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**BIOGEN IDEC JOINS FORMER MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNORS PAUL CELLUCCI
AND BILL WELD TO ANNOUNCE MAJOR GIFT TO
UMASS/ALS CHAMPION FUND**

Politicians past and present alongside Governors for event to benefit ALS research

BOSTON, MA – The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) today announced a \$500,000 gift from Biogen Idec to the *UMass/ALS Champion Fund*, which supports critical research into ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases. Biogen Idec CEO George A. Scangos, Ph.D., presented the gift to former Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci, who launched the *Champion Fund* last year shortly after announcing that he had been diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease.

In recognition of the critical need for new treatments for ALS, the *UMass/ALS Champion Fund* is a campaign to raise awareness and funding for the world-class neuroscience research happening in the UMMS neurology department, which is chaired by Robert H. Brown, Jr., D.Phil., M.D., director of the Day Neuromuscular Research Laboratory at UMMS and one of the world’s leading ALS researchers.

“I am so moved by the generosity of Biogen Idec – a great Massachusetts corporation,” said Governor Cellucci. “One of the greatest national resources we have is found in abundance right here in the Commonwealth, in companies like Biogen Idec that are committed to developing cures and treatments that change millions of lives.”

“I thank Dr. Scangos and his company. Their generous gift will help support the incredible research into potential treatments for ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases being done at UMass Medical School,” said the Governor. “Dr. Brown and his team will not rest: they want to find a cure. I am so proud to be helping them, raising funds, so that they can continue their groundbreaking research that is giving hope—*realistic hope*—to people living with ALS.”

The *Champion Fund* aims to enable UMMS scientists to pursue ALS research leads that might otherwise take years to attract funding from traditional sources. As a result, this fund will make researchers at UMMS better prepared to “seize the moment” when highly promising discoveries are made in the lab.

Cellucci announced in January 2011 that he had been diagnosed with ALS. He is being treated at UMass Medical School by Dr. Brown. Governor Cellucci has chosen to use his story as a catalyst to support Massachusetts’ public medical school and the research it is doing around ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases.

“For those of us dedicated to the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, this is a pivotal moment,” said Dr. Scangos. “In the past several years, there have been tremendous advances in ALS research, which have helped us better understand the disease and seek new treatments. Massachusetts is fortunate to have in our midst a world-class neuroscience research and patient-care center led by a world-renowned physician and scientist – as well as a medical school with the vision and dedication to nurture it. We are proud to support the Champion Fund.”

Biogen Idec presented its gift ahead of a fundraiser at the Seaport Hotel to benefit the *Champion Fund*. All of the living former governors of Massachusetts, along with Governor Deval Patrick, Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray and former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card are honorary co-chairs of the fundraising effort. Governor Bill Weld served as the chairman of this evening’s event.

“I’m deeply honored to host this event and help raise money for the *UMass/ALS Champion Fund*; it is but a small measure of my respect and regard for my dear friend, Paul Cellucci, as he lives courageously with this illness,” said Governor Weld. “It is no surprise to all of Paul’s many friends and colleagues that he continues his long commitment to public service by dedicating his energy to raising awareness – and critical philanthropic support – for this hugely important effort.”

Biogen Idec’s donation is the largest single contribution to the campaign since its inception in May 2011. To date, the fund has raised \$1.3 million in cash and pledges to support basic and clinical science research into potential treatments for ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases.

“Fundraising, like research, is a team sport,” said medical school Chancellor Michael F. Collins, MD. “It is incredible to see the team that has rallied around Governor Cellucci and our medical school. We have heard so many stories from so many people touched by this illness. They are moved by the Governor’s steadfast commitment. His spirit inspires our researchers, physicians and all who support this most noble cause.”

To become a “champion” in the fight against ALS, or for more information on the UMass ALS Champion Fund, visit www.UMassALS.com, or join the fight on Facebook ([Facebook.com/UMassALS](https://www.facebook.com/UMassALS)) or Twitter (@UMassALS).

About the University of Massachusetts Medical School

The University of Massachusetts Medical School, one of the fastest growing academic health centers in the country, has built a reputation as a world-class research institution, consistently producing noteworthy advances in clinical and basic research. The Medical School attracts more than \$270 million in research funding annually, 80 percent of which comes from federal funding sources. The mission of the Medical School is to advance the health and well-being of the people of the commonwealth and the world through pioneering education, research, public service and health care delivery with its clinical partner, UMass Memorial Health Care. For more information, visit www.umassmed.edu.

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