

Psychiatry Update: July 18, 2011

Thomas W. Uhde, M.D., Chair, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

MUSC Depression Research and Treatment Center:

I am pleased to announce that the MUSC Depression Research and Treatment Center has been awarded membership into the National Network of Depression Centers (NNDC) <http://www.nndc.org/>. The NNDC constitutes the premier academic centers in the United States, which study and treat depression and related co-morbid neuropsychiatric disorders. There are twenty-two designated comprehensive NNDC depression centers: Brigham & Women's Hospital (Harvard), Columbia, Duke, Emory, Johns Hopkins, Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard), McLean (Harvard), Stanford, UCLA, UCSF, University of Cincinnati, University of Colorado, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Iowa, University of Louisville, UMass, Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas Southwestern, and Weill Cornell Medical College. Thus, MUSC joins an elite group of institutions that conduct depression research and develop new therapies.

Drs. Mark George and Ziad Nahas deserve special recognition for conducting innovative research in brain mechanisms underlying mood disorders and advancing neuromodulation therapies for the treatment of depression. Drs. George and Nahas were critical in the development of our successful application for institutional NNDC membership. In addition, the following individuals also conducted research and/or provided invaluable information or feedback that was incorporated into the application: Ron Acierno, Ray Anton, Gary Aston-Jones, Kelly Barth, Kathleen Brady, Jeffrey Borckardt, Catalin Buhusi, Mona Buhusi, Bernadette Cortese, Michael de Arellano, Lindsay DeVane, Kevin Gray, Connie Guille, Karen Hartwell, Edward Kantor, Steve Lanier, Robert Malcolm, Peter Shiromani, Baron Short, Mark Sothmann, and Bryan Tolliver among other members of our academic family.

For anyone who wishes an overview of basic, clinical and translational research being conducted at MUSC, the 19-page application is available for your review.

The following individuals have agreed to serve as founding leaders of the MUSC Depression Research and Treatment Center:

Scientific Director (Mark George)
Director, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Mark Hamner)
Director, Women's Reproductive Biobehavioral Health (Connie Guille)
Director, Bipolar Mood Disorders Program (Bryan Tolliver)
Director, Telepsychiatry (Hugh Myrick)
Director, Data Registry and Informatics Infrastructure (Jeff Borckardt)
Director, Brain & Creativity Program (McCurdy & Uhde)

There will be a Community Advisory Board and Dr. Layton McCurdy has agreed to serve as the first Chairman. Until a permanent Director is identified, I will serve as the Interim Director and Connie Guille will serve as the Associate Director. Over the next several months and until a permanent Executive Assistant can be successfully recruited, Vickey Cornelison has kindly agreed to work with Central Administration to provide administrative support to the DRTC.

There are number of national NNDC positions to be filled (e.g. Mark George already sits on the rTMS Multi-Site Collaboration Task Group). All of the founding directors have been nominated for positions

on Task Group and Committees within the national NNDC organization. While the leadership of the DRTC at start-up is heavily weighted toward psychiatry, the mission and vision of the Comprehensive Depression Center ultimately requires strong transdisciplinary representation from many different academic departments, colleges, institutes, and centers. We will be inviting and identifying additional scientists, educators, clinicians (as well Directors of other Programs, Task Groups and Committees) in the near future.

Thank you for your many contributions to this important mission.