

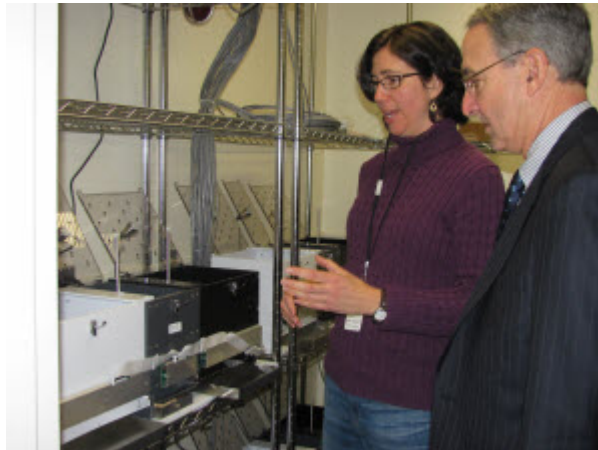


Helping researchers help those who need it most

McLean Hospital has been helping people with their mental health issues for 200 years. Its reputation is nationally and internationally known and, according to its president and psychiatrist in chief, **Dr. Scott Rauch**, it is ranked as the top freestanding psychiatric hospital in the country.

From individualized care to residential centers to schools, McLean provides an array of mental health services. But, as Dr. Rauch noted, “A big part of what we do is research.”

That is why the Recovery Act has played such a big role at McLean. The hospital received much of its research funds from the National Institute of Health but with the recession in 2008, some of those funds were no longer available. The Recovery Act was able to fill that gap by providing a total of \$10 million to 14 research projects.



“The ARRA funds were huge,” said Dr. Rauch. “These funds allowed us to do upgrades to equipment, fund specific research projects and sustain and hire researchers.”

Those research projects included new therapeutic approaches to Parkinson’s disease, addiction research, and, bipolar disorder.

Dr. Elena Chartoff’s research project at McLean is one of those projects. She is trying to understand how brain chemicals affect drug withdrawal in the hopes of increasing the likelihood that an addict’s drug withdrawal will be successful.



“The inability to break the cycle of addiction is most damaging,” she said. “When people are off drugs they feel lousy and relapse. If we can block that feeling that would help them.” The stimulus funds her project received of \$19K were used to purchase equipment necessary to conduct these experiments.

Dr. Dost Ongur, a psychiatrist at McLean, is trying to help patients with bipolar disorder. His research project involved developing more effective ways of measuring the levels of chemicals in the brain to understand how people with mental illness can more easily maintain a healthy chemical balance in the brain. A stimulus grant of \$50K supplemented an \$800K National Institute of Mental Health grant and enabled Dr. Ongur to hire a post-doctoral fellow to work on the project. The fellow improved techniques used to conduct the research and ultimately was retained by McLean.



“It was a small grant but it was a success and laid the groundwork for a larger \$1.2 million grant,” said Dr. Ongur.

Dr. Martin Teicher received \$1 million to help him add objectivity to the ADHD diagnosis in children. His approach involves developing software that can track a child’s movements and their ability to focus on a task. “We are getting objective information so we can resolve the discrepancy between what parents and teachers are saying about a child,” he said. With the grant, he added, “We developed new algorithms and made the technology better.”

“It’s time,” he noted, “we introduced technology into psychiatry.”