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**PARTNERSHIP AWARDS $3 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR PROMISING**

**NEW TREATMENTS IN ALZHEIMER’S AND RELATED DEMENTIAS**

***- Alzheimer’s Association and Rainwater Charitable Foundation join forces to accelerate drug discovery projects focused on a toxic brain protein that leads to the death of brain cells -***

**CHICAGO, December 20, 2018 –** $3 million in newly-awarded research grants give researchers across the country the ability to investigate creative new ways to target abnormal tau, a toxic brain protein that is a hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease, frontotemporal dementia, and many other neurodegenerative disorders. Previous studies have found that removing or blocking tau “tangles” holds great potential to delay, slow or prevent Alzheimer’s and other dementias, making it a high priority target for therapies.

To enable researchers to explore fundamentally new ways to prevent, reduce or remove tau from the brain, the [Alzheimer’s Association](http://www.alz.org) and the [Tau Consortium](http://tauconsortium.org/), a program of the Rainwater Charitable Foundation, have partnered to fund the [Tau Pipeline Enabling Program](https://alz.org/stepupthepace/T-PEP.asp) (T-PEP).

Five U.S.-based researchers are being awarded T-PEP grants in 2018. In total, they are testing nearly 900,000 compounds in mouse and cellular models to see what effect they may have in blocking or removing abnormal tau “tangles” from the brain. T-PEP aims to shorten the timeline from discoveries in laboratory settings to clinical trials in people living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

“Tau tangles are closely linked to changes in memory, reasoning and behavior,” said Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D., Alzheimer’s Association chief science officer. “The research funded by these grants will advance this promising field of drug research and enrich the pipeline for possible treatments, bringing us closer to more effective therapies, and even prevention strategies, for Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.”

“The future could be combination therapy,” Carrillo added. “Multiple drugs targeting multiple aspects of the disease, including amyloid, tau, inflammation and brain cell death. Or drug and lifestyle combinations, as we do now in heart disease.”

“We are excited to partner with the Alzheimer’s Association to provide support for these outstanding researchers,” said Patrick Brannelly, Program Director of the Tau Consortium. “The awardees were selected from a pool of more than 125 applicants, which shows how much progress the community has made in developing new approaches to treating neurodegenerative diseases. They’re giving hope to the millions of people around the world who are affected by these terrible disorders.”

The grants are awarded to:

● **Marc Diamond, M.D.**, University Texas Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas, TX)

In this study, 310,000 compounds will be tested for their effectiveness in reducing the interaction between tau and heparin, a molecule that has been shown to modify normal tau into tangles.

● **Karen Ashe, M.D., Ph.D.**, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (Minneapolis, MN)
170,000 compounds will be tested for their ability to suppress a natural protein in the brain called Casp2, which has been shown to cause tau to behave abnormally.

● **Glenn Larsen, Ph.D.**, Aquinnah Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Cambridge, MA)
In this study, 250,000 compounds will be tested for their ability to disrupt the tau accumulation in stress granules, which have been found in the brains of people with Alzheimer’s.

* **Camilo Rojas, Ph.D.**, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (Baltimore, MD)
This study will test the effectiveness of the compound MS882 in blocking the protein nSMase2, which encourages the spread of toxic tau in the brain.
* **Jason Gestwicki, Ph.D.**, University of California, San Francisco (San Francisco, CA)

160,000 compounds will be tested for their effectiveness in modulating or regulating the levels of “free” tau in the brain, which has been shown to cause tau tangles.

T-PEP is a joint funding partnership between the Alzheimer’s Association and the Tau Consortium. This is the inaugural class of T-PEP awardees.

**Alzheimer’s Association**

The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. For more information, visit the Alzheimer’s Association at [alz.org](https://www.alz.org/) or call the 24/7 helpline at 800-272-3900.

**Tau Consortium**

The Tau Consortium is an innovative medical research program that is operated under the auspices of the Rainwater Charitable Foundation. The Tau Consortium commissions world-class basic research and drug discovery to treat and prevent Alzheimer’s disease, progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), and other neurodegenerative disorders involving the tau protein. The Tau Consortium acts with urgency and with patients in mind. It ensures that its members work collaboratively and engage with partners who can accelerate their progress. Since founding the Tau Consortium in 2009, the Rainwater Charitable Foundation has committed nearly $100 million to the program. To date, eight treatments have entered human trials as a result of the Rainwater family’s funding. To learn more, please visit [www.tauconsortium.org](http://www.tauconsortium.org). To nominate a scientist for the 2019 Rainwater Prize for Advances in Neurodegenerative Research, please visit [www.rainwaterprize.org](http://www.rainwaterprize.org).

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