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April 5, 2010

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### EVENTS:

#### 2010 Clinical and Translational Research and Education Meeting

To enhance and promote the best practices in research and education of clinical and translational research, the CTSA Education and Career Development consortium has collaborated with the Association for Clinical Research Training (ACRT) and the Society for Clinical and Translational Science (SCTS) to develop a national conference for scholars and leaders in research and education. The scholars program will take place in Washington, D.C., on **April 6–7, 2010**, and the ACRT/SCTS joint meeting will be held on **April 5–7, 2010**.

For more information and to register, visit the [Association for Clinical Research Training Web site](#).

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### **Clinical Applications of Quantum Dot and Nanoparticle Technology**

The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) at the University of Illinois at Chicago will host an all-day symposium on the Clinical Applications of Quantum Dot and Nanoparticle Technology on **April 13, 2010**. The symposium, which will feature six cutting-edge researchers, is aimed at translational science investigators and those interested in learning more about this emerging field. The Translational Technologies and Resources Core (TTRC) of the CCTS is hosting the event to help foster greater interaction between basic scientists and clinical researchers to achieve breakthroughs that would not be attainable by individual efforts. All are welcome, but RSVP is required.

For more information, visit the [CCTS Web site](#) or to RSVP, e-mail [Beth Woods](#).

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### **Mayo Clinic CTSA Metabolomics Workshop**

The Mayo Clinic CTSA will host a metabolomics workshop at the Mayo Clinic campus in Rochester, Minn., on **April 16, 2010**. The workshop is aimed at translational science investigators, KL2 and other K-award scholars, and research fellows interested in this emerging field.

National and international visiting faculty, as well as Mayo Clinic faculty, will speak at the workshop. In addition to learning more about metabolomics techniques and applications, attendees will have the opportunity to network with colleagues and tour Mayo's metabolomics facilities. Also outlined will be the novel analytical tools at the Mayo CTSA's Metabolomics Core.

For more information and to register, visit the [Mayo Clinic CTSA Web site](#).

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### **Science of Team Science Conference**

Northwestern University will host a [Science of Team Science Conference](#) on **April 22–24, 2010**. The discipline of Team Science promotes team-based research by working closely with investigators to examine the process by which research teams organize themselves. This includes how they think and do their work together to achieve research breakthroughs that would not be attainable by individual or additive efforts. Northwestern's Office of Research Team Support is a champion of this emerging field of study.

*NEW:* A workshop on social network analysis has been added on Saturday, April 24th.

For more information, please contact [Holly Falk-Krzesinski](#).

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### **Improving Children's Health Through Community-Engaged Research Workshop**

The Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR), in partnership with the Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research, will sponsor the Improving Children's Health Through Community-Engaged Research Workshop on **April 23, 2010**, at the University of Michigan School of Public Health in Ann Arbor, Mich. This workshop will feature prominent experts and dynamic breakout sessions designed to prepare for conducting team science. The event will also focus on developing academic and community partnerships to improve the health of children and youth—through collaborative, community-engaged research. A pre-workshop reception is planned for the evening of **April 22**.

Other event sponsors include Community–Campus Partnerships for Health, Washtenaw County Health Department, and City Connect Detroit.

For more information, contact [Molly White](#) or [Nichole Washington](#).

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### **NUCATS Sponsors Chicago's European Bioinformatics Institute Roadshow**

Chicago's European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) Roadshow will be held **April 26–27, 2010**, at Northwestern University. Sponsored by the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute, Northwestern University Biomedical Informatics Center (NUBIC), and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center Biostatistics Core, the EBI Roadshow will provide hands-on bioinformatics training for scientists through an introductory-level course directed at researchers with a biological background but little or no previous knowledge of the resources to be presented. Faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students are all encouraged to attend.

For more information and to register, visit the [EBI Roadshow Chicago Web site](#).

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#### **Research Participant Recruitment and Retention Symposium: How to Succeed in the Face of Obstacles**

The Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) is hosting its second annual Research Participant Recruitment and Retention Symposium, "How to Succeed in the Face of Obstacles," on **April 30, 2010**. Organized by the ICTR's Office of Recruitment and Retention, the day-long program will take place at the Turner Concourse on the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine campus in Baltimore, Md.

This symposium is designed to equip investigators, study coordinators, and research staff with the strategies and tools to successfully meet the recruitment and retention goals of their studies. Lectures and interactive small group sessions will be led by experts in the field from Tufts, Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, and industry. Program participants will also have the opportunity to problem-solve their own recruitment and retention issues through facilitated small group sessions.

For more information and to register, visit the [ICTR Web site](#) or e-mail [ORR@jhmi.edu](mailto:ORR@jhmi.edu).

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#### **2010 National Predoctoral Clinical Research Training Program Meeting**

Washington University in St. Louis will again host the National Predoctoral Clinical Research Training Program Meeting **May 3–4, 2010**. Meeting events will take place in the Eric P. Newman Education Center and the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center at Washington University School of Medicine. The goals of this meeting are to bring together TL1 Predoctoral Program trainees from CTSA consortium institutions to share research findings and experiences and to provide TL1 Predoctoral Program directors an opportunity to meet face-to-face and discuss common issues of program management and predoctoral student career development. Program administrators are also welcome to attend.

For more information, visit the [meeting Web site](#) or e-mail [Joe Wilson](mailto:Joe Wilson).

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#### **Save the Date—Community Engagement Key Function Committee Meeting**

The CTSA Community Engagement Key Function Committee face-to-face meeting will be held **May 12, 2010** at the Natcher Conference Center at NIH in Bethesda, Md.

For more information, contact [Donna Jo McCloskey](#), NCCR.

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#### **Updated—Partnering to Improve Health: The Science of Community Engagement**

The Partnering to Improve Health: The Science of Community Engagement conference will take place on **May 13–14, 2010** at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Va. This is the third annual conference focusing on aspects of community engagement. This year's conference will emphasize the scientific rigor of community engagement by discussing methods, models, and outcomes that demonstrate measurable health improvements. Participants will have an opportunity to refine and develop research tools to further community engagement practices. Discussions also will include ways to transform the clinical research enterprise through effective collaborations that lead to improved health outcomes.

For more information and to register, [visit the meeting Web site](#) or contact [Donna Jo McCloskey](#), NCCR.

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**Save the Date—Society for Clinical Trials Annual Meeting**

The Society for Clinical Trials will hold its next annual meeting **May 16–19, 2010**, at the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott hotel. The Society is a non-profit organization, founded in 1979, that is devoted to developing and promoting high-quality clinical trials as a tool for advancing public health. The membership is multidisciplinary and includes clinical investigators, epidemiologists, statisticians, clinical research associates, IT professionals, and others interested in the practice of clinical trials. The meeting provides an excellent opportunity for CTSA trainees to present reports based on their training experiences.

[More information](#)

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**Save the Date—The 3rd Annual Clinical Research Management Workshop**

The 3rd Annual Clinical Research Management Workshop has been scheduled for **June 21–22, 2010**, at the North Bethesda Conference Center. Items proposed for the Agenda include reports on CTSA Consortium-wide studies on protocol and contracts processing, lessons learned in implementation of process improvements, reports on progress on administrative supplements in support of the goals of Strategic Goal Committee #1—National Clinical and Translational Research Capability, issues related to conversion to electronic IRB and comparisons of different systems, and use of metrics in implementation of improved processing.

Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

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**Tufts CTSI Seminar on Comparative Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness: Methods and Measurement**

Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) will present the second annual seminar titled Comparative Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness: Methods and Measurement on **June 24–25, 2010** at the Museum of Science, Boston, Mass. This acclaimed 2-day course provides participants with knowledge and hands-on experience in the nuts and bolts of the methods employed in evidence-based and value-based approaches, two essential components of comparative effectiveness research. Some background in comparative effectiveness research and cost effectiveness assessment is preferred.

More information, including the seminar schedule and a course brochure with a registration form, may be found at the [Tufts CTSI Calendar of Events page](#).

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**CTSA Committee Meetings and Activities**

View the full [CTSA Committee Meetings and Activities calendar](#) on [ctsaweb.org](http://ctsaweb.org).

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**NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:****University of Florida CTSI Names New Director**

David Nelson, M.D., has been named director of the University of Florida (UF) Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). Nelson, a professor of medicine and a leader in liver transplantation and hepatology at the UF College of Medicine, is engaged in multidisciplinary approaches to improve translational research and patient care. He has forged numerous collaborations with researchers across UF and the state of Florida as well as with national industry leaders. With a medical degree from SUNY Upstate University in Syracuse, N.Y., residency in internal medicine at the University of Massachusetts and fellowship training in gastroenterology and hepatology at UF, Nelson brings to the new position a commitment to further the institute's goals of speeding new treatments to patients and producing a highly trained force of researchers and physicians.



[More information](#)

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### Michigan Names MICHR Managing Director

The Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research (MICHR) announced in February that Teri Grieb, Ph.D., has been named the new managing director of MICHR. Grieb will also continue to lead the Office of Research in the Medical School as senior director of research.



In her new role with MICHR, Grieb will represent both the Office of Research and MICHR, serving as lead administrative liaison and primary staff interface between MICHR and the University of Michigan, and represent MICHR to the NIH/CTSA consortium. She is committed to advancing the mission of MICHR and helping foster better collaboration of research support programs and services with other research entities throughout the university.

For more information about MICHR, visit the MICHR [Web site](#).

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### Enabling Collaborative Research With Biomedical Informatics Research Network (BIRN) Infrastructure Meeting at NIH

The Enabling Collaborative Research With Biomedical Informatics Research Network (BIRN) Infrastructure meeting will take place on May 21, 2010, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EDT at the Lister Hill Center Auditorium on the NIH campus. This meeting is intended to facilitate communication and collaboration between BIRN and the NIH research community. The meeting will engage members of both NIH intramural and extramural research communities. In addition, this meeting will inform program officers at NIH how BIRN infrastructure may be used by their principal investigators interested in building collaborative research networks.

The conference will begin with brief introductions to BIRN and the BIRN Community Service Award. Presentations will then showcase real examples of how the BIRN system and services are being implemented by a variety of research organizations. The presentations will include the Function BIRN consortium, the Nonhuman Primate Research Consortium, and the Harvard Clinical and Translational Science Center. Presenters will focus on sharing experiences, addressing fundamental requirements, and demonstrating processes needed to enable biomedical research in using BIRN services.

For more information and to register, visit the [BIRN meeting Web site](#).

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### CTSA Industry Forum Catalyzes Collaboration for Accelerating and Streamlining Translational Discovery and Development

Bringing together stakeholders from NIH, CTSA, industry, non-profit organizations, other academic institutions, and government agencies, the CTSA Industry Forum: Promoting Efficient and Effective Collaborations took place in February on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Md. With over 400 attendees, the Forum explored current practices and successful management models to promote efficient and effective collaboration with CTSA organizations. Highlights of the Forum included focused discussion regarding intellectual properties policies, issues facing small businesses, and other "burning issues," including the challenges and potential solutions for collaboration in translational research. The CTSA Industry Forum was featured in the [March 12, 2010, issue of Nature Reviews Drug Discovery](#), as well as The Pink Sheet Daily, a BioPharma focus publication, and [The FasterCures Center for Accelerating Medical Solutions blog](#).

Forum presentations and meeting summary will be posted to the [conference Web site](#) and [ctsaweb.org](#) by mid-April.

For more information, visit the [conference Web site](#) or contact [Lili Portilla](#), NCRR.

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### NCRR Telehealth Event Yields Recommendation Publications

Last summer NCRR hosted the "Future of Telehealth: Essential Tools and Technologies for Clinical Research and Care" conference and workshop bringing together stakeholders from government agencies, academic institutions, health care organizations, and technology companies to review the state of telehealth science and technology, identify gaps in knowledge that can be addressed through targeted research and evaluation initiatives, and explore ways to leverage evolving information and communication technologies to advance the field.

The workshop yielded a set of short papers published in a "Special Section" of [Telemedicine and e-Health \(Volume 16, Number 1\)](#), reporting specific recommendations from thematic breakout sessions and some overarching recommendations to stimulate

and help guide further research through new multiagency, interdisciplinary collaborations.

Direct links to the abstracts are also found under the Past Events section of the [NCRR News and Events Web page](#).

For more information, contact [Mike Sayre](#) or [Lili Portilla](#), NCRR.

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### CTSA Consortium Governance Document Updated

The CTSA Governance document has recently been updated by the CTSA Consortium Steering Committee (CCSC) and posted to CTSAweb.org. The ad hoc Governance Committee, a subgroup of the CTSA Consortium Executive Committee (CCEC), drafted the first edits that then went through review and discussion by the CCEC and the CCSC. While some changes were minor updates, some items were more significant, such as changes in the leadership terms and membership for the Strategic Goal Committees, the addition of the Consortium Management Group, and the formation of Operations Groups for Key Function Committees to help ensure there is a core group steering the large committees. The [Governance Document](#) can be downloaded from CTSAweb.org in the “For the Consortium” menu on the left.

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### New Collaboration Opportunity Feature Available on CTSAweb.org

A new feature listing various research collaboration opportunities is now available on CTSAweb.org—[Collaboration Opportunities](#). The CTSA institutions have agreed to voluntarily post various research projects on a public bulletin board as opportunities for interested parties to connect and possibly collaborate. This new feature can be accessed through the “For Researchers” menu on the right side of CTSAweb.org.

Project ideas are welcome from all interested CTSA. If your institution would like to post an opportunity for collaboration on CTSAweb.org, please [download](#) and submit the project information forms to: [CTSABB@mail.nih.gov](mailto:CTSABB@mail.nih.gov).

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### Take Note—CTSA Web Systems Unavailable During Monthly Maintenance

Please note that the CTSA Web Systems, including CTSAweb.org and the CTSA Wiki, will be offline on the **second Thursday of each month at 10:00 p.m. ET** for regular updates and maintenance activities. During this scheduled maintenance period, the systems will be completely unavailable for approximately 30 minutes to one hour. We apologize for any inconvenience that may be caused as we perform these important updates to ensure the stability and functionality of the CTSA Web Systems.

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### Recent Media Coverage

Read CTSA institutional and consortium news and media coverage at the [CTSAs in the News page](#) on CTSAweb.org.

*We want to post your CTSA institutional news items and open events in the CTSA e-Newsletter and on the CTSAweb.org [Events page](#). Please send submissions to [newsletter@ctsaweb.org](mailto:newsletter@ctsaweb.org).*

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

#### Scientific Meetings for Creating Interdisciplinary Research Teams (R13)

This funding opportunity announcement encourages Research Conference Grant (R13) applications from institutions and organizations that propose to develop interdisciplinary research teams. Teams must include investigators from the social and/or behavioral sciences, and may include the life and/or physical sciences. The goal is to broaden the scope of investigation into scientific problems, yield fresh and possibly unexpected insights, and increase the sophistication of theoretical, methodological, and analytical approaches by integrating the analytical strengths of two or more disparate scientific disciplines while addressing gaps in terminology, approach, and methodology. This program will allow investigators from multiple disciplines to hold meetings in order to provide the foundation for developing interdisciplinary research projects.

[Full announcement](#)

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## Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Funding Opportunities Announcements

- [RFA-HS-10-013](#)—ARRA OS Recovery Act 2009 Limited Competition: Comparative Effectiveness Delivery System Demonstration Grants (R18)
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## FEATURES:

### Collaborative Transformation at The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University (OSU) is transforming how biomedical research is done by building meaningful collaborative relationships among leaders, researchers, and new partners. The academic environment provides a wealth of internal expertise and educational opportunities. Based on this, OSU is reaching across institutions to foster collaborative methods and bring unique visions to life.



For example, leaders from eight OSU colleges and Nationwide Children's Hospital jointly direct programs in the newly established OSU Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS). Competitive applications are solicited campus-wide and have resulted in trainee and K scholar awards representing several OSU colleges and schools as well as Nationwide Children's Hospital. Pilot project competitions have targeted awards to newly emerging cross-college teams and to extending current teams to include new disciplines, resulting in awards to research teams spanning 13 colleges.

The CCTS has partnered with OSU's Fisher College of Business to offer a workshop series, "Discovery, Innovation and New Product Development." The workshop consists of a training phase followed by a consultative phase that enables research teams to translate discoveries into commercially applicable and innovative products, leading to improved patient outcomes. The CCTS works with the College of Arts on Web site design and with journalism and communications interns from the College of Social and Behavioral Science on Web site content and production of videos on recruitment and center resources. Industrial engineering students completed a time series study to improve efficiency in scheduling participant clinic visits.

The Community of Research Education, an internal advisory group representing 10 colleges and disciplines, worked together to create common core competencies that now serve as the foundation for the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in translational research. This specialization enables students to take courses across disciplines and lays the groundwork for new team-taught courses in clinical and translational science. This same level of integration is also seen across various staff and administrative groups where the culture is transforming into one that fosters collaboration. For example, representatives from clinical research coordinator and research nursing groups came together to develop core competencies and training programs to facilitate the acquisition of the skills necessary for engagement in clinical research.

Through the use of pilot projects and administrative supplements, the CCTS is leveraging new partnerships with the College of Public Health, the Comprehensive Cancer Center, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, and the State Agricultural Extension Network to improve health and serve as a model for community-based practice research in two areas with great health disparities: Appalachian Ohio and the inner city. Seven pilot projects have been awarded to increase levels of community engagement in the clinical and translational research process, including a new community partnership.

The CCTS is linking data sets and biorepositories from OSU and Nationwide Children's Hospital, providing opportunities for new research teams to study maternal-fetal dyads and, eventually, health across the lifespan, including a major collaborative effort in the community—the Ohio Better Births Outcomes—to identify factors that can influence prematurity and interventions to prevent it.

Thus, building on institutional strengths that include a shared common vision of "excellence to eminence," the expertise available through a comprehensive university, a robust infrastructure of core resources, and an engaged community, the CCTS has focused significant efforts in the first two years on catalyzing collaboration as a strategic priority in the transformation of the research enterprise.

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### Community Engagement KFC Makes Strides to Enhance Research, Participation

The Community Engagement Key Function Committee (CE KFC) works in concert with Strategic Goal Committee Four (SGC4): Enhancing the Health of Our Communities and the Nation to develop mechanisms that support CTSA sites seeking to improve community participation in and benefit from research. A number of efforts involving both groups are underway.



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#### *Community Engagement Consulting Service*

The [Community Engagement Consult Service](#) (CECS) project, created with a 2008 NCRR administrative supplement, links CTSA sites with expert consultants and provides best practices, self-assessment tools and other resources. To date, more than half of the CTSA sites have found CECS useful in validating and identifying new community engagement strategies. Through an ARRA Supplement award, the CECS will continue for two more years and will provide further consults to newly funded CTSA sites from the previous year and enhance the current Web site. Some sites have already implemented practices on the basis of lessons learned from the CECS. Duke University houses the national coordinating center, and regional coordinators are located across the country (West: University of California, Davis; Midwest: University of Illinois at Chicago; South: Washington University in St. Louis; Mid-Atlantic: University of Pennsylvania; Northeast: Columbia University).

#### *Online Multisite Research Toolkit*

The Partnership-driven Resources to IMprove and Enhance Research (PRIMER) project, also the result of a 2008 NCRR administrative supplement, surveyed CTSA sites to identify the chief barriers to and benefits of conducting multisite research. The project yielded a suite of tools to facilitate multisite research—available for free at [ResearchToolkit.org](http://ResearchToolkit.org). In its final report to the CE KFC, the PRIMER lead investigators recommended that NCRR evaluate the Web site to assess the quality of the content, gaps in the content, and the functionality of the site. In addition, they called for resources to support continued dissemination and promotion of the survey results and the Web site as well as a mechanism to maintain and update the site as needed.

#### *Community Engagement Guidance*

The Principles of Community Engagement Subgroup of SGC4 is updating the 1997 booklet *Principles of Community Engagement* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The subgroup includes representatives from NIH, CDC, and the CTSA Consortium. The second draft revision was completed January 25.

#### *Sentinel Network*

The CE KFC Resource Development Workgroup established the Sentinel Network project to detect issues regarding participation of underrepresented populations in research. Community health workers at all five Sentinel Network sites, consisting of Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, University of California, Davis, University of Michigan, University of Rochester, and Washington University in St. Louis, will engage community members, collect demographic data and information on top health concerns, and determine barriers to research participation. Additionally, they will educate community members on the importance of health research participation and provide referrals to area agencies. Core data from each site will be compiled regularly and shared with NCRR, and the Sentinel Network sites will, in turn, share the results with the research communities and their community at large to meet the study aims.

#### *Logic Model Will Guide Outcomes and Measurements*

The CE KFC Outcomes of Community Engagement Workgroup seeks to develop a shared set of outcomes and measurement strategies across CTSA institutions. The workgroup elicited examples of community engagement projects underway and, from these, identified common community engagement research elements. The workgroup then created a logic model to guide the selection of outcomes and measurements. The workgroup will present the logic model at the KFC annual meeting on May 12, 2010. The workgroup's next steps are to identify a) key components of for outcomes and b) quantitative and qualitative methods that allow description and measurement of the logic model elements.

#### *National Advisory Committee*

The CE KFC invited all the CTSA sites to identify a community member to participate on the Community Partners Integration Committee, a new national community committee to the CE KFC that will represent the voice of the communities the CTSA sites serve. The new committee will identify important issues that affect CTSA sites' ability to improve health through research discoveries and strengthen partnerships between researchers and participants.

## ARTICLES:

### **CTSA Consortium Executive Committee: Outcomes of February 25–26, 2010 Meeting**

The CTSA Consortium Executive Committee (CCEC) held the first of an annual series of meetings on February 25–26. Multiple recommendations were agreed upon and have subsequently been approved by the CTSA Consortium Steering Committee (CCSC). Of note, it was agreed that the Consortium's strategic goals and governance would be reviewed twice a year: once during its annual meeting (to be held in February or March) and once during the established annual CTSA Consortium Steering Committee (CCSC) meeting in October.

The CCEC identified the need to be kept informed of progress on the many consortium projects. A decision was made to have the [Consortium Management Group](#) (CMG) provide monthly teleconference updates and quarterly reports. Furthermore, with the improved organization that the CMG will bring, the CCEC would like to revisit the decision making process to provide more flexibility to the CCEC in making timely decisions. Using the CCEC for more rapid decision making as a voice for the Consortium requires that the membership remain limited in number and rotate annually.

Strategic goal committees (SGCs), in contrast, require content experts who serve for more than a year at a time. To accomplish this, the CCEC recommended that the SGCs maintain a core membership of three CTSA principle investigators (PIs) and three administrators. Each PI will serve staggered three year terms and, during the last year of his or her term, would also serve on the CCEC. The CMG will propose plans to maximize the effectiveness of the administrator membership. These governance changes are reflected in the updated [Governance Manual](#).

In related governance changes, the CCEC agreed to reinstate the Clinical Research Management and Regulatory Knowledge Groups as key function committees (KFCs). Additionally, the recommendation to more fully integrate the CC-CHOC into all committees is a governance issue that will be addressed more closely.

Key consortium topics such as "what is meant by participation in the consortium" and "what is a consortium product" were also discussed by the CCEC. In both cases, it was decided that a workgroup should be established to further explore the concepts. Central to the discussion on consortium participation will be topics such as participation in trials or on committees. For the discussion on products of the consortium, CMG involvement will be a priority as project management is a major focus of the group. Primary issues will center around criteria needed for Consortium endorsement of a product and how the vetting might be structured.

In discussions related to communications, the CCEC supported the proposal by the T1 SGC and Public-Private Partnership KFC to create a [bulletin board](#) on CTSAweb.org to post opportunities for collaboration that would provide points of contact as well as conflict of interest statements. In addition, CCEC members were keen to better publicize achievements and breakthrough discoveries coming out of the CTSA institutions. The Communications KFC discussed the same topic after the CCEC meeting and will make recommendations to the CCEC on ways to improve reporting of scientific advances. Meanwhile, NCRP will look at possibilities for modifying the annual progress report to facilitate reporting.

Finally, the frequency and effectiveness of the CCEC and CCSC calls were discussed at the CCEC meeting. The CCEC recommended including in the monthly CCSC calls presentations from KFCs, SGCs, and CTSA sites on advances to share. At its March 16 call, the CCSC tested this new format with several presentations across these groups and it was well received.

The CCEC continues to follow up on the recommendations and actions resulting from this valuable meeting, and will work to keep the consortium informed of these activities.

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### **Southeastern CTAs Form Consortium to Collaborate on Regional Health Issues**

The Southeastern CTSA Consortium (SECC) met in Atlanta on February 25 and formed workgroups to explore next steps in collaborative research. Thirty representatives from six of the eight clinical and translational science institutes that comprise the SECC attended. The SECC seeks to address some of the most complex health problems confronting this region of the country.

For example, a disproportionate number of families in the South live in poverty. According to 2002 Census data, 54 percent of Blacks and 36 percent of Hispanics live in the South and are particularly exposed to behaviorally and environmentally mediated health risks. Health disparities abound in this region, as evidenced by the rates of certain cancers, low birth weight, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. The region also has a high incidence of stroke and cardiovascular disease. Solving these health problems will require many layers of targeted research and interventions. Formation of the SECC is an important step toward improving the speed, efficiency, and efficacy of prevention and treatment efforts to address these important health problems.

The SECC, led by Etta Pisano, M.D., principal investigator at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, includes the following:

- Duke University (North Carolina)
- Emory University (Georgia, partnering with Morehouse School of Medicine and Georgia Institute of Technology)
- Medical University of South Carolina
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Florida
- Vanderbilt University (Tennessee, partnering with Meharry Medical College)

Initially, the SECC will identify a few projects on which to focus. All eight institutions will not necessarily work in lockstep. Rather, each project may be suitable for collaboration for some but not all of the participating CTSA sites.

"The important thing is that we bring together the resources, talent, and energy from CTSA sites in the right mix to realize goals in clinical and translational research that we could not otherwise achieve on our own," explained Dr. Pisano. "The point is to collaborate in a way that the sum of our strengths is greater than each of us working independently."

Other [regional CTSA consortia](#) have emerged from the 46 individual CTSA sites around the country. Forerunners to the SECC are the [West Coast Consortium](#), Midwest Consortium, Chicago CTSA Consortium for Community Engagement (C3), East Coast-NYCON Consortium, and the [Upstate New York Translational Research Network](#). The SECC hopes to leverage its combined efforts in data sharing, training and other resources to address health issues that disproportionately affect the population in this region.

#### **BERD Watch—UPenn Offers Automated Databases, Consulting Services to All CTSA Investigators**

The Automated Claims and Medical Record Databases (ACARD) core at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics has enhanced the training and career development of new clinical scientists by encouraging investigators with diverse training to conduct translational research. The ACARD provides access to large databases that allow for rapid, cost-effective research on therapeutics, including drug safety. The ACARD services are also offered to investigators outside of UPenn at other CTSA sites.

The ACARD infrastructure includes access to several automated population-based databases, a manual of standard operating procedures for working with the non-US databases, and a library of disease and drug codes. It also offers consulting on project development and research design and support services, such as data management and data analysis.

The mentoring, support, and databases made available through the ACARD have resulted in funded NIH grant applications and publications of research findings covering a wide range of areas, such as cancer, diabetes, and hepatitis.

To enhance collaboration with investigators outside of UPenn, ACARD offers the following services to other CTSA sites:

- Consultation during planning stages and while conducting research using these databases
- Assistance with preliminary feasibility queries (e.g., obtaining frequency counts of patients with a given disease or medication exposure)
- Assistance in applying for data use agreements where necessary
- Assistance in writing research proposals to make sure the study is informed by in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each data resource
- Access to the needed hardware and software in an environment supported by UPenn's expert faculty
- Access to a library of disease and drug codes as well as a library of statistical and programming resources for executing studies within the available electronic databases

Under this model, outside investigators will guide their own research projects, and UPenn investigators will provide consulting and/or collaboration and implementation services. Investigators are responsible for the incremental costs of executing the research. Investigators have many incentives for taking advantage of these collaborative arrangements:

- Save the cost of paying for the license fee for one or more of the databases
- Save time involved in learning the unique features of each database
- Save time in developing the programming and statistical code to process the data in each database
- Save the cost of obtaining frequency counts for a pilot study
- Save time in getting the full study completed

With ACARD's support, access to data, assistance with data management and analysis, and overall project management, investigators will shorten the time it takes to see final results from their research and to publish their findings. For more information, visit the [ACARD Web site](#) or contact [Rita Schinnar](#).

#### GENERAL INFORMATION:

##### Updated Information on CTSAweb.org

The **CTSAweb.org** home page, in keeping with the Web site's role of ensuring access to CTSA resources, enhancing communication, and encouraging sharing, features:

- New CTSA [Collaborative Opportunities](#) page

The CTSA Web systems help desk e-mail is [help@CTSAweb.org](mailto:help@CTSAweb.org). Please contact the help desk if you have questions regarding the CTSA systems, including CTSA Wiki and password questions.

**Read archived CTSA e-Newsletters on the [CTSAs in the News page](#).**

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