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## Fisher announces nearly \$23 million for biomedical projects

*Funding goes to six proposals aimed at life-changing research*

**COLUMBUS** – Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher, Chair of the Ohio Third Frontier Commission, today announced that the Commission recommended nearly \$23 million in funding through the Ohio Biomedical Research Commercialization Program for six Ohio projects that target research and development in areas including improved prosthetic limbs, better treatment of asthma and cystic fibrosis, and expanded programs for burn care and nerve repair. The awards are contingent upon State Controlling Board approval.

“I’m particularly proud to announce these awards today because of the very real potential they present to change Ohioans lives for the better,” said Lt. Governor Fisher, who also serves as Director of the Ohio Department of Development. “The collaboration demonstrated by the State, our universities and research institutions, and our private companies illustrate the highest level of work we can do together to improve the health and quality of life for our citizens.”

The Biomedical Research Commercialization Program is to provide funds to help Ohio universities, research institutions, medical centers, and private companies work together to commercialize technology-based products and improve the health of Ohioans.

The Commission announced the following awards for the Fiscal Year 2008 Ohio Biomedical Research Commercialization Program:

**The Cleveland Clinic’s Lerner Research Institute**, located in Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) and in collaboration with **Ohio Willow Wood** and **Cleveland State University**, was recommended for \$2.1 million in funding to develop a more functional prosthetic limb for transfemoral amputee soldiers. The proposed prosthetic would use electrorheological fluids (fluids whose viscosity changes with electrical charge), combined with an internal spring, sensors and control systems to allow the prosthetic to capture and return energy allowing a more normal gait. The aim of the research effort is to develop an above-knee prosthesis that will enable rapid rehabilitation and a sustained ambulatory lifestyle.

**The Cleveland Clinic’s Clinical Tissue Engineering Center**, located in Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) and in collaboration with **Akron General Medical Center**, **Case Western Reserve University**, **University of Akron**, and **University of Cincinnati**, was recommended for \$4.9 million in funding to expand its network and programs beyond musculoskeletal applications in the areas of burn and scar care, wound healing and nerve repair. The Clinical Tissue Engineering Center was initially funded by the Ohio Third Frontier Program in 2004 with a plan to act as the hub of a network to bring scientists, tissue engineers, clinicians and private companies together to advance basic research findings to clinical practice.

**Case Western Reserve University**, located in Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) and in collaboration with **Copernicus Therapeutics, Inc.** and **Polgenix, Inc.**, was recommended for \$3.9 million in funding for the application of three complementary activities: development of nanoparticles for treatment of cystic fibrosis and retinitis pigmentosa; commercialization of a two-photon ophthalmoscope for early detection of retinal disease; and development of contrast agents for the detection of clean margins during breast cancer surgery.

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**The Cleveland Clinic**, in collaboration with **NASA Glenn Research Center**, **The Ohio State University**, **Case Western Reserve University**, and **Makel Engineering, Inc.**, was recommended for nearly \$3.8 million to develop a nitric oxide sensor that will enable asthma patients to monitor their asthma at home. The proposal aims to re-develop a sensor used in the aerospace industry, and the project's emphasis will be on testing and commercializing sensors already produced in Ohio.

**The Cleveland Clinic**, in collaboration with **Case Western Reserve University** and the **University of Toledo**, was recommended for \$3 million in funding to develop small molecules that can enhance repair of the brain in multiple sclerosis with the goal not only of delaying progression of disability but reversing it. The lead compounds will be chemically optimized to obtain compounds suitable for licensing by major pharmaceutical companies as drug candidates.

**Diagnostic Hybrids, Inc.**, located in Athens (Athens County) and in collaboration with **Case Western Reserve University's School of Medicine**, and **Apath, LLC**, was recommended for \$5 million in funding to further develop a yeast-based cloning system for viral diagnostics/treatment monitoring and to market these trials to hospitals, clinicians and pharmaceutical companies. The company focuses on delivering diagnostics tools to clinical virology laboratories, providing reagents for known cultivable viruses such as herpes, respiratory viruses and enteroviruses.

***The Ohio Biomedical Research Commercialization Program** provides grants which support biomedical and biotechnology research leading to Ohio commercialization and long-term improvements to the health of Ohioans. Projects are to be collaborations among Ohio higher education institutions, non-profit research organizations, and Ohio companies in the areas of human genetics and genomics, structural biology, biomedical engineering, computational biology, plant biology and environmental biology.*

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