



Uniformed Services University
of the Health Sciences
4301 Jones Bridge Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-4799

Release No.11-5-72

May 16, 2011

Contact: Ken Frager, Office of External Affairs

Voice: 301-295-3981 **Cell:** 240-281-2738

Email: kenneth.frager@usuhs.mil

For Immediate Release:

New Research Shows Promise for TBI treatment

Dr. Stanley Prusiner, Nobel Laureate in Medicine, to speak at USU Research Day; describes collaborative program between UCSF and USU to address TBI

Bethesda, Md. -- In a collaborative program with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) under the leadership of Dr. Daniel Perl, professor of Pathology, USU, Dr. Stanley Prusiner and the Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases (IND) at University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), has made an encouraging start to identify drugs to treat troops suffering from the long-term effects of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

They are identifying drugs that can reduce the accumulation of proteins in the brain that are a result of traumatic brain injury and thus halt the progression of the injury. It is the focal accumulation of an abnormal form of the tau protein, particularly in the frontal lobes, that causes central nervous system dysfunction. This is similar to what has been recently described in the National Football League (NFL). Currently there are no drugs available to stop, or even slow, tau production or aggregation. The identification of such drugs is an urgent medical and societal issue.

Dr. Prusiner, who is director of the IND and Professor of Neurology at UCSF, and 1997 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, will outline the collaborative program when he presents the 2011 Presidential Lecture, *Therapeutic Approaches to Neurodegeneration in Head Trauma*, during USU's Research Week, May 18, 2011. Dr. Prusiner received his undergraduate and medical training at the University of Pennsylvania and his postgraduate clinical training at UCSF. From 1969-72, he served in the U.S. Public Health Service at the National Institutes of Health. Editor of 12 books and author of more than 350 research articles, Dr. Prusiner's contributions to scientific research are internationally recognized.

Dr. Prusiner is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and is a foreign member of the Royal Society, London. Along with the Nobel Prize, he has been awarded the Potamkin Prize for Alzheimer's Disease Research from the American Academy of Neurology (1991); the Richard Lounsberry Award for Extraordinary Scientific Research in Biology and Medicine from the National Academy of Sciences (1993); the Gairdner Foundation International Award (1993); the Albert Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research (1994); the Paul Ehrlich Prize from the Federal Republic of Germany (1995); the Wolf Prize in Medicine from the State of Israel (1996); the Keio International Award for Medical Science (1996); and the Louisa Gross Horwitz Prize from Columbia University (1997), and in 2009 was awarded the National Medal of Science – an honor bestowed by the President of the United States to individuals in science and engineering who have made important contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of behavioral and social sciences, biology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics and physics.

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, or USU, is the nation's federal health sciences university. USU students are primarily active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who are being educated to deal with wartime casualties, emerging infectious diseases and other public health emergencies. Of the university's more than 4,500 physician alumni, the vast majority are supporting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, offering their leadership and expertise. For more information, visit www.usuhs.mil.