

# Press Release

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## **CLEVELAND CLINIC AND RUTGERS TO LEAD NEWLY FORMED INSTITUTE FOR WAR WOUNDED**

*Armed Forces Institute for Regenerative Medicine to Develop  
Therapies for Critically Injured Service Members*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**April 17 1:30 P.M. EST, 2008**, Cleveland, Ohio – Cleveland Clinic and Rutgers University are leading one of two civilian research consortia to develop innovative medical therapies for the treatment of wounded service members. Cleveland Clinic will receive more than \$10 million from a total of \$42.5 million awarded over 5 years to create a new institute called the Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine (AFIRM).

Cleveland Clinic Orthopedic Surgeon, George Muschler, M.D., is AFIRM’s Co-Director, in collaboration with AFIRM Director Joachim Kohn, Ph.D, of Rutgers University. Together Drs. Muschler and Kohn will lead a collaborative network of leading clinician scientists drawn from 15 premier institutions and more than 20 commercial partners nationwide.

“The AFIRM team is deeply committed to offering new recovery options for the brave men and women who have served our country,” Dr. Muschler said. “Our collaborative mission is to translate opportunities that are now available in regenerative biology as quickly as possible into practical tools that can be used on the front lines or here at home.”

The mission of AFIRM is to accelerate the development of new technologies in the field of regenerative medicine and tissue engineering to effectively serve the needs of injured service members. The research and development of new therapies will focus on the regeneration of bone, muscle, tendon, nerve and blood vessels, as well as new methods for transplantation of limb and facial tissue and the treatment of burns.

Cleveland Clinic President and CEO Delos “Toby” Cosgrove has experienced the devastation of war firsthand and commends the AFIRM project.



"Early in my career, I served as an Air Force surgeon in Vietnam where I saw military casualties firsthand and witnessed the impact of combat injuries on the fine men and women of our Armed Forces," Dr. Cosgrove said. "I am honored that Cleveland Clinic is part of the team awarded this opportunity to serve these heroes and potentially help several thousands of others who suffer from similar injuries."

AFIRM is a national effort to address the healthcare challenges of severely injured service members returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, said Dr. Kohn of Rutgers.

"Our foremost goal is to alleviate the human suffering associated with debilitating blast injuries and to enable our injured men and women to return to productive lives," Dr. Kohn said.

The AFIRM will be a collaborative virtual institution working in conjunction with the US Army Institute of Surgical Research (ISR). A second AFIRM consortium will be managed by Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center and the University of Pittsburgh who will receive another \$42.5 million in funding.

Successful inter-institutional and commercial partnerships like AFIRM have become a hallmark of biotechnology in Ohio, thanks to investments made by the Ohio's Third Frontier Project (TFP), which is working to expand biotech research and business in the state. In 2005 the state initiative funded the Clinical Tissue Engineering Center (CTEC), a collaboration among Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals Case Medical Center (who are also part of the Rutgers-Cleveland Clinic AFIRM team) and several other Ohio institutions and companies.

CTEC is a key partner in the larger National Center for Regenerative Medicine (NCRM), which integrates several regional programs and an international education effort focused on the development of therapies based on non-embryonic stem cells and regenerative medicine strategies.

Regenerative medicine in Ohio enjoys broad support from Ohio Governor Ted Strickland and federal government officials, including Ohio Senators George Voinovich and Sherrod Brown, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and Congressman Ralph Regula.

"This extraordinary grant is a testament to the outstanding work being conducted among the partners and the Department of Defense's recognition of this work," Congressman Regula said. "I am pleased to have been an early supporter of this initiative, as I believe it will profoundly improve the lives of our service members and their families."



The core academic partners in the Rutgers-Cleveland Clinic consortium are: Case Western Reserve University, Carnegie Mellon University, SUNY Stony Brook, Dartmouth College, MIT, Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Mayo Clinic, Northwestern University, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, University of Cincinnati, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, University of Pennsylvania, University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University.

### **About Cleveland Clinic**

Cleveland Clinic, located in Cleveland, Ohio, is a not-for-profit multispecialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Cleveland Clinic was founded in 1921 by four renowned physicians with a vision of providing outstanding patient care based upon the principles of cooperation, compassion and innovation. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation's best hospitals in its annual "America's Best Hospitals" survey. Approximately 1,800 full-time salaried physicians and researchers at Cleveland Clinic and Cleveland Clinic Florida represent more than 100 medical specialties and subspecialties. In 2007, there were 3.5 million outpatient visits to Cleveland Clinic and 50,455 hospital admissions. Patients came for treatment from every state and from more than 80 countries. Cleveland Clinic's Web site address is [www.clevelandclinic.org](http://www.clevelandclinic.org).

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