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HILLBLOM FOUNDATION GRANTS \$12 MILLION TO UCSF FOR RESEARCH

The University of California, San Francisco recently announced grants of more than \$12 million from the Larry L. Hillblom Foundation for the creation of a new center for research on the basic biology of aging as well as research programs in diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and eye disorders. The largest of the grants, \$8 million, will establish the Larry L. Hillblom Center for the Biology of Aging at the new UCSF Mission Bay Campus.

“In 1999, UCSF was honored to receive the very first grant the Hillblom Foundation made after its establishment, and we are delighted that our relationship has been strong and vibrant since then, as reflected in these magnificent new commitments to some of our most promising and important programs,” said UCSF Chancellor J. Michael Bishop, MD. “We’re thrilled to have the Hillblom Foundation as a partner in our efforts to improve human health.”

“The Board and Officers of the Larry L. Hillblom Foundation are proud and gratified to be able to fund these high quality innovative research projects relating to the biology of aging and diabetes being pursued at UCSF,” Peter J. Donnici, president of the Hillblom Foundation said. “The late Mr. Hillblom, an innovator in his own field of endeavor, would be pleased with the outstanding nature of the scientific research being conducted in his name,” he added.

Cynthia Kenyon, PhD, UCSF professor of biochemistry and biophysics, will direct the Hillblom Center. Kenyon is an internationally acclaimed pioneer in the field of aging research whose discoveries on biological regulation of aging are influencing this research for humans.

More than two dozen of UCSF’s researchers in the field of preventive and therapeutic treatments for age-related diseases will join Kenyon at the Hillblom Center. This group of researchers will conduct research related to extending lifespans and slowing the aging process. Many of these investigators will be located in the first two buildings to be completed at UCSF Mission Bay. The Hillblom grant provides \$7.5 million for the

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construction of laboratory space at the new campus and \$500,000 in seed grants for innovative research projects.

A grant of \$2 million from the Hillblom Foundation to the UCSF Diabetes Center will support research on the molecular formation of pancreatic beta cells which produce insulin. Michael S. German, MD, UCSF associate professor of biochemistry, and his team hope to find new ways to replenish the beta cells destroyed by Type 1 diabetes.

Another \$1.7 million Hillblom grant will support a multidisciplinary effort to improve early identification and treatment of individuals at high risk for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This project will be led by Bruce Miller, MD, UCSF professor of neurology and the clinical director of the UCSF Memory and Aging Center.

A Hillblom grant of \$485,000 will support the research of Jonathan Horton, MD, PhD, UCSF associate professor of ophthalmology, working at the UCSF Beckman Vision Center. Horton's research seeks to determine the neural cause of strabismus, a childhood developmental disorder commonly known as crossed eyes.

Terry Hillblom, executive vice president of the Hillblom Foundation and brother of the late Larry Hillblom, said, "The Larry L. Hillblom Foundation is committed to funding the highest quality of scientific medical research. We believe the current grants to UCSF meet the Foundation's rigorous criteria. Hopefully, the results of these studies will move forward the body of knowledge necessary to successfully mitigate the effects of several debilitating diseases."

UCSF's Mission Bay is a 43-acre campus on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay dedicated to teaching and research, saving lives and improving health. For more information about UCSF's Mission Bay, visit the website: <http://pub.ucsf.edu/missionbay/>.

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