

# 5 Rhode Island institutions form agreement to collaborate on neuroscience research



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**By G. Wayne Miller**

**Journal Staff Writer**

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Five of the state’s leading neuroscience research institutions have joined forces in an unprecedented collaboration they hope will bring significant advances in the understanding and treatment of such brain-centered disorders and diseases as autism, epilepsy, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease and traumatic brain injury.

“Neuroscience is the next, great frontier in medicine and within that expanse lies some of the most vexing and devastating neurological disorders of our time,” said Timothy J. Babineau, president and CEO of Lifespan, one of the five institutions. “Just as with cardiac disease and cancer, true breakthroughs in

diagnosis and treatment occur only when there is collaboration among and between disciplines and institutions. This agreement presents just such a collaborative opportunity.”

Joining with Lifespan’s Norman Prince Neurosciences Institute, according to Friday’s announcement, are: the University of Rhode Island’s George and Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience, the Providence VA Medical Center’s Center of Excellence for Neurorestoration and Neurotechnology, Brown University’s Brown Institute for Brain Science, and Care New England’s psychiatry research division at Butler Hospital and its autism research unit at Women and Infants Hospital.

According to a media release, Rhode Island is the only state in the U.S. to have such a formal statewide neuroscience research collaboration.

Governor Raimondo praised the effort, saying, "sharing information and research across our university and health care partners will lead to valuable treatments to improve the quality of life of so many people. Combining our existing neuroscience expertise will also take our research capabilities to the next level, and put Rhode Island on the map as a place of innovation and collaboration."

In a joint statement, Sens. Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and Reps. David Cicilline and Jim Langevin also praised the initiative. “We are committed to ensuring Rhode Island is a national leader in neuroscience research and our veterans have access to cutting-edge care," the Congressmen said.

Under the new group’s memorandum of understanding, a Committee on Coordination on Neuroscience Research within Rhode Island will spearhead the collaboration.

“This agreement will help develop cutting-edge therapies and technologies for veterans with neurological and mental health disorders,” said Providence VA director Dr. Susan MacKenzie.

Brown University President Christina Paxson said “the challenges of mental health and brain disease in Rhode Island and the world demand not just that we make progress, but that we make a real, positive difference in the lives of people.”

Also applauding the effort were URI president David M. Dooley and Thomas M. Ryan, former chairman and CEO of CVS Health, who with his wife, Cathy, established the George and Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience at URI.

*gwmiller@providencejournal.com | (401) 277-7380 | On Twitter: @GWayneMiller*