FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pitt Asthma Institute Receives Prestigious AsthmaNet Grant

PITTSBURGH, Nov. – Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Institute at UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine have received a seven-year, $529,000 grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), an arm of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in order to bring cutting-edge clinical trials to asthma patients in Pittsburgh.

The Asthma Institute is one of only nine sites across the country chosen to participate in “AsthmaNet,” the group of adult and pediatric centers chosen by the NHLBI to receive money in order to study the latest asthma medications. The grant also supports research investigating innovative approaches to improving the care of patients with a high risk of hospitalizations and even death from asthma, including African Americans and children.

Nearly 10 percent of the U.S. population suffers from asthma, making it one of the most common chronic diseases in both adults and children. Asthma attacks are responsible for over one million visits to the emergency room and 500,000 hospitalizations each year and billions of dollars in health care costs. While many patients are able to control their symptoms through medication, as many as 20 percent of asthma patients don’t experience relief from symptoms with current medications.

“Despite how common asthma is, it remains poorly understood and, in many cases, poorly treated,” said Sally Wenzel, M.D., director of the institute and professor of medicine at Pitt. “This grant money will help us bring the most innovative and promising clinical trials to Pittsburgh, giving our patients and the Pittsburgh asthma community access to the best treatment available while at the same time helping us advance our understanding of asthma.”

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About UPMC
UPMC is an $8 billion integrated global health enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and one of the leading nonprofit health systems in the United States. As western Pennsylvania’s largest employer, with 50,000 employees, UPMC is transforming the economy of the region into one based on medicine, research and technology. By integrating 20 hospitals, 400 doctors’ offices and outpatient sites, long-term care facilities and a major health insurance services division, and in collaboration with its academic partner, the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, UPMC has advanced the quality and efficiency of health care and developed internationally renowned programs in transplantation, cancer, neurosurgery, psychiatry, orthopaedics and sports medicine, among others. UPMC is
commercializing its medical and technological expertise by nurturing new companies, developing strategic business relationships with some of the world’s leading multinational corporations and expanding into international markets, including Italy, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Cyprus and Qatar. For more information about UPMC, visit our Web site at www.upmc.com.

About the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
As one of the nation’s leading academic centers for biomedical research, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine integrates advanced technology with basic science across a broad range of disciplines in a continuous quest to harness the power of new knowledge and improve the human condition. Driven mainly by the School of Medicine and its affiliates, Pitt has ranked among the top 10 recipients of funding from the National Institutes of Health since 1997 and now ranks fifth in the nation, according to preliminary data for fiscal year 2008. Likewise, the School of Medicine is equally committed to advancing the quality and strength of its medical and graduate education programs, for which it is recognized as an innovative leader, and to training highly skilled, compassionate clinicians and creative scientists well-equipped to engage in world-class research. The School of Medicine is the academic partner of UPMC, which has collaborated with the University to raise the standard of medical excellence in Pittsburgh and to position health care as a driving force behind the region’s economy. For more information about the School of Medicine, see www.medschool.pitt.edu.