

## Belmont School of Pharmacy Lands First Drug Study

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The Belmont University School of Pharmacy (BUSOP) announced recently the launch of the school's first research study, a project to investigate the stability of liquid forms of several drugs previously only available in solid dosage forms (tablets, capsules). The study contract grant of \$157,000 is with Galipot, which manufactures SyrSpend SF™, the sugar-free syrup suspension agent for the drug's active ingredients. The research project will involve numerous Belmont pharmacy faculty members in evaluating 71 different drugs over the next two years. Liquid forms of drugs are vital to the treatment of infants, children and patients whose illnesses prevent swallowing.

Dr. Phil Johnston, dean of the School of Pharmacy, added, "I'm excited that our first research project as a school will serve patients who are often most in need: young children and patients with cancer, stroke or other devastating conditions who have lost their ability to swallow. BUSOP's vision involves training competent, compassionate practitioners *and* serving our profession and patients. This first drug study project incorporates every aspect of our mission."

The process of testing the 71 drugs involves mixing the active ingredients into the liquid suspension agent. Both room temperature and refrigerated liquid forms of the drug are then tested frequently over a period of three months using Belmont's newly-purchased High Pressure Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) equipment, which enables the scientists to measure how much of the drug remains active in the solution over time. These important and precise tests will determine the liquid drug's stability to ensure it is a viable product for the market.

Dr. Andrew Webster, professor and chair of pharmaceutical sciences, said, "This project is an important scholarship endeavor for our entire department, and it takes advantage of the unique expertise Belmont's School of Pharmacy faculty members bring to middle Tennessee. Though this region has long offered specialists in the fields of drug design and development, our team provides the area's only true experts in drug delivery, a vital element of pharmacy practice."

BUSOP recently leased laboratory space in the Cumberland Emerging Technologies (CET) Life Sciences Center on 10th Avenue. In addition to the primary space that is now home to the HPLC equipment, the lease will allow BUSOP to use all of the diverse testing equipment in CET's shared space. As part of the grant agreement, BUSOP faculty members have also been asked to author 20 manuscripts based on their research for proposed publication in scientific journals.

BUSOP will seat its first class of 75 students in August.