CTSI Announces New RFA for Pilot and Collaborative Grants

On July 15, the Clinical and Translational Science Institute issued a call for research proposals for pilot and collaborative translational grants. In an effort to stimulate translational and clinical research in and across its partnering institutions, CTSI encourages interdisciplinary collaboration between clinical and basic scientists, as well as social scientists, ethicists, engineers, and clinicians. To stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations in translational and clinical research, funds released through this new RFA will be provided to: 1) support new and promising clinical and translational projects; 2) provide a mechanism for young investigators to focus efforts in clinical and translational research; 3) stimulate collaborative research between bench and clinical investigators within similar thematic areas; 4) foster interdisciplinary collaborations between and within constituent institutions of the CTSI and 5) support brain imaging research. This year the focus of the grants will be on Small Pilot Projects, Translational Opportunity Grants, and Traineeships.

As an outcome of the Brain Imaging Workshop held this past May, a portion of available funds have been set aside to support translational brain imaging research. Multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional proposals which utilize brain imaging technology are particularly encouraged.

With the emphasis on multi-institutional collaborations, investigators are encouraged to contact the Translational Research Resources Offices (TRRO) found in “Research Resources & Infrastructure” on the CTSI website. The directors of the TRROs will assist with identifying potential trans-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaborators for these projects.

Information on the RFA may be found on the CTSI website (www.ctsi.mcw.edu). The deadline for submission is October 15, 2009.

Accessing Adult TRU Space

The Translational Research Unit is an outpatient clinic that is primarily a place for IRB and CTSI-approved research protocols. However, a vast majority of research takes place throughout the clinics and other hospital spaces. In some cases, it may be difficult to find space within the hospital to properly meet the needs of a research participant in a timely, safe, and comfortable manner. As an investigator or coordinator who may need to use space for IRB-approved protocols on a one time or limited time basis, please feel free to contact the TRU and fill out a Space Request Form. This is one way that the TRU helps facilitate research throughout the medical campus.
Clinical and Translational Science Institute News

Biostatistics Key Function

The Biostatistics Key Function of the CTSI provides basic statistical and epidemiological support to translational research. Investigators performing translational research at any of the partner institutions are invited and encouraged to use this key function to help with study design and analysis. The current services include a drop-in statistical consulting service, a more extensive statistical consulting service, review and assistance with preparation of proposals for the translational research units (TRU), epidemiological data service, and a series of basic statistical educational activities.

Consulting Service

Biostatistical support for the CTSI is primarily provided by faculty and staff of the MCW Division of Biostatistics and its Biostatistics Consulting Service (BCS). The BCS operates a drop-in consulting service daily at MCW and alternating Mondays at Marquette and the VA. The service is available:

- 1-3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Froedtert TRU
- 1-3pm on Tuesday and Thursday, Room 2400, MCW Health Research Bldg.
- 8:30-11:30am — 1st & 3rd Monday of the month, VA Adult TRU
- 8:30-11:30am — 2nd & 4th Monday of the month, Haggerty Hall, Room 338, Marquette

Staff is available to answer statistical questions, help formulate study ideas, interpret statistical methods in papers, and answer statistical computing questions. Last year the drop-in service saw over 100 clients.

By appointment, the Biostatistics consulting service provides statistical consulting on study design and analysis. The faculty and staff statisticians have extensive experience in providing this service. In the last year, we have worked with over 140 investigators from every department at MCW, as well as from a number of Marquette, VA, and UWM departments. BCS staff helps investigators with statistical support for many grant applications. One of the BCS statisticians is assigned to each of the TRU’s to help with protocol preparation and review. The BCS provides a number of free hours to all investigators, which covers most projects.

Epidemiology Data Service

This service assists investigators in locating, acquiring, and using secondary data sets. The EDS is a member of the national Center for Health Statistics Data Dissemination Program, and it also maintains ties with other national, state, local, and private health agencies. The current collection includes over 200 secondary databases on topics such as health behaviors, vital events, ambulatory care, inpatient care, long-term care, and medical expenditures. The collection also contains demographic data from the US Census Bureau and spatial data. The EDS also provides support for the use of the Geographic Information System (GIS) technology by health researchers.

Statistical Education for Researchers

In the coming year, the monthly lecture series by Division of Biostatistics faculty and staff will include new talks on statistics in diagnostic medicine, survival analysis, and design of clinical trials, as well as repeat of some of the most popular presentations from the past year. The talks are aimed at clinical and basic scientists and are focused on interpretation of statistical results rather than on computations. Videos of these presentations will be made available to CTSI researchers. Watch for next year’s schedule on our web site.

These lectures are supplemented by a bimonthly newsletter, “DATUM”, which provides additional details and examples of how the statistical methods discussed in the lectures have been applied to projects here at MCW. DATUM also has a regular column on new data sets available for use on graphical statistical methods and statistical software.

Further information on the Biostatistics Key Function and its programs can be found on the Division of Biostatistics website at: www.mcw.edu/biostatistics.htm.
Clinical and Translational Science Institute News

Masters Program in Clinical and Translational Science launched this Fall

The newly established Master of Science (MS) Program in Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) at the Medical College of Wisconsin will enroll its first group of graduate students this fall. Eleven students will begin courses towards an MS in CTS, which has the following areas of concentrations:

1) Epidemiology and Outcomes
2) Translational Research
3) Commercial Development of Drugs, Devices and Diagnostics

The 30-credit degree can be completed in 2-4 years, including time spent on a research thesis. The program is an expansion of the former graduate program in Epidemiology which has been training physician-scientists for over ten years under the directorship of Jane Morley Kotchen, MD, MPH. Dr Kotchen is also the director of the research training and education key function in the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI).

The degree in CTS is a collaborative effort between the Department of Population Health, CTSI and CTSI’s partners at Marquette University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee School of Engineering. To request more information on the MS in Clinical and Translational Science, contact Sharon Memory in the Department of Population Health at (414) 456-4763 or smemory@mcw.edu.

CTSI TRU Now Open at the VA Medical Center

A phase 2 infusion study that looks at safety and drug effect on renal function in type 2 diabetics and a study investigating muscle fatigue in vets with PTSD. What do these two studies have in common?

They are both utilizing the CTSI TRU at the VA Medical Center. This TRU space on the 5th floor of the main hospital building is available Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00am – 4:00pm. The area includes two fully equipped exam rooms and a supply room/laboratory/office.

Joan Banks, the Research Nurse, is scheduled to be on site Monday and Thursday during the hours of 7:00 am until 5:00 pm. However, with appropriate notification, her days and hours can be flexible, depending on the need for assistance. To support a research protocol, she may do blood draws, administer IV medications, process lab specimens, monitor patients during studies, assist investigators with procedures, and help record and track data.

To inquire about protocol submission to utilize the VA TRU, contact Glenn Krakower, the TRU Scientific Administrator at 805-3802 or gkrakower@mcw.edu. All protocols must have VA IRB approval.

For information on the VA TRU space and services, please contact Dr. Ann Rosenthal, VA TRU Director, at 384-2000 x42760 or arosenthal@mcw.edu. Ms. Banks may be reached at 384-2000 ext 45732.
The MCW Consortium’s Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) is a major community-based initiative that aims to decrease violence in Milwaukee neighborhoods and greater Wisconsin, and strengthen community capacity to prevent future violence. The initiative uses both a public health and asset-based model that focuses on community strengths and emphasizes preventing violence before it occurs. Still in its development phase, the initiative is led by a 16-member steering committee representing both community and academic leaders. Community engagement efforts are a key component of the Initiative, and the VPI Steering Committee has engaged community members to identify key issues, map community assets, and develop the Initiative’s model and action plan.

Among its many efforts, the VPI held two community events in June 2009 to report on its progress, elicit feedback on the VPI model, and recruit participants for workgroups that will guide the development of the action plan. Over 160 individuals attended the events and contributed their guidance through robust table-top discussions. Participants were asked to discuss five questions to help guide future efforts (for more information, see “Sample of Key Themes Discussed”):

1. How can the VPI build alliances and navigate community politics to assist in their efforts?
2. How do we listen to and give voice to youth? What specific strategies would you use?
3. What would you propose that may be risky that would uniquely address youth violence in our community?
4. How should we deliver technical assistance resources to existing initiatives that are currently addressing youth violence prevention?
5. What training and education opportunities would advance policy addressing youth violence?

From these discussions, the VPI formed four workgroups who will meet to inform recommendations for the VPI’s implementation plan. The workgroup focus areas include: coalition-building and collaborative efforts, community-academic capacity-building, policy and advocacy development, and youth asset development. The VPI looks forward to working with both community and academic partners as it develops its action plan to decrease violence and build community capacity to prevent violence before it occurs. For more information, please visit the Violence Prevention Initiative website at: www.mcw.edu/vpi.htm.

2009 VPI Community Events: A Sample of Key Themes Discussed

**How can we build alliances and navigate community politics?** Create tools to evaluate partnerships, engage neighborhoods early in the initiative, share resources and foster mutual respect and willingness to work together, make decisions based on what is best rather than what is politically correct.

**How do we listen to and give voice to youth?** Value the fact that youth always will have a voice, allow youth to have an action movement to galvanize and create momentum around violence prevention, utilize technology, create credibility on the street, go to where the youth are.

**What would you propose that may be risky that would uniquely address youth violence in our community?** Engage youth in planning and evaluation of programming, encourage youth entrepreneurship, support transitional programming for the incarcerated, and provide financial incentives.

**How should we deliver technical assistance resources to existing initiatives that are currently addressing youth violence prevention?** Provide education on causes and predictors of violence, share information and collaborate, provide training in cultural sensitivity, incorporate community capacity building, help partners establish goals, and assess and evaluate violence prevention programs.

**What training and education opportunities would advance policy addressing youth violence?** Provide training, education and skill-building sessions for all those who work with youth, train and educate policymakers, Legislators, businesses and media to advance policy change, and implement policy change using a bottom-up approach.