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Don't forget! Get your flu shot!

FEATURE ARTICLE . . .

President of Botswana Visits Hematology/Oncology Centers



From left: Dr. David Poplack, Director of the Centers, Mark Wallace, President/CEO, Texas Children's Hospital; His Excellency Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, President of Botswana; John Damonti, President of the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation; Dr. Mark Kline, Chair of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, and Physician-in-Chief, Texas Children's Hospital.

The President of Botswana, His Excellency Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, along with his family and members of his delegation, visited Texas Children's Hospital on September 21, 2018, and met with clinical and executive leaders of TCH for a luncheon and tour of the Cancer and Hematology Centers. The group met to discuss health care in Botswana and the continued relationship between the groups. The gathering also provided an opportunity to assess the progress that has been made thus far in combating childhood illness in Botswana, especially with regard to HIV/AIDS and cancer and hematologic diseases.

Through Global HOPE, significant progress has been made in Botswana to address childhood cancer. A transformative \$100 million initiative has helped to create an innovative pediatric hematology-oncology treatment network in sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information, visit texaschildrens.org/globalhope.

Drs. Mark Kline, Susan Blaney, and David Poplack took President Masisi on a tour of the hospital and the Texas Children's Cancer and Hematology Centers.



His Excellency Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, President of Botswana, viewed history and other accomplishments of BIPAI and the Cancer and Hematology Centers while touring the facility.

The wife of the President of Botswana joined him on the tour and spent time interacting with the children.





DEPARTMENT NEWS . . .

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

Heart Center Clinic Opens in Legacy Tower

"From the very beginning of the design process, the opening discussion for every space has been about making sure the focus is on the patient and that they have everything they need."

-- Dr. Daniel Penny, Section Head

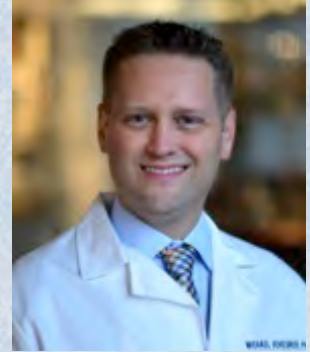
As part of its mission to provide the best care possible for the patients, TCH built Legacy Tower, a new, modern building that allows physicians to continue providing critical, lifesaving care for the patients who need it the most. The Heart Center's new home in Legacy Tower encompasses eight floors dedicated exclusively to cardiac care, including an outpatient clinic, four cardiac catheterization labs with a dedicated MRI scanner, four cardiovascular operating rooms, a 48-bed cardiovascular ICU, and 42 cardiology acute care beds.

The Tower also has dedicated space for families and a helistop on the roof to enable transport of critically ill patients. The ICUs encompass four floors, with subspecialty units dedicated to neuro-ICU and surgical ICU, and 84 large private ICU rooms. The Tower has six high acuity operating rooms for neurosurgery, orthopedics, plastic surgery, transplant surgery, and general surgery.

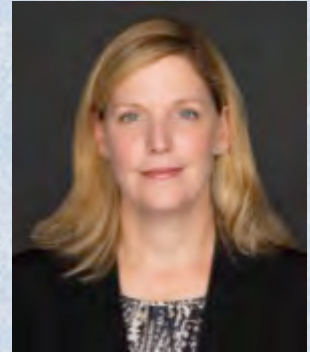
New Epidemiology Center Opens

The Department of Pediatrics newly established **Center for Epidemiology and Population Health** will be co-led by **Dr. Michael Scheurer**, Assoc. Professor, and **Dr. Lisa Pompeii**, Professor. Dr. Scheurer has appointments in the Departments of Pediatrics, Medicine, and Molecular Virology & Microbiology.

Dr. Scheurer received his M.P.H. in Epidemiology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1999, and his Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston in 2004. He completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Molecular Epidemiology at MD Anderson Cancer Center before joining the faculty at Baylor College of Medicine in 2007. He is a molecular epidemiologist with a focus on infection and inflammation as risk factors for chronic disease and outcomes among patients with those conditions. He has a particular interest in the interface between the host immune response (including immunogenetics) and external inflammatory cues on disease risk and outcome.



Dr. Pompeii joined the Department of Pediatrics on October 1, 2018, coming from UT Health School of Public Health, where she has been faculty since 2005. She has a master's degree in occupational health nursing and a doctoral degree in epidemiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on occupational and injury epidemiology, including effects of maternal occupational exposures and adverse pregnancy outcomes. In addition, she studies occupational health issues specific to healthcare workers and the effects on quality of patient care.



This Center includes additional talented faculty, including **Drs. Philip Lupo, Austin Brown, Jane Montealegre, Erin Peckham-Gregory, and Melissa Richard**, with research expertise in birth defects, health disparities, genomics, cancer, and survivorship. As Center leaders, Drs. Scheurer and Pompeii will initially be meeting with faculty and leaders across the Department to identify potential areas for immediate and long-term growth for the Center. Interested faculty should also contact them to discover more about the Center and to discuss exciting opportunities for collaboration.

2019 Research Symposium Announced



SAVE THE DATE
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019



The 2019 Pediatric Research Symposium will be held on **Tuesday, April 9, 2019**. A formal call for abstracts will be sent via email on **November 12, 2018**, with links to online registration and abstract submission forms. The abstract submission period will begin November 12. Please plan to attend and encourage your Fellows, Postdocs, and Residents to submit abstracts and participate in the Symposium. For more information, contact Research Administration at resadmin@texaschildrens.org.

New Textbook Addresses Issues of Transition



Dr. Albert C. Hergenroeder, Professor and Chief of Adolescent Medicine & Sports Medicine, and **Dr. Constance M. Wieman**, Assoc. Professor, are editors of the recently published book dealing with transition of health care from pediatric to adult care. They note in the Preface that, whereas just a generation ago many patients with chronic disease did not survive beyond childhood, today, 90% of individuals with chronic illness and disability survive childhood, and 750,000 young adults with special health care needs in the United States transition to adulthood annually. In this book, they focus on adolescents and young adults

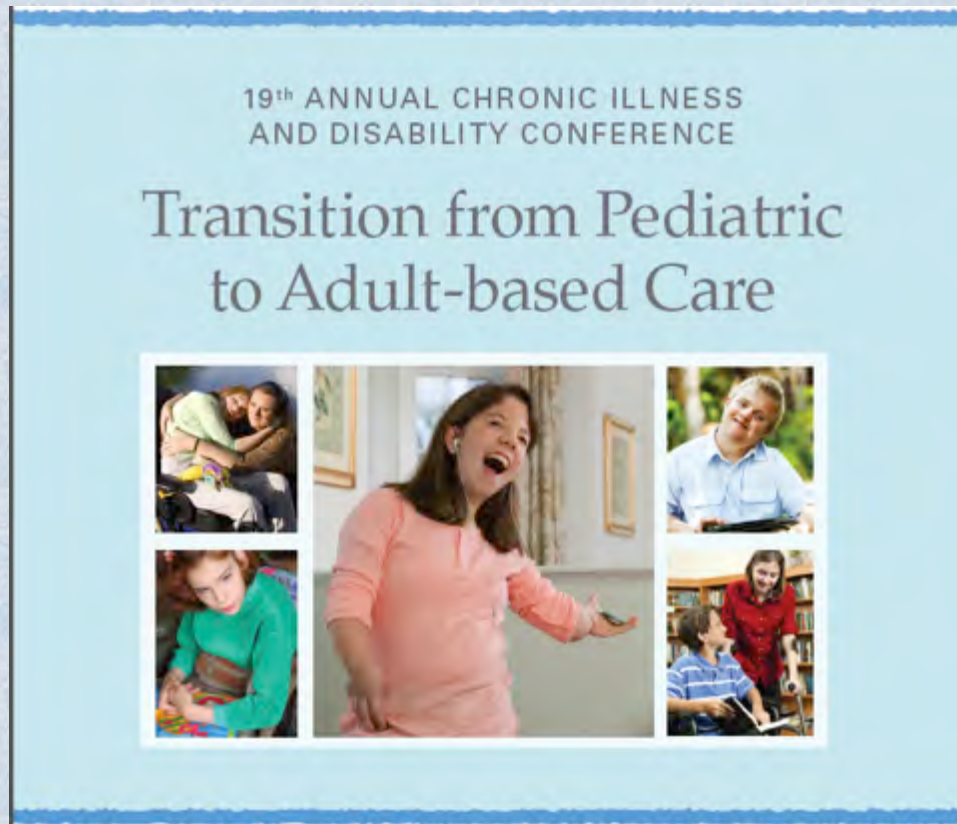
with special health care needs. Below is an excerpt from the Preface:



Health care transition is defined as “the purposeful, planned movement of adolescents and young adults with chronic physical and medical conditions from child-centered to adult-oriented health-care systems.” (Blum 1993) We include mental health conditions in this definition. For most AYASHCN who have mild conditions, characterized by no limitation of activity or cognitive impairment, the transition to adulthood appears to be successful. As the complexity of the condition increases, however, health care transition (HCT) becomes more problematic, resulting in increased morbidity and mortality. Because poor HCT can contribute to this increased risk of morbidity and mortality, many pediatric and professional medical organizations, public health agencies and advocacy organizations have developed statements or guidelines about the need to develop improved transition planning programs Despite increased recognition of the importance of HCT from pediatric to adult-based care, evidenced by the number of national conferences and increased peer-reviewed publications on the topic, there has been limited progress in addressing these barriers. There is an emerging yet not established evidence base for best methods in developing HCT programs and major issues to be answered include defining successful HCT and providing evidence for the predictive validity for actual successful HCT outcomes The purpose of this textbook is to provide health care professionals caring for youth and young adults with chronic illness and disability with a state of the field reference, including the framework, tools and case-based examples needed to develop and evaluate a HCT planning program that can be implemented regardless of a patient’s disease or disability. The editors of this book have been involved in developing HCT programs over the past 17 years. Drawing from their own personal experience as well the empirical literature, the editors and invited chapter authors provide valuable perspectives on issues to consider in developing HCT programs across a range of health care settings.

This textbook focuses on how to develop HCT programs regardless of disease or disability. As such, it does not cover condition-specific transition concerns, except as illustrated through case studies. We prefer to think of the transition process as occurring in three phases: preparation, transfer and engagement of the AYASHCN in the adult health care system This process can be applied to any HCT model.

Faculty Heads Annual Health Care Transition Symposium



October 25 – 26, 2018
MD Anderson
Mitchell Basic Sciences Research Building
Onstead Auditorium, 3rd Floor
6767 Bertner Avenue
Houston, Texas 77030

Dr. Albert C. Hergenroeder, Professor and Section Head, is the Activity Director of the 19th Annual Chronic Illness and Disability Conference, presented by BCM/TCH and supported by The Robbins Foundation. The conference broadcast will be supported by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities through a HRSA grant and by the Texas DSHS Maternal and Child Health Program.

Aimed at physicians, other healthcare providers, patients, and their families, the symposium will offer training for appropriate healthcare workforce in order to provide the services necessary to make the healthcare transition from pediatric to adult care.

It will feature research presentations in the emerging field of healthcare transition (HCT), covering a variety of topics including testing of HCT models of care and programs; the HCT needs and experiences of adolescents, emerging adults, and families; and provider information pertaining to pretransition and posttransition services and training.

The Plenary Session will be presented by **Dr. Beth H. Garland**, Asst. Professor, on the topic of "Inclusion of Mental Health in Healthcare Transition."

Teams Transport Heart Patients to Legacy Tower

On September 25, 2018, during an 8½-hour process, six specially-trained clinical teams comprised of more than 200 members transported 64 heart patients, ranging in age from 3 days to 22 years and some critically-ill, safely to their new, state-of-the-art rooms in Legacy Tower.



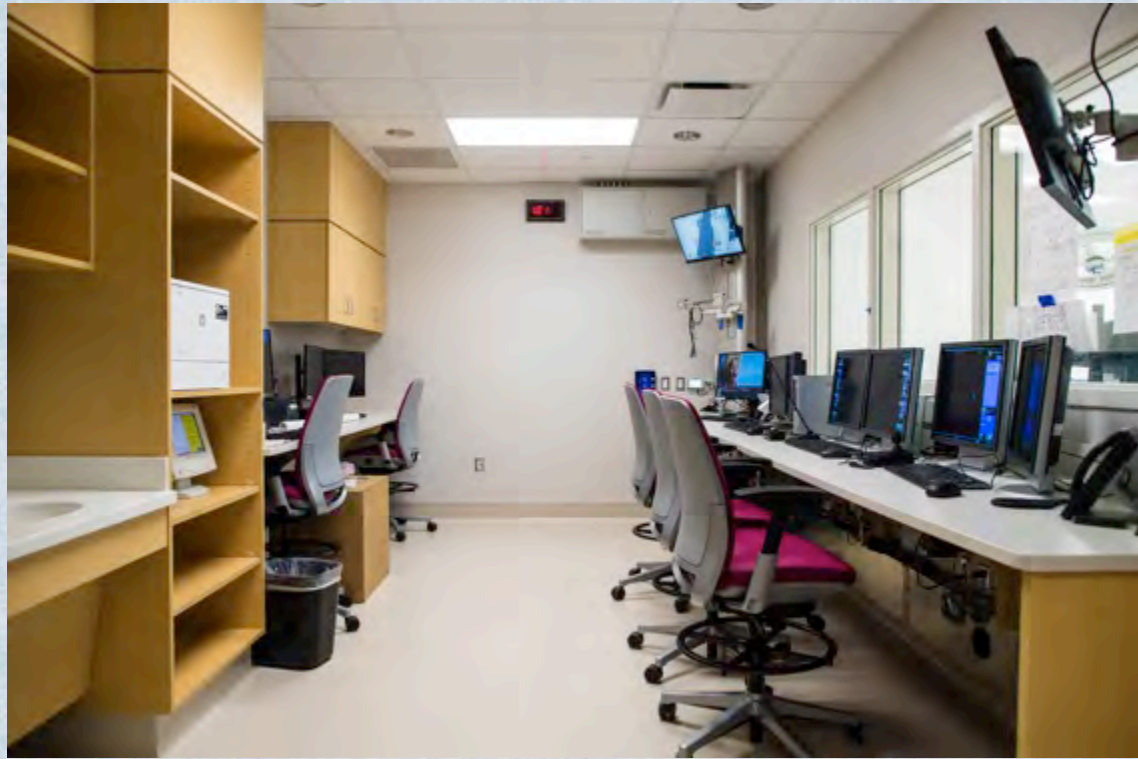
The Heart Center's new home in Legacy Tower encompasses eight floors dedicated exclusively to cardiac care. Included are an outpatient clinic, four cardiac catheterization laboratories – one with integrated MRI – four cardiovascular operating rooms, a 48-bed cardiac intensive care unit and 42 cardiac patient care beds.

Dr. Daniel J. Penny, Chief of Cardiology, looks on as one of the children settles in to a new room in Legacy Tower



New Heart Center Boasts State-of-the-Art Equipment

The new Cardiac Catheterization Lab in Legacy Tower houses four catheter labs, each of which has 1,000 square feet of space, and includes a control room where clinicians operate the lab's equipment and document patient care.



Section Well Represented at National Meeting

The Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics had a significant presence at the annual meeting of the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP), held from September 14-17, 2018, in Anaheim, California.



Dr. Adiaha Spinks-Franklin completed her term on the SDBP Board of Directors.



Dr. Robert Voigt was elected to the Board of Directors and selected to serve on the Editorial Board for the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. Dr. Voigt also serves as Co-Chair of the SDBP Section on Fellowship Training.

At the meeting, Meyer Center medical and social work faculty, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics fellows, and administrators presented three Educational and Advocacy Workshops and 10 Research Posters, as described below:

Session Type	Title	Meyer Center presenters
Workshop	"Survival of the Fittest: A Call to Action for Developmental-Behavioral Educators to Prevent Extinction of the Species"	Robert Voigt, MD; Adiaha Spinks-Franklin, MD; Noel Mensah-Bonsu, MD; Kathryn Ostermaier, MD; Lisa Pham, MD; Candice Allen, MD; Dinah Godwin, LCSW; Jennifer Cervantes, LMSW; Jessica Smith, LMSW; Jennifer Evans; Jonathan Topham, MD; Maja Katusic, MD; Veronica Villarreal, MD
Workshop	"Racism: Another Adverse Childhood Experience"	Adiaha Spinks-Franklin, MD; Noel Mensah-Bonsu, MD; Lisa Pham, MD
Workshop	"Beyond the Exam Room: Stories of Legislative Advocacy and Skills to Help You Make a Difference"	Dinah Godwin, LCSW; Adiaha Spinks-Franklin, MD
Poster	"Advocacy Boot Camp: A Workshop for Professionals in Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics"	Dinah Godwin, LCSW; Adiaha Spinks-Franklin, MD
Poster	"Effectiveness of Psychoeducational Intervention for Families Awaiting Developmental Evaluation for their Children"	Dinah Godwin, LCSW; Jennifer Cervantes, LMSW; Jessica Smith, LMSW; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"Adaptive Behavior Profiles of Intellectually Gifted Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder"	Sonia Monteiro, MD
Poster	"Co-occurrence of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Down Syndrome"	Kathryn Ostermaier, MD; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"Intellectual Ability in Research-Identified Cases of Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Longitudinal, Population-Based Birth Cohort Study"	Maja Katusic, MD; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"Quality of Life Assessments in Adults Born with Asymptomatic Congenital Cytomegalovirus Infection"	Maja Katusic, MD; Noel Mensah-Bonsu, MD; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"Attention Problems and Hyperactivity in Children with Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Congenital CMV"	Jonathan Topham, MD; Robert Voigt, MD,
Poster	"Using Entrustable Professional Activities to Assess Graduation Readiness in Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics: A SPIN Study"	Noel Mensah-Bonsu, MD; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"Are Graduating Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Fellows Ready for Clinical Practice? A SPIN study"	Noel Mensah-Bonsu, MD; Robert Voigt, MD
Poster	"A Comprehensive Perspective on Adverse Adult Psychosocial Outcomes in Individuals with Childhood ADHD"	Robert Voigt, MD

New Section Head Appointed

Dr. Rona Sonabend, Assoc. Professor, has accepted the invitation to serve as head of the Section of Diabetes and Endocrinology, effective September 1, 2018. Dr. Sonabend has been the Medical Director of Quality Improvement for the Section and Medical Director of Clinical Systems Integration Process Improvement for TCH. For more information, see page 26.

Section Ranked #6 in Nation

The section received the #6 Pediatric Endocrinology program ranking in the *US News and World Report* 2018-2019 Best Children's Hospital survey. Fifty pediatric centers were ranked for treating diabetes and endocrine disorders in children. The score is based on various measures of clinical care. According to the website, "Eighty five percent of each hospital's scores comes from data collected through a detailed U.S. News clinical survey of children's hospitals. . . . The remaining percentage reflects nominations from pediatric specialists and subspecialists who responded to surveys. . . ." This score ties the highest ranking the program has ever received, which occurred in the prior survey year.



Program Provides Smooth Transition to Adult Care



Young people with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, face special challenges as they prepare to leave home and go to college or enter the business world. To help this vulnerable population make a smooth transition BCM/TCH offer a new Young Adult Diabetes Clinic, under the direction of **Dr. Siripoom McKay**, and a diabetes program aimed at their specific needs.

The program, designed for patients 17 to 26 years of age with diabetes, begins with the patients meeting a physician and diabetes educator for the first time without parents to assess if they are ready to be on their own. The clinic is for patients with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, but because many patients with type 1 were diagnosed as small children, often as young as 4 years old, the education on diabetes has been directed to the parents of other care providers. Hence, this program seeks to make sure they know about medical concerns such as navigating the healthcare system, knowing what insurance they have and what it provides, being aware of how to renew a prescription and make an appointment for medical care on their own. Other questions posed to the patients address sex, pregnancy, alcohol, and other issues that need to be addressed directly as they may lead to dangerous situations for diabetic patients. The patients are urged to eat something before drinking, and to have a friend along who can be trusted to identify signs of something wrong.

During these sessions, they also address contraception with females. This topic is particularly important because a pregnancy with diabetes has a risk for birth defects that occur within the first trimester, and without proper precautions, the birth defects cannot be obviated. In addition, the program provides focus groups where young diabetic adults can discuss issues that their physicians did not prepare them to face, thereby helping future generations to be better prepared. This program was featured on KPRC, channel 2 in Houston, and presented by Haley Hernandez.

Centers Celebrate “Going Gold”

September was National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and patients, families, and staff of the Cancer and Hematology Centers celebrated “Going Gold” with events at the Texas Children’s hospitals in the medical center, on the West campus, and in the Woodlands. Each year, the Center diagnoses more than 500 children with cancer.



As part of the Awareness Month, The Centers posted pictures of different “Superheroes” on their Facebook page.



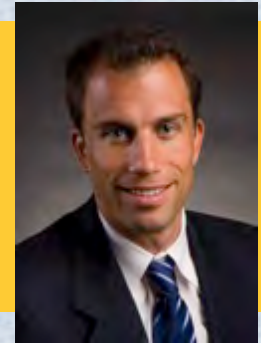
The Centers also came together for the Going Gold parade and ribbon tying ceremony at Texas Children’s Main Campus. Participants proceeded through the halls of the hospital, finishing the parade on the Auxiliary Bridge, where gold ribbons were tied in honor of children and families who have been touched by pediatric cancer. They were greeted by local pediatric cancer organizations, which provided face painting, games, and other activities for the patients.

Procedure Helps Patients with Liver Tumors

A team of physician-scientists at BCM/TCH are now using a new treatment option for pediatric patients with liver tumors, Transarterial Radioembolization (TARE). Because treatment options are limited if a tumor cannot be removed, especially considering that chemotherapy often has limited efficacy and significant short- and long-term side effects, the need has been urgent to find other strategies for treating these patients. Often, by the time a pediatric patient presents, the tumor is too large or complex for surgical consider, and TARE allows for better control of the tumor to prevent it from spreading further or to shrink it to a size that can be optimized for resection, according to Dr. Kamles Kukreja, who leads the team that performs the procedure at TCH.

"TARE may help some children with unresectable tumors by decreasing the tumor size and allowing tumor resection. For the children with liver cancer we cannot cure, TARE provides an alternative palliative care measure, giving the child more time with their family and a more comfortable therapy experience."

-- Dr. Andras A. Heczey
Asst. Professor and Director of the Liver Tumor Program



TARE is a two-step procedure: *first*, a dye is injected into an artery that travels to the liver and identifies and maps the blood supply to the tumor; *second*, a defined map is then used to deliver a high dose of radiation directly to the tumor via the blood vessel supplying the tumor, thereby sparing neighboring, healthy liver tissue. Because TARE enables the delivery of radioactive isotopes to the tumor directly, it is better tolerated than chemotherapy. Furthermore, the treatment is done in a single visit and can occur in the outpatient setting.

Although the procedure has been available for many years for adult patients with liver cancer, very few centers offer it exclusively at a pediatric facility. The Liver Tumor Program at TCH is the only center in the southwestern U.S. currently offering TARE to treat pediatric liver cancers.

Canine Assistants Form Part of Healthcare Team

Man's best friend is part of the team at TCH's Cancer and Hematology Centers, where dogs like "Elsa" provide emotional support to help pediatric patients with cancer cope with the different challenges they face, from getting a new diagnosis to having extended hospital stays and undergoing medical procedures.



5th Symposium Proves to be Great Success



The 5th Annual Food Allergy Symposium was a roaring success, with more than 200 registrants coming from Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. The keynote speaker was Dr. Mariella Self, Assistant Professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, who spoke about "Fostering Resilience When Managing Food Allergies." Two nationally known speakers, Mrs. Tonia Winders, CEO of Allergy and Asthma Network, and Mr. Cody Sklar, a University of Miami student entrepreneur with a history of allergies to six of the top eight food allergens and founder of "Wander without Worry", a company which produces allergen-free travel foods, spoke to the audience. Mrs. Winders instructed families about school-stock epinephrine laws, and Mr. Sklar shared his coping strategies with families concerned about their children matriculating institutions of higher learning.

Experts who led discussions in expanded breakout sessions for the families of children with food allergies included Drs. Aikaterini Anagnostou, Sara Anvari and Maria Buheis. Ms. Lauren Kronisch, RD, led a lively cooking demonstration, and Dr. Anvari led a panel about oral immunotherapy with a research trial patient and parent. The HEB-Food Allergy Program Cart sponsored by The Children's Museum, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Texas Southern University School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences was on display to educate families with the help of Dr. Christy Nance. Dr. Jenny Miller, Ms. Holly Emerson, CCLS, Mr. Rodney Payne, Mr. Fabian Rivera and Ms. Munazza Noor led the children and teen sessions with help from Dr. Nicole Canon, Mr. Justin Branch, Mr. Joseph Carnot, Ms. Monica Guevara and Mrs. America Lueso. There was a t-shirt contest and each of the participants in the teen steering committee received a t-shirt for their efforts!

Appreciation was expressed to Ms. Christina Cowperthwait, who organized the entire event at the United Way, and Mrs. Theresa Aldape, who led the Food Allergy Family Network (FAFN) final session with all the attendees split into regions by zip code so families could share experiences in a smaller setting. Gratitude also went out to all TCH IARR participants, including Mrs. Chivon McMullen Jackson, Ms. Patricia Perez, Ms. Larraine Lyter-Reed, Ms. Kathy Pitts, Dr. Alexander Vargas-Hernandez, Mrs. Teslyn Kauffman, and the Memorial High School Volunteers, who stuffed the packets for participants.

Section Sponsors “AE Family Day of Hope”

On Saturday, July 28, 2018, the section sponsored the “AE Annual Day of Hope: Navigating Autoimmune Encephalitis.” The event was well attended and a great success! Approximately 100 patients, family members, faculty, and staff attended the event, lead by **Dr. Eyal Muscal**, Assoc. Professor and Fellowship Program Director for Pediatric Rheumatology (pictured above with one of the patients). Families mingled over lunch, children enjoyed creative activities, and Dr. Muscal gave a talk on the current status of diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and research in AE. Ed Arditte represented the AE Alliance at the event and thanked Dr. Muscal for serving as a member of the AE Alliance Scientific Advisory Committee. Academic presenters from TCH spoke about the usefulness of multidisciplinary care, rehabilitation, and working closely with your child’s school in addressing academic needs. Question and answer sessions allowed for meaningful interaction with the faculty and staff for the families who traveled from near and far for this Day of Hope.



“We flew in from Chicago for an appointment with Dr. Muscal (who we love) and to attend the AE Family Day of Hope. For our family, hearing about the rehabilitation process was very helpful. When I asked my children, who are 13 and 17, what their favorite part of the trip was, they said it was hanging out with other kids who have AE and meeting Amobi Okoye. The families we spent time with, outside of the event, are already talking about returning next year for another family day.”

– a family member who attended the event



A highlight of the event was the appearance of Amobi Okoye, NFL player and AE survivor, who spoke about his personal experience with the disease. Children and families took pictures in front of a football field background with Mr. Okoye and then participated in an open panel discussion with him and his mother.

Appreciation was expressed for the contributions of Chivon McMullen Jackson for spearheading the event; Monica Guevara, Ruth Herrera, Karen Johnson, and Luis Paxtor for organizing it; all IARR faculty, staff and volunteers who contributed to registration and the childcare/play area; and family advocates Marcia Bayer, Devon Fults, and Mandy Kuftic. Thanks were given also to the sponsors: Chick-fil-A for sponsoring lunch and Cypress Ace Hardware and Feed, as well as the Autoimmune Encephalitis Alliance and the Epilepsy Foundation, which hosted educational booths for families.

Inaugural “Peanut Allergy Friendly Day” Held



In an effort to address the growing concern of children’s increasing incidence of allergies to various foods, **Dr. Carla Davis**, Assoc. Professor and Section Head, began the Food Allergy Program at TCH. Children and adolescents with food allergies are seen daily for clinical and research visits at the hospital. As part of the comprehensive, multidisciplinary program, the Section launched the first Annual Food Allergy Symposium in 2014 for the Houston community. It also founded the Food Allergy Family Network (FAGN) 4 years ago so families living with food allergies would have opportunities to meet each

other and network and have access to education. The families are an integral part of the program, and some of the parents are volunteers and FAGN leaders.

Recognizing that baseball and peanuts go “hand-in-hand” and that children allergic to peanuts are unable to attend a MLB games because of concerns of coming into contact with peanuts, in November 2017, Mr. Sachin Menon (pictured right with family) brought attention to the fact that no “peanut friendly” event in partnership with the Houston Astros existed. Since then, he and the Section have worked with Enrique Cruz and Greg Van Sickler (Premium Sales) at the Astros organization. Mr. Van Sickler gave the Section team a tour of Minute Maid Park to help identify an area that would be ideal for Texas Children’s Hospital to sponsor a **Peanut Allergy Friendly Day** at an Astros event.



Eight of the families who have children with peanut allergy; Dr. Carla Davis; Daisy Tran, RN; Lauren Kronisch, RDN, LD; and Theresa Aldape, LMSW, attended the game. The children had a fun, enjoyable, and anxiety-free event at the game this year. Patients and their families were able to feel the energy and excitement we all experience when we attend an Astros game. No peanuts were in the suite. and every food had a label listing all the ingredients in the foods. The staff attendant and everyone at the Astros Organization and Minute Maid Park provided exceptional customer care.

With a generous donation from the Harris County Houston Sports Authority, the Inaugural Peanut Allergy Friendly Event was held on July 14, 2018 - Detroit Tiger vs. Houston Astros. Ms. Amanda Garcia from Aramark was exceptional in helping to identify food allergy friendly foods for these children and their families.



New Clinic Will Address Rare Disorder

"Thanks to the help of the ASF, we are proud to further our mission of providing very specialized care for patients with Angelman syndrome. Given the science that's being developed at the NRI at Texas Children's in genetics and neurology, we are making great strides in helping these patients." - **Dr. Gary Clark**, Chief of Neurology

On July 9, 2018, TCH and the Angelman Syndrome Foundation (ASF) celebrated the opening of the new **Angelman Syndrome Clinic**, one of only seven such clinics in the United States aimed at addressing a rare neurogenetic disorder. Angelman syndrome, which occurs in one in 15,000 live births, often is misdiagnosed as autism or cerebral palsy. Patients frequently have developmental delays, lack of speech, seizures, and disorders of walking and balancing.

The new clinic, established through the generosity of donors and in partnership with the ASF, will provide opportunities for patients and their families to receive care and education through a multidisciplinary team of specialists, including experts in Angelman syndrome, clinical geneticists, a neurologist, a psychiatrist, a speech language pathologist, genetic counselors, and social workers. It will allow them to access care in one setting rather than having to visit numerous locations across the nation.

Attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony were patients and leaders in this field. Debbie Sukin, daughter of the late Dr. Ralph Feigin (former Chair of Pediatrics and Physician-in-Chief at TCH), delivered the opening remarks. She shared how this new clinic will benefit her own son, 16-year-old Jacob, as well as many other children who have the syndrome. She noted that, "The hardest part of advocating and managing a child with Angelman Syndrome is trying to understand what might be wrong when they aren't feeling right, looking right or acting right. We're confident that this multidisciplinary clinic here at Texas Children's will provide all children the expertise and best chance at meeting their maximum potential and provide guidance to ensure the best outcome." **Dr. Carlos Bacino**, chief of the clinic, also spoke at the event, as did **Carrie Rys**, Assistant Vice-President, and Eileen Braun, Executive Director of the ASF. The organization donated \$50,000 to advance research at TCH.



Section Reports on Substance Abuse



Dr. Bethanie Van Horne, Asst. Professor and Director of Research for the Section provided the following update on local substance abuse:

In December 2017, a team from the Section of Public Health and Primary Care received a grant from the University of Baltimore to identify ways to improve the alignment between the many sectors that interact with pregnant and postpartum women with opioid abuse issues and their infants. Healthcare (OB/GYN, neonatology, and pediatrics), child welfare, treatment, and for some, law enforcement and the judicial system are involved and must work together to form a system of care to support these vulnerable mothers and their infants. Unfortunately, what the team has discovered through interviews with more than 100 key stakeholders across sectors in Houston and San Antonio is that lack of education and training, stigma, and inconsistent policies and practices, as well as fear and mistrust, are pervasive, and, many times, impede our ability to provide the best care for individuals and families impacted by addiction. The project is still in progress, with a full report set to be release at the end of December. A brief summary of findings and key points of interest are outlined below.

General information on substance use

- Data on toxic deaths from the Houston Medical Examiner revealed that Houston had more overdose deaths than 21 other states in 2016.
- Polydrug use is common, and cocaine and methamphetamines continue to be popular in Houston.
- Fentanyl and carfentanyl, the substances largely responsible for the dramatic rise in overdose deaths across the country, are being found in fake prescription pills and mixed with other illicit drug (cocaine, meth, kush). Users are likely unaware of what they are taking and how much.

Specific to mothers

- Drug overdose is now the leading cause of maternal mortality in Texas, with opioids contributing to 58% of these deaths from 2012-15.
- Many women do NOT know there are treatment services available to them or that pregnant women, IV drug users, and families involved with child welfare are prioritized populations for treatment.
- Healthcare providers are missing opportunities to intervene early because of inconsistent and non-universal screening practices.
- Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) is best practice treatment for pregnant women with an opioid use disorder. Detoxification is NOT recommended due to the impact on the fetus and risk for relapse.
- There are specific intervention programs for pregnant and postpartum women at risk for substance use disorders funded by HHSC, and Houston is home to one of only a few inpatient treatment centers in the state that allows children to live with their mothers during treatment.

Specific to infants

- The rate of prenatal drug exposure has doubled since the mid-2000s and now impacts ~9.4 per 1,000 births in Texas.
- Houston has about 100 babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and over 500 born exposed to drugs, each year. However, this is likely an underestimate given the inconsistencies in drug screening and testing practices.
- Rooming-in after delivery has been shown to decrease the length of hospital stay and the need for pharmacotherapy in infants with NAS.

To increase awareness and ensure providers have the tools and resources they need to support families impacted by substance use, the team has partnered with The Council on Recovery and Santa Maria Hostel to provide training and education. In June, the Maternal and Fetal Center at the Pavilion for Women participated in lunch time talk, and in September, the team held a 4 hour training at LBJ hospital with CME, CNE, and CEU credits provided.

For more information, to schedule a training, or to get involved, contact the PI, Beth Van Horne, at bethanie.vanhorne@bcm.edu.

Conference on Post-Harvey Social Determinants of Child Health Offered



Friday, October 19, 2018
Registration: 8 am – 9 am
Conference: 9 am – 5 pm

Rice University BioScience Research Collaborative
6500 South Main Street
Houston, Texas

Hurricane Harvey devastated large areas of Texas in August 2017 and is estimated to be the most expensive natural disaster in US history. Vulnerable groups are at higher risk for flood exposure and adverse social determinants of health (SDH), both of which can negatively influence health outcomes. This event brings together regional, state, and national leaders to explore the intersection of natural disasters, SDH, and child health.

Experts will address the following questions:

- What are evidence-based strategies and policy considerations for disaster preparedness?
- How do housing instability and food insecurity after natural disasters affect children?
- What are strategies to preserve child education during natural disasters?
- What is the impact of displacement and natural disasters on child mental and physical health?
-

Cost: \$50 for general public; \$25 for students, residents, fellows with appropriate identification

For more information, contact Michelle Lopes at malopez@texaschildrens.org

Policy to Practice: Addressing the Social Determinants of Child Health One Year Post-Harvey is co-sponsored by Texas Children's Hospital Center for Child Health Policy and Advocacy, Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research, and CHILDREN AT RISK.

Section Tackles Ticks, Parasites, and Autism



Researchers in the National School of Tropical Medicine are studying ticks they have collected from different areas in Texas to determine what bacteria they may be carrying and what diseases they could be spreading.

Dr. Sarah Gunter has received a grant to collect and study Ixodid ticks, which spread bacterial diseases such as Lyme disease and spotted fever group rickettsioses. Dr. Gunter cites urban encroachment on traditionally rural areas as one reason to be cautious of “spillover” of disease from the animal population to the human population. “Unless we understand what’s going on in the tick population, it’s hard to inform area clinicians and people in a specific area of risk of disease and help to prevent those outbreaks,” said Gunter.

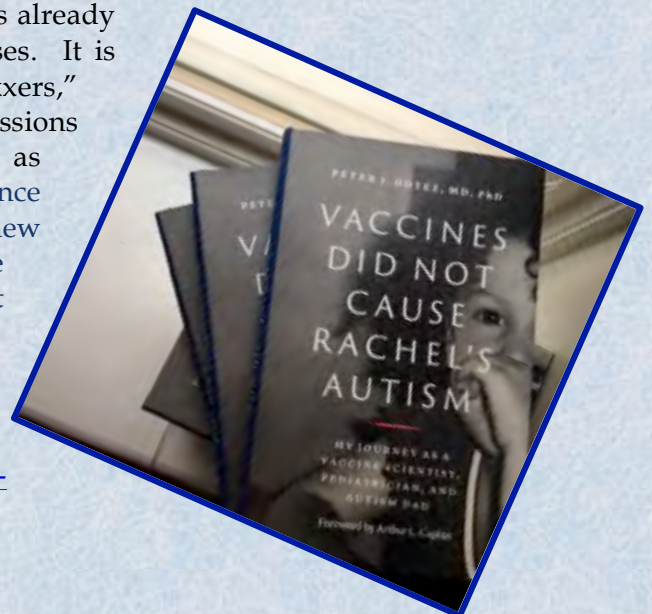
See an interview with Gunter about the project here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckwfYWVJXg4>

Major discoveries published this month from the Section of Pediatric Tropical Medicine included three publications: (1) the publication of a novel adjuvant derived from the filarial parasite *Onchocerca volvulus* (VACCINE), (2) a study of the impact of helminth infections on childhood education (PLOS NTDs), and (3) an analysis of non-medical vaccine exemptions across the U.S. (PLOS MEDICINE). From the vector-borne and zoonotic disease unit, studies were published on a murine model of congenital Zika virus infection (AM J OB GYN), arbovirus surveillance in Houston (AM J TROP MED HYG), and Chagas disease transmission in Texas (J WILDLIFE DIS).

On the policy side, the paper on non-medical vaccine exemptions generated considerable media interest in the press, with major articles on the CNN website and elsewhere, while **Dr. Hotez** gave his first interview on his forthcoming book, *Vaccines Did Not Cause Rachel's Autism* on Houston Public Media (Houston Matters). (for more information, see item below)

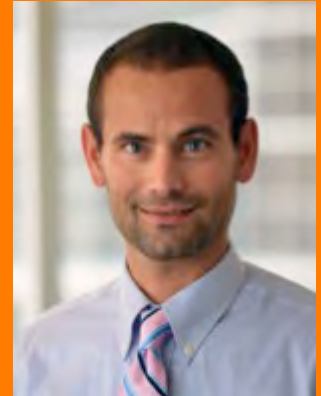
Dr. Peter Hotez's book, due for release in October, is already the #1 new release for autism and infectious diseases. It is already receiving negative reviews from the “anti-vaxxers,” rendering its release an interesting mark on the discussions regarding vaccines. Dr. Hotez describes the book as being “a science book that explains the evidence showing that vaccines do not cause autism, also new information about what we’ve learned about the genetic basis of autism, . . . new information about girls and women on the autism spectrum, and finally being an autism dad (and autism parents) of an adult daughter on the autism spectrum and our life in Montrose.” The book will be available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Vaccines-Did-Not-Cause-Rachels-Autism/dp/1421426609>



Dr. Job Lopez has been collecting ticks also, but his studies revolve around argasid, or soft ticks, which behave quite differently from hard ticks. In a case study of a patient with tick-borne relapsing fever (TRBF) contracted from the bacterium *Borrelia turicatae*, Dr. Lopez worked with Austin Public Health officials to collect ticks near the center of a suspected outbreak of TBRF. Being unable to gain access to the patient's alleged exposure site, the researchers collected *Ornithodoros turicata* (the tick vector) in a nearby park and evaluated them for infection by feeding them on immunologically naïve mice. They reported the transmission and isolation of TRBF spirochetes in culture medium. Partial sequencing of the flagellin B (*flaB*), 16S rRNA (*rrs*), and DNA gyrase B (*gyrB*) genes . . . indicated probably emergence of *B. turicatae* in Austin, Texas.

Abstract:

In March 2017, a patient became febrile within 4 days after visiting a rustic conference center in Austin, Texas, USA, where Austin Public Health suspected an outbreak of tickborne relapsing fever a month earlier. Evaluation of a patient blood smear and molecular diagnostic assays identified *Borrelia turicatae* as the causative agent. We could not gain access to the property to collect ticks. Thus, we focused efforts at a nearby public park, <1 mile from the suspected exposure site. We trapped *Ornithodoros turicata* ticks from 2 locations in the park, and laboratory evaluation resulted in cultivation of 3 *B. turicatae* isolates. Multilocus sequencing of 3 chromosomal loci (*flaB*, *rrs*, and *gyrB*) indicated that the isolates were identical to those of *B. turicatae* 91E135 (a tick isolate) and BTE5EL (a human isolate). We identified the endemicity of *O. turicata* ticks and likely emergence of *B. turicatae* in this city.



Dr. Lopez's article, "Detection of Tickborne Relapsing Fever Spirochete, Austin, Texas, USA," can be read here: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/24/11/17-2033_article.

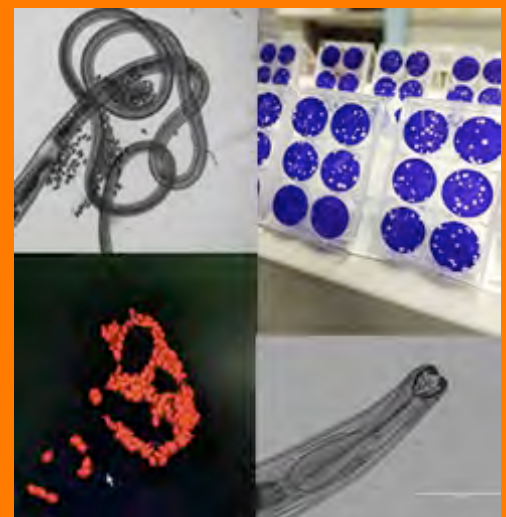
Dr. Lopez also has continued work on the ecology of relapsing fever spirochetes and studying how these pathogens adapt and are transmitted from ticks. In a recent article titled "Vector competence of geographical populations of *Ornithodoros turicata* for the tick-borne relapsing fever spirochete *Borrelia turicatae*," he evaluated geographically separated populations of tick and identified significant differences and transmission frequencies.

You can read this abstract here:

<https://aem.asm.org/content/early/2018/08/20/AEM.01505-18.long>.

Come and Meet the Parasites

Do you Instagram? The National School of Tropical Medicine and the section of Pediatric Tropical Medicine has launched their Instagram page—it tells the story from the parasite's point of view! Visit and see pictures and videos from their labs: https://www.instagram.com/bcm_meettheparasites/.



Physician in Lesotho Featured



Dr. Ntsioua Rathabaneng was the first physician from Lesotho to be part of the clinical staff at Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation – Lesotho. She joined the Center of Excellence (COE) upon its opening in 2007 and served whole-heartedly until her retirement in June 2018. In speaking with Dr. Rathabaneng, one has a sense of the life force she possesses. The recognition of her vibrant spirit is enriched upon learning that in addition to being a physician, she is also an Anglican priest. In fact, Dr. Rathabaneng has earned the nickname 'Lady Luke' in reference to the Gospel author who was also a physician and priest. When she speaks about her experience as a physician, her care is evident: "It [is] so touching, so painful, but at the same time so comforting to see what one is contributing." This deep compassion is what brought Dr. Rathabaneng to the COE.

When Dr. Rathabaneng retired from her career as an eye surgeon at Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital, she was recruited to the COE. At the time, adults in Lesotho, but not children, were being treated for HIV/AIDS. Though excited by the possibility that Lesotho could tackle HIV/AIDS in children, Dr. Rathabaneng admits she was initially hesitant to join the staff because of her little experience with pediatrics. Moreover, she worried about the anguish from taking care of sick children. That apprehension convinced the Executive Director at the COE that Dr. Rathabaneng was the right person for the job. She recalls being told, "They will cut your heart and you will jump into action." She most certainly did.

Dr. Rathabaneng remembers the early days at the COE being very challenging. There were code blue calls frequently. Parents had not yet seen that HIV could be controlled in children, so they arrived at the COE very late in the disease course. This depiction is in stark contrast to what is seen at the COE today and is exemplified by a recent patient story that Dr. Rathabaneng recounted:

A pregnant lady was referred because she was HIV positive. She was pregnant for the first time and could not believe she was infected with HIV. She said, "Doctor, please give me a week to think if I should start treatment or not." I said "Okay, next week come with your partner. Tell him we would like to test him." The husband was understanding. Even before they came, he got a test and was positive. They came together. The husband said "We want to start treatment. We want our child to be born healthy." The child will soon be 18 months. She is coming for her final test. She is a beautiful girl, running around, very naughty.

Education is a core feature of the COE and something that Dr. Rathabaneng particularly values. She notes that among her favorite times with staff were Friday afternoons when they were able to sit together and discuss their work. She describes how the COE has been involved in many lessons and collaborations with other institutions, playing a vital role in the approach to HIV/AIDS in Lesotho. Due to these efforts, Dr. Rathabaneng reports there are less patients than when she started because now almost all clinics and hospitals in Lesotho are able to address HIV.

Looking toward the future, Dr. Rathabaneng expects the COE to continue to grow. She has seen the dedication and commitment of the staff as they work hard to carry on its vision and mission. She expects to see increased scientific endeavors and research coming from the COE. And when discussing her future, Dr. Rathabaneng says, "I do not [know] the word 'retired.' You can only retire the day you die. I would say I am just changing the tires, I am buying new tires for this vehicle...[When you want to talk to a doctor you know the road to the COE.] When you want to talk to me about anything else you know where to find me." We are extremely grateful for her years of faithful service and wish the best of luck to "Lady Luke" on the road she travels next!


Baylor-Malawi Launches JAIDS Supplement

The Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation-Malawi (Baylor-Malawi) held a satellite session at the recent 22nd International AIDS Conference to launch the release of a special JAIDS supplement on best practices and lessons from the Accelerating Children's HIV/AIDS Treatment (ACT) Initiative, a public-private partnership that expanded pediatric HIV services in nine sub-Saharan African countries from 2014-2016 and provided treatment to more than 560,000 children living with HIV. The ACT Initiative was implemented by more than 100 partners in a significant effort to fill gaps in case finding and treatment, including the Baylor network in Lesotho, Malawi, and Tanzania.



Nine speakers and more than 70 participants from international development organizations, donor agencies, and academia gathered at AIDS 2018 to discuss best practices and lessons learned from the ACT Initiative, reflecting on how to sustain and continue to accelerate progress in reaching children and adolescents living with HIV. The speakers, who were among the authors of several articles in the new supplement, reflected on the ACT initiative, presented on topics including an examination of data revealing pediatric HIV treatment gaps, identification and linkage strategies, the need to strengthen services for HIV-exposed infants, and family-centered differentiated service delivery. Participants asked thoughtful questions and engaged in lively discussion with the panel of speakers. This included reflection on challenges with case identification and the need for countries to strategically position point-of-care diagnostics. In terms of maternal retesting, the group concluded that there needs to be careful consideration of country-specific disease burdens and resource availability in order to balance convenience for women, the capacity of healthcare workers, and effectiveness. Male partners should also be targeted, as partners' unknown status is one of the highest risk factors for HIV infection.

The supplement was developed under Technical Support to PEPFAR Programs in the Southern Africa Region (TSP), a five-year, USAID-funded project implemented by Baylor-Malawi which provides technical expertise to strengthen the HIV response at local, national, and regional levels across 10 countries. The supplement features 11 articles that can be applied to help improve pediatric HIV care globally.




Accelerating Children's HIV/AIDS Treatment (ACT):
Post-program JAIDS Supplement

The two-year ACT Initiative, a public-private partnership in nine sub-Saharan African countries, achieved remarkable results:

- 16.4 million HIV tests conducted
- Nearly 470,000 children diagnosed with HIV
- More than 560,000 children treated for HIV

The eleven articles in this special-issue JAIDS Supplement highlight lessons and best practices that can be applied to improve pediatric HIV care globally

Access the supplement online at:
<https://journals.lww.com/jaids/toc/2018/08152>





DEPARTMENT NEWS . . .

FACULTY, FELLOWS, STAFF FEATURES

Honorary Doctor of Science Conferred in Uganda

Makerere University held a special graduation ceremony at which it conferred upon **Dr. David Poplack** an Honorary Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa). Dr. Poplack is the Elise C. Young Professor of Pediatric Oncology at BCM, Director of Global HOPE at TCH, Associate Director of TCH's Cancer Center, and Deputy Director of the Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center at BCM. He is Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded Pediatric Pharmacology Research Unit, Principal Investigator of an NCI K12 Pediatric Oncology Clinical Research Training Grant, and the Program Director of an NCI T32 Pediatric Oncology Training grant. Dr. Poplack has authored more than 350 original articles and book chapters relating to pediatric oncology, and serves on the editorial board of numerous subspecialty journals. He is co-editor of *Principles and Practice of Pediatric Oncology*, the leading textbook of pediatric oncology, which is in its fifth edition. He also has served on numerous NIH, FDA and Institute of Medicine committees.



In Memoriam

Dr. William T. Shearer

On October 9, 2018, the world lost a noted luminary in the field of allergy and immunology and legend in his own time, Dr. William T. Shearer. Dr. Shearer was Professor of Pediatrics and Immunology at Baylor College of Medicine and the founder and former Chief of the Allergy and Immunology Services, a position he held for 34 years. He was 81 years old.

Dr. Shearer gained international recognition many years ago when he and the late Dr. Ralph Feigin, then Chairman, provided innovative care for David Vetter, known as “the Bubble Boy” because he spent most of his life in a contained “bubble” due to his immune deficiencies. After David passed, he and Dr. Feigin created a lasting tribute in David’s memory, the David Vetter Memorial Fund. David’s Dream Run was later founded by the David Elementary School and the Parent Teacher Organization to support the fund.



“It was my good fortune to work side-by-side with Dr. Shearer for many years. No one worked harder or was more dedicated to his patients and trainees than Bill. I learned an enormous amount from him during the formative stages of my career development. He was a mentor and friend for nearly 30 years, and I will miss him tremendously.”

-- Dr. Mark Kline, Chairman

“It was truly an honor to be able to witness the incredible passion and productivity of this international leader, eminent immunologist, superlative teacher, and incredibly compassionate mentor. We will all miss him dearly.”

--Dr. Carla Davis, Chief of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology

Dr. Shearer graduated from, and is a distinguished alumnus of, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He received his clinical training in pediatrics, allergy and immunology at Washington University’s affiliated hospitals, St. Louis Children’s Hospital and Barnes Hospital. He joined the faculty of Washington University in 1974 and was promoted to Professor in 1978, prior to coming to BCM/TCH.

During his 40 years at BCM/TCH, Dr. Shearer’s career was characterized by his passion for both basic and clinical research in primary and secondary immunodeficiency, for which he was a constant recipient of funding from the National Institutes of Health and other institutions. He was extremely active in clinical research, especially for children with HIV infection, and he was a pioneer in the initial studies of prevention and treatment of the disease and its complications. He enthusiastically mentored 117 trainees as the Program Director of the Allergy and Immunology Fellowship Training Program at BCM/TCH and has been remembered for being “an incredibly compassionate mentor.” He continued his work until his passing.

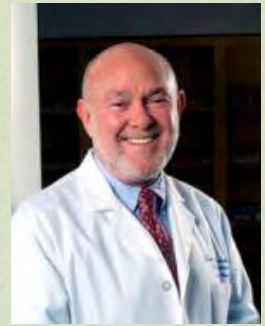
He served in numerous leadership positions in every major professional organization concerned with patient care, training and research in pediatric immunology, and HIV/AIDS. He was honored by numerous organizations with prestigious awards recognizing his work as a clinician, research, and mentor. Among his accolades were the Research Scholar Award from the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, a Faculty Research Award from the American Cancer Society, the 2017 Clinical Immunology Society Distinguished Service Award, and the Arnold J. Rudolph Baylor Pediatric Award for Lifetime Excellence in Teaching. He was elected to the Association of American Physicians in 2008; served as Chair of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Program Directors Assembly from 1986-1991; served as Chair of AAAAI’s Clinical and Laboratory Immunology Committee; and was elected Councilor (1997-2001) and President (2001-2002) of the Clinical Immunology Society. He also authored more than 500 journal articles and textbook chapters, was Associate Editor of the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, and was the Editor-in-Chief of the world’s premier textbook of clinical immunology, *Clinical Immunology: Principles and Practice*, for more than 20 years.

Donations may be made in his memory to the David Vetter Memorial Fund, which is dedicated to research, diagnosis, and treatment of immune deficiencies.

New Leader of Cancer/Hematology Center Named



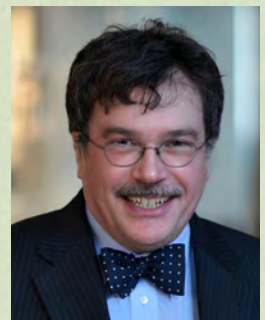
Dr. Susan Blaney, Professor and Executive Vice-chair of Pediatrics, has been promoted from Deputy Director to **Director of Texas Children's Cancer and Hematology Centers**. She assumes the position held since 1993 by **Dr. David Poplack**, who was named **Associate Director of Global HOPE**, the hospital's pediatric hematology and oncology initiative in Botswana, Malawi, and Uganda. Dr. Blaney, a member of the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, is Vice-chair of the Children's Oncology Group, the clinical trial cooperative.



Co-Section Head of Tropical Medicine Announced



Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi was appointed **Co-Section Head of the Section of Pediatric Tropical Medicine**. She currently serves as Professor of Pediatrics, as well as the Co-Director of Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, and Associate Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine. The announcement was made by **Dr. Peter Hotez**, Section Head



Dr. Bottazzi obtained her undergraduate BS degree in Microbiology and Clinical Chemistry from the National Autonomous University of Honduras and a Ph.D. in Molecular Pathology & Experimental Immunology at the University of Florida. She completed her postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Miami and Pennsylvania before joining the faculty of the Department of Microbiology and Tropical Medicine at George Washington University rising to the rank of Associate Professor and Vice Chair of Administration.

Dr. Bottazzi joined Baylor College of Medicine in 2011 as Professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology and Microbiology, where she leads a team of scientists and programs to accelerate the development of new vaccines for hookworm, schistosomiasis, Chagas disease and other neglected tropical diseases using innovative business models based on global consortia called product development partnerships or PDPs.

Dr. Bottazzi is the author of more than 120 peer reviewed publications, is principal investigator on numerous grants, and is an internationally recognized leader in vaccine product development and translational medicine. In 2017, she received the Medal of Honor Orden Gran Cruz Placa de Oro from the Honduran National Congress, where she also received the National Science Award. Dr. Bottazzi is one of the 2017-18 Alan I Leshner Leadership Institute Public Engagement Fellows, a Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Fellow and American Leadership Forum (ALF) Fellow. This year she received the 2018 Carlos Slim Health Award Lifetime Achievement in Research.

New Head of Diabetes/Endocrinology Named

On August 30, Dr. Mark Kline, Chairman, announced that **Dr. Rona Sonabend**, Assoc. Professor, had accepted the invitation to serve as head of the Section of Diabetes and Endocrinology, effective September 1, 2018. Dr. Sonabend has been the Medical Director of Quality Improvement for the Section and Medical Director of Clinical Systems Integration Process Improvement for TCH.



She received her BA with distinction from Cornell University in 1998 and a MD degree from The University of Texas-Houston Medical School in 2002. She completed her pediatric residency training (2005) and a pediatric endocrinology fellowship (2008) at BCM/TCH. She joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor in 2008. During the past ten years, she has developed an Endocrine Late Effects of Cancer Therapy program and research and clinical collaborations with premier cancer centers across the United States, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her research on the negative effects of hyperglycemia on survival rates in children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and the endocrine complications following proton therapy in survivors of brain tumors has received national attention and influenced prospective therapy protocols.

"Dr. Sonabend is a superb clinician who is well-loved and respected by her patients and colleagues . . . Dr. Sonabend is a dynamic speaker and well-recognized educator. She has received the Pediatric Endocrinology Resident Teaching Award for the last two years . . . We are extremely fortunate to have on our faculty an individual of Dr. Rona Sonabend's quality, experience and character to lead our efforts in Diabetes and Endocrinology."

--Dr. Mark Kline, Chairman

In 2013, Dr. Sonabend took a formal leadership role for the Diabetes Care Process Team (CPT), a multidisciplinary clinical program that sought to improve the quality of care for children with diabetes at TCH. Using rapid cycle quality improvement methodology, the CPT was charged with decreasing variability, waste, and costs through delivery of evidence-based best practices. The team was credited with developing a first of its kind, six-bed acute care inpatient Diabetes Care Unit, with specialized diabetes nurses trained to manage and educate from diagnosis to severe complications of disease. The team has grown to approximately 155 individuals tackling topics such as ambulatory practices, education pathways for patients and staff, community engagement and advocacy and predictive analytics for high risk behaviors, and has been extended to three inpatient facilities and six ambulatory satellites. Dr. Sonabend now serves as project lead representing Texas Children's Hospital as a site in the Type 1 Diabetes Exchange Quality Improvement Collaborative (one of only ten), a national collaborative funded by the Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to accelerate treatment and improve the health outcomes of individuals living with Type 1 Diabetes.

In the fall of 2014, Dr. Sonabend was appointed the Medical Chief of Quality for the Section of Diabetes and Endocrinology. In this role, she has overseen all quality improvement projects of the Section, mentored faculty and learners in quality methodology, and managed metrics and quality improvement efforts for federal, state and other reporting agencies, including the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program and *U.S. News & World Report*.

In her 10 years as a faculty member, she has mentored and advised numerous medical learners, junior faculty, and colleagues who credit her with their success, and she has developed numerous infrastructural education programs and materials.

Leadership Transition for Psychology Announced



Dr. Doug Ris, Head of the Section of Psychology, will be stepping down from that position at the end of this calendar year. He joined BCM/TCH in February, 2009, as Professor of Pediatrics and Head of the Section of Psychology. During the past nine years, his remarkable leadership in organizing and growing the programs in psychology and behavioral health have expanded to become among the finest in the United States.

"Please join me in thanking Dr. Ris for more than nine years of outstanding leadership and service to Baylor and Texas Children's."

-- Dr. Mark Kline, Chairman



"Dr. Kaplow already has had an amazing impact on the Department of Pediatrics and Texas Children's in her short time here, establishing and growing programs for children and families impacted by Hurricane Harvey, the mass shooting in Santa Fe and a variety other adverse life events. She has impeccable academic credentials and creative problem-solving skills, as well as a strong mission focus. She will be an outstanding successor to Dr. Ris as Chief of Psychology."

-- Dr. Mark Kline, Chairman

To fill Dr. Ris's position, **Dr. Julie Kaplow** has accepted Dr. Kline's invitation to serve as the new Head of the Section of Psychology, effective January 1, 2019. Dr. Kaplow joined BCM/TCH in August, 2017, as Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center within the Section of Psychology. She earned a Ph.D. degree in Clinical Psychology from Duke University in 2002 and completed an internship and postdoctoral fellowship training at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School and in the Center for Medical and Refugee Trauma at Boston University Medical Center. Dr. Kaplow is the current recipient as Principal Investigator of extramural grant funding totaling \$7.4 million. She has given more than 100 national or international lectures and authored numerous peer-reviewed papers and several books.

Faculty Member Receives AAP Education Award

Dr. Teri Turner, Assoc. Professor, was awarded the 2018 AAP Education Award. The award recognizes a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics whose career reflects educational contributions that have a broad and positive impact on the health and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults with a broad perspective of educational contributions, ranging from bedside instruction to formation of a national child health education policy. Dr. Turner is the Vice Chair of Education and Association Program Director of the Pediatric Residency Program, as well as the Director of the Department's Center for Research, Innovation and Scholarship in Medical Education (CRIS).



Critical Care Faculty Attend International Congress



BCM/TCH were well represented at the 3rd International Children's Palliative Care Network Congress in Durban, South Africa, thanks to **Drs. Gordon Schutze, Parth Mehta, and Tammy Kang**. **Dr. Liane Campbell** (Tanzania), **Dr. Kamusisi Chinyudo** (Botswana) and **Regina Okhuysen-Cawley** presented a workshop on complex symptom management, a plenary, a concurrent session, and six posters.

CRIS Announces Upcoming Education Retreat

"Thriving in an Era of Disruptive Change in Health Sciences Education"

January 18, 2019

Texas Children's Hospital Auditorium

Pavilion for Women, 4th floor

The **Center for Research, Innovation and Scholarship in Medical Education (CRIS)** announced that the theme of the next Annual Department of Pediatric Education Retreat is ***"Thriving in an Era of Disruptive Change in Health Sciences Education."*** It will be held on January 18, 2019, in the TCH Auditorium (Grand Rounds) and the Pavilion for Women, 4th floor (workshops, afternoon plenary, oral presentations, and awards). Submissions of workshops and abstracts is now open, with a deadline of November 9, 2019 for workshops and November 16, 2019 for platforms.

Submissions should be sent to

<https://orit.research.bcm.edu/R5T80IF3WH2/TCHEducationRetreat/Welcome.aspx>

Please use the **Registration link** to register for this day. <https://www.bcm.edu/departments/pediatrics/education/faculty-development-sessions>.

Please email at CRIS@texaschildrens.org with any questions.

Planning Committee: Co-Chairs: Rachel Wolfe & Ankhi Dutta
Danny Castro; Julieana Nichols; Satid Thammasitboon; Remijio Elizondo; Karla Gonzalez

Faculty briefs . . .

Dr. Keisha Barton, Fellow, was selected as Senior Fellow Representative to Fellows College Leadership & Steering Committee for 2018-2019 Academic Year.

Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi, Professor and Associate Dean of National School of Tropical Medicine, was honored with the 2018 Carlos Slim Award, and was introduced by Dr. Peter Hotez.

Dr. Ashley Butler, Asst. Professor, was awarded a National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases R25 grant for a mentoring and leadership development program for underrepresented-in-medicine early career faculty, postdocs and clinical fellows. Scholars in the program will strengthen skills in leadership and grant writing, expand their professional networks and discuss common challenges faced by underrepresented groups and potential strategies to address them.

Dr. Rikhia Chakraborty, Asst. Professor, won a \$5,000 Antibody Immuno-Profiling Grant from Genewiz for her project to sequence T-cell receptors in the tumor microenvironment in hopes of designing combinatorial therapies for pediatric cancer. Genewiz provides genomic services and celebrates leaders and innovations in the field and awards grants during its annual Genewiz Week.

Dr. Hsiao-Tuan Chao, Instructor and Assoc. Director of the the Child Neurology Residency Program, was awarded the Child Neurology Foundation's 2018 Pediatric Epilepsy Research Foundation Grant for clinical or basic science research by a child neurologist early in their academic career. The \$100,000 grant will be awarded over two years to support Dr. Chao's transition from postdoctoral trainee to independent investigator where she will continue to tackle important questions in intellectual disability, autism and epilepsy.

Dr. Bruno Chumpitazi, Assoc. Professor and Director of the Neurogastroenterology and Motility Program at TCH, received a 2-year grant from the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition Foundation for his research project, "Advancing Nutritional Science for Children with Functional Dyspepsia."

Dr. Carla M. Davis, Assoc. Professor and Chief of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology

- served as the Presiding Officer for the Stock Epinephrine Advisory Committee (SEAC) on September 28, 2018, in Austin, Texas. The SEAC met to discuss the rules for the implementation of stock epinephrine on campuses of high education and the report of the administration of epinephrine auto-injectors to the Texas Department State Health Service.

- was invited attendee at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease Mast Cell Activation Syndrome, Sept. 7, 2018, with other national experts to discuss the contextualization of the MCAS and MCAS-like endotypes and diagnostic workup, proposals for current management, what to do for refractory, difficult patients, research on mechanisms, education for patients and providers, managing expectations and outcomes.

Dr. Harold J. Farber, Assoc. Professor, recently addressed the inherent dangers of the increasingly popular e-cigarette devices (and other electronic nicotine-delivery systems). He vehemently debunked the false perception of safety and criticized the companies manufacturing them and boasting of their tempting flavors. In a blog published on the TCH website, Dr. Farber addressed several specific myths and unsubstantiated claims regarding e-cigarettes and offered advice for what parents can do to help their children.

Dr. Ricardo Flores, Asst. Professor and member of the NCI-designated Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, has been invited to present about pediatric clinical practices and research findings at the Puerto Rico Hematology and Medical Oncology Association annual meeting. He is the first pediatrician to have received an invitation to present at this venue.

Dr. Vanessa Hill, Assoc. Professor, is featured in the Meet Your Senator article on the faculty intranet portal. She represents the faculty at Children's Hospital of San Antonio on the Senate.

Dr. Jimmy Holder, Professor and Investigator at the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute, accepted a \$25,000 award from the Bridge the Gap – SYNGAP Education and Research Foundation in support of the primary synaptopathy clinic in the Bluebird Clinic of Neurology at TCH. The clinic treats patients with neurological disorders due to mutations in genes critical for synapse function.

Dr. Peter Hotez, Professor and Dean for National School of Tropical Medicine

- gave a keynote to 4,000 attendees at the annual APIC (Association for Professionals in Infection Control) meeting in Minneapolis.

- was honored at the Belgium Royal Academy of Medicine in Belgium.

- delivered pediatric grand rounds at Stanford medical school and Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, and at UT Health Northeast in Tyler, Texas.

- presented at a biomedical research symposium (together with Dr. Eric Lander from the Broad Institute at Harvard MIT) held at UNAM (Autonomous University of Mexico).

Dr. Philip Lupo, Assoc. Professor and member of the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, was invited to be an associate editor for *Birth Defects Research*. Lupo conducts research on the intersection of birth defects and childhood cancer.

Dr. Priya Mahajan, Asst. Professor, was selected for the editorial board of *Clinical Thyroidology for the Public*, a monthly online journal that shares the latest in thyroid research with patients and families.

Dr. Judith Margolin, Assoc. Professor, was named the 2017-18 recipient of the biennial Founder's Award from the Lymphoangiomatosis and Gorham's Disease Alliance. The award recognizes a physician for extraordinary medical professionalism, critical care, treatment, and support to children and their families affected by Gorham-Stout disease and other lymphatic disorders.

Dr. Juan Marini, Assoc. Professor, is the corresponding author of "Prematurity reduces citrulline-arginine-nitric oxide production and precedes the onset of necrotizing enterocolitis in piglets chosen by the American Physiological Society for inclusion in APSselect, which showcases some of the best recently published articles in physiological research.

Dr. Nmazuo "Maz" Ozuah, Asst. Professor and part of the international program at TCH's Cancer and Hematology Centers

-- was awarded the Daniel D. Von Hoff Innovator Award at the American Association of Cancer Research/American Society of Clinical Oncology Methods in Clinical Cancer Research conference held in Vail, Colo., from July 28 – Aug. 3. This award recognizes the most innovative and impactful protocol from a workshop attendee. Ozuah's proposal was on the feasibility of dose-intensive response-based chemotherapy for pediatric Hodgkin's lymphoma in Malawi.

-- was awarded a new International Scholar award from the St. Baldrick's Foundation (\$330,000 USD, for 3-years). His work on non-Hodgkin lymphoma will be focused in Malawi.

Dr. David Poplack, longtime director of TCH's Cancer and Hematology Centers, was recognized as a Hometown Hero at the June 20 Houston Astros game. The Hometown Heroes Program recognizes people from the Houston area who have helped their community in extraordinary ways.

Dr. Mary Esther Rocha, Assoc. Professor, was one of four recipients of the Academy of Distinguished Educators award, Norton Rose Fulbright Educational Grants, for her project "Assessing Validity Evidence for an Observed Structured Clinical Examination Assessing Communication Skills Involving Transitions of Patient Care. Award winners will submit poster abstracts to the Academy's Showcase of Educational Scholarship in 2019.

Dr. Binoy Shivanna, Asst. Professor, received an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health for his project on the roles of the hormone adrenomedullin and its signaling receptors in experimental models of bronchopulmonary dysplasia and pulmonary hypertension. The goal of his work is to translate bench research to clinical trials for the prevention and or treatment of BPD in premature infants.

Dr. Lakshmi Srivaths, Assoc. Professor, has been appointed as chair of the education/advocacy subcommittee for the national Foundation for Women and Girls with Blood Disorders The chair will be in charge of the subcommittee's organization and ongoing activities, which include creating education for clinic staff, referring providers, providers outside of primary institution and organized/informal education opportunities.

Kate Travis, Medical Student, is the recipient of the 2017-18 Adam Cohen Medical Student Professionalism Award in Pediatrics, based on nominations from her student peers, residents, faculty and clerkship administrators. She was recognized for her empathy, character and kindness toward patients and others.

Dr. Peter Wasswa, Asst. Professor, was awarded extended support as an International Scholar from the St. Baldrick's Foundation for an additional year (\$115,000 USD, 1-year). Dr. Wasswa plans to expand his research on pediatric hematological malignancies to include populations in Malawi and Uganda.



DEPARTMENT RESEARCH . . .

HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES



Funds Seven Projects at BCM/TCH

The St. Baldrick's Foundation, a volunteer-powered charity dedicated to raising money for childhood cancer research, has awarded grants to seven faculty members.

- **Dr. Nmazou Ozuah**, Asst. Professor, received a \$330,000 grant to support his project studying biological predictors in Hodgkin lymphoma in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Dr. Peter Wasswa**, Asst. Professor, was awarded \$115,000 to pursue research looking at the biological and clinical profiling of childhood hematological malignancies.
- **Dr. Michele Redell**, Assoc. Professor, received \$96,012 to fund her research in chemotherapy resistance through stroma-induced SYK in pediatric acute myeloid leukemia.
- **Dr. Kimberly Raghubar**, Professor, received \$49,858 to aid in the development of an online platform for cognitive surveillance in pediatric brain tumors.
- **Dr. Eveline Barbieri**, Asst. Professor, was awarded a grant for \$111,616 to support her research exploring novel differentiating therapies for high-risk neuroblastoma.
- **Dr. Will Parsons**, Assoc. Professor and Co-director of the Brain Tumor and Cancer Genetics and Genomics Programs, received a \$150,000 St. Baldrick's Foundation Innovation Award.
- **Dr. Carl Allen**, Assoc. Professor and Co-director of the Lymphoma and Histiocytosis Programs, received a \$150,000 St. Baldrick's Foundation Innovation Award.

Grant Will Support Three Projects to Address Liver Cancers

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) donated \$6 million to BCM/TCH to find new predictive biomarkers and therapies for high-risk pediatric liver cancers. This grant addresses an urgent need to find safe, targeted, and effective treatments that will improve outcomes for children with high-risk liver cancers.

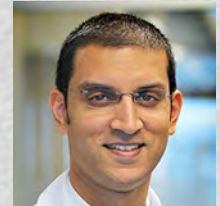
Dr. Dolores Lopez-Terrada, Professor and Director of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Cytogenetics at TCH (pictured left), is leading the multi-investigator grant, which consists of three complementary projects.



The *first* project proposes to validate previously identified prognostic and therapeutic biomarkers for high-risk liver cancers. It will be headed by **Dr. Pavel Sumazin**, Asst. Professor and Director of the Bioinformatics Core at TCH's Cancer and Hematology Center (left), and **Dr. Donald W. Parsons**, Assoc. Professor and Director of the Pediatric Center for Personal Cancer Genomics and Therapeutics and Co-director of the Brain Tumor Program and Cancer Genetics & Genomics Program at TCH's Cancer and Hematology Center (right).



The *second* project, led by **Dr. Sanjeev Vasudevan**, Asst. Professor and Director of the Surgical Oncology Program at TCH (right) and Dr. Karl-Dimiter Bissig, Assoc. Professor at the Center for Cell and Gene Therapy in TCH's Cancer and Hematology Center, aims to reactivate p53 tumor suppressor signaling pathways in mouse models of pediatric liver cancers with the ultimate goal of developing targeted therapies to counter chemoresistance and tumor cell dissemination in children with high-risk liver tumors.



The *third* project, led by **Dr. Andras Heczey**, Asst. Professor and Director of the Liver Tumor program at TCH's Cancer and Hematology Center (left), will aim to develop targeted immunotherapy for high-risk liver tumors by examining the safety and efficacy of genetically engineered Glypican-3-specific chimeric antigen receptors (CAR)-T-cells.

“Kids First” Supports Research on Down Syndrome and ALL



The Gabriella Miller Kids First Pediatric Research Program (Kids First) has awarded a grant to researchers from BCM, Emory University, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to sequence the genomes of more than 2,000 individuals with Down syndrome. **Drs. Philip Lupo** and **Karen Rabin**, both Assoc. Professors, are co-principal investigators of the study. Children with Down syndrome are approximately 20 times more likely than other children to develop acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). The project will focus primarily on genes that the individual is born with (inherited DNA), but it also



will include sequencing of leukemia samples (tumor DNA) from the same individuals to identify the genetic changes that are acquired by cells as they develop into leukemia after birth. The research will focus primarily on genes that the individuals' inherited DNA and will also sequence leukemia samples from the same individuals to identify the genetic changes that are acquired by cells as they develop into leukemia after birth.

Faculty Receive BCM Grant Awards

Baylor College of Medicine has awarded its first round of grants for proposals on **Precision Medicine and Population Health** topics, in support of the strategic planning initiative. After BCM issued an RFP in February stipulating that projects leverage large data sets currently available at BCM or an affiliate; involve multidisciplinary teams of faculty, staff and trainees; and be relevant to population-based clinical care, it received 43 proposals, 10 of which were selected for one-year, \$30,000 grants. Awards received by faculty in the Department of Pediatrics are:

- **Dr. Maria Redondo**, Assoc. Professor, and colleagues, for "Precision medicine for pediatric diabetes"
- **Dr. Michael Scheurer**, Assoc. Professor, and his team, for "Big data for biobanking"
- **Dr. Mir Reza Bekheirnia**, Asst. Professor, as lead for "Precision diagnosis of persistent isolated hematuria in children"

Consortium Receives 5-Year Grant

The Southwest Pediatric Device Consortium, led by **Dr. Chester Koh**, Professor and Director of the Pediatric Robotic Surgery Program, received a \$6.75 million grant from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to support the consortium's goal to expand development of much needed medical devices for children. The consortium seeks to meet a gap in medical devices designed specifically for children, a result likely of economic, clinical, regulatory, reimbursement, and business model challenges, according to its website. The site notes that "Since pediatric device projects often cannot progress through the standard market-based approach of adult device projects, where premature exits outside of academia and into industry often lead to failure, the approach of the Southwest Pediatric Device Consortium (PDC) emphasizes the need for an extended life cycle of pediatric device projects in the children's hospital / academic setting before exposure to the external market." The consortium is anchored by TCH, and BCM and includes clinical, scientific, business, financial, regulatory, reimbursement, engineering ISO13485 compliant product design and manufacturing. It partners with Texas A&M University System, Rice University, University of Houston, Fannin Innovation Studios, Biotex, Children's Health Dalls, Phoenix Children's Hospital and other organizations and institutions.



Novel Treatment for Immune Dysregulation Published



Dr. Lisa Forbes, Assist. Professor (left), and **Dr. Tiphany Vogel**, Assist. Professor (right), and colleagues published a novel treatment for patients with immune dysregulation from STAT 1 and STAT3 gain of function mutation. The article is titled, "Jak inhibitors for the treatment of immune dysregulation in patients with gain-of-function signal transducer and activator of transcription 1 (STAT1) or STAT3 mutations." The list of authors is: Forbes LR, Vogel



TP, Cooper MA, Castro-Wagner J, Schussler E, Weinacht KG, Plant AS, Su HC, Allenspach EJ, Slatter M, Abinun M, Lilic D, Cunningham-Rundles C, Eckstein O, Olbrich P, Guillerman RP, Patel NC, Demirdag YY, Zerbe C, Freeman AF, Holland SM, Szabolcs P, Gennery A, Torgerson TR, Milner JD, Leiding JW. The article was published in the August issue of *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*: J Allergy Clin Immunol. 2018 Aug 6. pii: S0091-6749(18)31127-8.

New Treatment for Sickle Cell Disease Reported

Dr. Vivien Sheehan has recently developed a new treatment for sickle cell disease, based on her laboratory research. Sickle cell disease, a red-blood-cell disorder, affects more than 100,000 Americans and millions more worldwide. Although it can be treated no cure has been found. Dr. Sheehan has reported her findings that metformin, a commonly used medication for diabetes, has the ability to induce fetal hemoglobin in developing red blood cells. As higher levels of fetal hemoglobin reduce sickling in red blood cells of patients with sickle cell disease, the medication has the potential to reduce the severity of sickle cell complications in patients. It also can be taken with another drug, hydroxyurea, that increases fetal hemoglobin, in order to achieve a synergist effect.

After attending a cancer-related conference where researchers mentioned that the drug metformin could help with cancer by increasing amounts of proteins and research showed increased fetal hemoglobin, Dr. Sheehan approached the IRB and asked about starting a clinical trial of metformin in sickle cell patients since it was known to be safe, and wouldn't cause hypoglycemia even in non-diabetics.

With funding from Pfizer, in 2016 she and other researchers launched a clinical trial that is currently assessing the effectiveness of metformin to make fetal hemoglobin in patients with sickle cell who are receiving care at TCH's Hematology Center. Precious Uwaezuoke, a nurse practitioner, works closely with Dr. Sheehan and the research team, as well as patients, and she is responsible for helping to determine who may be good candidates for clinical trials. Fighting sickle cell herself, she knows that at times handling the disease can be very difficult. After the clinical trial is completed, the next step will be commercialization. Dr. Sheehan noted that the progress is very exhilarating and that it is amazing for a process of this magnitude to have been executed in just four years.

"Usually it takes around 15 years," Sheehan said. "That's the average time it takes to develop a drug from the bench to the bedside, and that's a pharmaceutical company with all of their staff. So now we're in 2018, we're almost done with the first arm of our clinical trial, patients taking both hydroxyurea and metformin, and can now analyze and publish our results."

-- Dr. Vivien Sheehan



Dr. Sheehan explains that research is key to improving the use of the tools that we already have. She is now looking for a few more participants to complete the second arm of the clinical trial, patients not on hydroxyurea, and also add adult patients younger than 40 years of age. Dr. Sheehan has formed a collaboration with University of Texas Health Sciences Center's Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center and Dr. Juneja and Dr. Idowu to be able to enroll these older patients.

She notes that, "It's the only way to advance in a meaningful way. You can make incremental advances just by improving access to care or use of the drug, but you're not going to make a big, significant change without research. Those with Sickle Cell are doing better through childhood, but they're still not living longer in adulthood and I think it's the lack of therapies that will continue to work in our older patients and I feel like this is going to be one of them and I want to see it improve life spans and not just number of years, but health."

MAKE A NOTE . . .

UPCOMING EVENTS



October 25 – 26, 2018

19th Annual Chronic Illness & Disability Conference
MD Anderson Mitchell Basic Sciences Research Building
Onstead Auditorium, 3rd Floor

October 26, 2018

All-Day Retreat for Scholarly Writing
Sponsored by CRIS
First Presbyterian Church
5300 Main, Houston

October 26, 2018

Systematic Reviews Workshop
Pavilion for Women 4th floor

November 27, 2018

LEAD Certificate Program
Applications Open

Pedi Press is a quarterly news publication of the Department of Pediatrics
Baylor College of Medicine

Dr. Mark Kline, Editor-in-Chief
Dr. B. Lee Ligon, Managing Editor / Graphics Design
Dr. Gordon Schutze, Consulting Editor
Julie O'Brien, Copy and Content Editor

Articles and other items should be sent to Dr. Lee Ligon at
bligon@bcm.edu

The next deadline is December 1, 2018