

Charles H. Hood Foundation

Countless researchers funded by the Charles H. Hood Foundation 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 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 promising investigators at the beginning of their careers assists researchers in securing long-term funding from private and government sources. Ultimately, this kind of leverage funding helps to build the biomedical research workforce that can continue for decades to benefit the health and well-being of children and their families.

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 Boston Children's Hospital, 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 a 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. 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.

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 growth of research in genetics, oncology, epidemiology, and other disciplines. The Program also shifted to an exclusive focus on young investigators. Today, many of 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. John O. Parker, a trustee since 1976, served as President from 2009 until 2013. Under the direction of Neil Smiley, 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.

In October 2012, the Foundation celebrated 70 years of grantmaking by hosting a scientific poster session and dinner. Award Recipients, Committee members and Institutional leaders attended the event which also included three talks from distinguished former Awardees. The event honored both the research community and the Foundation's trustees who have dedicated themselves to the advancement and improvement of pediatric care.

As a result of strong leadership from the descendants of Charles H. Hood, the Foundation has made close to 700 awards totaling over \$63 million and powerfully impacting the health and quality of life for millions of children.