

## News Release

ANF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Neuromuscular Foundation Awards Two Development Grants to Innovative Researchers

**Rochester, Minn. (Sept. 30, 2024)** - The American Neuromuscular Foundation (ANF) is excited to announce the 2024 ANF Development Grant Award winners. Rebecca Schmitt, PhD, has been selected as one of award recipients for her research project, “Evaluation of Aberrant Autophagy and Myogenesis in GNE Myopathy.” Christopher Cashman, MD, PhD, has also been selected as an award recipient for his research project titled, “Acquired Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Diabetic Neuropathy.”

In Dr. Schmitt’s study, she and her team utilize a patient-derived cell-based model, molecular analyses, and genetic tools to investigate mechanisms and therapeutic avenues. “Specifically, we are studying the role of autophagy – a process used to remove unwanted components in a cell – in which we have discovered activation of autophagy can improve muscle health in the GNE myopathy patient-derived samples,” she says. Long-term, she hopes this research allows investigations into potential therapeutic strategies that can be used to improve patient quality of life.

Dr. Cashman’s research aims to increase the understanding of how diabetes may lead to a length-dependent neuropathy, particularly regarding the differential function and health of the mitochondria within the nerve. He believes having this specific understanding could lead to the development of mechanistically targeted therapeutics and a greater general understanding of the processes that drive the development of neuropathies. His hope is that this project will lay the foundation for future work on diabetic and other length-dependent neuropathies by identifying fundamental processes that may drive their development.

Following completion of the research, Drs. Schmitt and Cashman will each present their findings at an AANEM Annual Meeting.

### **About American Neuromuscular Foundation (ANF)**

Based in Rochester, MN, ANF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the global effort to cure neuromuscular disease. As part of its mission to promote the advancement of scientific research and education, the ANF offers annual development grants and abstract and fellowship awards to launch research into muscle and nerve disorders by experts in the field. For more information about ANF, visit [neuromuscularfoundation.org](http://neuromuscularfoundation.org).

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