BRAIN RESEARCH

DISCOVERIES™

USF HEALTH BYRD ALZHEIMER'S INSTITUTE SPRING/SUMMER 2011

USF HEALTH

Welcome

ALEX STAFFORD

This year the first *"Boomers"* celebrated birthday 65. And our historic, trend-setting, barrier breaking generation has a new moniker.

We are *"Generation Alzheimer's."*

What we thought of as the disease that is stealing our parents and grandparents is the health crisis now staring at us. It is not a normal part of aging, but age is the greatest risk factor. Whether we get the disease or not, we are likely to be touched. If we live into our 80s, odds are we will be diagnosed or caring for someone who is afflicted. This swell of aging baby boomers will face one more great national crisis: How do we stop the indignity and the life-savings-depleting disaster that is on the horizon?

Politicians from Newt Gingrich to Patrick Kennedy argue for a national commitment equal to our quest for the moon. Scientists like Ron Davis from Scripps Florida say research has prevented or delayed other diseases when we made the commitment; it is just a matter of resolve. Caregivers and advocates like Larry Butcher from West Palm Beach told Congress that caregivers must be supported and research must be ignited. Florida's senior Senator, Bill Nelson, says that Florida is taking big steps and that the new federal legislation will help the state push on. Public policy expert Larry Polivka warns that scientific breakthroughs won't come fast enough, if funding for Alzheimer's is lost in the budget battles.

Change is happening. The news from the lab is promising. New drugs are in the pipeline. Community programs offer education and support for caregivers. Here at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, we are training the next generation of neuroscientists and physicians who will carry the work of prevention and cure forward. We are strengthened in our resolve by the shared commitment from our community partners like the Grand Masonic Lodge, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Order of the Eastern Star, and other important groups that raise money and awareness.

In this issue, we explore Alzheimer's from national politics to genomes: from public policy to single genes. Again, I say thanks to all of you who partner with us and share in our work. We will continue together…*until Alzheimer's is a memory.*

Dave Morgan, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

BRAIN RESEARCH
DISCOVERIES

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Unraveling Angelman Syndrome

Little known, often-misdiagnosed genetic disorder may lead USF Health researchers to improve memory function in Alzheimer's patients.

To halt a disease and reverse its damage is the highest achievement in medical research. And sometimes, it so happens, there is the tantalizing prospect of such a breakthrough being applied to multiple diseases.

That's the case with work by a University of South Florida neuroscientist who has discovered a way of correcting a rare genetic condition that causes mental and physical disabilities. His work may also lead to breakthroughs in treating Alzheimer's disease and other learning and memory disorders.

Genetic research has exploded in recent years with the revolutionary breakthrough of mapping the human genome, the code of more than 25,000 genes in the human body. Using gene therapy, Dr. Edwin Weeber says he has been able to fully restore brain function in laboratory mice that suffer from a rare genetic disorder known as Angelman syndrome.

Often misdiagnosed as cerebral palsy or severe autism, Angelman syndrome (or AS) afflicts about one in 15,000 people. People with the little known disorder, first identified by Dr. Harry Angelman in England in the 1960s, are usually severely speech impaired. Their body movements are jerky and they suffer seizures. They also present unusually happy dispositions and frequently laugh a lot.

But Weeber's research may also one day help unlock other cognitive disorders, said Dr. Cliff Gooch, chairman of the USF Department of Neurology. "What it shows is the power of using molecular biology in concert with genetic discovery to figure out how a disease works and how to stop it," Gooch said.

"This has implications beyond Angelman syndrome to the much broader world of medical genetics in general," he added. "We're beginning to identify all of the 1,000 parts of the 'grandfather clock' that is memory, and once we understand that, we have a much better handle on how we can go about correcting memory problems and diseases like Alzheimer's."

In Weeber's lab, mice with the disorder were implanted with a missing gene that began producing an essential enzyme and restored their brain function.

"We can recover the cognitive defects in the mice, so they can learn and remember just like mice that never had Angelman syndrome," Weeber said.

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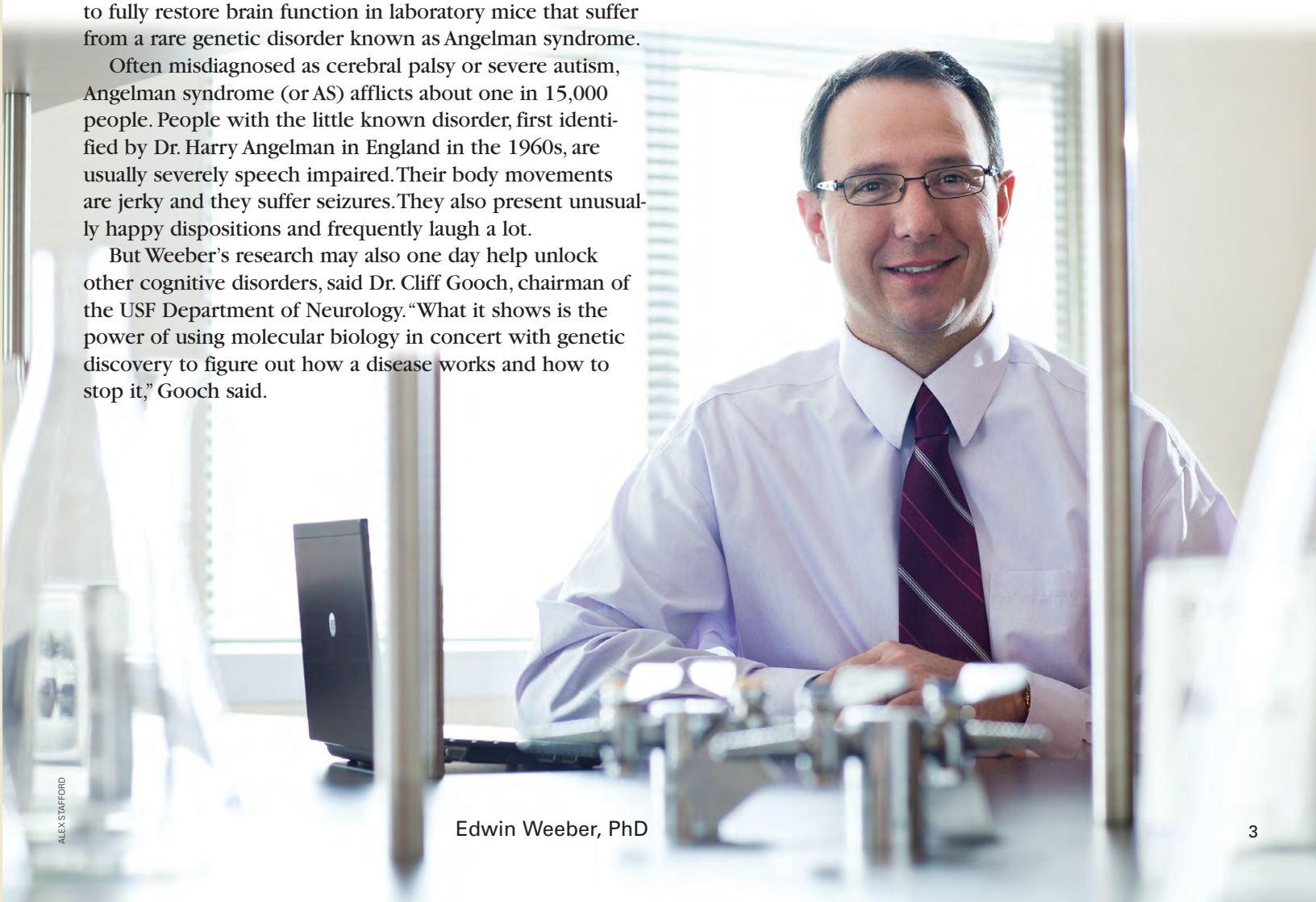

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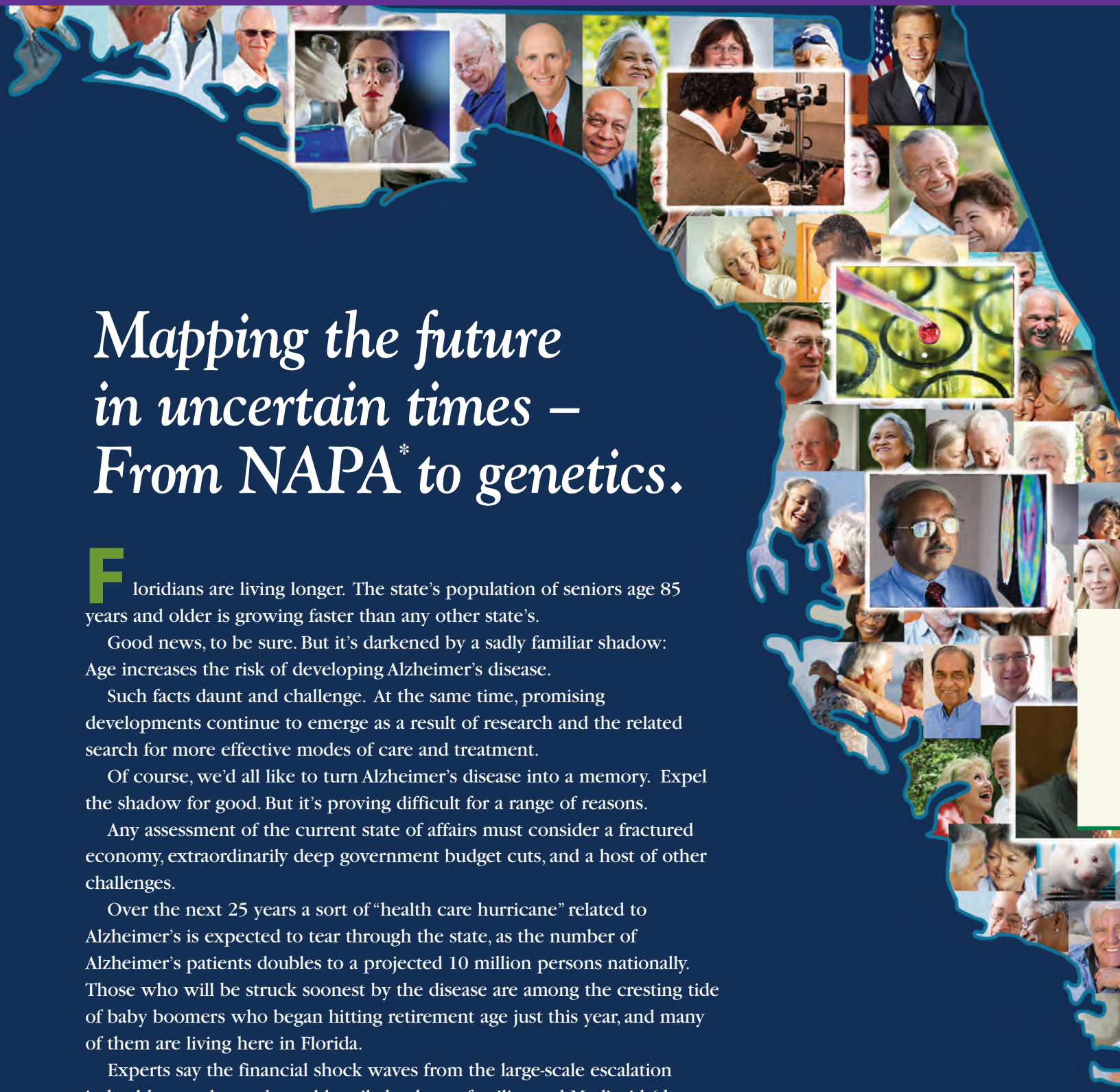
Edwin Weeber, PhD



Mapping the future in uncertain times – From NAPA to genetics.*

Floridians are living longer. The state's population of seniors age 85 years and older is growing faster than any other state's.

Good news, to be sure. But it's darkened by a sadly familiar shadow: Age increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Such facts daunt and challenge. At the same time, promising developments continue to emerge as a result of research and the related search for more effective modes of care and treatment.

Of course, we'd all like to turn Alzheimer's disease into a memory. Expel the shadow for good. But it's proving difficult for a range of reasons.

Any assessment of the current state of affairs must consider a fractured economy, extraordinarily deep government budget cuts, and a host of other challenges.

Over the next 25 years a sort of "health care hurricane" related to Alzheimer's is expected to tear through the state, as the number of Alzheimer's patients doubles to a projected 10 million persons nationally. Those who will be struck soonest by the disease are among the cresting tide of baby boomers who began hitting retirement age just this year, and many of them are living here in Florida.

Experts say the financial shock waves from the large-scale escalation in health care demands could easily bankrupt families and Medicaid (the federal safety net that provides care and resources to seniors when they run out of money).

Another grim reality: Alzheimer's is now the sixth-leading cause of death, and among all of the leading causes of death it is growing the fastest, increasing 65 percent between 2000 and 2008. Meanwhile, the mortality rate for other leading causes of death – strokes and heart disease, for instance – has been decreasing.

*National Alzheimer's Project Act

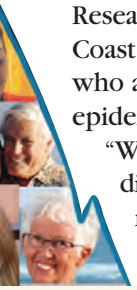
Alzheimer's advocate Larry Butcher of Stuart, Florida, worries that a new federal law advancing Alzheimer's issues will be meaningless without adequate funding.

"In fact, among the 10 leading causes of death in the United States, it is the only one without a way to prevent, cure or even slow disease progression," says Robert Egge, the Alzheimer's Association's vice president of public policy in Washington, D.C.

Still, such challenges are not new to the legions of researchers who work to unlock the secret to the cause of Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Ron Davis, an authority on memory and learning disorders at the Scripps Research Institute on Florida's East Coast, is among those scientists who are optimistic that an Alzheimer's epidemic can still be averted.

"When you look at the history of disease in humankind, there are many diseases that have been solved or largely eradicated, so it will happen [with brain diseases]. It's just a matter of having the resolve to do it," he says.



"When you look at the history of disease in humankind, there are many diseases that have been solved or largely eradicated, so it will happen [with brain diseases]. It's just a matter of having the resolve to do it."

Ron Davis, PhD
Scripps Research Institute

Strengthening Commitment

There are new signs of a strengthening of commitment to solving the massive social conundrum and medical puzzle posed by Alzheimer's. Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich says the growing economic threat of Alzheimer's deserves the same priority as the race to the moon in the 1960s.

Gingrich and other advocates have pressed the federal government to step up funding for research and to identify and support the best community programs serving patients and families.

That push led early this year to the creation of the National Alzheimer's Project Act, or NAPA.

On the genetics front, scientists recently announced a singularly significant discovery (to which the Byrd Institute contributed samples). Five genes linked to Alzheimer's were identified. And according to one national expert, it's "just the tip of the iceberg."

Researchers analyzed the genetic material from 50,000 people in the United States and Europe to identify the five variations that are providing critical new insights into the onset and progression of the disease. The study also confirmed earlier findings that high cholesterol, strokes, and head injuries increase the risk of a person developing Alzheimer's.

Many people working in Florida on genetic solutions believe the state has the potential to retake the lead in Alzheimer's research as well as patient care.

The recent announcement that the world-renowned genetics research firm Jackson Laboratory is planning to open a research facility in Florida, joining the prestigious Scripps Research Institute and others, points to the confidence the private sector scientific community has in the state's future. The company is working to open a research institute in the Tampa Bay area that would partner with surrounding medical and research institutions, including the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. [Editor's note: Just before this issue went to press, Jackson Labs announced they had decided to withdraw their application for state funding for The Jackson Laboratory – Florida.]

Jackson Lab's Vice President Mike Hyde said their DNA studies of neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's, are working to pinpoint the causes and lead to better ways to treat and prevent brain disorders. "Our expertise would be available to collaborators from around the state, the nation and the world."

New Economic Realities

That strategy has been tempered by new realities. Federal and state lawmakers, in order to provide tax breaks and offset budget deficits, are making deep spending cuts to state budgets. That's raising troubling questions about whether Florida and the nation can

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Volunteers essential to two clinical research

Jill Ardila, MA, Assistant Director, USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, with Resonator study participants Barbara and Emilio Ruiz.

ALEX STAFFORD

As researchers around the world try to prevent Alzheimer's disease or reverse its heartbreaking toll, the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute is among the trailblazers searching for better ways to diagnose and treat the disease that afflicts more than 5.3 million people in the United States.

The Institute's clinical research center is partnering with drug companies and technological innovators to test new approaches. One clinical study under way at the Institute could make it easier to diagnose Alzheimer's disease early, making it possible to begin treatment sooner and slow the progression of the disease.

Another study is testing whether low-dose electromagnetic impulses can help slow the pace of decline in brain function in people with mild to moderate memory loss.

Looking inside the brain for early clues to memory loss

Technological advancements such as X-rays, CT scans, magnetic resonance imaging (better known as MRIs) and, more recently, PET scans have allowed doctors to see what's going on inside our bodies without making an incision. These innovations have become more refined as special dyes and other compounds help them pinpoint what they're looking for.

"The challenge today in Alzheimer's disease is two-fold: One is diagnosing the disease very, very, very early, and the other is treating the disease," says Dr. Ashok Raj, a Byrd physician researcher. Testing a new method to detect the Alzheimer's type plaque buildup in the brain early on, Raj says, "What we're beginning to realize is the earlier we can diagnose the disease, the more likely we are to have some effective treatments, because once the brain gets damaged, we may be able to stop the progression of the disease, but won't be able to reverse it."

USF is one of only seven institutions nationwide – and the only one in Florida – conducting a pilot studies on whether an experimental tracer injected into the body can reveal the gooey plaques. The tracer's appeal is that it lasts up to six times longer than conventional tracers that must

very different studies.

be used within 20 minutes after they're produced in a particle accelerator known as a cyclotron that few medical facilities can afford, Raj said.

Researchers hope that color photographs of the tracer using a form of nuclear imaging known as PET scans (or positron emission tomography) will help advance early diagnosis. If it's successful, screening middle-age people for early stages of the harmful deposits – known as amyloid plaque – in the brain could become as commonplace as other wellness screenings, such as mammograms and colonoscopies, Raj said.

If brain screenings become standard in years to come, "We might say your brain looks squeaky clean and we can repeat the test in five or six years, or it might show your brain is beginning to show mild deposits of amyloid plaque, and we might want to repeat the test in two or three years to see if it's progressing," he said.

To learn more about this study or to become a volunteer, call USF Health's clinical trials office at (813) 974-4355.

Can electromagnetic therapy delay memory loss?

With few FDA-approved drugs to slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease and none that can undo its devastating effects, researchers, patients, and families are willing to consider alternative therapies. USF has begun enrolling volunteers with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease in a new clinical trial to test whether electromagnetic therapy can improve memory function in compromised brain cells.

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Dr. Ashok Raj of the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute.

Study volunteer undergoes electromagnetic therapy in The Resonator.

ALEX STAFFORD

Amanda G. Smith, MD

Dr. Amanda Smith is keenly interested in aging issues, especially those relating to the diagnosis and treatment of memory disorders, medical research on Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, and the services available to patients and their caregivers. After receiving her medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1997, she completed her internship, residency in psychiatry and fellowship in geriatric psychiatry at USF's College of Medicine. She serves on several regional, state and national committees promoting memory disorder research and education, and is a charter member of the International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment. She is also a USF Health correspondent for the Tampa Tribune on aging issues.

Q How are the diagnostic criteria for Alzheimer's changing?

A Alzheimer's disease is usually diagnosed when people develop symptoms of dementia, such as increasing forgetfulness and difficulty performing daily activities. Absolute confirmation of the diagnosis was traditionally only made at autopsy, when characteristic plaques and tangles in the brain could be seen under a microscope. New criteria take into account a "pre-clinical" stage of Alzheimer's, when the disease is building up in the brain but symptoms have yet to appear. New techniques in imaging now allow us to see that plaque in the brains of living patients.

Q How do these criteria differ from the current standards?

A The criteria that we currently use were written in 1984, and much has changed about our understanding of this disease. With the old criteria, we had to wait to diagnose Alzheimer's until someone had become demented, which is akin to diagnosing cardiovascular disease after someone had a heart attack. The new criteria include a pre-clinical stage, as well as a stage of mild cognitive impairment, with Alzheimer's dementia being the third stage. These new standards also include biomarkers found in the body that measure illness. These indicators include certain imaging findings on MRI and PET scans, and measurements of specific proteins in the brain and spinal fluid.

Q When do the proposed changes take effect?

A The new standards were proposed last summer at the International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and were rolled out this year.

Q What will this mean for patients and their families?

A Our ability to diagnose Alzheimer's disease at an earlier stage may have tremendous implications for people with the illness and their relatives as well. We know that plaque starts to build up in the brain years before the first signs of forgetfulness. Lifestyle changes that are known to delay the onset of Alzheimer's can be implemented. As new drugs are developed, those people shown to be at risk may be able to begin treatment before symptoms ever appear. This offers a new level of hope that dementia due to Alzheimer's disease will someday be a thing of the past.

Q What will this mean for medical providers?

A Physicians will be able to screen for Alzheimer's disease much like they do now for heart disease and stroke. By looking at risk factors and biomarkers, they can intervene early rather than waiting until cell death in the brain has become irreversible. It also allows physicians to be compensated for their time – until very recently, there were no billable diagnosis codes for cognitive exams when the person didn't have dementia. In fact, as of Jan. 1, 2011, Medicare announced that beneficiaries must be screened for cognitive impairment as part of their annual wellness visit. This is an entire paradigm shift: a change from symptomatic treatment to preventive medicine. ■

Collective Compassion.

Four Florida groups demonstrate the power of organizational giving.

What do casino nights, pancake breakfasts and rummage sales have in common?

They are the tools fraternal organizations, social clubs and professional groups are using to fund Alzheimer's research and caregiver support programs.

Large and small donations from civic-minded groups can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year at the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute, in addition to the donations and bequests from individuals. Some of its largest charitable groups have collectively contributed more than $400,000 to help the Institute carry out its mission.

Statewide, the Fraternal Order of the Eagles and its ladies' auxiliary have chosen the Institute as their special charity and hope to raise an additional $100,000 by the middle of next year. Tom Knox, the Eagles' incoming state president, knows that families of dementia patients need all the help they can get, and his organization wants to help them through the research, education and caregiver support services offered at the Institute.

"Alzheimer's patients can live for years and years, and they need a lot of care, so the demand on the caregiver becomes greater and greater," said the Fort Lauderdale resident. "My main concern is for caregiver services and education."

He experienced firsthand what families go through when his 82-year-old mother began showing signs of dementia following a stroke and four years later required full-time nursing home care. By raising money through dances, karaoke contests and other special events among their chapters throughout Florida, the Eagles and Eagles Auxiliary are living up to their motto of "people helping people," Knox added.

The Masons also plan to raise money for the Alzheimer's Institute this year, as they have done in the past, says Past Grand Master Dale I. Goehrig. "Alzheimer's research is close to my heart," said Goehrig, whose brother-in-law, daughter-in-law and a close friend all succumbed to the disease. "It may be too late to help them, but let's see if we can't help someone else." The central Florida resident said he hopes contributions from their 300 lodges statewide – and nearly 50,000 members – can lead to ways to help prevent or reverse the degenerative disease.

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) association also has designated Alzheimer's organizations as one of its primary charities, and several of its chapters in central Florida help raise funds for the Institute.

"We feel, based on the information we've been given by the USF staff who have spoken to us, that they're on the track of a cure and the future looks good," said NARFE District 5 Vice President Bob Lemley of Plant City. "Alzheimer's has touched a lot of us personally," he added. "We think that what they're doing is very worthwhile and we want to support them."

Lois Wolfe, the state leader of the Fraternal Order of the Eastern Star, agrees. "It's just such a horrendous disease that we want to do something to help,"

> *"Alzheimer's research is close to my heart."* *Dale I. Goehrig*

said the Merritt Island resident, whose mother-in-law struggled with Alzheimer's disease for seven years before her death.

As the state leader of the Eastern Star, which is affiliated with the Masons, Wolfe hopes to present the Institute with a check this spring for $20,000 or more raised by their 150 chapters statewide.

The institute is grateful for its many individual and group supporters and welcomes new ones.

"There are opportunities for new organizations to come on board and marshal their efforts to support what we do," said Holly Lisle, associate director of development at USF Health. "The power of organizational giving is the combination of many gifts adding up to a substantial impact," she said. "In addition to their financial support, the dedication and enthusiasm of these organizations and their members are invaluable."

For more information on how you or your organization can help, contact Lisle at (813) 974-0890.

Institute Tours

Alzheimer's disease is devastating, not only to people suffering from the disease and their families, but to our community as well. As part of USF, the ninth-largest research university in the nation, the Institute provides state-of-the-art research and services to persons living with Alzheimer's disease — from bench to bedside.

On the tour you will visit the *Discovery Labs* and see our researchers pursuing a cure for Alzheimer's. You will also tour our Medical Clinic and learn about the clinical trials, services, and care we provide to patients and families currently dealing with this disease — all under one roof. Along the way you will learn about our revolutionary plan to create a full-service C.A.R.E. Center on the second floor for patients and their families at the Institute.

Tour dates

All tours are scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and include lunch.

Day	Date
Thursday	June 30, 2011
Thursday	August 18, 2011
Thursday	September 15, 2011

If you would like to learn more about the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute by attending a tour, please contact De'Nicea Hilton, Assistant Director of Development at (813) 974-5697 or email her at dhilton1@health.usf.edu. There is no cost for the tour, but reservations are required as space is limited.

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 they 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

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 on 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. ■

Unraveling Angelman syndrome

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute Associate Professor hopes his findings will confirm that AS is not a developmental abnormality, but a biochemical imbalance in the brain for which a therapeutic can one day be discovered.

> *"This has implications beyond Angelman syndrome to the much broader world of medical genetics."*
>
> *Cliff Gooch, MD, Chairman, USF Health Department of Neurology*

Weeber is among a new breed of researchers since the 1990s focusing on molecular triggers of genetic abnormalities and diseases, said Gooch, who also is the director of the USF Neuro-science Collaborative, which brings together scientists and faculty from different departments throughout the university with an interest in neuroscience research.

Gooch believes Weeber's work in genetics could help scientists studying other brain disorders. "Much more experimentation is required, but there might be a way to use regulation of this particular enzyme to improve memory function in patients with Alzheimer's disease, post-traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's disease, dementia or other kinds of processes that adversely affect memory function in humans," Gooch said. ■

Volunteers essential

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"This is something very different than what we've tried in the past. Some people are not interested in medications. It could be a form of alternative therapy, the way we use acupuncture for pain management," said Jill Ardila, study coordinator and assistant director of clinical research at USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute in Tampa.

Researchers will be looking at whether the electromagnetic frequencies generated by a futuristic-looking machine known as the Resonator™ can revitalize brain cells in Alzheimer's patients "so that maybe the cells won't die off as quickly and can function longer," Ardila said. Previous research over a wide range of health issues including Parkinson's disease, arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease – led USF to test the Resonator™ with Alzheimer's patients.

After an initial screening, the volunteers will receive the low-level electromagnetic or placebo treatments three times a week for 12 weeks. During each 90-minute session, the participant is seated in a chair and receives the frequencies from two large electromagnetic coils, one on each side of them. Participants are assigned randomly to the treatment or the placebo group.

Once the series of visits is completed, the volunteers will take additional memory tests to see if their brain function has improved, declined or stayed the same. Ardila hopes 30 people will complete the experimental treatments in the next several months so researchers can evaluate its effectiveness. Although its benefits are uncertain, the risk of negative side effects appears minimal, Ardila noted.

To learn more about the study involving Alzheimer's patients or to participate, call the Institute's clinical research center at (813) 974-4355. ■

Mapping the future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

sustain the strides made in recent years. The decisions of policymakers over the next few years will have deep and lasting social consequences.

Analyst Larry Polivka, PhD, who has broad experience addressing aging issues at the state and federal levels, says we are at a crossroads in averting an Alzheimer's crisis. "The question is, are we going to spend the money we need to get some scientific breakthroughs to keep this from becoming a totally out-of-control epidemic in the next 10 or 20 years?"

Polivka, who lectures on long-term care and the economic security of America's elderly population as executive director of the Claude Pepper Center at Florida State University, says investing in research now will avert a great toll in human suffering. Beefing up current research levels will also save taxpayers and families far more money in the long run, if science can develop better ways to manage or cure the disease.

"We need $2 billion in [Alzheimer's] research and we're currently spending about $450 million…That's absurd!" said the self-described "cost-effectiveness fanatic."

Polivka argues that cuts in Alzheimer's research by lawmakers trying to rein in spending defy common sense. "Alzheimer's research should be receiving major increases over the next decade simply in terms of policy cost-effectiveness," he said.

Others hope Florida's new governor, Rick Scott, who has a health care background and campaigned on supporting cost-effective programs that produce results, will support funding critical to new research and step forward to promote the best community-based solutions to Alzheimer's care.

Florida has the potential to be a national model for community care.

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Mapping the future

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One example of an innovative, grassroots approach is found at the Alzheimer's Community Care on Florida's East Coast, which provides a program that could defer, or eliminate, the need for much costlier nursing home care.

A Step In The Right Direction

A comprehensive approach is the guiding principle in the work of advocates, experts and business leaders who formed the Alzheimer's Study Group. The study group, led by Gingrich and former U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, called for a nationwide, integrated strategic initiative. The Alzheimer's Association worked with other leading advocates for three years to win its passage this past January.

Florida Alzheimer's advocate Larry Butcher of Stuart, Fla., joined Gingrich, retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and California First Lady Maria Shriver in 2009 in urging Congress to enact recommendations of the Alzheimer's Study Group. Congress approved legislation in 2011 known as NAPA, the National Alzheimer's Project Act.

Butcher calls NAPA a step in the right direction, but warns that without adequate funding, "I think we're a long way from ever implementing all of the things contained in the Alzheimer's Study Group's report."

The Alzheimer's Association is calling for "swift, aggressive implementation" of the actions called for in the new law.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., who serves on the Senate's Aging Committee, believes NAPA will help the state remain out front in treatment and research.

> *"With the research being done at the Byrd Alzheimer's Institute at USF, we will continue to make progress in the years to come."*
>
> *U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla.*

"Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that affects many of Florida's seniors," he said. "A number of research institutions in Florida have made great strides in recent years to better understand how Alzheimer's affects the brain and what can be done to stop it. I am encouraged by their work, and know the National Alzheimer's Project Act can help funnel resources in the right direction so we can take even bigger steps forward. With the research being done at the Byrd Alzheimer's Institute at USF, we will continue to make progress in the years to come."

Charles T. "Chuck" Corley, interim secretary of Florida's Department of Elder Affairs, believes NAPA will lead to progress at the state and national levels in addressing Alzheimer's growing threat.

He said the Florida's Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI) is helping to update the federally mandated "State Plan on Aging" to make responding to Alzheimer's a core goal, Corley reported.

The Alzheimer's Association's Egge argues, "While only 4 percent of the general population will be admitted to a nursing home by age 80, 75 percent of people with Alzheimer's will be. This poses significant economic challenges to state Medicaid budgets."

"These are staggering numbers and they will only continue to climb. With these projections, the stakes are high throughout the country, but particularly in Florida," Egge said. ■

For more information on Alzheimer's disease in Florida and throughout the country, check out the **Facts and Figures** link on the Alzheimer's Association's Web site at

www.alz.org/downloads/Facts_Figures_2011.pdf