



American Heart Association and The Children's Heart Foundation fund more than \$550,000 in congenital heart defect research with third round of grants

Dallas, June 6, 2017 – The American Heart Association (AHA) and The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) announced today the third round of recipients for the Congenital Heart Defect (CHD) Research Awards, a research program co-funded by the AHA and CHF. Five research programs were selected to receive a total of \$561,798 in funding. The CHD Research Awards will fund more than \$22 million in CHD-specific research through 2021. To date, more than \$2.42 million has been awarded.

An estimated minimum of 40,000 infants are expected to be affected by congenital heart defects each year in the United States. About 25 percent of babies born in the U.S. with a CHD require invasive treatment in the first year of life. Research that helps understand, identify and treat CHDs is helping these children live longer healthier lives. In fact since 1979, deaths from CHDs in the United States have declined by 39 percent.

"We are honored and excited to continue our research funding partnership with AHA," said William Foley, Executive Director of The Children's Heart Foundation. "Through this collaboration and our ongoing commitment to research focused on congenital heart defects, we strive to make a lasting impact in the lives of those with CHDs. This \$550,000 of new research will help bring innovative solutions to CHD survival rates and care."

The five grants are:

- Jack Rubinstein, MD of the University of Cincinnati – studying if using Probenecid, common gout medication, improves cardiac function and symptoms in children and young adults with only one functioning ventricle in their hearts, instead of the typical two.
- Jesse Davidson, MD of the University of Colorado School of Medicine at the Anschutz Medical Campus and Children's Hospital Colorado – researching to see if giving alkaline phosphatase in a model of a heart-lung machine and prior to stopping all blood flow will help protect the lungs from injury, as is common in children undergoing CHD surgery.
- Anushree Agarwal, MBBS of the University of California, San Francisco - generating the first U.S.-population-based estimates of CHD comorbidities, health care utilization and costs, which can then be used to allocate resources appropriately for adult CHD clinics as more children born with CHDs survive to adulthood.
- Ramak Khosravi, BS of Yale University - engineering arterial grafts from biodegradable polymers, with reduced costs and off-the-shelf availability, which will over time be replaced by the patient's own cells when arteries and veins need replacement in children living with CHD.
- Alexander Guzzetta, BS of the University of Chicago – uncovering the core genetic components of early cardiovascular development. Genes identified from this study can be used as candidates in subsequent human studies to validate the genetic drivers of human CHD.

“We are committed to working with The Children’s Heart Foundation to fund these important research projects, to secure healthier futures for babies born with CHD,” says Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association. “Innovations in research drive our work to improve the health of all Americans.”

Congenital heart defects are serious and common conditions that have a significant impact on morbidity, mortality and healthcare costs in children and adults. Collaborations like the one between the AHA and the CHF are vital to the continuation of life-saving advancements.