

For Immediate Release

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Diabetes researcher at Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute awarded NIH grant

Alan Schneyer, Ph.D., distinguished scientist at the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute (PVLSI), has been awarded a research grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant, entitled “Physiologic Roles of Activin and Myostatin Antagonists”, provides Dr. Schneyer with \$737,000 to conduct research into diabetes over the next three years. Dr. Schneyer recently joined PVLSI from the Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School.

More than 20 million Americans, or 7% of the population, suffer from diabetes, costing more than \$132 billion to treat annually. “My research focuses on looking for hormones that lead to more and better functioning insulin-producing cells,” states Dr. Schneyer. In particular, this grant will fund studies on a protein called Follistatin (FST), which plays an important role in normal development and appears to cause proliferation of insulin-producing cells. Dr. Schneyer and his team will look at different versions of FST made by the body to determine the function of each. Their early studies have shown that one form of FST seems to enhance the body’s sensitivity to insulin and to cause proliferation of β -cells-- special insulin-producing cells located in the pancreas, a small organ tucked behind the stomach that aids in the digestion of food. This research could lead to new treatments for diabetes. For more information about Dr. Schneyer, visit: www.pvlsi.org/lab_schneyer.html

Dr. Larry Schwartz, PVLSI’s science director, says, “We are delighted to have Dr. Schneyer working at the Institute. He is an outstanding addition to our new diabetes and metabolism group. His work has basic research and clinical implications that fit well with PVLSI’s focus and strengths, as well as with the high-quality bench science of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the top-notch clinical work of the Baystate Medical Center.”

About the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute (PVLSI)

PVLSI was created in 2002 as a joint venture of Baystate Medical Center and the University of Massachusetts Amherst with the dual missions of biomedical research and economic development. Drawing on each of the founders as well as its own researchers, the Institute brings together physicians, scientists, and engineers to create interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams focused on the molecular mechanisms of disease and the development of new diagnostic and therapeutic tools. For more information, go to www.pvlsi.org

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