

# THE Continuum

From Bench to Bedside to Community

## UF Institute on Aging Wins Major Grant for Research to Help Older Adults Stay Independent

The University of Florida Institute on Aging has been awarded a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging, in renewed support of the UF Pepper Older Americans Independence Center. The new award comes on the heels of NIH funding that established Florida's first Pepper Center at UF in 2007.

The Center focuses on understanding age-related muscle loss from different perspectives, and the potential role of skeletal muscle as a key target for therapies to counteract age-related damage to the body. Another central part of the center's mission is to train the next generation of academic and research leaders in the field of aging.

"We are honored by this strong, continued support as we use scientific tools to tackle the issue of aging," said principal investigator Marco Pahor, M.D., director of the UF Institute on Aging and chairman of the Department of Aging and Geriatric Research in the UF College of Medicine.



Continued on page 2

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of the IOA,

We are very excited to welcome Dr. Ronald Cohen as the director of the UF Cognitive Aging and Memory Clinical Translational Research Program, which is supported by an endowed fund from the McKnight Brain Research Foundation

Dr. Cohen comes to us from Brown University, where he was a professor and director of the Neuropsychological Research Centers for Behavioral Medicine at affiliate The Miriam Hospital.

He brings unique expertise and experience to the study of cognitive aging and memory. Over the last 15 years his research has centered on brain-related effects of diseases and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, HIV, hepatitis C and obesity, that affect the brain but that are not typically thought of as brain disorders. This work, which bridges a broad range of disciplines, is sure to attract strong support from major funding agencies.

Dr. Cohen's primary appointment is in the UF College of Medicine Department of Aging and Geriatric Research, and he also holds joint appointments in the Departments of Neurology, Psychiatry and Community Health. His program will be an excellent complement to the ongoing basic science, clinical and translational research at the UF Institute on Aging. In his role with the McKnight Brain Institute of UF, Dr. Cohen is leading efforts to develop and test methods for improving brain function in humans based on animal models being developed at the institute.

Dr. Cohen's UF roots run deep — almost 30 years ago he did a postdoctoral fellowship in the UF College of Medicine's neuropsychology program. We are very pleased he has returned to UF and we look forward to his continued accomplishments aimed at improving the health and quality of life of older adults.



Dr. Ronald Cohen



## International Researchers Gathered in Orlando for Discussion of Age-Related Muscle Loss

Sunny Florida hosted researchers from around the world during the 2nd annual International Conference on Sarcopenia Research, Dec. 6-7, 2012, at Orlando's Hilton Grand Vacations Suites. Drs. Marco Pahor, Bruno Vellas and Roger Fielding headed the organizing committee.

Sponsored by the Global Aging Research Network of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, the meeting tackled the topic of age-related muscle loss from a multidisciplinary perspective. Speakers presented research in a variety of fields, including physical activity, nutrition intervention, animal models, drug development and clinical trials. The meeting featured symposia, oral presentations and poster sessions.

Speakers and presenters hailed from many different countries, including: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Australia and the U.S. Activities included a tour of the UF Research and Academic Center at Lake Nona.

For more information visit [www.icsr-sarcopenia.com](http://www.icsr-sarcopenia.com).

## Clinical and Translational Building Moving Along

*The new home of the UF Institute on Aging is taking shape. Here's a look at the construction progress over the last few months.*

The new Institute on Aging - Clinical and Translational Research Building, a LEED Platinum Plus project, is really coming along! The new IOA-CTRB building will house state-of-the-art clinical and research facilities, and is expected to be ready for occupants in late Spring of 2013.

- Underground telecommunications work is complete, and precast panels are installed.
- Masonry work along the south side of the building and at the south entry is complete, and all concrete floor slabs are poured.
- Mechanical units are in place and duct work is being performance tested; all stair steps and landings are poured, and the 2nd layer of roofing has been installed and inspected.
- The drywall, primer, painting, and inspection of mechanical and electrical rooms are complete.
- The interior wall framing is ongoing on level 1, and the manufacturer installed the rails and platforms for elevator 1.





## The Science of Frailty

As the number of elderly adults rises in coming years, so will the number of people who have disabilities. Frailty is one condition that puts older adults at increased risk of disability, falls, hospitalization and premature death. UF Institute on Aging researchers and colleagues are devising ways to detect and address frailty as soon as it starts to develop, as a way to prevent disability.

The number of Americans age 65 and older is expected to double in the next 20 years, reaching more than 70 million by 2030 and accounting for about 20 percent of the population. Four out of five older Americans are living with at least one chronic condition, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Preventing frailty and disability is a first step toward helping older adults maintain their health and independence. But how is frailty measured?

In assessing frailty, physicians generally look at a range of factors, including unintentional weight loss, exhaustion, weakness of grip, slow walking and difficulty being physically active.

But UF researchers think we can get a better handle on frailty by combining that traditional evaluation method with a new way that involves analyzing blood and urine for biological markers such as proteins, that can give clues about age-related processes occurring in the body.

Nicknamed FRAILOMIC, the study conducted by a consortium of several institutions from Europe and the US will evaluate samples and measurements from up to 75,000 older adults in eight ongoing large-scale studies. That information will serve as the basis for devising tools to predict patients' likelihood of developing various conditions, and arriving at accurate diagnoses and prognoses. The FRAILOMIC project is supported by a grant from the European Community. 🌴



## Welcome to Our New Faculty and Staff:

Many thanks to Socorro Pata, RN, and Marlene Sarmiento, RN, who are assisting our Clinical Research Division with study participants' safety. Dr. Sobhana Hariharasubramanian, recipient of a NIH Fogarty fellowship, will enhance her training by observing and assisting for six months with the Clinical Research division. Welcome!

## Opportunities to Participate In Research Studies:

If you are interested in participating in a current or future Institute on Aging study, you can enroll in our Institutional Review Board-approved recruitment registry. To enroll or obtain additional information, please call Cardie Dielschneider at [352-273-5919](tel:352-273-5919) or [866-386-7730](tel:866-386-7730) (toll free) or email [Recruit@Aging.ufl.edu](mailto:Recruit@Aging.ufl.edu).

## New Positions:

For employment opportunities, please contact Camelia Pascu at [cpascu@ufl.edu](mailto:cpascu@ufl.edu).

## IOA Wins Major Grant

[Continued from page 1](#)

UF is one of just 15 institutions in the nation to receive the award, which is named for the late Claude D. Pepper, a U.S. senator-turned-representative from Florida. Pepper advocated for the rights of the elderly and championed laws aimed at improving the health and well-being of older Americans.

“The UF Pepper Center has long been interested in maintaining and improving function of older adults in the community,” said Basil Eldadah, M.D., Ph.D., acting chief of the geriatrics branch of the National Institute on Aging. “It has made several significant contributions to our understanding of aging processes, particularly in the areas of prevention and rehabilitation of disability in older people.” 🌴



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**MAKE A GIFT**

**Giving to the Institute on Aging**

*...why every dollar counts*

Unlocking life's mysteries – particularly the secrets of how long and how well we live – is the distinct focus of the University of Florida's Institute on Aging. Our scientists and physicians are dedicated to achieving better understanding of the mechanisms of aging and how we can maintain or enhance our physical independence and cognitive abilities.

Private philanthropy is so essential to our work. Your gift, regardless of size, can make the critical difference in funding new scientific endeavors. Imagine discoveries that fuel positive cellular changes; identify new therapies that help rehabilitate aging bones and joints; or uncover additional pharmaceutical allies. Private philanthropy makes all this and much more possible.

To learn more about how you can invest in a healthier and more independent tomorrow for us all, please contact Mary Ann Kiely at [352-273-9620](tel:352-273-9620) or email [mkiely@ufl.edu](mailto:mkiely@ufl.edu).

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