

## Hartford Foundation Renews Support for UC San Diego Program to Train Geriatric Mental Health Specialists

*Grant supports Center of Excellence in Geriatric Psychiatry to train next generation of geriatric psychiatrists, researchers/educators to meet mental health needs of the elderly*

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By 2030, when the last of the baby boomers reach age 65, there will be more than 70 million Americans over 65, twice as many as in 2000. Studies suggest that close to a quarter of them will have significant psychiatric symptoms.

To help address this growing need, the John A. Hartford Foundation has awarded a \$750,000 renewal grant to the Center of Excellence in Geriatric Psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine. For more than 20 years, the UCSD Geriatric Psychiatry program has been training specialists to care for and conduct research in the growing number of older persons with illnesses ranging from depression to psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.

The funding will support recruitment and training of geriatric psychiatrists and researchers with an interest in mental health problems of the elderly. UC San Diego's Center of Excellence, originally funded by the Hartford Foundation for three years beginning in 2005, will receive an additional \$150,000 in support per year for five years. The program is one of only two such Centers of Excellence in the U.S. dedicated to geriatric psychiatry that are supported by the Hartford Foundation.

The Hartford Foundation is a committed champion of training, research and service system innovations that promote the health and independence of America's older adults. Through its funding, the Foundation seeks to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide effective, affordable care to the rapidly increasing older population.

"The renewal of the Hartford Foundation grant will enable UC San Diego to continue its essential work to provide dedicated practitioners with the research, teaching and clinical skills necessary to serve this growing population of older adults with psychiatric illnesses," said David A. Brenner, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and Dean of the School of Medicine at UC San Diego.

According to a Surgeon General's Report, "disability due to mental illness in individuals over 65 years old will become a major public health problem in the near future because of demographic changes." At the same time, of 39,000 psychiatrists in the United States, fewer than 3,000 specialize in geriatric psychiatry.

"Since 2005, the Hartford Foundation grant has enabled the Center of Excellence to train fellows, junior faculty researchers and educators in geriatric psychiatry, support research programs for young investigators in the field, and offer research internships to medical students, encouraging careers as geriatric mental health specialists," said the Center's director Dilip Jeste, M.D., Estelle and Edgar Levi Chair in Aging and distinguished professor of psychiatry and neurosciences, chief of the UCSD Division of Geriatric Psychiatry, director of the UCSD Sam and Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging (SIRA), and a geriatric psychiatrist with the VA San Diego Healthcare System.

An internationally known expert in geriatric psychiatry, Jeste and his team are uniquely qualified to train geriatric psychiatrists and researchers. The UCSD Division of Geriatric Psychiatry includes National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)-supported programs, among them the Advanced Center for Innovation in Services and Intervention Research (ACISIR) focusing on older people with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. The first and, to date, only ACISIR in the country, this Center was recently funded by a five-year, \$10 million grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health to work with community partners in serving older persons with serious mental illness in San Diego County.

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