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Governor Doyle Announces Historic Genomic Research Collaboration

Wisconsin Genomics Initiative Will Solidify State's Leadership Role in Personalized Health Care

MARSHFIELD, MILWAUKEE, MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle today announced a historic collaboration between four Wisconsin research institutions to advance personalized health care – leading to health care that proactively addresses diseases. The Wisconsin Genomics Initiative is a collaborative research effort among the Marshfield Clinic, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UWSMPH) and UW-Milwaukee (UWM).

Wisconsin is a leader in genomic research and personalized health care, and the Wisconsin Genomics Initiative will solidify the state's national and international leadership position.

"With our combined knowledge, expertise and technologies here in Wisconsin, we have an incredible opportunity to become a worldwide leader in personalized health care," Governor Doyle said. "By aligning the intellectual capital of four major research institutions, we will meet an important scientific and public health need that could otherwise not be met, and which cannot be accomplished anywhere else but Wisconsin."

"Medical experts have testified before my committee that the future of medicine is that we will be able to look at individuals and know what diseases they are likely to get, how best to treat them, and what we can do to keep them from getting sick in the first place," said Representative Dave Obey. "The Wisconsin Genomics Initiative is all about getting us to that future. I'm proud that once again Wisconsin is helping to lead the nation in medical research, just like we are with stem cell research."

This public-private partnership is the result of a challenge issued by Governor Doyle in 2006 at the groundbreaking for Marshfield Clinic's Laird Center for Medical Research expansion. He challenged the four institutions to combine and leverage resources to create a Wisconsin Medical Research Triangle. The Wisconsin Genomics Initiative is the first project stemming from that challenge.

Through this initiative, the four institutions will use combined resources to achieve the promise of personalized health care by developing scientific models to:

- Predict with high accuracy individual susceptibility to disease,
- Precisely target personalized treatments,
- Determine how well each person will respond to specific treatments,
- and, prevent disease before it occurs.

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Marshfield Clinic is home to the Personalized Medicine Research Project, the largest population-based genetic research project in the country. Approximately 20,000 people have contributed their DNA and given researchers access to their complete electronic health records. Marshfield Clinic is also a national leader in clinical informatics.

MCW is one of the top human genetic research centers in the country, capable of cost-effectively genotyping individual DNA samples.

UW-Milwaukee conducts ongoing research in urban health care and health informatics. Its School of Nursing is active in research and community health engagement.

UWSMPH is a global leader in stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. It is uniquely capable of the full biostatistical analysis of the vast data that will result from the Initiative's genotyping analysis. Additionally, UW-Madison's Institute for Clinical and Translational Research creates an environment to transform research into real-life medical practice.

Because Wisconsin will be among first states to have statewide adoption of electronic health record standards, Wisconsin Genomic Initiative partners will be able to exchange information with one another and physicians throughout the state. In addition to improving medical care, this initiative will have a positive impact on the state's economy because of its potential for creating new jobs, attracting business and securing federal funding through research grants.

Initial work will involve genotyping each DNA sample in Marshfield Clinic's bio-bank for one million genetic markers; using the Clinic's electronic medical health record to obtain health history and environmental factors for targeted diseases; and building and testing a scientific computational model capable of predicting an individual's disease susceptibility and treatment response.

The initiative will be supported by the federal government, the state, and the partnering four institutions.