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John I. Nurnberger Jr., M.D., Ph.D.
Joyce and Iver Small Professor of Psychiatry
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via US Mail and Fax

Re: Nomination of Dr. Christopher McDougle for the 2011 Glenn W. Irwin, Jr., M.D. Research Scholar Award

Dear Dr. Nurnbergber:

It gives me great pleasure to write in enthusiastic support of the nomination of Dr. Christopher McDougle for the 2011 Glenn W. Irwin, Jr., M.D. Research Scholar Award. I understand that the criteria for this award include a sustained record of research, successful grant writing, and a national to international impact on the field. Dr. McDougle exemplifies all these attributes and is an ideal candidate for this honor.

I've known Chris since he was a trainee here in the 1980's and have had the opportunity to observe him develop into one of the real leaders nationally in the field. As you probably know already, but otherwise will note on his CV, Chris originally trained in adult psychiatry and then became interested in autism and developmental disabilities. We were pleased when he decided to also pursue child psychiatry training. My friend and mentor the late Donald J. Cohen was particularly helpful to Chris in this process.

During his long career he has continued his focus on provision of psychiatric services for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. He has developed an outstanding career as a researcher, teacher, and mentor. Indeed his research work has focused on bringing the highest quality research methods to the study of new treatments of autism and related conditions.

When I first met Chris back in 1987 or so, it was in a seminar that Donald J. Cohen and I were doing on child psychiatry for the PGY-2 residents. Even at that point he was clearly a person with fantastic observational skills and a strong commitment to clinical excellence. During his time at Yale, Chris was engaged in a range of research projects both within the adult psychiatry department and the Child Study Center. These included work in mood and anxiety disorders, drug dependence, OCD, and autism. As a junior faculty member here he was very productive and this productivity has only increased over time.

I believe that Chris is the only person to have ever maintained an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale while also receiving child training at the Child Study Center. Once his training was complete he became the first member of the Yale Medical School faculty to have a truly joint appointment evenly split in both departments.

As you know, in 1997 Chris left Yale to join the Department of Psychiatry at the Indiana University School of Medicine where he became the director of the Section of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He immediately began a series of organization changes to reorient clinical care, administration, research, and educational activities within the section. His reorganization resulted in an upsurge of clinical and research activities and totally revitalized the section. In part due to his outstanding leadership, he was given the Albert Eugene Sterne Professorship of Psychiatry and became Chairman of the Department there in 2000.

It is a tribute to Chris that even back in the late 1980's he appreciated the importance of a still underserved population - adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities. His work here attracted the support of parents, advocacy groups as well as state agencies who appreciated his new approaches to work with this population. He developed a special clinical program which he replicated when he moved to Indiana. Chris has always been an outstanding physician and his commitment to high-quality clinical care and his patients has earned him an international reputation. Chris has been active in social policy work for individuals with disabilities as well. He worked closely with Congressman Dan Burton of Indiana in the development and construction of the Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center at the Riley Hospital for Children. His efforts also led the way to an expansion of service provision through the state.

His research has focused on neurobiology and development of effective treatments for autism and related conditions. His work was among the first to demonstrate the efficacy of an SSRI in the treatment of autistic adults in a double-blind, placebo controlled study

published in the Archives. He replicated these findings in a series of open-label studies with a variety of SSRIs and related compounds and conducted a series of studied on serotonin function. His work also demonstrated some of the difficulties of the SSRIs in children with autism and PDD and highlighted the importance of a developmental perspective in use of these agents. His more recent work has focused on other agents including risperidone. His research has had a major impact in the field and is internationally known.

In addition to his service and clinical work Chris has been an outstanding mentor and teacher to a new generation of child and adolescent psychiatrists interested in developmental disabilities. His work stands as a testament to the importance of clinical investigation grounded in basic science. I am delighted to give you this enthusiastic nomination of Chris for the Irwin Award.

Sincerely yours,

Fred R. Volkmar, M.D.