New Hampshire Nonprofit Awards Grant to Dartmouth Health for Neuroimmune Psychiatry Program

Funding enables expansion of groundbreaking work on the disorders known as PANS and PANDAS

Drs. Juliette Madan and Richard Morse, Dartmouth NIPD Program founders, collaborate with Susan Manfull, PhD, Executive Director of The Alex Manfull Fund (center)

PORTSMOUTH, NH, UNITED STATES, July 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Alex Manfull Fund (TAMF) announced today its renewed support for a groundbreaking initiative at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center–The Alex Manfull Neuroimmune Psychiatry Program Fund. TAMF's grant, which follows the completion of the program's highly impactful first year of operation, supports education, research and patient care related to the neuroimmune disorders known as PANS and PANDAS.

TAMF is a New Hampshire-based nonprofit founded by William and Susan Manfull in 2018 shortly after the death of their only daughter Alex to PANDAS.

Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) are disorders triggered by common bacterial and viral infections, like strep throat, SARS-CoV-2, and the flu. They strike young people indiscriminately. The immune system dysregulates and creates autoantibodies that attack healthy brain tissue, resulting in severe brain inflammation and a range of debilitating physical and mental symptoms. Early diagnosis and treatment lead to recovery, but when untreated or inadequately treated, PANS and PANDAS can cause progressive brain damage, lifelong disabilities–and even loss of life.

TAMF's grant has enabled the creation of a research and education coordinator position and additional fellowship opportunities at Dartmouth Health's Neuroimmune Psychiatry Disorder (NIPD) Program, created by Drs. Juliette Madan and Richard Morse. This includes expansion of the program's microbiome investigations across time and the launch of a prospective

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> *Susan Manfull, PhD, Executive Director of The Alex Manfull Fund*

epidemiology study in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin. Fellows engage in longitudinal patient care learning experiences and take part in national and international consortium meetings and research symposia throughout the year. The grant has already resulted in a 20% increase in the number of patients seen by the program.

"We're very excited to collaborate with Dartmouth on this vital work," said Susan Manfull, PhD, Executive Director of TAMF. "One of the best ways to expand the medical community's knowledge-base of these disorders is through hands-on training and research in neuroimmune psychiatry. Creating additional space for young people at the clinic further opens the door for much-needed, expedited treatment. And it is incredibly exciting to witness the historic addition of 'med-psych' hospital beds available to young people in need of urgent psychiatric care."

The Alex Manfull Neuroimmune Psychiatry Program Fund has enabled a wide range of specialties, including pediatrics, psychiatry, rheumatology, neurology, and psychology, among others, to learn more about PANDAS and PANS.

"The Alex Manfull Fund's dedication to improving the lives of children, adolescents, and young adults facing complex neurological and psychiatric disorders has enabled us to make great strides this past year," said Dr. Juliette Madan. "TAMF's investment has been critical in advancing our mission of expanding our clinical care and research initiatives, and educating future specialists in neuroimmune psychiatry."

On completion of the program, trainees will have developed their own clinical and research networks in the field, their ability to provide more evidence-based care for patients with neuroimmune conditions, and participate in ongoing research endeavors in the field.

"Our goal is that these physicians will either join our team formally in the future or provide the same care at other institutions, expanding the number of specialized clinics nationwide," Dr. Madan added.

Support for Dartmouth Health builds on TAMF's trailblazing funding for clinical training and research on PANS/PANDAS at top-tier medical and learning institutions, including Harvard University/Massachusetts General Hospital, and Georgetown University, home to the world's first-ever PANDAS/PANS brain bank, established by TAMF.

Additional funding for The Alex Manfull Neuroimmune Psychiatry Program Fund comes from the Devin and Adrienne Gaskell Family, which contributed just over $9,000 to TAMF for this purpose

from their inaugural Vermont PANDAS & PANS Awareness 5K Run/Walk in 2024. Their second annual 5K Run/Walk is scheduled for October 11, 2025, from which proceeds will again be pooled with TAMF support for the fellowship fund at Dartmouth Health.

To learn more about The Alex Manfull Fund, visit https://thealexmanfullfund.org.

ABOUT THE ALEX MANFULL FUND
When Susan and William Manfull lost their only child, Alex Manfull, to this disorder, they established the Fund in their daughter's memory to increase awareness about these disorders, especially in adolescents and young adults, and to advance education for physicians, mental health professionals, and educators, helping them to recognize and treat these disorders. The Alex Manfull Fund was instrumental in establishing the POND Brain Bank at Georgetown University Medical Center–the country's only repository for brains from individuals who have been diagnosed with PANDAS/PANS and Other Neuroimmune Disorders (POND). The facility makes tissue available for research to advance the understanding of these disorders.

ABOUT PANS/PANDAS
Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) develop after common viral and bacterial infections, triggering the immune system to attack healthy brain tissue. Symptoms typically include obsessive compulsive behaviors, restrictive eating or tics. Other symptoms may include cognitive decline, behavioral issues, anxiety, insomnia, and urinary frequency. Onset may be sudden and dramatic.

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