



**For Immediate Release**

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**NIH AWARDS \$1,640,000 GRANT TO  
SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER**  
*Ernesto Canalis, M.D., to Study Notch Signaling in Osteocytes*

(Hartford, Conn. March 28, 2013) –Ernesto Canalis, M.D., Director of Research at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, is the Principal Investigator on a \$1,640,000 grant award from the National Institute of Arthritis Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases to investigate the *Role of Notch Signaling in Osteocytes* over the next five years.

The purpose of the grant is to study a new signal termed *Notch* and how it affects the function of specialized cells embedded in the bone matrix, termed *osteocytes*. *Notch* determines the fate of bone cells and has been implicated in diseases affecting both the developing and the adult skeleton.

“Osteocytes communicate messages to other cells within the skeleton and play a fundamental role in the maintenance of bone integrity,” notes Dr. Canalis.

A primary goal of the study is to determine the functional role played by *Notch* in skeletal cells and its possible role in certain forms of osteoporosis and disorders characterized by bone loss.

For nearly three decades, Dr. Canalis has been working to unravel the effects of bone growth factors. He was the first investigator to demonstrate that growth factors play a critical role in bone cell function.

In recognition of his contributions to medical sciences, Dr. Canalis has been the recipient of the *Ann Doner Vaughan Kappa Delta Award for Excellence in Orthopedic Research* from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the *Gerald Aurbach Award for Outstanding Research in Endocrinology* from the Endocrine Society, the *Marshall Urist Award for Excellence in Tissue Regeneration Research* from the Orthopedic Research Society, the *Louis V. Avioli Founders Award* for fundamental contributions to bone and mineral basic research from the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR), and the *Lawrence G. Raisz Award for Outstanding Achievements in Preclinical Translational Research* from the ASBMR. Dr. Canalis has also served as President of the ASBMR.

Dr. Canalis’ work has been supported by the National Institutes of Health for over 30 years. His research is highly relevant to metabolic bone disease and osteoporosis, a major health issue facing men and women as America’s baby boomers age.

**[About Saint Francis Care](#)**

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis Health*Care* Partners. Its services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit [www.stfranciscare.com](http://www.stfranciscare.com).

*NIH Disclaimer*

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