

BRAIN RESEARCH DISCOVERIES

USF HEALTH BYRD ALZHEIMER'S INSTITUTE

FALL 2010

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Welcome

It is finally fall: football, crisp mornings, holidays and family get-togethers, beginning to think about the end of another year. What a great season. In July, I was named as CEO and Director of the Institute. We are nearing the end of our first full year as part of the University of South Florida, and I want to thank all of our community partners and supporters for their involvement and hard work in the last year. Progress in Alzheimer's research used to be discussed in five-year increments. Now the breakthroughs are starting to come every year, and this past year, we had exciting news almost every quarter.

In this issue, we want to share with you some of the family and community related aspects of our work with Alzheimer's. Our caregiver education seminars prepare families with practical skills that help them through the long Alzheimer's journey. Our clinical trials research volunteers partner with us as a research team, with some participating for seven years. We value the time they donate, and they enjoy contributing to the work that will lead us to prevention and cure of this disease. Our education and clinical services join research as the three pillars of our mission. In this issue you will also meet research colleagues from other parts of the USF community. Dr. Paula Bickford (Neurosurgery) and Dr. Brent Small (Aging Studies) are studying the potential of molecules in food to improve brain health. Dr. David Chiriboga is an expert on healthcare access and health disparities in minority communities. The USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute continues to focus attention on the needs of what are historically underserved communities.

Again, I wish to thank you, our friends and supporters. As we approach the close of 2010, I am thankful for the accomplishments we created together: breakthrough science, excellent clinical care, and education that teaches families and professionals about the best practices in care for Alzheimer's. We will continue working together... *until Alzheimer's is a memory.*

Dave Morgan, PhD
Chief Executive Officer



ALEX STAFFORD

BRAIN RESEARCH DISCOVERIES

Fall 2010

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The Blueberry Study: Can foods rich in anti-oxidants help delay memory loss in older adults?

Could a mega-dose formula of anti-oxidants found in blueberries and green tea, and other nutrients found in everyday foods, boost declining memory function in ordinary older adults?

That's the question two USF researchers hope to answer in a clinical trial with volunteers. The researchers have already found promising results in preliminary tests using older laboratory rats.

The rats used in the study were approximately 1½ years old (roughly the equivalent of people ages 60 to 65) and the test animals were exhibiting age-related memory decline.

"We looked at learning and memory and saw that in the segment of animals that showed impairments – and not every rat at that age showed impairment in memory – it seemed there was an improvement in memory in that subset of animals in the intervention group that we would have expected to show a memory deficit," said Paula Bickford, PhD, a professor in the Center of Excellence for Aging and Brain Repair at USF Health and the James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Hospital.

Bickford has been studying rats for more than 30 years.

For her latest study, she is teaming up with Brent Small, PhD, a professor in USF's School of Aging Studies who has studied life span and aging issues in humans for more than two decades.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the researchers' investigational use of high doses of cell-boosting nutritional supplements to see if it will enhance mental fitness among older adults.

USF's Neuroscience Collaborative is funding the study as part of a two-year, \$50,000-a-year grant awarded to the researchers, who will be conducting their study at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute in Tampa.

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"If we can target therapies toward [stem] cells, that may help many aspects of aging mentally, and it may also have broader effects on the body overall."

Paula Bickford, PhD

USF researchers
Paula Bickford, PhD
and Brent Small, PhD.



Disclosure: Paula Bickford and Paul Sanberg, USF Senior Associate Vice President for Research & Innovation, are co-founders of Natura Therapeutics Inc., which has been granted the license to produce NT-20 patented by USF.

ALEX STAFFORD

Clinical trials offer patients new medicines – and hope.

Since learning at the age of 53 that he was developing the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, Joe Furey has taken part in two different drug studies in recent years to try to slow his memory loss.

And he's already looking ahead to next year when he can take part in his next clinical trial.

"I've got nothing to lose," says the former welfare office administrator from Philadelphia, now 62. Furey retired just two months before his diagnosis but had suspected something was wrong when he found himself doing some of his work over again.

Taking experimental drugs under close medical supervision at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute is fine with him.

"If it works, I'm ahead of the game. If it doesn't, I'm where I would have been anyway," he says. "You're taking a chance, but I don't want to sit and do nothing."

Furey doesn't mind going to the Alzheimer's Institute in Tampa to participate in the drug studies, even though he lives 80 miles south in Venice. Bob Bainbridge, Furey's partner of 36 years, handles the driving and shares information about Furey with the clinical team throughout the carefully monitored study.

Both men know that Furey and the hundreds of other drug trial participants each year at the Alzheimer's Institute will receive frequent medical checkups throughout their study and can quit at any time. Individuals and entire study groups can be dismissed early if the drug being tested doesn't show promise or could prove harmful.

"We are upbeat about this process and encourage people to do it," Bainbridge says.



Jill Ardila, Assistant Director of Clinical Research at the Institute, regards the volunteers as medical pioneers helping to advance scientific research.

"Alzheimer's disease is an enormous puzzle, and every study we do and all of the participants involved provide valuable new pieces of that puzzle, either because an experimental drug worked or didn't work," she says. "We also want to diagnose Alzheimer's more effectively through research in brain imaging."

With more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease, including one in every 40 Floridians, the search for ways to prevent or cure the progressive disorder has never been greater. Only a few medications so far have managed to help restore some



L-R: Desmond and Maureen Kerr, Jill Ardila, Bob Bainbridge and Joe Furey.

communication among nerve cells in the brain, but finding a cure has proven elusive.

Clinical trials are necessary to determine the safety and effectiveness of all new drugs and medical procedures on humans before they can be marketed. Because of their broader resources, university-based research centers around the country are among the most reputable facilities for testing new drugs.

The Alzheimer's Institute often has a dozen or so clinical trials taking place at the same time. Ardila said the Institute adheres to several measures to ensure the comfort and safety of its



"Alzheimer's disease is an enormous puzzle, and every study we do and all of the participants involved provide valuable new pieces of that puzzle."

Jill Ardila

Assistant Director of Clinical Research, USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute

volunteers. "We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards, and the FDA and university review committees ensure that."

Prospective volunteers are screened before enrolling to make sure they meet the criteria of each study. There is no cost to participate, and sometimes the volunteers receive a modest stipend to cover travel or other expenses. The costs of most studies are typically borne by the major drug manufacturers, and most of the experimental drugs have already passed preliminary tests and are in their final phase of testing before being submitted to the Food and Drug Administration for approval. Almost every study involves a placebo, or an inactive version of the treatment. "This is the only way to know if a drug

really works or has side effects," states Dr. Amanda Smith, Medical Director of the Institute.

Ardila tells prospective volunteers that well-established drug manufacturers, such as Pfizer, Bayer, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, Wyeth and Bristol-Myers Squibb, are behind some of the studies, and that those companies have already created household staples such as, Advil®, Lipitor®, Plavix®, Aricept®, One A Day® vitamins, and a number of the antibiotics we use. "People don't always

Maureen Kerr of Tampa has helped her 63-year-old husband, Desmond, take part in two drug studies in recent years, including one that currently involves an intravenous infusion every 12 weeks, with medical checkups and cognitive testing every six weeks.

"The one thing people need to know is that if you're in a study, you get really excellent medical care while you're there," she says. "Fortunately, Desmond is really healthy physically except for Alzheimer's disease. But I personally believe that if there's anything else going on with him, they'd find it first at USF"

In addition to having access to experts with the latest information about Alzheimer's, participants are informed about support groups and other services in their community they may have been unaware of otherwise.

Maureen Kerr knows that if she has any questions about dealing with her husband's advancing illness, help is just a phone call away. "We're very spoiled at USF because it's a really good team: the (study) coordinators, the nurses, the social workers – all of them. I know that I can call them at any time if I have a question or a concern, and they've made themselves very available to us." ■

realize that every drug we use today had to go through the same research process that we are doing now," Ardila says. Other studies at the Institute are funded by the federal government.

She also points out that the trial participants never go it alone. A spouse or other family member or friend always accompanies them as their "study partner" to make sure people who sign up maximize the benefits of their enrollment, and to report any changes in the participant's behavior during the study.

Trial participants may also receive various free medical tests, such as neurological exams, EKGs and PET scans, depending on the study. A team of doctors and other experts at USF often provides volunteers with closer medical supervision than the care they receive outside of the study.

Interested? For more information on clinical trials, call (813) 974-4355 or visit the Web site

alz.health.usf.edu

which includes answers to some frequently asked questions.



David Chiriboga, PhD

Professor, Department of Aging and Mental Health Disparities,
Florida Mental Health Institute, USF

Dr. David Chiriboga has studied mental health issues for more than 40 years, often as they relate to racial or ethnic minorities. His current work includes a statewide study of mental and physical health disparities in Florida, including disparities in services used by Medicaid beneficiaries with Alzheimer's disease. He received the Hispanic Pathways Award from the USF Latin Community Advisory Committee in 2009 for helping to improve the lives of Latinos.

Q Do Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia vary by ethnic group?

A According to a 2010 report from the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's disease is 50-100% more prevalent among African-Americans and Hispanics than among whites. In fact, minorities in general are less likely than whites to receive a specialized diagnostic evaluation for dementia and are generally diagnosed at more advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, and their caregivers are less likely to use supportive services. We need more research in this area, however, because the reasons these differences in prevalence exist are unknown. Due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining participants in clinical research studies, we lack a comprehensive understanding of variations in the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease across racial and ethnic groups.

Q In what ways are some groups less likely to access medical services?

A Economic and language barriers, and differing cultural perspectives on what constitutes appropriate care often keep members of disadvantaged racial or minority groups from receiving care. For example, a frequent lack of adequate health insurance translates into racial or ethnic group members being less likely than non-Hispanic whites to have what is called a "medical home," meaning a specific health care provider they can turn to for help. There is growing evidence that having a medical home is associated with better health.

Latinos seem less likely to place their loved ones in nursing homes, and the same appears to hold true for African-Americans. So, are they underserved with respect to long-term care, or simply employing another, more culturally defined model? Perhaps more important is whether we can tailor services to a specific group when an individual from that group may really need help. Families, for example, may be extremely burdened by the need to care for a family member and yet not seek formal support because the family is expected to care for its own. This may explain why there

are a number of studies indicating that Hispanic caregivers have higher levels of caregiver burden than other groups.

Q Why are some groups less likely to seek medical help before or after they are diagnosed with memory loss?

A One major concern for those of us in the helping professions is the low levels of health literacy we often encounter in disadvantaged groups. These low levels, coupled with high levels of stigma attached to mental health problems, may create barriers to care. I have already mentioned that the lack of health insurance is another critical problem, with Latinos as a group being the least likely to have health insurance.

Q Why are these disparities in access to medical care important?

A Making culturally and linguistically appropriate care available to groups that historically encounter various barriers to health care has ethical as well as fiscal implications. The ethical concerns arise from the importance of making such health care available to all. Doing so can be assumed to improve the social, psychological and physical quality of life, not only for the individuals concerned, but also for their family members. While increasing access may also result in short-term increases in cost, in the long run better access to health care has historically led to better health, which in turn can reduce the need for health care. In short, when society does not provide adequate care to everyone, we all suffer.

Q What is being done or needs to be done to reach out to these historically underserved groups?

A Health care reform may provide some help by ensuring that the proportions of racial or ethnic group members with health insurance increases. But that is just part of the solution.

We need more "culturally competent" and coordinated programs of outreach, where a particular focus is on education. Health literacy is also a big problem. And of course, we need

DONOR PROFILE

Remembering Martha Politz.

Her selfless dedication and generous gift will help us change the world.

by Carol Wight

Martha Politz wanted to make a difference in her adopted community of Tampa Bay. Through her commitment to create a Charitable Remainder Unitrust to benefit the Suncoast Gerontology Center, she has not only impacted her community, but is now helping to establish a program that could literally make a world of difference.

Born in Berlin, Germany, Martha immigrated to the United States in 1939 and married Alfred Politz, prior to becoming a U.S. Citizen in 1949. She had worked in the banking industry in Germany, and was employed in New York City until her retirement as an executive with Alfred Politz Research Inc., a market research firm founded by her husband, who became one of the leaders in advertising media research.

After her husband's death in 1982, Martha actively filled her days with managing a tree farm and orange grove on her 50-acre property in Odessa, Florida. Having no children, Martha also dedicated a considerable amount of time to her community. It was through this community involvement that she was introduced to Dr. Eric Pfeiffer, founder of the then-named Suncoast Gerontology Center, now part of the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, and became passionately involved.

Though Martha had no personal experience with



Alzheimer's disease, she dedicated herself to do whatever she could to help. Eventually she joined the Center's Board of Directors and regularly attended meetings until her death in 2006.

The Center's Founding Director, Dr. Eric Pfeiffer, recalls, "Once Martha became a member of the Suncoast Board, she adopted the board and staff as family, and vice versa: She could see that this group of people were going to make a difference in solving an important problem, i.e., Alzheimer's disease. She wanted to be part of making that difference, and she has."

Because of the caring generosity of Martha Politz, her gift is now making it possible for the USF

Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute to begin construction of a Clinical and Research Integrated Strategic Program (CRISP). The Comprehensive Dementia Diagnostic Clinic, the NeuroImaging Center and the Caregiver Education Resource Center that are part of the CRISP will be a beacon for transforming patient and family-centered care, all under one roof. The Institute's goal is to expand the frontiers of dementia care through research leading to innovations in prevention, early diagnosis, and intervention for patients.

Martha Politz cared deeply about Alzheimer's research and care. Every planned gift can make an impact. In the case of Martha Politz, her gift is helping to create a better world for Alzheimer's patients; one that can include hope. ■

Your Planned Gift: Funding Alzheimer's research today, sustaining the USF Health of tomorrow.



By Kelly Retrievi
Sr. Director, Gift Planning
University of South Florida
Foundation Inc.

What is a planned gift?

Planned giving describes a way of demonstrating charitable support and commitment using a variety of assets, other than or in addition to cash, to make a gift to USF Health. It encompasses many types of gifts, such as life income gifts, estate bequests, gifts of life insurance or retirement plans and gifts of real and personal property. The type of gift depends on your personal situation and your goals for giving.

Because many of the planned giving vehicles delay the realization of the gift until after your death or the death of another, planned gifts shape and sustain the USF of tomorrow.

What are the advantages of planned giving?

- There are many benefits to arranging a planned gift, including:
- Income to you and/or another beneficiary for life
 - A charitable income tax deduction for a portion of your gift
 - Avoidance of all or a portion of the capital gains tax on the transfer of appreciated property
 - Ability to designate how your gift will eventually support USF

What are some examples of planned gifts?

A life income or deferred gift can take any of several forms, including but not limited to:

Charitable gift annuity: In return for your gift of cash or marketable securities in an amount of \$10,000 or more, you and/or your beneficiary receive from the USF Foundation a guaranteed income stream for life or for a specified number of years. Income payments begin immediately or are deferred to begin at a later date. You receive an immediate income tax deduction for the gift portion of the annuity and part of the income you receive may be tax-free.

Charitable remainder trust: A gift of cash, marketable securities, closely held stock, real estate, and in some cases, tangible personal property such as works of art may be used to fund a trust that provides a fixed income at a guaranteed amount or an amount that varies based on the trust's investment performance. Income payments are made for life or for a specified number of years.

Charitable lead trust: A charitable lead trust generates and provides income during your lifetime, or the terms of the trust that is immediately given to the charity, and can provide significant short and long-term tax benefits. Assets remaining in the trust pass to your heirs.

Bequests: Making a bequest to support USF Health through your trust or will can consist of cash or property such as securities, real estate interest, or certain types of tangible property, such as artwork. A bequest can take the form of a specific sum or item, or the form of a residuary bequest in which USF Health receives the remainder of an estate after specific bequests are distributed.



To make a bequest to benefit the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, simply include the following language in your estate plan:

"I give (_____ dollars or _____ percent or all of the residue of my estate) to the USF Foundation Inc., a nonprofit direct support organization of the University of South Florida, for the benefit of the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. If the Foundation Board of Directors determines that all or part of the gift cannot be used in the manner set forth, then the Board may direct that the gift be used for other University purposes that will most nearly accomplish my wishes."

Gifts of Real Estate: Several types of real estate are appropriate as gifts, including a personal residence or vacation home, commercial or agricultural property, and undeveloped land. In the case of a residence, you may retain lifetime tenancy in the property (though not also an income stream). Real estate can also be used in establishing a trust that can provide you and/or your beneficiaries with lifetime income.

Gifts of Life Insurance: You may wish to donate a fully paid-up policy for which the original need no longer exists, or you may give a partially-paid policy, in which case the present value of the policy plus your remaining premium payments are tax deductible. Similarly, if you took out a new policy and named USF Health as owner and beneficiary, all of your premiums would be deductible.

Gifts of Tangible Property: By donating tangible property (such as works of art, antiques, stamp and coin collections) during your lifetime, you may reduce your taxable estate while potentially benefiting from a charitable income tax deduction in the year you make the gift.

Gifts of Retirement Plans: By naming USF Health as the beneficiary of your IRA, Keogh Plan, tax-deferred annuity, or qualified pension plan, any assets remaining in the plan after your death pass untaxed to USF Health.

Planned gifts may be made throughout the year; however, you may receive tax benefits from establishing a life income gift prior to year-end. Year-end gifts must be received or postmarked on or before midnight December 31.

Consult with your professional advisor with regard to the impact of any gift on your personal situation. ■

Help us make more discoveries.

Please support the vital work of the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute with your gift today.

Contact our development office at (813) 974-0890 or visit giving.usf.edu for more information or to make your gift securely online. Thank You!

Institute Tours

An interesting way to learn more about the Institute is by taking a facility tour. Visit the Discovery Labs to see our researchers at work in the pursuit of a cure for Alzheimer's. Tour our Medical Clinic and learn about the clinical trials, services, and care we provide to Alzheimer's patients and their families – all under one roof. Along the way, you will learn about Prevent Alzheimer's Now, our revolutionary plan to create a Multi-disciplinary Diagnostic Dementia Center for patients and their families at the Institute.

Tour dates

The following tour dates are scheduled for the remainder of calendar year 2010. All tours are from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and include lunch.

Day	Date
Tuesday	December 14

If you would like to schedule a tour of the Institute, please contact Holly Lisle, Associate Director of Development, at (813) 974-0890 or email her at hlisle@health.usf.edu. There is no cost for the tour, but reservations are required as space is limited.

Institute Open House

November 18, 2010

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

In recognition of National Alzheimer's month, you are invited to attend an Open House at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. Our regularly scheduled tour and presentation have been expanded to offer several opportunities throughout the day. Scheduled tour times are: 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Scheduled presentation times are: 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

No reservations are necessary. For larger groups, or if you have questions, please call Holly Lisle at (813) 974-0890 or email her at hlisle@health.usf.edu.

How To Give

The USF Foundation welcomes gifts of all sizes on behalf of the Institute. Outright gifts and planned gifts can benefit both the university and the donor, via potential tax benefits.

Outright gifts

Outright gifts are the simplest way to help, and immediately go to work on behalf of the university. Donors can make checks payable to the USF Foundation. The donor can designate the gift for Alzheimer's by a note in the memo line of the check or in a letter, and may designate the gift for a specific department or program.

Donations can be mailed to:
University of South Florida
ATTN: Development Department
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC 70
Tampa, FL 33612-4742

Donors may also use the pre-addressed envelope bound into copies of Brain Research Discoveries magazine. Donations also can be made online, using a credit or debit card. Visit the Web site at giving.usf.edu and click the **Make A Donation** link. Many corporations will match gifts made by employees, retirees or even spouses, allowing the donor to double or triple the value of their gift. It only requires the donor to request a matching gift form and send it along with the gift.

Planned giving

Planned giving involves donating assets and is usually part of a donor's estate plan. Options include simple bequests, memorial and honorary gifts, endowed gifts, charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts. Such gifts usually involve legal documents and require the advice and assistance of a professional financial consultant. The USF Foundation offers more information at its Web site.

Corporate & foundation giving

Donating to USF can also benefit corporations and foundations. Through corporate giving, businesses can build partnerships, participate on USF advisory boards, and develop relationships with outstanding students who are preparing to enter the workforce.

Foundations can fulfill their missions by working with USF to find projects and goals that meet or align with their funding initiatives.

The USF Foundation has staff trained in coordinating these gifts and developing opportunities that help both the university and the donor organization.

For more information, please contact Holly Lisle, Associate Director of Development, at 813.974.0890 or email her at hlisle@health.usf.edu.

Age-Related Memory Loss

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"Other people are as excited about this as we are," said Small, the co-principal investigator.

Bickford and Small are seeking 120 healthy volunteers for the study: men and women, ages 65 to 85, who have not been diagnosed with any memory disorder.

During the supervised, 10-week clinical trial, some of the participants will be given a concentrated dose of anti-oxidants extracted from blueberries and green tea, combined with vitamin D-3 and amino acids, including carnosine. The formula of nutrients, known as NT-20, has been patented by Bickford, her colleagues, USF and the VA because of early indications that it may boost memory performance by promoting the health of neurons in the aging brain. Volunteers in the Bickford and Small study will be asked to perform memory tests at the beginning and end of the study. During the study, the volunteers will receive free medical supervision related to the investigational study.

Bickford found in an earlier study that aging rats that received NT-20 performed better in behavior and memory tests than rats that did not receive the nutrient-rich supplement.

She believes the high doses of anti-oxidants and other natural components in the supplement can reduce age-related damage to stem cells in the brain and lead to an enriched environment for the neurons in the brain, leading to better cognitive performance.

"One of the things that's emerging in the field of aging is that the stem cells in the body are one of the more sensitive cells to aging and they seem to slow down," Bickford said. "If we can target therapies toward that population of cells, that may help many aspects of aging mentally, and it may also have broader effects on the body overall." A growing body of research suggests that blueberries and other foods high in anti-oxidants may help protect the body against damage from oxidative stress and inflammation, biological processes linked to aging.

The study will help advance Bickford's



ongoing research into oxidative stress and inflammation in aging, for which she received a five-year grant of \$1 million a year from the National Institute

on Aging in 2006. She hopes to receive a continuation of the grant next year.

Interested? For more information about this investigational study or to inquire about participating, contact Ms. Kerri Rawson, School of Aging Studies, USF by telephone (813) 974-6873 or email usfagingstudy@gmail.com.

Paula Bickford, PhD, is a professor of neurosurgery and pharmacology at USF and a Senior Research Career Scientist at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center and is president-elect of the American Society for Neural Therapy and Repair. Brent Small, PhD, is a professor in USF's School of Aging Studies and a Senior Member in the Department of Health Outcomes and Behavior at the Moffitt Cancer Center.

Q & A

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

to develop effective interventions that are designed to be accepted by those in the various racial or ethnic groups. With respect to acceptance and effectiveness, one related issue that is gradually being recognized is the need to ensure that members of disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups participate fully in research intended to lead to evidence-based practice. The effectiveness of established interventions for older members of racial or ethnic groups is largely unknown.

Q Much of what you have said relates to efforts to increase the overall cultural competence of our health care system. Are there any other strategies that aid in this effort?

A Several states have created legislation mandating training in cultural competence for all licensed health care providers. In Florida, the previous director of the Office of Minority Health had expressed a strong interest in creating similar legislation, but with his departure I am not sure whether this will happen. One strategy to which universities such as the University of South Florida are paying increasing attention is to expand the "pipeline" of racial or ethnic minority students in the health professions. ■

A New Treatment for Alzheimer's?

Researchers at USF are testing an experimental approach to treating Alzheimer's disease that may provide a breakthrough in preventing memory loss. The clinical trial is one of several under way at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute in Tampa, this one taking cues from our body's own immune system – an approach known as immunotherapy – to try to prevent or reverse the cellular damage linked to dementia.

But it is not a typical treatment that is given to prevent a disease. Rather, bapineuzumab is a passive immunotherapy approach to treating Alzheimer's in people who already have the disease. If successful, it could lead to a treatment to help delay the progression or even prevent the onset of Alzheimer's, according to Jessica Banko, PhD, associate director of the Institute.

Researchers are testing whether antibodies harvested from laboratory animals will attack harmful goopy protein deposits in the human brain and help the body's immune system remove them. The deposits, known as amyloid plaque, are a feature of Alzheimer's disease thought to damage the communications system in the brain. "There are no drugs on the market for Alzheimer's that target the amyloid plaques," Banko said. "This treatment has the potential to actually modify the underlying cause of the disease rather than just treat the symptoms. That's what is so exciting about it."

USF is one of several test sites around the country that will complete their studies by 2016, before federal regulators rule on the safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

For more information about this study visit:

alz.health.usf.edu

Caregiver seminars at The Byrd Institute: Support built on science.



A common misconception among families when told a loved one has Alzheimer's disease is to think they can handle it themselves.

"In the very beginning, the demands on the caregiver are not as great," says Eileen Poiley, director of education at USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. But she wants families to know that as the disease progresses and poses greater challenges, help is available.

Poiley believes that the sooner caregivers learn about the disease and the variety of resources available, the more capable they can be at shouldering the increasing responsibilities of maintaining a household and dealing with their

loved one's unpredictable behaviors and needs.

Caregiver seminars are held in the Tampa Bay area and surrounding counties throughout the year to provide families with information and strategies to better handle their situation. The free programs typically cover medical and behavioral issues, legal matters, clinical trial information and other common concerns. They also include several question-and-answer opportunities, a resource folder and lunch.

"We've reached thousands of caregivers, and they tell us in their evaluations how helpful these seminars are. They say things like, 'If I had only known this

practical information five years ago, my life would have been so much easier,'" Poiley said.

She encourages caregivers to attend more than one seminar because their circumstances will likely change over time.

"The thing about Alzheimer's is they're going to come and learn information that they need now, but in six months or a year from now things could be completely different and they could be dealing with new behaviors and entirely different issues," she said. The training caregivers receive is based on scientific research, she added.

The Institute welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with community partners to sponsor a caregiver seminar in their community. For more information on sponsorship, please contact Eileen Poiley at (813)974-4355 or epoiley@health.usf.edu. ■

To learn about upcoming seminars, go to alz.health.usf.edu and click on "Upcoming Events."

The Web site also provides caregivers with helpful resources and other tips for their crucial role.

Caregivers can also call (813) 974-4355 and ask to be placed on a mailing list for upcoming seminars.