

Speech by
Professor Jerry Roy Mendell

I am greatly honored and humbled by receiving the King Faisal Prize in medicine. The principles of the award that reflect King Faisal's intent to relieve human suffering are consistent with my own views and lifetime achievements. I have done everything I could to improve the quality and prolong life for patients afflicted with neuromuscular diseases. This work has provided a novel path upon which others have followed, also for the benefit of those afflicted with relentless and unforgiving diseases. In two conditions that could best be treated in the newborn period, my research has led to newborn screening whereby infants are recognized to carry the fatal gene that terminates their life prematurely. Recognition of the condition at a time before the disease takes away the physical resources that maintains the most life has to offer provides the greatest potential applying the justification for the treatment demonstrated by my research. Allowing treatment to restore better health and welfare for the afflicted subject is the most gratifying experience a clinician scientist can realize.

Honoring me with the King Faisal award allows me to join a distinguished group of awardees since the first award in medicine was granted in 1982. My presence among them is a precious honor that is both humbling and rewarding. I am grateful to the King Faisal Foundation for putting me in a place of honor amongst these prior recipients.