to advance the field of aging research in the United States. In 2007, with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, the program expanded to the Island of Ireland. To date the program has produced five Beeson Ireland Scholars.

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About the Atlantic Philanthropies

The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on critical social problems related to aging, disadvantaged children & youth, population health, and reconciliation & human rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Vietnam. The organization’s self-imposed expiration date for completing active grantmaking by 2016 has been established in keeping with the high-impact “giving while living” philosophy of its founder, Charles F. Feeney. Since its inception in 1982, Atlantic has made more than 4,600 grants totaling more than \$4.4 billion.

To learn more, please visit www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

About the American Federation for Aging Research

The American Federation for Aging Research is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support biomedical research on aging. It is devoted to creating the knowledge that all of us need to live healthy, productive, and independent lives. Since 1981, AFAR has awarded more than \$113 million to nearly 2,500 talented scientists as part of its broad-based series of grant programs. Its work has led to significant advances in our understanding of aging processes, age-related diseases, and healthy aging practices. AFAR communicates news of these innovations through its organizational web site www.afar.org and educational web sites Infoaging (www.infoaging.org) and Health Compass (www.healthcompass.org).

About The Centre For Ageing Research and Development In Ireland

CARDI is a not for profit organisation developed by leaders from the ageing field across Ireland (North and South) including age focused researchers, academics, statutory, voluntary and community sector

representatives with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies. It is overseen by a Steering Group and hosted by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. CARDI has been established to provide a mechanism for greater collaboration among age researchers, for wider dissemination of ageing research information and to advance a research agenda relevant to the needs of older people in Ireland (North and South). Operating at a strategic level and in an advisory capacity, CARDI focuses on promoting research cooperation across sectors and disciplines and concentrates on influencing the strategic direction of research into older people and ageing in Ireland

To learn more, please visit www.cardi.ie