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Michigan researchers among recipients of \$156K in funding as grant program marks 30th year

ANN ARBOR – Midwest Eye-Banks has announced its research grant funding for 2010, marking the 30th anniversary of the organization’s Eye and Vision Research Program. Since its inception in 1980, the program has provided nearly \$3 million in seed money to researchers investigating the causes of and cures for blinding eye conditions.

Midwest Eye-Banks’ Research Review Committee met on May 14 to evaluate the proposals, which were submitted earlier this year. The Committee recommended funding for nine research proposals and nine student stipends, totaling more than \$156,000. The Eye-Bank’s Board of Directors approved the Committee’s recommendation in a meeting on June 12.

The Eye-Bank’s Eye and Vision Research Program sets it apart from other eye banks.

“Eye banks are non-profit organizations that primarily recover, evaluate and distribute eye tissue for transplantation,” explains Charles Pivoney, Chief Operating Officer. “Midwest Eye-Banks is one of the few organizations of its kind to provide substantial funding for eye and vision research. We do this because transplantation can only address about 10 percent of blinding eye conditions. Our mission is the restoration of sight, so we go a step further through our Eye and Vision Research Program, which enables us to fight blindness on all fronts.”

Of the nine research proposals approved for funding, eight were from academic institutions in Michigan, including Wayne State University/Kresge Eye Institute and the University of Michigan. The proposed research will investigate such eye conditions as retinal degeneration, retinal dystrophy and glaucoma.

The Michigan Eye-Bank, a division of Midwest Eye-Banks, is a charitable, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight. It recovers, evaluates and distributes human eye tissue for transplantation. It also supports research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions, promotes donation awareness through public and professional education, and provides humanitarian aid to people in need of corneal transplantation throughout the world. For more information, visit the Michigan Eye-Bank online at www.michiganeyebank.org or call (800) 247-7250.



Midwest Eye-Banks Eye and Vision Research Program 2010 Grant Awards

- 1. Shtein, Roni M., M.D., Ph.D.,** University of Michigan Medical School
Diagnostic Imaging for Intraoperative Floppy Iris Syndrome (\$14,338)
- 2. Demirci, Hakan, M.D.,** University of Michigan Medical School
Roles of inflammation and angiogenesis in conjunctival melanoma progression and metastasis (\$15,000)
- 3. Pukhrambam, Lalit Singh, Ph.D.,** Wayne State University
Role of TXNIP in retinal inflammation, Gliosis and innate immune response in early stages of diabetes (\$15,000)
- 4. Thompson, Debra, Ph.D.,** University of Michigan Medical School
Chromophore therapy in retinal degeneration (\$15,000)
- 5. Hitchcock, Peter, Ph.D.,** University of Michigan Medical School
Regulation of retinal-specific gene expression (\$15,000)
- 6. Bartoe, Joshua T., M.S., D.V.M.,** Michigan State University
Mutant Capsid AAV vectors for gene therapy in a canine model of rapid-onset retinal dystrophy (\$15,000)
- 7. Berger, Elizabeth, Ph.D.,** Wayne State University School of Medicine
Analysis of post-trauma vision syndrome using a rat model of diffuse traumatic brain injury (\$15,000)
- 8. Chang, Jin Hong, Ph.D.,** University of Illinois at Chicago
Collagen XVIII in corneal lymphangiogenesis (\$15,000)
- 9. Gage, Phillip J., Ph.D.,** University of Michigan Medical School
Testing post-natal models of Pitx2-related glaucoma (\$15,000)