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**New Jersey Health Foundation/The Nicholson Foundation award
\$50,000 to advance research to slow brain degeneration in Parkinson's disease**

M. Maral Mouradian, M.D., a professor at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has received a \$50,000 Innovation Grant from New Jersey Health Foundation/The Nicholson Foundation to advance research that is attempting to reduce an abnormal key protein in the brains of patients with Parkinson's disease, announced James M. Golubieski, president of New Jersey Health Foundation.

Dr. Mouradian is the William Dow Lovett Professor of Neurology and the Director of the Center for Neurodegenerative and Neuroimmunologic Diseases at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

If successful, Dr. Mouradian's work could slow down degeneration in the area of the brain responsible for the motor symptoms of the disease and could also prevent progression leading to the emergence of psychiatric problems and cognitive impairment in those suffering from Parkinson's disease.

"Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive, disabling disorder that affects over one million people in the US and over 10 million worldwide," noted George F. Heinrich, M.D., vice chair and CEO of New Jersey Health Foundation. "No cure or measures to slow disease

progression are available for those affected. Finding interventions that can help to slow the neurodegenerative process are critical to advance treatment of this devastating illness.”

This grant will allow Dr. Mouradian to continue to develop a targeted therapy that is expected to reduce the amount of alpha-synuclein in vulnerable neurons in the midbrain and mitigate the oxidative stress conditions that exist in those neurons.

“We already know the amount of alpha-synuclein that forms toxic aggregates in brain cells is critically important in patients with Parkinson’s disease,” said Dr. Mouradian.

“Therefore, a rational strategy to mitigate the problem of alpha-synuclein aggregation and neuronal damage is to reduce levels of this protein in neurons.”

A patent for Dr. Mouradian’s research is currently pending and expected to be issued shortly.

For more information, contact Mike Wiley, vice president, at (908) 731-6612 or mwiley@njhf.org.

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About New Jersey Health Foundation

[New Jersey Health Foundation](#) is a not-for-profit corporation that supports biomedical research and health-related education programs in New Jersey through its Research Grants Program, its Innovation Grants Program and its affiliate, [Foundation Venture Capital Group](#) which makes private equity investments in life science start-up companies in New Jersey headed toward commercialization.