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Health Promotion Research Center Begins New Five-Year Research Cycle

Seattle, WA. Jan. 11, 2010 – For the past 23 years researchers and community partners of the Health Promotion Research Center (HPRC) at the University of Washington have worked together to reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases that affect adults aged 50 years and older. HPRC is pleased to announce a new award of \$3.95 million for the next five years from the Prevention Research Centers (PRC) program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

HPRC will use these funds to partner with community and business organizations in King County and Washington State to study five areas important for healthy aging: cancer prevention, depression management, fall prevention, physical activity, and workplace health promotion. In each of these areas HPRC focuses particularly on low-income and minority populations.

The previous five-year CDC award allowed HPRC to bring more than \$25 million dollars into Washington State to conduct its community-based research. The Center expects its new award to allow it to achieve a similar level of funding during the next five years.

Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of all deaths in the United States, and almost half of all Americans live with at least one chronic disease. The costs of chronic diseases account for nearly half the funds the nation spends on medical care each year. Through the support of the CDC PRC program, HPRC investigators are helping to find ways to improve the health of aging adults and reduce the financial burden of chronic diseases on Washington's individuals and communities.

Over the years HPRC's research has resulted in three nationally recognized programs for middle-aged and older adults: EnhanceFitness, PEARLS, and Workplace Solutions. The physical activity program EnhanceFitness now reaches more than 6,500 older adults in 269 communities in 26 states.

PEARLS is an in-home counseling program that teaches practical depression management techniques to socially isolated older adults. PEARLS investigators are working with the Washington State Aging and Disability Services Administration on broader dissemination strategies because PEARLS has the potential to reduce costs for many dually eligible Medicaid-Medicare clients receiving social case-management services.

Workplace Solutions is a workplace health promotion program developed in collaboration with the American Cancer Society (ACS). HPRC works with ACS on effective ways to disseminate Workplace Solutions. More than 700 large national employers have participated in Workplace Solutions, reaching more than 2.5 million employees. In its new funding period, HPRC will test ways to expand this successful program to smaller, low-wage employers, starting in King County.

For more information about HPRC and its projects, visit its Web site at depts.washington.edu/hprc.