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NEWS RELEASE

July 17, 2007

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTER LANDS \$10.6 MILLION GRANT

MISSOULA –

University of Montana biomedical research got a big shot in the arm recently from a five-year, \$10.6 million grant for the University's Center for Environmental Health Sciences.

Founded in 2000, the center works to advance knowledge of environmental impacts on human health. Its 16 faculty members and six faculty affiliates study everything from arsenic exposure to diseases caused by Libby asbestos.

The National Institutes of Health grant represents continued funding for CEHS, which is a Center for Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) housed in UM's College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences. The center received a similar COBRE grant shortly after it was founded.

"This new grant shows we were evaluated on our past and on our plan for the future," CEHS Director Andrij Holian said. "They determined that we were doing a good job, that we were successful and were more likely than not to continue being successful."

He said the center will receive \$1.5 million per year for direct costs and another \$620,000 per year for indirect costs such as facilities and administration expenses.

A third of the annual \$1.5 million will support new pilot research projects. Holian

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hopes his scientists will use this money to get their research started and then find their own long-term funding from other sources.

He said CEHS researchers have pulled in about \$20 million from sources beyond the COBRE grants since the center started. "We have been fairly successful in getting our investigators to get their own funding," he said.

Another third of the annual \$1.5 million will fund four state-of-the-art core facilities housing major research tools. One example is the flow cytometry facility, which houses an instrument capable of incredibly detailed cell analysis. The instrument itself costs a half million dollars, and it requires a full-time operator and facility manager to keep it running.

"The core facilities are tools that people can't afford to have individually but are available to all UM researchers," Holian says.

The third chunk of annual funding supports the CEHS administration, as well as graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and other specialized costs.

Holian says his team spent a number of months preparing the massive grant application last year. By November he knew the application had scored high enough that full funding was likely, but he only received the official announcement recently.

If funding had fallen through, CEHS would have been decimated. Holian said he likely would have needed to shut down programs, stop taking in new students and lay off up to 20

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people.

“It would have been extremely devastating to the University and people’s lives,” he said. “This continued support is major for the center, UM, Missoula and the state of Montana. It really helps keep us on the map for this type of research.”

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