

## **Association-Francaise Contre Les Myopathies Joins Cooperative**

The Association-Francaise Contre Les Myopathies, the French Muscular Dystrophy Association is the newest member to sign the cooperative agreement on biopharmaceutical research established in 2006. AFM joins the University of Florida's Center of Excellence for Regenerative Health Biotechnology (UF CERHB); Institut National de la Sante et de la Recherche Medicale (INSERM), the French National Medical Research Institute; and the Etablissement Francais Du Sang Pays De Loire (EFS), the French national blood bank in a cooperative relationship that is designed to help bring new therapies to clinical trials.

"The addition of the AFM to our Cooperative is very exciting and brings an added dimension to the scope of our research and clinical activities," said Richard Snyder, a faculty member in the department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, and director of the Center of Excellence for Regenerative Health Biotechnology at the University of Florida, who co-signed the latest agreement on UF's behalf together with Dr. Dennis Jett, Dean of the International Center and Dr. Win Phillips, Vice President for Research. The French signatories are Dr. Gilles Follea, Director of the EFS Pays De Loire, Dr. Andre Syrota, General Director of INSERM, Dr. Philippe Moullier Director of INSERM UMR649, and Dr. Laurence Tiannot-Herment, President of AFM.

Clinigene, a European Commission-funded clinical research organization is providing funding for the program.

"AFM is a key player in biomedical research in France. This non-profit organization collaborates with INSERM and EFS to support new developments in biotherapies in the country. Signing the Cooperative Agreement with UF CERHB is a unique opportunity for all of us to synchronize and synergize our resources" said Dr. Philippe Moullier, director of the Gene Therapy Laboratory at University de Nantes and an adjunct professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology at UF.

"In the first two years of the Cooperative Agreement, significant scientific advances have been made resulting in several publications, additional grant funding, and preparation for clinical trials anticipated to begin in 2009", Snyder said.