REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Background: Prenatal Exposures and Child Health Outcomes: A Statewide Study (1 UG3 OD023285-01) is a collaboration among five Michigan institutions, and is one of 35 national pediatric cohorts funded under the aegis of the NIH-funded ECHO (Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes) program, a seven-year initiative that began in September 2016. All scientists affiliated with any of the five participating institutions in our state (Henry Ford Health System, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Wayne State University) are eligible to apply to either or both of two grants programs designed to support original research making use of the resources of this project.

A national grants program will shortly be announced by the national ECHO program that will annually seek applications from all 35 pediatric cohort centers for some 5 – 10 research grants (up to $250,000 total costs for each grant) that make use of one or more ECHO databases.

We here invite applications to our local small grants program, funded by the Vice Presidents for Research of HFHS, MSU, UM and WSU, targeted solely to our center, that will annually support two one-year pilot studies with budgets of up to $50,000. Support will be provided to studies that make use of any of the three cohorts, singly or in combination, that constitute our statewide study, or otherwise help to achieve the general goals of the grant without impinging on pre-specified study hypotheses. These cohorts are referred to as ARCH, MMIP and MARCH, and are fully described in the attached grant application. Applicants should carefully read the NIH grant application appended to this announcement to learn the goals of the study, to understand the three cohorts, and to note the hypotheses that have already been specified for investigation in this study. We encourage applications from investigators from groups underrepresented in scientific research.

Requirements: Submissions and inquiries about use of the cohorts and other issues should be emailed to our study office at charmstudy@epi.msu.edu.

1. Applications must be preceded by a one-page letter of intent that describes the research to be undertaken, the key investigators, and the relationship of the research to the goals of the study. The letter of intent is not reviewed, but it is required for submission of a pilot grant application.

2. Applications should follow the NIH outline and format guidelines for the specific aims and research strategy components of R03 and R21 applications (7-page limit including an aims page, tables and figures, but not including references). A one-page budget and 5-page NIH-format biosketches for all key investigators should be appended.

3. Budgets may not include faculty salaries or indirect costs.

4. Letters of intent are due on or before 5 pm January 15th, 2017.

5. Final grant applications are due on or before 5 pm March 1st, 2017.

6. Grant announcements will be made by April 1st, 2017, with funding to begin May 1st, 2017.

Review: Grants will be scored by a senior scientific review team with representation from all five institutions, and will be based on the five categories used in NIH reviews, namely significance, innovation, investigator, approach, and environment. To encourage early stage investigators, more emphasis will be placed on the quality and importance of the scientific ideas than on the experience of the investigative team. Applications should focus on investigating novel hypotheses not specified in the original grant application. Two additional criteria for this program are:

1. Potential for development into NIH-funded investigator-initiated research projects.

2. Collaboration among the five institutions in the research. Applications making use of investigators from more than one of our participating institutions will receive priority in funding.

We hope that this small grants program will encourage publication and presentation of early research findings that demonstrate the scientific value of continued investment in our cohorts,