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PRESS RELEASE

NICE welcomes creation of body charged with speeding up development of new medicines

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) today welcomed the launch of the new UK Clinical Research Collaborative (UKCRC).

The UKCRC will bring together expertise from clinical teams, primary care trusts, special health authorities, the voluntary sector and industry to co-ordinate existing research and funding, identify gaps where more research is needed and develop incentives for NHS clinicians to become research active.

An initial £24 million has been allocated to establish new NHS research networks in five key areas – Alzheimer's' disease, stroke, diabetes, mental health and children's medicine. An extra £7 million will be available to fund additional research and to strengthen the infrastructure to support more trials in these key areas.

Professor Sir Michael Rawlins, Chairman of NICE commented, "Research is key to bringing forth new treatments and better care for patients in the NHS. We are please to be a part of such an important venture."

Professor Peter Littlejohns, NICE Clinical Director goes on to explain, "In producing evidence based guidance NICE is in a strong position to identify and prioritise gaps in clinical research. We hope to feed this information into the UKCRC."

Full details of how research funding will be used to support the UKCRC's work is available on the Department of Health's website at: <http://www.dh.gov.uk>.

Information about the NICE R&D programme can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=114221>.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit www.nice.org.uk.
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals
 - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.
 - whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.

NICE also funds three enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).
3. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.