The National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF) is pleased to be honoring Dr. Paul E. Monahan, Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, and Division of Hematology/Oncology of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with this year’s “Leadership in Research Award”. The award will be presented at our organization’s 65th anniversary reception to take place at The Lighthouse Chelsea Piers in New York City on June 12, 2013.

NHF’s Leadership in Research Award was established to recognize the outstanding achievements of researchers and physicians working to improve treatments for hemophilia and advance the field of bleeding disorders research. This marks the third time NHF has given this award. The two previous recipients were Dr. Katherine High of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Dr. Robert Montgomery of the Blood Disorders Research Institute in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In selecting Dr. Monahan as our recipient this year, the leadership of NHF wanted to acknowledge his accomplishments in scientific research -- particularly his work in AAV vectors in gene therapy for factor IX deficiency -- and also pay tribute to Dr. Monahan’s dedication as a clinician, as well as his commitment to volunteer work on behalf of the bleeding disorders community.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Monahan was awarded a National Hemophilia Foundation Judith Graham Pool Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for his research into adeno-associated virus (AAV) gene therapy vectors in hemophilia B mice. A few years later in 2003, he was awarded NHF’s Career Development Award to support his research on “Double-Stranded AAV Vectors to Improve Efficacy and Evaluate Safety of Factor IX Gene Therapy”. This work was instrumental in building a better understanding of the potential to safely achieve increased factor IX expression using AAV vectors. The current advances in novel technologies for hemophilia and late-phase human gene therapy trials already underway for patients with factor IX deficiency were made possible through the hard work of Dr. Monahan and others to firmly establish the use of recombinant AAV in animal models.

In more recent years, Dr. Monahan has naturally progressed into the role of “mentor” to a new generation of researchers and clinicians at UNC Chapel Hill and elsewhere. Dr. Jun-Jiang Sun, while a post-doc at UNC’s Gene Therapy Research Center, was awarded a NHF JGP fellowship in 2007 for his project on “Hemophilic Arthropathy: Gene Delivery Vectors for Determining Mechanisms and Therapy”. Dr. Monahan served as Dr. Sun’s mentor throughout his two years of JGP fellowship support and beyond. Today, Dr. Monahan continues to support the development of new researchers in gene transfer therapy and recognizes the importance of attracting new researchers and clinicians to the field of bleeding disorders.

Not only has Dr. Monahan been an important contributor and discussant at NHF’s Novel Technologies and Gene Transfer for Hemophilia Workshops, he has also worked to further the global research agenda for hemophilia. Dr. Monahan is an excellent educator and communicator and he has been asked to present at numerous professional and scientific meetings all over the world. NHF has also been fortunate enough to have Dr. Monahan give high level presentations on factor IX and advances in gene therapy at previous NHF Annual Meetings as part of our Medical Track for Physicians and Researchers.
As a clinician, Dr. Monahan has maintained a steadfast commitment to his patients and continues to serve as attending physician at the Comprehensive Hemophilia Diagnostic and Treatment Center at UNC Chapel Hill. He has published over 40 articles in leading peer review journals, many of which simply highlight the broad range of his scientific inquiry and clinical interest – from inhibitor development, immune tolerance therapy, hemophilic arthropathy, optimizing joint function, to the molecular structure of factor IX and developments in novel therapies.

Dr. Monahan has served for over eight years as a valuable member of NHF’s Medical and Scientific Advisory Council. He has also contributed his expertise and guidance on numerous occasions as a peer reviewer for NHF’s Research Grants Programs. NHF is truly honored to bestow this year’s Leadership in Research Award to Dr. Paul Monahan --- for his commitment to furthering research initiatives in hemophilia and his work in improving the quality of life of individuals with bleeding disorders.