



**HAROLD HAMM  
DIABETES CENTER**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA SM



**HAROLD HAMM INTERNATIONAL PRIZE**  
*for BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH in DIABETES*

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## **Pioneering Scientist Ralph DeFronzo Named 2017 Hamm Prize Laureate**

Dr. DeFronzo spearheaded study of insulin resistance and diabetes drug metformin

OKLAHOMA CITY – Imagine how different the lives of the one in three Oklahomans who have diabetes or prediabetes would be if this disease were cured, and the billions of dollars in annual health care costs saved.

Advancing progress toward that cure was the impetus for establishing the \$250,000 Harold Hamm International Prize for Biomedical Research in Diabetes, the largest of its kind in the world, awarded by Harold Hamm Diabetes Center at the University of Oklahoma.

The Hamm Prize recognizes and encourages lasting advances in the field of diabetes research. It is awarded to an individual who has either demonstrated lifelong contributions to the field or realized a singular advance, especially in leading toward a cure.

The 2017 recipient, Dr. Ralph DeFronzo, is directly responsible for many of the advances achieved in diabetes over the last 50 years. He was a leader in developing the concept of insulin resistance, the defining characteristic of Type 2 diabetes, resulting in novel ideas about the development and progression of diabetes.

DeFronzo led the U.S. development of metformin, the first-line medication for treatment of diabetes, and ushered it through FDA approval in 1995. More recently, he discovered a new approach to diabetes treatment that targets glucose reabsorption in the kidneys. This work led to the development and approval of other widely used drugs, including dapagliflozin, empagliflozin and canagliflozin.

DeFronzo is the author of 750 publications dating back to 1967. He currently serves as professor of medicine and chief of diabetes in the Long School of Medicine at University of Texas Health San Antonio, where he has been on faculty since 1988.

“My hope in awarding this unprecedented international research prize is that we would ignite worldwide scientific interest and innovation to find a cure for diabetes in this generation,” said Harold Hamm, chairman and CEO of Continental Resources Inc., who provided the endowment to establish the prize, following his generous lead gift in 2007 for the establishment of Harold Hamm Diabetes Center.

Hamm’s endowment of the prize provides for its awarding in the future in perpetuity. This endowment represents a unique private/public partnership using philanthropic dollars as a

catalyst for desperately needed medical advances, which is especially beneficial in the current environment marked by declining federal funding for medical research.

“I am grateful to Harold Hamm for establishing this important prize and for the leadership and tenacity he has demonstrated by taking action to address the diabetes health crisis,” said OU President David L. Boren. “The CDC has said that at current rates, one in three people in America will develop Type 2 diabetes. This prize is another example of the forward momentum of Harold Hamm Diabetes Center’s efforts to slow growing statistics like these. Dr. DeFronzo’s contributions to science directly benefit millions of Americans receiving treatment for diabetes.”

In Oklahoma, two in three adults are obese or overweight and thus at severe risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Half of those who already have Type 2 diabetes remain undiagnosed. The disease costs the state of Oklahoma more than \$4.3 billion per year. In just 10 years, that number is expected to climb to \$6.3 billion per year.

DeFronzo was selected by an international jury of leading diabetes scientists during deliberations held in February at Harold Hamm Diabetes Center in Oklahoma City. He was nominated by jurors Dr. Vivian Fonseca of Tulane University and Dr. Aaron Vinik of the Strelitz Diabetes Center at Eastern Virginia Medical School.

“To my mind very few people in the world have done as much for so many different aspects of diabetes, research, clinical care and teaching,” Fonseca said.

“DeFronzo has to be one of the most singular outstanding stars in the diabetes world,” Vinik said. “He is absolutely unique in identifying the contributions of almost every organ in the body to the pathophysiology of Type 2 diabetes.”

Harold Hamm Diabetes Center will host a reception honoring DeFronzo, the Prize jurors and previous Prize laureates on June 10, 2017, at the American Diabetes Association 77<sup>th</sup> Scientific Sessions in San Diego. The Hamm Prize will officially be conferred upon DeFronzo Oct. 16, 2017, in Oklahoma City by Hamm and Boren at the 2017 Connect+Cure Gala benefitting Harold Hamm Diabetes Center.

Previous conferrals of the Hamm Prize were in 2013 and 2015, and the next will occur in 2019. To learn more about the Hamm Prize, please visit [www.HaroldHammPrize.org](http://www.HaroldHammPrize.org).

*Harold Hamm Diabetes Center at the University of Oklahoma, an OU Medicine comprehensive center of excellence, is a world leader in research focused on advancing progress toward a cure, providing dramatically improved patient care to those with diabetes, and stopping the spread of diabetes through healthy lifestyle and prevention programs. For more information, visit [www.haroldhamm.org](http://www.haroldhamm.org).*

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