

## NEWS RELEASE

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### UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

FOR THE GOOD HEALTH OF NEVADA

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Lynne Williams, medical school information  
Sept. 22, 1994

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:30 A.M., THURSDAY, SEPT. 29**

#### **Nevadan receives prestigious NIH grant**

One of Nevada's medical super sleuths has been awarded a prestigious grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as part of a nationwide study of women's health issues. Sandra Daugherty, M.D., Ph.D., professor of family and community medicine and epidemiologist at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, has been awarded \$8.5 million for a 12-year study of the risk factors involved in heart disease, breast cancer and osteoporosis in older women. The NIH grant is the largest and longest-term grant ever awarded to the university system.

This is not the first study Dr. Daugherty has undertaken. She also has studied mercury levels in Dayton, Nevada, developed a "report card" about the health habits of Nevadans in relation to the prevalence of their diseases, and analyzed the risk factors associated with chronic fatigue syndrome when it was first identified at Lake Tahoe.

Dr. Daugherty is one of only 40 researchers in the U.S. chosen to conduct these studies. "Although there have been pilot studies of these health problems in women,

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there has never been one undertaken of this magnitude," she stresses. Nationwide, 160,000 women will be studied during the next 12 years; 3,600 will be enrolled in the Nevada study.

The project will involve both clinical trials and observational studies. The clinical trials will be set up to study: 1) the effect of hormone replacement therapy on heart attacks in women, 2) whether a low-fat diet can reduce breast cancer rates, and 3) whether calcium and vitamin D can slow down bone loss due to osteoporosis. All trials will be randomized with some participants receiving intervention (such as low fat diets and use of calcium and vitamin D), while others will receive placebos.

In the observational study, there is no treatment or intervention. Women will be followed over the 12-year period, with records kept regarding their medical problems, physical condition, and various forms of biomedical monitoring.

Dr. Daugherty hopes to recruit women, ages 50 to 79, from a broad spectrum, including minorities and all socio-economic levels. Depending upon which of the studies they are enrolled in, the women will be seen once or twice a year, and can be enrolled in one, two or all three of the groups being studied.

Recruitment will begin in January. Women who live within a 50-mile radius of Reno and are interested in being part of this important study can contact Dr. Daugherty at 784-4906.