

# NEBRASKA'S MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING



In the face of growing uncertainty related to federal funding for biomedical research, it is increasingly important that Nebraska maintain its support for research through the Health Care Cash Fund (HCCF). Twenty-five years ago, the Nebraska Legislature made the wise and unprecedented decision to use tobacco settlement funds to promote biomedical research. This funding has allowed the University of Nebraska, Creighton University, and Boys Town National Research Hospital to recruit and retain outstanding scientists from all over the country and help them create their research labs.

The result has been the rapid growth of biomedical research across our state, the ability to attract large federal grants and contracts, and a “brain gain” attracted to quality jobs. Funding has allowed Nebraska institutions to become global leaders in areas such as infectious disease, hearing, and cancer research. Economically, every dollar spent to recruit talent to Nebraska has, on average, a return on investment that is greater than 10:1. Maintaining the use of the HCCF to support biomedical research is a wise investment that is good for Nebraska.

## INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING MONEY FROM THE SETTLEMENT FUND WITH THEIR 2024-25 ALLOCATIONS

University of Nebraska Medical Center - \$ 7,804,003  
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln - \$2,789,253  
 Creighton University - \$2,898,851  
 Boys Town National Research Hospital - \$1,403,499  
 University of Nebraska at Omaha - \$538,018  
 University of Nebraska at Kearney - \$72,305



## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| <b>UNMC</b>      | <b>16.7 TO 1</b> |
| <b>UNL</b>       | <b>15 TO 1</b>   |
| <b>CREIGHTON</b> | <b>13 TO 1</b>   |
| <b>BOYS TOWN</b> | <b>12.4 TO 1</b> |



## ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

The state invests an additional \$2.7 million in pediatric cancer research from the HCCF.

# EXAMPLES OF FUNDED PROJECTS

## UNMC/UNL

The U.S. Department of Defense has partnered with the University of Nebraska to develop drug therapies to protect military personnel from acute radiation syndrome that could result from a nuclear accident or a nuclear weapons incident. The Nebraska Tobacco Settlement funds allow them to hire qualified teams to research and develop the medications. Pharmaceutical companies lack an interest in this type of drug development because of lower profitability through public sales.



## CREIGHTON

Researchers in Creighton's Bellucci Translational Hearing Center develop strategies to preserve and restore hearing loss caused by noise, medications, and genetic factors across the lifespan, supporting communication and reducing cognitive decline.

Additionally, Creighton's Lynch Cancer Research Center uses funding to conduct research designed to prevent and treat hereditary cancers. Researchers

are also examining how to better treat Lyme disease, the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S. Transmitted by ticks, Lyme disease can affect a person's entire body and significantly reduce their quality of life.

## UNO

The Biomechanics Rehabilitation and Manufacturing Initiative focuses on improving the quality of life for people with upper extremity injuries or amputations. A licensed occupational therapist who specializes in hand and upper extremity therapy provides rehabilitation services and the creation of low-cost assistive devices for community members.



## BOYS TOWN

Boys Town National Research Hospital has launched a mobile research trailer equipped with advanced technology for hearing, speech, and hearing aid tests. The project's goal is to improve the diagnosis of ear infections and middle ear problems in children. They also target diverse communities that experience challenges accessing care including children in rural areas.

## UNK

UNK invested a share of their Tobacco Settlement funds to hold a grant writing workshop to assist participants in writing federal grant requests. Since the summer of 2021, workshop participants brought in almost \$1.2 million from three NIH grants. This represents a 23-fold return on the state's investment. The remainder of the funds were used to provide startup and seed funding for new researchers at UNK. Examples of this research include the study of physical activity in support of healthy aging and independence for older generations, and for improving college student mental health through sleep interventions.