UNITED MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASE FOUNDATION SM

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Dialogue about potential links between mitochondrial disease and autism spectrum disorders begins at Indy

(Indianapolis, IN) The United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation announces a workshop that will convene in Indianapolis to discuss the potential relationship between mitochondrial diseases and autism spectrum disorders. The workshop, entitled ***"Mitochondrial Disorders of Childhood: Testing, Potential Relationships to Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Triggers for Neurological Deterioration,"*** is being sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Representatives from the UMDF and its Scientific and Medical Advisory Board will participate in the discussion.

The workshop is scheduled for Sunday, June 29, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Indianapolis, following the UMDF's Symposium, ***"Indy 2008: Setting the Pace in Mitochondrial Medicine."***

According to the organizers, this workshop will convene 11 experts in mitochondrial disorders or autism to discuss how the neurology of mitochondrial disorders might inform autism research. In particular, the workshop will address the implications for autism research of topics such as neurological features of mitochondrial disorders, current understanding of their exacerbating factors, and challenges in testing and diagnosis.

Representing the mitochondrial disease communities at the workshop through their affiliation with the UMDF are:

Charles A. Mohan, Jr., Chairman and CEO of the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation, Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D., UMDF Trustee, Salvatore DiMauro, M.D., Columbia University and Chairman of the UMDF's Scientific and Medical Advisory Board (SMAB). Also representing the SMAB are Bruce Cohen, M.D., Cleveland Clinic, Vamsi Mootha, M.D., Massachusetts General Hospital, Doug Wallace, PhD., University of California, Irvine. Also attending is past SMAB members Robert K. Naviaux, M.D. PhD., and Richard Haas, M.D., both from University of

California – San Diego School of Medicine and Tania Taivassalo, PhD. who is a previous recipient of the UMDF research grant.

Observers are welcome as seating allows, and registration is required. Please contact Ms. Sylvia Parsons at parsons@ninds.nih.gov for registration and additional information.

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About Mitochondrial Disease
Every 30 minutes, a child is born who will develop a mitochondrial disease by age 10. Mitochondrial diseases result from the failure of the mitochondria, which is a located in the cells of our bodies. Mitochondria are responsible for creating more than 90% of the energy needed to sustain life and support growth. When mitochondria fail, less energy is produced causing cell injury or cell death. On a larger scale, organ systems begin to fail. The disease is often debilitating.

About the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation
Founded in 1996, the UMDF works to promote research and education for the diagnosis, treatment and cure of mitochondrial diseases and to provide support for affected individuals and families. Since its inception, the UMDF has funded nearly $6 million in research, making it the leading non-governmental contributor of grants focused solely on mitochondrial disease. The UMDF, based in Pittsburgh, PA., is a national organization, represented by 14 chapters around the United States and thousands of members who participate in groups and as ambassadors.