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**New Jersey Health Foundation Awards \$50,000 Innovation Grant
To Princeton University Researcher Working to Manipulate Cellular DNA
for Improved Disease Treatments**

New Brunswick, NJ –Max Wilson, Ph.D., a post-doctoral researcher in the Molecular Biology Department at Princeton University, has received a \$50,000 Innovation Grant from New Jersey Health Foundation (NJHF) to advance two projects aimed at controlling cell behavior to improve treatments for a wide range of disease entities, announced James M. Golubieski, president of NJHF.

One project seeks to improve and maximize treatments for cancer, autoimmune diseases and neurological disorders using a technique called optogenetics that enables researchers to use light-responsive proteins to control the therapeutic behaviors of cells. This aims to greatly reduce the side effects of cell-based therapies by allowing physicians to pinpoint the site where a therapeutic behavior modification occurs.

With the second project Dr. Wilson hopes to revolutionize cancer treatment by customizing therapies that can be targeted to tumor cells of any cancer patient using a two-tiered level of precision medicine that should eliminate the severe side effects of traditional radiation and chemotherapy.

Dr. Wilson will pursue the projects with Alexander Goglia, a student in the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School-Princeton University M.D. /Ph.D. program, under the supervision of Jared Toettcher, an assistant professor of molecular biology at Princeton.

“Both of Dr. Wilson’s projects use innovative approaches that deserve further exploration,” explained George F. Heinrich, M.D., vice chair and CEO of New Jersey Health Foundation. “Our Innovation Grant program is geared specifically to advance translational research projects that demonstrate the potential to offer improved and focused treatments and cures for people affected by a variety of ailments.”

Through this New Jersey Health Foundation program, Innovation Grants of up to \$50,000 each are available to full-time faculty and personnel at major research universities in New Jersey— New Jersey Institute of Technology, Princeton University, , Rutgers University, Rowan University and Stevens Institute of Technology.

For more information, contact Mike Wiley, vice president of Foundation Venture Capital Group, an affiliate of NJHF, 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 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.