

FOUNDATION OF HOPE GIVES NEARLY HALF A MILLION DOLLARS TO MENTAL ILLNESS RESEARCH

June 19, 2019

Raleigh, NC — In its continuing efforts to curb the debilitating effects of mental illness, the Foundation of Hope for Research and Treatment of Mental Illness will award over \$480,000 in research grants to seven investigators from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The recipients were Dr. Jessica Baker, Dr. Paul Geiger, Dr. Zoe McElligott, Dr. Rebekah Nash, Dr. Jose Rodriguez-Romaguera, Dr. Guorong Wu, and Dr. Anthony Zannas. Their proposed projects encompass a range of mental and behavioral conditions, including bulimia, opioid addiction, post-traumatic stress, and women's mood disorders.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), mood disorders like postpartum depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and PTSD take their toll on up to 1 in 5 United States adults each year. Even minor manifestations of a mental illness can cripple a person's ability to function; the damage is often compounded by rampant social stigma and alienation.

The research funded by the Foundation of Hope could lead to breakthroughs in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses, improving the lives and livelihoods of those who suffer.

"We are so proud to be funding these innovative research studies," says Shelley Belk, Executive Director of the Foundation of Hope. "This is a tremendous amount of money, and I'm overcome with appreciation for all of our supporters who donated and volunteered. This would not be possible without them."

Grants Awarded

Dr. Jessica Baker | Award: \$46,942 | "A Mechanistic Examination of Continuous-Cycle Oral Contraceptive Administration in Bulimia Nervosa"

Dr. Paul Geiger | Award: \$38,400 | "Depression in the Menopause Transition: Cortisol Circadian Rhythms and Sleep Impairment as Mechanisms of Risk"

Dr. Zoe McElligott | Award: \$50,000 | "Evaluating Oxytocin in Opioid Withdrawal: A Translational Study"

Dr. Rebekah Nash | \$39,886 | "Genetic Risk Factors of Post-traumatic Stress Disorders in Solid Organ Transplant Recipients"

Dr. Jose Rodriguez-Romaguera | \$200,000 | "Dissecting the Neural Circuits of Hyperarousal States in Psychiatry"

Dr. Guorong Wu | \$39,069 | "Quantifying the brain developmental trajectory of autism-associated brain overgrowth using 3D cellular resolution imaging"

Dr. Anthony Zannas | \$75,000 | "Epigenetic Mechanism of Post-traumatic Stress After Sexual Assault"