Nell J. Redfield Foundation to fund clinical research at Nevada

From a research center to a patient’s bedside, the delivery of new medical discoveries can take upward of 17 years. Now, with the help of a $1.5 million pledge from the Nell J. Redfield Foundation, researchers at the University of Nevada School of Medicine endeavor to impact medical practice and patient treatment by providing the treatments of tomorrow—today. Current research projects at the School of Medicine range from pediatric genetics to AIDS diagnostics.

“The Redfield Foundation’s commitment to support the development of a robust clinical research enterprise will enhance our ability to improve medical care in Nevada and to train more and better medical students, residents and fellows,” says Dr. Thomas Schwenk, dean of the School of Medicine.

To shorten the time between medical discovery and practical application, the School of Medicine will begin by assembling a clinical research team charged with supporting physician faculty in writing and publishing articles, making presentations about research results and extending studies performed in a single location to a wider set of clinical practices—investigational methods collectively referred to as “translational research.”

“Translational medicine is neither isolated ‘basic’ research nor can it be described merely as ‘clinical’ research. It is typically disciplinary,” says Dr. Daniel Shapiro, chairman of internal medicine at the School of Medicine in Reno. “It attempts to rapidly apply targeted basic science results to clinical practice.

“Clinical observations may prompt basic scientists to conduct these targeted investigations,” Shapiro adds. “As a result, the yield of translational research is greater and the time required to apply basic science to clinical care is shorter than in the typical research cycle.”

Students will receive hands-on experience during research rotations in the third and fourth year and in residencies, ultimately providing the students with a career model that combines practice and research. The northern Nevada patient community will benefit from being closer to the source of practice innovations.

“Advancement of clinical research is important to the growth of the School of Medicine and to the betterment of the community,” says Jerry Smith, Redfield Foundation trustee. “We are pleased to be able to partner with the medical school in this most worthy undertaking.”

The Redfield Foundation has been a major supporter of the University for decades, including substantial support for the William N. Pennington Health Sciences Building, the Nell J. Redfield Foundation Auditorium in the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center, the Sports Medicine Fellowship, the Student Outreach Clinic and the Redfield Campus.

—Roseann Keegan

Dr. Elijah Johnson, a Department of Surgery faculty member at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, right, studies X-ray images with radiologist and former School of Medicine student Dr. Matthew Ripplinger ’06M.D.