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**KU Alzheimer’s Disease Center renewed
as one of only 31 nationally designated centers
by the National Institute on Aging**

FAIRWAY, Kan. — Several high-ranking members of Kansas political leadership were in attendance today as the University of Kansas Medical Center announced that the University of Kansas Alzheimer’s Disease Center (KU ADC) has had its national designation renewed for five years by the National Institute on Aging.

U.S. Sens. Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran, along with Rep. Kevin Yoder, were on hand at the KU ADC to hear Douglas Girod, executive vice chancellor of KU Medical Center, announce that the center would have its designation and funding of an estimated \$8.5 million through 2021.

The KU ADC is one of only 31 nationally designated centers by the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. Alzheimer’s disease affects more than 5 million Americans, and there is currently no proven cure or treatment to delay its progression. The grant money and designation will help researchers at KU ADC continue to unravel the mysteries of the disease, which claimed nearly 85,000 American lives in 2013 and is this country’s sixth-leading cause of death.

“When the NIA first announced in August 2011 that the KU Alzheimer’s Disease Center had achieved national designation, we were thrilled, but not surprised,” Girod said. “We knew that our Alzheimer’s program had long been at the forefront of discovery and had already achieved significant success in understanding and treating this devastating disease.”

Russell Swerdlow, M.D., director of the KU ADC, noted that this renewed designation comes with an expanded responsibility to continue to move the field of Alzheimer’s research forward, both regionally and nationally. “We work with a number of partners to advance clinical research and to help lower the barriers for Alzheimer’s researchers all across the region,” he said.

Swerdlow noted that the center has supported more than 100 investigators for the past five years, with more than 80 studies and more than 800 clinical trial participants. “Renewing our national designation will allow us to continue to bring top-flight scientists to the area, lead the way on clinical care and grow our research team,” Swerdlow said. “Our goal is to double our clinical trials and double our trial participants in the next five years.”

Jeffrey Burns, M.D., co-director of the KU ADC, points out that the criteria for national designation also include a commitment to basic science, clinical science and clinical care. The KU ADC is specifically focused on the contribution of metabolism to Alzheimer’s disease, which means examining how altering metabolism and cell energy, either through drugs or other interventions, such as exercise and lifestyle changes, may change the course of the disease.

“We are leading the prevention field in Alzheimer’s disease,” said Burns. “And now, we are prepared to take it into the community with more awareness and more tools for physicians to manage dementia care.”

Burns noted that a new community-based alliance between physicians and volunteers is anticipated to assist in overcoming the biggest barrier to research—finding enough participants for clinical trials. “We can’t conduct more clinical trials without more participants,” he said. “What we’re really looking at is preserving brain health and fighting brain aging. As our population continues to age, fighting Alzheimer’s becomes even more critical.”

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The University of Kansas Medical Center’s mission is to educate exceptional health care professionals through a full range of undergraduate, graduate, professional, postdoctoral and continuing education programs in the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions. KU Medical Center also advances the health sciences through world-class research programs; provides compassionate and state-of-the-art patient care in an academic medical center environment; and works with communities in every Kansas county to improve the health of Kansans.