

## **Charles H. Hood Foundation**

Countless researchers funded by the Child Health Research Awards Program have made seminal contributions to medical research that has benefited large numbers of children. Many of these scientists have also achieved brilliant careers as leaders in their fields. One of the Hood Foundation's first research grants in 1944 was the prototypical example. The Foundation supported Dr. Louis Diamond's groundbreaking investigation of erythroblastosis, the fatal condition for Rh-positive babies who became sick and died because their blood contained antibodies from their Rh-negative mothers. Dr. Diamond developed an exchange transfusion technique for the Rh-positive babies that not only enabled doctors to save millions of children's lives, but also opened important new research pathways. At the time, Dr. Diamond was a young investigator struggling for support to such an extent that he even considered abandoning his research career.

The Charles H. Hood Foundation has demonstrated that supporting carefully screened, innovative investigators at the beginning of their careers enables researchers to achieve results that lead to secure, long-term funding from private and government sources, thereby multiplying the benefits of the initial grant. Ultimately, the kind of leverage funding that the Foundation provides helps build the research infrastructure that can continue for many years to benefit the health and well-being of children and their families.

Today, selection of grant recipients using a peer review process is the norm at institutions that fund medical research. But in 1942, the Hood Foundation was one of the first to establish peer review as the basis for its decisions, four years before the National Institutes of Health. Because of the vision of its founder, Harvey P. Hood II, the Foundation has supported close to 550 gifted researchers, powerfully impacting the health and quality of life of millions of children.

The history of the Charles H. Hood Foundation reveals a century-long tradition of commitment to community and child health. In the late 1800's, Charles H. Hood was a pioneer in the dairy industry, making important advancements in the sanitary production and distribution of milk, which made possible the provision of significantly more healthful dairy products to thousands of New England families. The revolutionary pasteurization and cleaning techniques that Charles Hood invented or sought out and ultimately initiated at his company significantly improved the survival rate for New England infants. By introducing pasteurization to New England, Mr. Hood acted in advance of both public health requirements and the standards of competitors.

Through his experience as an agent of change in the dairy business and his study of bacteriology, Mr. Hood realized the importance of seeking out scientific developments that could be applied to improve public health. His interest in science and his fervent dedication to the health of New England families inspired his son, Harvey P. Hood II, to incorporate the

Charles H. Hood Foundation in 1942. The Charles H. Hood Foundation has been entirely supported by private contributions from Hood family members.

Harvey P. Hood II dedicated the Foundation to improving the health and quality of life for children through grant support of New England-based pediatric researchers. His purpose was to create an effective mechanism for selecting and supporting projects of significant scientific merit. As he explored ways to accomplish this goal in the 1940's, he consulted with the Physician-in-Chief of Children's Hospital in Boston, Dr. Richard Smith, as well as Dr. Frederic Russell, Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Harvard School of Public Health and former Scientific Director of the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Division in New York.

Dr. Russell recommended a peer review committee of medical and public health experts. His advice corresponded closely with Harvey Hood's own innovations in the use of successful management committees instead of traditional hierarchical structures. In establishing the committee, Mr. Hood also created an inventive membership rotation system, which continues today, designed to profit from members' expertise without overtaxing them, and to ensure that the Foundation would continue to draw upon New England's leading child health experts.

In its early years, the Child Health Research Awards Program focused on infectious diseases, prevention, and training for health professionals. From the mid-1940s until 1971, the Foundation supported a diversity of programs seeking to improve child health including medical research, demonstration projects, public health programs, and scholarships and fellowships.

As the Foundation reorganized in 1971, it increased its budget and explicitly emphasized basic science and medical research as its priority. Over the years, expertise has been added to its Scientific Review Committee to reflect research emphases on genetics, oncology, epidemiology, and other disciplines, and it has shifted to an exclusive focus on young investigators. Today, these "young investigators" are now senior leaders in pediatric research.

Harvey P. Hood II served as a trustee of the Foundation for thirty-six years from 1942 – 1978 and as President until 1974. His son, Charles H. Hood II, a trustee since 1960, assumed the presidency of the Foundation in 1974 and became President Emeritus in 2009. Under the new direction of John O. Parker, the current President, the family discipline of commitment to the Foundation's original mission, combined with creativity and flexibility in achieving its goals, will continue.

As a result of strong leadership from the descendants of Charles H. Hood, the Foundation has given close to \$55 million to improving the health and quality of life for children. The Program is proud to have supported 546 junior investigators since 1942 and 37 postdoctoral fellows since 1989. The Foundation has now been advancing child health through the support of medical research for 70 years.