Dr. Ronald H. Laessig Memorial Newborn Screening Fellowship

Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and the Jeffrey Modell Foundation (JMF), this two-year fellowship offers post-doctoral candidates an exciting opportunity to engage in primary newborn screening research, including a focus on immunodeficiencies.

The inaugural Laessig NBS Fellow will work at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the state’s public health laboratory. Wisconsin has long been a national leader in newborn screening and in 2008 became the first state to begin screening all newborns for severe combined immune deficiency (SCID). The PCR-based screening test method was developed by WSLH scientists and colleagues at the Medical College of Wisconsin with financial support from the Jeffrey Modell Foundation and the Children’s Hospital and Health System of Wisconsin.

The WSLH is currently being funded by CDC to expand newborn screening for SCID to other states. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders and Genetic Diseases in Newborns and Children recently recommended the addition of SCID and related T-cell lymphocyte deficiencies to the uniform NBS panel used by all NBS programs. The Laessig NBS Fellow will assist NBS programs in this effort, as well as perform primary research on immunodeficiencies.

The Fellow also will have the opportunity to:

- Work for one month with a Jeffrey Modell Foundation-sponsored research entity to gain perspective and understanding of current research initiatives on primary immunodeficiencies, while networking with key experts in the field
- Participate in a two-week bench training at the CDC with newborn screening and genetics experts to enhance skills and gain an understanding of CDC’s newborn screening initiatives
- Attend professional meetings and publish research

The Laessig NBS Fellowship will be administered by APHL and the fellow will receive a competitive salary, health insurance and a professional development allowance.

Application Process

Interested applicants are asked to email a curriculum vitae, a letter of interest, three reference letters and a summary statement of future career plans to Charles Brokopp, DrPH, Director, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, 465 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706, cdb@mail.slh.wisc.edu. The fellowship will be available on July 1, 2010. Applications will be accepted and recruitment will remain open until the fellowship is awarded.

For more information on Dr. Ronald H. Laessig and the sponsoring organizations, please see reverse side.
About Dr. Ronald H. Laessig
Ronald H. Laessig, Ph.D., served as Director of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene from 1980-2006. Dr. Laessig was an active researcher and speaker in the areas of clinical chemistry, laboratory quality improvement and newborn screening. After retiring in 2006, Dr. Laessig continued working on newborn screening issues, proving essential to Wisconsin's efforts to become the first state to screen all newborns for the life-threatening severe combined immune deficiency disorder. His belief that we should always “do what's best for the babies” is the foundation of the WSLH newborn screening laboratory's mission. Dr. Laessig passed away in March 2009.

About the Jeffery Modell Foundation
Vicki and Fred Modell founded the Jeffrey Modell Foundation in 1987, in memory of their son Jeffrey, who died at the age of fifteen from complications of Primary Immunodeficiency – a genetic condition that is chronic, serious and often fatal. JMF is a global nonprofit organization devoted to early and precise diagnosis, meaningful treatments, and ultimately, cures through clinical and basic research, physician education, patient support, advocacy and public awareness.

About APHL
The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) works with members to strengthen laboratories serving the public’s health. Its mission is to promote the role of public health laboratories in shaping national and global health objectives, and to promote policies, programs and technologies that assure continuous improvement in the quality of laboratory practice and health outcomes.

About CDC
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting public health activities in the United States. CDC’s focus is not only on scientific excellence but also on the essential spirit that is CDC—to protect the health of all people. CDC keeps humanity at the forefront of its mission to ensure health protection through promotion, prevention, and preparedness.

About the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and the University of Wisconsin-Madison
The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene is the state’s public and environmental health laboratory. As part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the WSLH is committed to exploring new ideas which benefit the state, the nation and the world. Through analytical services, research and development, public health programs, laboratory proficiency testing, and training and education of students and professionals, the WSLH’s work is vital to Wisconsin’s and the nation’s public and environmental health.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison ranks as one of the top research universities in the country. WSLH faculty and staff participate in this vibrant research and education community, fostering partnerships with academic departments and performing vital human and environmental health research.