

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tonya Ewers, 303.315.6374, pager 303.266.0941, tonya.ewers@ucdenver.edu

University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine Physician Named a St. Baldrick's Scholar; Receives \$330,000 Grant

Local grant is part of more than \$12.6 million awarded for pediatric oncology research



AURORA, Colo. (Sept. 23, 2008) – St. Baldrick's Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising money for childhood cancer research, has awarded \$330,000 to fund Amy Keating, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, as a St. Baldrick's Scholar for three years.

Worldwide, 160,000 children are diagnosed with cancer each year and in the United States, cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children. St. Baldrick's began as a challenge between friends, and has exploded into the world's largest volunteer-driven fundraising program for childhood cancer research.

The St. Baldrick's Foundation coordinates worldwide head-shaving events, with volunteer "shavees" raising money to support childhood cancer research. Since 2000, head-shavings have taken place in 18 countries and 48 U.S. states, raising more than \$50.8 million, and shaving more than 72,490 heads.

Keating is one of the first doctors to be funded as a St. Baldrick's Scholar. Part of a new funding program to further the research of promising young pediatric oncologists, these awards bridge the funding-gap between their fellowships and sources of funding available to more established researchers. These awards will also provide much-needed research funding to doctors during this critical stage of their careers.

Dr. Keating's research project is entitled, "The Role of Mer and Axl Tyrosine Kinases in Pediatric Astrocytoma." Astrocytoma is a brain tumor that has no effective chemotherapies and the survival rates for high-grade astrocytoma remain well below 10 percent. Brain tumors are the most common solid tumor of pediatrics and are a leading cause of cancer related deaths in children. Identification of new potential treatment targets is the goal of her project.

"As a St. Baldrick's Scholar I will be able to explore the abnormal cellular pathways that are active in brain cancer cells," said Keating. "Assistance from the St. Baldrick's

Foundation is essential in the development of more effective and less toxic treatments for children with cancer. With this funding, my team can work to develop new targeted therapies to treat children suffering from astrocytoma.”

The St. Baldrick’s Foundation will fund \$110,000 per year for three years for Keating’s work, after which she may apply for an additional two years of funding.

The University of Colorado Denver [School of Medicine](#) faculty work to advance science and improve care as the physicians, educators and scientists at University of Colorado Hospital, The Children’s Hospital, Denver Health, National Jewish Health, and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Degrees offered by the UC Denver School of Medicine include doctor of medicine, doctor of physical therapy, and masters of physician assistant studies. The School is part of the [University of Colorado Denver](#), one of three universities in the University of Colorado system. For additional news and information, please visit the [UC Denver newsroom](#) online.

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About The St. Baldrick’s Foundation

The St. Baldrick’s Foundation makes grants to research institutions to find new cures for childhood cancer, and to find treatments to ensure a better quality of life for patients and survivors. The Foundation funds research projects conducted by established pediatric cancer experts, as well as younger professionals who will be the experts of tomorrow. Funds also enable hundreds of local institutions to participate in national pediatric cancer clinical trials, offering the best available care for every child. The St. Baldrick’s Foundation is grateful to its many volunteers (bald or not!) and donors, including Headblade Ultimate Headcare, PartnerRe, elope and QBE for making life-saving childhood cancer research possible. For more information about St. Baldrick’s, please call 1-888-899-BALD or visit www.StBaldrics.org.