



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Elaine St. Peter
860-714-1076
estpeter@stfranciscare.org

**NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY AWARDS \$500,000 GRANT
TO MANDELL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CENTER
TO STUDY CRUCIAL ROLE OF UPPER EXREMITIES IN INDIVIDUALS WITH MS**

(HARTFORD, Conn.) – The Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research at Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, a Saint Francis Care Provider, has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to research the capacity and performance of upper extremities including arms, hands and shoulders in individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS). This is the largest research grant ever received by the Mandell MS Center.

Albert Lo, M.D., Ph.D., Director of Neuroscience Research at the Mandell Center for Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research and Elizabeth Triche, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Brown University, are co-principal investigators for the grant.

“Much attention is given to the lower extremities in multiple sclerosis research, but upper body movement is essential to maintain independence and social function, and we have much less information available,” stated Dr. Lo. “An integrated clinical examination of how strength, coordination and pain contribute to upper extremity function is needed in order to identify what is important to future upper extremity rehabilitative interventions. Effective rehabilitative approaches could mean improving the quality of life in individuals with MS.”

A random, community-based population of 300 people will participate in the two-year study to determine impairments in body functions that most contribute to deficits in upper extremity capacity and performance. The study will examine physiological changes in upper extremity body functions during physical activities, and study the impact and variability of pain and fatigue on a person’s capacity to perform daily tasks like writing, driving, eating, showering, grocery shopping, working, or dressing. Once the study is completed, the researchers hope to help clinicians better customize individual care for MS patients.

“If one patient uses a computer for work, has mild weakness and some pain, we may be able to provide information to the clinicians that will help them to individualize patient care in order to possibly help a patient stay in the work force and maintain their independence longer,” stated

Dr. Lo. “We also hope to use our findings from this study to design future studies to evaluate which therapies work best for specific combinations of impairments.”

The *Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research* at Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital offers multiple sclerosis (MS) care, with an emphasis on early and ongoing treatment. The Mandell MS Center brings together a full range of services and programs for MS care and research – providing a coordinated approach to help with the rehabilitation of disease and restoration of function. At the MS Center, patients can see a neurologist, a urologist and a rehabilitation physician, receive customized infusion treatment, and participate in a wide range of therapies including physical, occupational, speech and language therapy. A therapeutic “cool” pool and neurorehabilitation gym are also available.

The Mandell MS Center opened in February, 2008, and combines groundbreaking research, state-of-the-art treatments, and innovative rehabilitation programs to provide patients with comprehensive, individualized care led by clinicians recognized as leaders in their fields.

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 HealthCare Partners. Johnson Memorial Medical Center, parent organization of Johnson Memorial Hospital, Evergreen Health Care Center, and Home and Community Health Services is also a Saint Francis *Care* Partner. Saint Francis *Care*'s 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.