January 24, 2007

New Intel Research Grant Focuses on Aging Advancements

University Research Award from Intel Takes Aim at Changing the Way Age-Related Conditions are Detected, Treated

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

Getting a head start on assessment and intervention for age-related conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and injuries from falls is the goal of the collaboration between Intel Corporation and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). Through a $1 million grant, renewable up to three years, researchers will focus on improving the quality of life of the country's aging population by developing behavioral marker technologies that help to sense changes in behavior and, in doing so, provide earlier detection and more effective and personalized treatment.

Intel has created the Behavioral Assessment and Intervention Commons (BAIC), a unique academic-industrial collaboration that constructs a research commons -- a shared pool of tools, technology and thinking -- around behavioral markers and health outcomes. This collaboration promises to bring resources and attention to the development of health care technologies that will create sensors and other behavioral assessment tools to provide early detection and intervention.

Behavioral markers are an exciting, emerging area of research, focusing on measurable changes in behavior that might help us discover a medical problem earlier, notice an important trend in dealing with a chronic disease, or help us personalize treatment for a particular person's needs. An example of a BAIC technology could be a cell phone that picks up on subtle changes in a person's voice, triggering a warning for him to see a doctor in case this is a sign of an early-stage neurological disorder. Another example is simple sensors in the home that can help track a person's movements to reduce the risks of a fall.

"We are grateful that Intel has given us the opportunity to build on our work in this cutting-edge field," said Tamara Hayes, Ph.D., principal investigator on the grant. "This program is an important complement to our NIH-based studies of aging health outcomes in that it will allow us to make significant progress in developing behavioral marker and intervention technologies that have clinical relevance. Because of our complementary blend of clinical, basic science and engineering researchers, ORCATECH is particularly well poised to lead this field of research."

OHSU's Medical School is considered one of the country's leading academic centers for neuroscience research as reflected by its strong funding track record. Over the years Intel has provided OHSU with grants to support the development of this unique research. However, with the rapidly growing challenge of aging, Intel has decided to increase the

attention and investment with the research partnership with OHSU. From the development of hardware, such as gait and speech sensors, to that of software designed to aggregate data and create coaching tools, this funding may lead to research results that translate into new products and services that support healthy and independent aging. Furthermore, OHSU researchers plan to form a national data center that will allow other researchers to share their results and accelerate lab-to-home implementation of the technologies into everyday life.

"The Alzheimer's Association is strongly supportive of innovative efforts that advance early detection of Alzheimer's disease and that increase independence for older adults," said William Thies, Ph.D., vice president for Medical & Scientific Relations at the Alzheimer's Association. "Early and accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer's is valuable for many reasons. Right now it permits planning for the future with the full participation of the person with dementia. It also allows them to participate in clinical trials, which is a great service to others with Alzheimer's and to the entire society. For the not too distant future, we anticipate that we will soon have drugs that can slow or stop the progression of Alzheimer's. It will be crucial to detect Alzheimer's early so that we can begin therapy as early in the course of the disease as possible."

"Alarmingly, it is a worldwide problem that health care focuses on crisis, not prevention or early detection, and Intel is committed to supporting research initiatives that will create new technologies for early disease intervention," observed Eric Dishman, general manager of Intel's Health Research and Innovation Group. "Most health care solutions are established on large population-based studies, underscoring the need for personalized treatment. Intel is launching the BAIC program to bring resources and attention to this promising technology area. We hope to grow the field of behavioral assessment and intervention technologies that may help to detect disease earlier and to personalize treatment to the person's own needs, biology and everyday activities."

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