

COBRE Center Grant

The Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) project is funded by the NIH's National Institute on General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) and focuses on investigating relationships between unhealthy behavior and the risk for chronic disease and premature death. Substance abuse and physical inactivity account for 40 percent of premature deaths in the U.S. annually, and substantially increase healthcare costs and health disparities. There is a tremendous need for greater scientific understanding of the mechanisms underpinning vulnerability to these risk behaviors; and, more effective interventions to promote behavior change.

The VCBH approaches these challenges using the concepts, principles, and methods of behavioral economics and behavioral pharmacology. This effort involves key interdisciplinary collaborations across multiple academic departments and colleges within UVM; Vermont community healthcare leaders; and other universities, including Brown, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Brandeis and Johns Hopkins.

AIM 1: Develop and sustain a vibrant interdisciplinary center of research excellence by:

- Providing an **Administrative Core** for leadership, organizational structure, intellectual infrastructure (e.g., seminar series, annual national conference), a mentoring plan, fiscal management, and strategic planning for fiscal support beyond COBRE funding.
- Providing a **Behavioral Economics and Intervention Sciences Core** that supports intervention development and evaluation, econometric modeling of cost effectiveness, and the study of health-related decision making and its neurobiological underpinnings.
- Providing a **Collaboration, Dissemination, and Education Core** to facilitate key missions.

AIM 2: Support the selection and career development of junior faculty project directors:

- Robert Althoff, M.D., Ph.D., *Shared Mechanisms in Child Dysregulation, Adult Psychopathology, and Metabolic Disorders*
- Diann Gaalema, Ph.D., *Incentives to Improve Cardiac Rehabilitation Participation in Low-income Patients*
- Julie Phillips, M.D., *Incentives Targeting Gestational Weight Gain in Overweight/Obese Low-income Women*
- Kim Dittus, M.D., Ph.D., *Predictors of Weight Loss Success in Overweight Breast Cancer Survivors*
- Brian Sprague, Ph.D., *Behaviors, Chronic Disease, and Quality of Life After Ductal Carcinoma In Situ*