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RHI AWARDED TWO GRANTS IN FIRST-EVER FUNDING FROM INDIANA SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN INJURY RESEARCH BOARD

(Indianapolis, Ind.) – Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana announced today that two of its ongoing lines of brain injury research have been awarded a total of \$240,000 from the new Indiana Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Board.

RHI's **Jacob T. Kean**, Ph.D., and his team of investigators will receive \$120,000 for research into the involvement of acetylcholine, which is critical to the function of the brain and nervous system, in the rehabilitation phase of recovery following traumatic brain injury (TBI). Among the goals of the study is reduction of the severity of delirium – a state of disorientation and confusion – after TBI.

In addition, Kean's study, titled "**An Exploration of the Hypocholinergic Hypothesis of Delirium Following Traumatic Brain Injury**" will also result in a first look at variables that may co-contribute to delirium risk and incidence, along with the effects of greater anticholinergic drug burden. Anticholinergic drugs reduce the effects of acetylcholine and include commonly prescribed medications such as stomach acid blockers.

Samantha Backhaus, Ph.D., is the principal investigator in a study aimed at identifying effective methods of assisting survivors of brain injury and their caregivers in the challenging adaptation required by brain injury, and also in identifying more clearly the reasons why group treatment is effective. She and her fellow researchers will also receive \$120,000 for their important work, "**Brain Injury Coping Skills Group for Improving Self-Efficacy and Adjustment in Individuals with Brain Injury and Their Caregivers.**"

"Our researchers are outstanding, and these awards are further evidence of that fact," said Dr. Jim Malec, research director for RHI. "With the help of this funding, we will be able to make significant strides in better understanding brain injury and take steps to improve the lives of people living with disabilities."

The Indiana Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Board was created in 2007 by the Indiana General Assembly. One of the main purposes of its funding is to support research related to the treatment and cure of spinal cord and brain injuries, including acute management, medical complications, rehabilitative techniques and neural recovery. Grants from the Board are worth

\$120,000 each over the course of two years, and although collaborations are encouraged, the research must all be done in Indiana.

“We are grateful to the Board for these grants, and share the excitement of so many colleagues across the state that this funding will advance Indiana’s leadership in understanding neurological injury and its rehabilitation,” Malec added.

A community collaboration between Clarian Health and St. Vincent Health, Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana (www.rhin.com) opened its doors in January 1992 as one of the largest freestanding rehabilitation hospitals in the Midwest. It provides inpatient acute services, and outpatient and vocational rehabilitation services for adults with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, strokes, amputations, orthopedic conditions, neuromuscular diseases, burns and related disabilities. RHI’s Sports Program, which is recognized as among the best in the country, serves hundreds of people with disabilities every year.

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