



## THE AGING & ALZHEIMER'S UPDATE

THE C. REX AND RUTH H. LAYTON AGING AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER  
A NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER

WINTER 2012

### Our Layton family legacy

The C. Rex & Ruth H. Layton Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Center was established with a \$3 million investment from the Layton Family in 2001. Inspired by the late Rex Layton's experiences with the disease and the family's exceptional experience at OHSU, the gift has made a tremendous impact on the Center's ability to help patients and their families. The inspirational philanthropic leadership shown by the Layton family has enabled The Layton Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Center to expand its impact and fund new and progressive research.

The Layton Center is one of thirty National Institutes of Health-designated Alzheimer's disease research centers in the United States and the only one in Oregon.

An October 21, 2011, celebration paid tribute to the family's ten-year commitment to the center and to honor Jeffrey Kaye, M.D. as Layton Professor in Neurology. Executive vice-provost David Robinson expressed gratitude to Ruth Layton's "generosity of spirit" on behalf of OHSU.



Executive vice-provost David Robinson, Ruth Layton and Dr. Jeffrey Kaye toast the Layton Center on October 21, 2011

By providing stable, long-term financial resources, endowed funds are critically important to attracting and retaining talented people and supporting programs that exemplify the institution's mission of healing, teaching, discovery and outreach. The endowed professorship creates a perpetual legacy and also recognizes the work of an excellent scientist and physician. ❄️



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# Task force crafts state plan for Alzheimer's disease

The National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA), passed by congress in January, 2011, calls for the creation of a national strategic plan to address the many challenges associated with the dramatic increase in the number of Americans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. As a part of this national plan, the Alzheimer's Association has taken the lead in state plan development. State plans will inform local actions and policy, as well as provide grass roots direction for the national plan. In Oregon, a task force of community and organizational partners has been working throughout the year to create recommendations and develop collaborative actions.

The task force has marshaled Oregon stakeholders toward a common goal: meeting the needs of the many citizens affected by Alzheimer's in Oregon. The State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease in Oregon (SPADO) task force includes state legislators, non-profit organizations, government agencies, academic researchers, care providers and interested individuals. Topics of concern include continuum of care, medical treatment and research, public awareness and education, and public safety and legal/financial concerns. Layton Center director, Jeffrey Kaye, M.D., serves on the Medical Treatment and Research work group. Education core assistant, Mary Ruhl, participates in the Public Awareness and Education work group.



Layton Center director Dr. Jeffrey Kaye, M.D. listens to comments during one of six town hall sessions held to gather citizen comments and ideas for the state Alzheimer's plan.

The task force work groups have now developed recommendations based on broad expertise as well as the input from citizens who attended one of six public town hall meetings around the state. These recommendations will be presented to the Oregon legislature.

*"We have the potential to create the same success that has been demonstrated in the fights against other diseases...such as HIV/AIDS, heart disease, prostate cancer, breast cancer and stroke."*

— Jon Bartholomew  
Oregon Alzheimer's Association

State plans will help formulate NAPA initiatives, increasing the ability of policy makers at the national level to raise awareness, strengthen medical and service infrastructure, and fund research.

To find out more about NAPA, visit [www.alz.org/napa](http://www.alz.org/napa).

Alzheimer's  
Research

## Help Oregon scientists discover new treatments for Alzheimer's disease

To advance important Alzheimer's research in our state, the Oregon legislature established the Oregon Tax Check-off Alzheimer's Research Fund in 1990.

### This fund benefits Oregonians

All money donated through the Oregon Alzheimer's Research Tax Check-off Fund supports studies conducted here, in Oregon, by researchers who are entering the field of Alzheimer's research. These projects provide important pilot data and prepare researchers to obtain funding from National programs.

### You can help

To donate a portion your state income tax refund for 2011, fill in an amount next to "Alzheimer's Research" on the Charitable Check off list of the Oregon Income Tax Return, form 40. You may also donate directly to the Oregon Tax Check-off Research fund through the OHSU foundation.

Visit [www.ohsu.edu/alzcheck](http://www.ohsu.edu/alzcheck).

# Now you're talking! Conversation and cognition

**D**o older persons who frequently engage in conversation maintain better thinking abilities than those who do not often socialize?

It is widely believed that social engagement is good for cognitive health as we age. Yet this concept is difficult to study. Simply asking people to estimate how much time they spend talking to others does not result in reliable information. In a new four-part study, Layton Center's Dr. Hiroko Dodge and assistant Molly Bowman are using leading edge technology devices to examine the relationship between social interaction and cognitive health.

In the first phase, investigators will be testing the usefulness of a special mobile audio recorder (MAR) for collecting spoken language activity. Participants already enrolled in an ORCATECH study geared toward introducing new technologies to elders, will wear the MAR on a chest pocket or collar. The recorder will measure the amount of time spent in conversation during a 2-day period.

During the second part of the study, participants will visit the lab at OHSU to test video-phone interaction technology for ease and effectiveness of use. These same participants will then test this technology with a week-long trial in their homes.

For phase three, an anonymous survey about social engagement will be distributed to a large number of older

people in the community. This survey will give researchers more accurate information about average levels of social engagement. The three preliminary phases will provide context for the results of the main study.

The fourth, main study phase will test whether frequent conversation using video phone technology (VChat) has a positive effect on thinking abilities in the elderly.

New volunteer participants may join any or all of the four phases of the study.

Technicians will install equipment in participants' homes. The experimental group will be asked to use VChat to speak with a research assistant for 30 minutes each weekday for 6 weeks. Participants will be asked to complete a short health questionnaire on the computer once a week. Follow-up cognitive testing sessions in the participant's home will be conducted one week and again at three months after the equipment has been removed.

Dr. Dodge and her team will be using the results of the study to find out if persons who engage in daily conversation improve in cognitive function compared to the control group. They will also look at whether improvement could be associated with other factors, such as personality and cognitive status, before the study.

For more information, contact Molly Bowman, 503-494-7198. \*



# OHSU “CONNECT”: Center of Excellence for Neuroscience/Clinical Research

A recent grant from the National Institutes of Health: National Institute for Neurologic Disorders and Stroke (NIH:NINDS), establishes OHSU as a clinical center of excellence for the conduct of clinical trials in neurologic disease. The Layton Center’s Dr. Joseph Quinn, M.D. is principal investigator for the grant, which will support collaboration across neurology research and clinical disciplines. The new national program is called “Network of Excellence in Clinical Trials” (NeuroNEXT). OHSU’s center is called the “Comprehensive Oregon Neuroscience Network for Excellence in Clinical Trials” (CONNECT).

Advances in neuroscience and neuroimaging are expected to accelerate the development of new treatments that will need to be tested in patients. Testing through clinical trials is essential to determining the effectiveness and safety of new drugs or devices.

A goal of NeuroNEXT is to conduct exploratory studies through partnerships between academia, private foundations and industry. Through enhanced collaboration, the network will expand national capability to test new therapies and increase the efficiency of clinical trials. This new network initiative will improve the process of turning promising discoveries into new ways to treat neurological diseases.

Although NIA continues to be the institute that will fund Alzheimer’s disease research, NINDS will fund research into hundreds of other neurological diseases such as lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia, vascular dementia, and rare diseases like autoimmune encephalopathy. The grant to OHSU provides a modest amount of funding for infrastructure. More importantly, as a member of the NeuroNEXT network, OHSU will gain opportunities to receive support for individual trials.

Only 25 centers in the United States were funded under NeuroNEXT. The funding period is anticipated to be 7 years. ❁

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*The complexity and often rare nature of diseases of the central nervous system present a unique set of challenges in terms of developing new treatments. This new initiative by the NIH will create the economies of scale and coordination necessary to rapidly and efficiently move novel therapies closer to the point where they can ultimately benefit patients.”*

– Dr. Robert Holloway, M.D., M.P.H.  
University of Rochester Medical Center

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Different neurological diseases often show similar abnormal effects in tissue and cells, leading researchers to look for clues across disease types. For example, many cases of late life dementia reveal a mixed pathology; doctors observe not only plaques and tangles in the brain, typical of Alzheimer’s disease, but also other abnormalities.

These may include blood vessel abnormalities and/or “lewy bodies” (clumps of protein typical in this less common type of dementia). So, for example, clinical research targeting vascular health or lewy body disease may also be immediately applied to the “mixed” dementia that commonly occurs in late life. ❁

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## The Layton Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease Center

The Layton Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease Center is one of 30 NIH Alzheimer’s disease Centers in the United States and the only one of its kind in Oregon. Our Center is recognized as a national leader in dementia care and research, and is committed to serving the needs of people throughout the Northwest.

### Volunteering for Clinical Studies

To find out about our current clinical studies, please contact Lisa Loree: 503-494-7615. ❁

# Collaboration improves dementia care for veterans

Access to specialty care can be challenging for older veterans, especially those who live in rural areas. Depending on their individual symptoms and needs, patients with dementia may require consultation with neurologists, psychiatrists, or geriatricians. To address the need for specialty care in dementia, the Portland Veterans Administration Medical Center (PVAMC) has launched a new integrated Dementia Innovations in Consult Management (DICM) program to facilitate patient and family care. Electronic consultation, or E-Consult, is an essential component of this program, designed to save time and travel for the veteran, as well as reduce wait time for appointments and for obtaining results of specialist consultation. Instead of scheduling an additional clinic visit, the primary care clinician and the specialist communicate about a patient's medical condition and care needs through the VA electronic medical records system.

The E-Consult enhances care coordination and quality through improved information sharing between primary care clinicians and specialists. Redesigned medical record communication tools send all referrals for specialty care through a single portal. A triage nurse or doctor receives the referral, ensures that needed patient information is provided, and passes along the referral to the most appropriate specialist. E-Consult is one of a series of telehealth innovations being developed and tested in the veteran health system, along with secure messaging, telephone-based programs, and visual links to patients' homes through internet cameras.



To initiate the DICM program, Sarah J. Goodlin, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and chief of geriatrics in the Portland PVAMC, collaborated with Jeffrey Kaye, M.D., director of the Layton Aging & Alzheimer's Disease Center at OHSU. Other Layton Center staff on the DICM team are Lisa Silbert, M.D., neurologist, and Katherine Wild, Ph.D., psychologist, who serve as advisors and trainers. Linda Boise, Ph.D., M.P.H., education core leader and Mary Ruhl, M.A.I.S., education core assistant, are responsible for project evaluation and coordination between VA and Layton Center staff.

The team is currently working with regional PVAMC outpatient clinics to implement an efficient and sustainable dementia care system. On December 15, the DICM team provided training for about twenty VA providers. The E-Consult process was introduced, using examples of how information on individual patients would be transmitted from primary care through the triage clinician to and among specialists. Training was also provided on identifying common

types of dementia, behavioral problems that may occur in people with dementia, advanced care planning, and family support. High marks were given for the content and presentation for all presenters and all participants reported that they learned new information and strategies that they can apply in practice. A second training is scheduled for February 3, 2012.

Across the region, Dementia Innovations in Consult Management will soon provide more VA patients with better access to interdisciplinary specialists, as well caregiver support and education. Ongoing evaluation will determine how well the program meets its goals: to increase the proportion of dementia patients served by primary care and through E-Consult, and to increase the numbers of veterans and veteran families who receive caregiver education, support, advance care planning, and appropriate medications. ❁

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The Dementia Innovations in Consult Management program will increase the skills and resources for Patient Aligned Care Teams, or PACTs, in VA primary care clinics. A PACT is a team of health care professionals that provides patient-centered, data-driven, and continuously improving care to meet each veteran's individual health care goals. In addition to personal visits with primary health care providers, veterans may schedule visits with a social worker, nurse, or pharmacist. PACTs may also offer group clinics, educational seminars, or information through My Healthy Vet, an on-line resource.

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