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SCIENTIST TARGETING MECHANISMS AND TREATMENT OF NEURODEGENERATIVE DISORDERS RECEIVES ENDOWED CHAIR AT CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER

Terrence Town, Ph.D., will hold the Ben Winters Endowed Chair in Regenerative Medicine

LOS ANGELES (Dec. 22, 2008) – Terrence Town, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Neurosurgery and the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, has been named holder of the Ben Winters Endowed Chair in Regenerative Medicine.

Town's research focuses on molecular genetics, cellular and molecular biology, and pathology and imaging. His work has shown that key immune molecules play central roles in neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, encephalitis, stroke and multiple sclerosis.

He recently published findings in *Nature Medicine* that support the possibility of developing an immune-based approach to treating Alzheimer's disease. Most therapies targeting the disease are thwarted by the blood-brain barrier, a natural mechanism that protects brain cells from intrusion, and by the fact that immune responses in the brain are typically muted. But in his study of laboratory mice programmed to develop Alzheimer's-like disease, Town found that certain immune cells could be coaxed into the brain where they attacked the damaging sticky plaque buildup that is a defining feature of Alzheimer's disease. Town is continuing to pursue this line of research in hopes of developing a next-generation drug for Alzheimer's disease.

His work, which has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Alzheimer's Association, has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals. Of the approximately 75 research papers he has published, half have been related to Alzheimer's disease.

Prior to joining Cedars-Sinai, he was an associate research scientist in the Department of Immunobiology at Yale University/Howard Hughes Medical Institute in New Haven, Conn.

The endowed chair is named in memory of Ben Winters, who became a member of the Mt. Sinai Hospital board in 1954 and was instrumental in bringing together Cedars of Lebanon and Mt. Sinai hospitals to form Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in 1961. When he passed away from Lou Gehrig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS), his family and friends wanted to show their gratitude for the care he received at Cedars-Sinai by raising funds in his name to support research in degenerative diseases and regenerative medicine.

(more)

Winters was a member of the Board of Directors for 34 years and was chairman of the Board of Governors from 1977 to 1979. He was named a Life Trustee of the Medical Center in 1996.

Cedars-Sinai's endowed chair program enables the medical center to attract and retain superior scientific leaders, advancing the institution's mission of patient care, research and education. An endowed chair is created with a philanthropic contribution of at least \$2 million. The principal remains untouched, generating continuing resources to support the chair holder's research and teaching efforts.

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