For Immediate Release

February 11, 2014

Contact:
Janice Guhl, University Hospitals
Janice.Guhl@UHhospitals.org
216-346-2737

John Hawley, ASCI
John.Hawley@the-jci.org
734-222-6050 x. 402

Harrington Discovery Institute and the American Society for Clinical Investigation honor Johns Hopkins Pediatric Cardiologist and Geneticist Harry C. Dietz, MD

Inaugural 2014 Harrington Prize for Innovation in Medicine

CLEVELAND, Ohio. The inaugural Harrington Prize for Innovation in Medicine has been awarded to pediatric cardiologist and genetics researcher Harry Dietz, MD, of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

The Harrington Prize for Innovation in Medicine, established this year by the Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals Case Medical Center and the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), is a $20,000 honorarium that recognizes a physician-scientist who has successfully navigated the path to advance discovery into clinical application.

Dr. Dietz became a scientist as well as a pediatrician to better care for young patients with Marfan syndrome, a rare and potentially fatal connective tissue disease that enlarges the aorta, leading it to tear or burst. Dr. Dietz’s work provided new insights into the origins of the disease, which motivated clinical trials under his direction with commonly available medication. Children with Marfan syndrome have thus been offered new hope for longer and healthier lives. Dr. Dietz has also inspired research that may lead to a blood test to detect aortas at risk for rupture so that surgery can be timed appropriately.

“The extraordinary dedication and creative thought of Dr. Dietz has led to groundbreaking progress in understanding aortic aneurysms and connective tissue disorders,” said Peter Tontonoz, MD, PhD, the 2013 – 2014 President of the ASCI. “He and his team took basic genetic science and found a promising therapeutic agent – a commonly prescribed blood-pressure medication – that prevents aortic aneurysms from forming that will improve the quality of life and save thousands of lives each year.”

A committee composed of members of the ASCI Council and the Harrington Discovery Institute Scientific Advisory Board reviewed more than 60 nominations from eight countries before selecting Dr. Dietz as the recipient. This year’s award acknowledges Dr. Dietz’s “bedside to bench and back” efforts that have led to fundamental new insights.
into the biology of Marfan syndrome and related disorders, and the development of therapies to improve care standards.

“We are so pleased to join with the ASCI to honor Harry and his team’s remarkable work that has changed the way people think about Marfan syndrome as well as the quality of life of young children with the disease,” said Jonathan Stamler, MD, Director of the Harrington Discovery Institute and the Robert S. and Sylvia K. Reitman Distinguished Chair in Cardiovascular Innovation at University Hospitals and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. “Harry has made a difference and serves as a role model for all of us hoping to see our discoveries advanced into medicines that impact the lives of our patients.”

In addition to a $20,000 prize honorarium, Dr. Dietz will deliver the Harrington Prize Lecture at the 2014 ASCI and Association of American Physicians joint meeting on April 26 and publish a review in the April issue of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

Dr. Dietz is the Victor A. McKusick Professor of Genetics in the Departments of Medicine, Pediatrics, and Molecular Biology and Genetics at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Director of the William S. Smilow Center for Marfan Syndrome Research.

The American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), established in 1908, is one of the nation's oldest and most respected medical honor societies. The ASCI is dedicated to the advancement of research that extends the understanding and improves the treatment of human diseases, and its members are committed to mentoring future generations of physician-scientists.

The Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals Case Medical Center, part of a national initiative unveiled in February 2012 called The Harrington Project, is a nonprofit medical institute dedicated to physician-scientists, enabling them to transform breakthrough insights into novel therapies that enhance patient care. The Harrington Project is fueled by $250 million in donations and other funding, including $50 million from the Harrington Family. Learn more about The Harrington Project.

The Harrington Prize, presented by the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals Case Medical Center, honors a physician-scientist who has moved science forward with achievements notable for innovation, creativity and potential for clinical application.

About University Hospitals
University Hospitals, the second largest employer in Northeast Ohio, serves the needs of patients through an integrated network of hospitals, outpatient centers and primary care physicians in 16 counties. At the core of our health system is University Hospitals Case Medical Center, one of only 18 hospitals in the country to have been named to U.S. News & World Report’s most exclusive rankings list: the Best Hospitals 2013-14 Honor Roll. The primary affiliate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, UH Case Medical Center is home to some of the most prestigious clinical and research centers of excellence in the nation and the world, including cancer, pediatrics, women's health, orthopaedics and spine, radiology and radiation oncology, neurosurgery and neuroscience, cardiology and cardiovascular
surgery, organ transplantation and human genetics. Its main campus includes the internationally celebrated UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, ranked among the top children’s hospitals in the nation; UH MacDonald Women's Hospital, Ohio's only hospital for women; and UH Seidman Cancer Center, part of the NCI-designated Case Comprehensive Cancer Center at Case Western Reserve University. UH Case Medical Center is the 2012 recipient of the American Hospital Association – McKesson Quest for Quality Prize for its leadership and innovation in quality improvement and safety. For more information, go to UHhospitals.org.