

### **The TAME/Metformin Study**

The number one threat to global health is not pollution, climate change, poor diets or smoking, or even Alzheimer's. The biggest threat to global health is the aging of our population.

The underlying processes of aging, rather than individual diseases, underlie many of the debilitating conditions of getting older. These conditions include cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's and cancer and threaten to overwhelm our health care infrastructure and cripple our economy.

There is an urgent need for the development of new interventions to improve and maintain health into old age – to improve “healthspan”. In order to develop these interventions, we are working with the FDA to approve these underlying factors as indications, just as hypertension was once considered. This will pave the way for the pharmaceutical industry to develop new medications that will prevent and delay the diseases of older age.

Ranked among the 7 biggest innovations in 2015 (#5) by the *Washington Post*, *Targeting Aging with Metformin* (TAME) is a study that will test whether metformin, a drug currently prescribed as the first line of defense against Type II (adult onset) diabetes, can delay the onset of age-related diseases.

With an estimated cost of \$64 million, this groundbreaking clinical trial will recruit and monitor the health of 3,000 individuals between 65 and 79 years of age at fourteen centers throughout the nation over a six year period. Individuals will be randomly selected to either get metformin or a placebo. The study will show us whether the group taking the drug develops fewer new diseases of aging over the six year period as compared to the group not taking the drug. Such controlled experiments are the gold standard of scientific evidence, and would provide valuable insights. Currently selected centers include UAB, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Wake Forest University. The American Federation for Aging Research and the Gerontological Society of America will be the 501c3 charitable administrators of the study nationwide.

#### **Why the TAME study matters**

Health care systems around the globe are struggling to cope with the “silver tsunami” of elderly people with clusters of diseases for which age is the main risk factor. Today, the opportunity is at hand to transform the landscape and arm health professionals with the knowledge they need to keep people in better health as they age – all that is missing are the resources to do it.