MUSC researchers involved in landmark Paradigm-HF clinical trial, while coordinators from the CTSA-funded SCTR Institute provide service and support.

Charleston, S.C. (November 7, 2014) – Researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) were involved in what has been the largest heart failure study conducted to date. The study revealed that Novartis’ investigational heart failure medicine (LCZ696) was superior to ACE-inhibitor enalapril when the new medication cut cardiovascular deaths by 20 percent for patients experiencing heart failure with reduced ejection fractions (HF-REF), reduced heart failure hospitalizations by 21 percent, and reduced the risk of all-cause mortality by 16 percent.

Michael Zile, M.D., MUSC professor and Charles Ezra Daniel endowed chair for cardiology, and physician at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, where study procedures took place, was part of the international steering committee and helped design, implement and evaluate the study alongside numerous heart center principal investigators (PIs), such as cardiologist Dr. Terry O’Brien, who also has a dual appointment at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center and MUSC.

“This will change the fundamental guidelines for therapy in heart failure patients,” explained Zile. “This medication substantially improves survival and quality of life, and proves that the care we provide is not only state-of-the-art, but also pushes the known boundaries of discovery, ultimately resulting in new, more effective ways to treat our patients.”

Coordinators from the South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research (SCTR) Institute’s Research Coordinator Core were brought on board by the Charleston Research Institute (CRI), to assist Dr. O’Brien with the day-to-day operations of the trial. The CRI administers research studies at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center that are not funded by the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) but involve VA PIs. CRI has utilized the SCTR Institute’s Research Coordinator Core (RCC) services for 15 different studies under the supervision of VA principal investigators.

“It is a true privilege to have coordinators from our program involved in such groundbreaking work,” explained Clare Tyson, SCTR’s Research Coordination and Management manager. “It is always rewarding for our team to facilitate studies leading to significant success.”

As a result of this trial’s findings, Novartis is opening a second five-year study called the Paragon-HF trial that will test the same drug in patients with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HF-PEF). Coordinators from SCTR’s RCC have been contracted by CRI to continue service and support for this study, as well.
About SCTR
The South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research (SCTR) Institute of the Medical University of South Carolina is the catalyst for changing the culture of biomedical research, facilitating sharing of resources and expertise, and streamlining research-related processes to bring about large-scale change in the clinical and translational research efforts in South Carolina. The SCTR Institute was established in 2006 in response to the National Institute of Health’s Clinical and Translational Science Award Program, funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NIH/NCATS Grant UL1 TR000062). For more information, visit sctr.musc.edu.

About MUSC
Founded in 1824 in Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina is the oldest medical school in the South. Today, MUSC continues the tradition of excellence in education, research, and patient care. MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and residents, and has nearly 13,000 employees, including approximately 1,500 faculty members. As the largest non-federal employer in Charleston, the university and its affiliates have collective annual budgets in excess of $1.7 billion. MUSC operates a 750-bed medical center, which includes a nationally recognized Children's Hospital, the Ashley River Tower (cardiovascular, digestive disease, and surgical oncology), and a leading Institute of Psychiatry. For more information on academic information or clinical services, visit musc.edu.