TO: Oregon Academic Department Chairs/Institute Directors/Mentors

DATE: August 2, 2010

RE: Medical Research Foundation Letters of Support for an Oregon Scientist Development Award

The Medical Research Foundation (MRF) awards grants specifically to support research in Oregon. The Oregon Scientist Development Award is designed to support exceptional, but not yet fully independent young investigators who are making the transition from an intermediate rank to scientific independence. This includes investigators currently at the level of staff scientist, research assistant professor, instructor or similar transitional appointments. Applicants must be in a rank that is eligible to submit independent R01s and similar grant applications. This award is not designed for tenure track or new investigators appointed through a national search who have been given a start up package.

Two confidential letters of reference and support must be obtained from the chair of applicant’s department and his/her current mentor. If the departmental chair is also his/her mentor then one additional letter of reference should be included.

The letter of support from the department head should describe the level of commitment to the applicant including space, resources, financial support and duration of appointment. A description of the plan to support the applicant’s transition to independence and explanation of how this award assists that transition should be included in the support letter.

The letter of support from the mentor should comment on the applicant’s qualifications and career plans, and on the originality and origin of the applicant’s research ideas. The letter should also include a candid evaluation of the applicant’s potential to become a successful, independent scientist. The mentor should describe in some detail the proposed training program. The mentor should also address his or her track record as a mentor, current funding and the research facilities available to the applicant.

These letters of support will weigh heavily in the consideration of OSDA applications.

Support letters should be emailed directly from the author, by the OSDA application deadline, to mrfsubmit@ohsu.edu.

For general questions about the MRF or the application process, please contact mrfsubmit@ohsu.edu.