

Annual Letter December 2016

Dear Friends:

It is always a great pleasure at this time of year to reflect upon the Department of Psychiatry's achievements and share a summary of highlights with our community. We could not be more grateful for the supportive leadership of the administrations of both NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medical College who continue to make important investments in our programming including: **Augustine M.K. Choi, MD**, Interim Dean and Provost, and Chair of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medicine; **Gary Koretzky, MD, PhD**, Dean of Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences and Vice Dean (Research); **Michael Stewart, MD, MPH**, Vice Dean Weill Cornell Medical College, Chief Medical Officer, Physician Organization, Associate Dean (Clinical Affairs); **Steven Corwin, MD**, President and Chief Executive Officer, NewYork-Presbyterian; **Laura Forese, MD, MPH**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, NewYork-Presbyterian; and **Cam Patterson, MD, MBA**, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer NYP/Weill Cornell.

We deeply appreciate the dedication of our faculty and staff whose expertise, commitment, and vision enable us to remain among the country's premier Psychiatry programs. We also want to make special mention of our voluntary faculty members who make invaluable contributions to our training and education programs and enhance the institution's prestige with their accomplishments as clinicians and scholars.

Awards

We celebrated the election of **Francis Lee, MD, PhD**, to the National Academy of Medicine, one of the top honors in the field of health and medicine. Dr. Lee is the Mortimer D. Sackler, M.D. Professor of Molecular Biology in Psychiatry and a professor of psychiatry, pharmacology and neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medicine. He studies the molecular basis of anxiety disorders and has pioneered an approach combining molecular and cell biological studies with parallel animal and human circuit-based and behavioral studies to identify robust genotype-phenotype relationships to inform psychiatric practice. Dr. Lee is also the Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Psychiatry and is serving as the Interim Director of the Department's Sackler Institute for Psychobiology. As a member of the academy, Dr. Lee intends to work to ensure that issues related to adolescent mental health are at the forefront of the organization's research and advocacy efforts.

Philip J. Wilner, MD, MBA, Executive Vice Chair for Psychiatry, and Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of NewYork-Presbyterian/Westchester, has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Planetree organization. This award recognizes his notable contributions to the field of behavioral health services and acknowledges his commitment and dedication in implementing and sustaining excellence in patient-centered practice as evidenced by NYP/Westchester Division's Designation with Distinction Designation. The award was presented at Planetree's annual meeting where NYP/Westchester was prominently featured. Thank you to our wonderful colleagues in the Hospital for expertly representing us at the meeting.

Highlights from our Clinical Programs

Our clinical programs continue to expand with innovative new programming thanks to investments in Psychiatry by both the Medical College and the Hospital.

In the spring of 2016, NewYork-Presbyterian launched a telepsychiatry program in the emergency rooms of Weill Cornell and Columbia Presbyterian to support NewYork-Presbyterian/Lower Manhattan and the regional hospitals. Kudos to **Lisa Sombrotto, MD**, Clinical Director of Payne Whitney, for leading the implementation of this important and innovative telehealth initiative at the Weill Cornell campus. We congratulate **Janna Gordon-Elliott, MD**, on her appointment as Chief of the Consultation Liaison Service at NYP/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

We continue to enhance our programming under the dedicated leadership of **Mark Russ, MD**, Medical Director of NewYork-Presbyterian/Westchester.

We recruited **Juan Gallego, MD**, into the role of service chief for the Psychotic Disorders Service. An accomplished and NIMH-funded clinician-scientist, Dr. Gallego is a recognized expert in schizophrenia treatment and research with experience and interests in exploring biomarkers for this disorder, improving clinical outcomes for early episode patients, and conducting medication trials. He will be expanding our academic and research programming in schizophrenia. Under the superb leadership of **Evelyn Attia, MD**, Director of Eating Disorders, we expanded our program by adding an eating disorders track in our partial hospitalization program for adults. The program launched in August and has been fully subscribed.

We commend **Linda Espinosa, MS, RN**, Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer of NYP/Westchester and NYP/Weill Cornell Medical Center (Behavioral Health), on being the first campus at NYP to embark on the journey toward Magnet designation, an award given by the American Nurses' Credentialing Center (ANCC), an affiliate of the American Nurses Association, to hospitals that satisfy a set of criteria designed to measure the strength and quality of their nursing. We are currently preparing the necessary documentation and evidence in anticipation of a site visit before the end of 2018.

The Department's Physician Organization has grown to 120 providers practicing across Manhattan and Westchester, an increase of 20% over the last two years. **The Weill Cornell Psychiatry Specialty Center**, headed by **Justin Mohatt, MD**, Vice Chair for the Psychiatry Physician Organization, has contributed to this growth. The **Psychiatry Collaborative Care Center**, officially launched in January of 2016 has been a remarkable success. The Center offers access to commercially insured patients who are receiving primary care and other sub-specialty services by Weill Cornell physicians. The program was established with funding from both the Medical College and the Hospital with a goal to use innovative and integrative approaches to improve health outcomes of medically ill patients by addressing their psychiatric needs. Headed by **Tomer Levin, MD**, and **Judith Cukor, PhD**, who serve as co-directors of the program, the center consists of a multidisciplinary clinical team of four clinicians and has seen over 565 new patients since January.

The **NewYork-Presbyterian Youth Anxiety Center (YAC)** continues to grow under the leadership of **Shannon Bennett, PhD**, who services as the Weill Cornell site director. YAC is a collaborative program of NewYork-Presbyterian, and the Departments of Psychiatry of Weill Cornell Medicine, and Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons with a mission to advance innovative ways of diagnosing, treating, and helping teens and young adults suffering from anxiety disorders through research, treatment, and education. The Weill Cornell site has seen a volume growth of 70% in this year with over 800 unique patient visits. Under the direction of **Avital Falk, PhD**, we launched an Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program at NYP/Weill Cornell Medical Center treating children and adolescents with moderate to severe Anxiety Disorders. The goal of the program is to provide short-term intensive treatment to target symptoms using Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) and Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) treatment strategies. We are delighted to welcome **Matthew Specht, PhD**, who joined the full time faculty in November and will be expanding the YAC services to NewYork-Presbyterian/Westchester.

Institutes, Research, and Scholarly Endeavors

In November, the Department hosted a day-long scientific conference to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the **Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology** and to honor the Sackler family whose generous gift created and now sustains this important program. For the past 20 years the Sackler Institute and its Infant Psychiatry program have been at the forefront of interdisciplinary neurodevelopmental research and training and has generated many distinguished investigators working across the nation. The program was launched by founding director **Michael Posner, PhD**, and then led for the past twelve years by **BJ Casey, PhD**, who transitioned to an exciting new opportunity at Yale University this past June. Both Drs. Posner and Casey are members of our adjunct faculty and continue to provide their wisdom, consultation, and mentorship of junior faculty. Dr. Casey was instrumental in cultivating important partnerships and collaborations across our Department and institution including the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, The Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. **Francis Lee, MD, PhD**, is serving as the Institute's interim director while the Medical College and Department conduct an international search for the Institute's next director.

We thank **Jonathan Victor, MD, PhD**, Professor of the Feil Brain and Mind Research Institute and Neurology, for serving as the search committee chair.

The Institute faculty has made significant contributions to the field of psychiatry this year including **Conor Liston, MD, PhD**, Siobhan Pattwell, PhD, **BJ Casey, PhD**, and **Francis Lee, MD, PhD**, who published a paper in **Nature Communications**, in which they identified in rodent models a “sensitive period” in adolescence in which there is heightened plasticity in the hippocampus to fearful stimuli that may be leveraged in the future to extinguish pathological fears implicated in anxiety and stress-related disorders. These findings were highlighted in the *New York Times*.

In a collaborative and groundbreaking study published in **Nature Medicine** in December, Dr. Liston has identified biomarkers in depression by analyzing more than 1,100 functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) brain scans of patients with clinical depression and of healthy controls, gathered from across the country. These biomarkers may help doctors to better diagnose depression subtypes and determine appropriate treatments.

Rebecca Jones, PhD, received a renewal of her Leon Levy Fellowship titled “Trajectories of Neural Development in Autism”, a project using novel tools to identify time periods during development when there are shifts in impulsive behavior and will test whether social stimuli versus stimuli of an individual’s special interest are more likely to induce changes in impulsive behavior.

George Alexopoulos, MD, Director of the **Weill Cornell Institute for Geriatric Psychiatry** received a fifth competitive renewal of his long-standing NIH-funded research training grant offering post graduate research training in geriatric mood disorders. Dr. Alexopoulos has a large research portfolio of \$1.5 million in grant funding from the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Alexopoulos was also honored with the Physician of the Year award by the Department of Nursing this year. All of the faculty in the Institute received new grants this year including **Dimitris Kiosses, PhD**, who received a grant from the National Institute of Aging to conduct a treatment trial for depression in older adults and a grant from the NIMH studying an intervention to reduce suicide risk. **Faith Gunning, PhD**, who also serves as the Department’s Vice Chair for Psychology, received a grant from the NIMH to examine neural networks of middle-aged and older adults with major depressive disorder. **JoAnne Sirey, PhD**, was awarded a contract from New York City’s Department for Aging to integrate mental health services into aging-service settings to improve access for older adults. This is a continuation of a collaboration between Dr. Sirey and DFTA that received a prestigious Innovations Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging this year.

The **Program for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Studies (PATSS)**, led by **JoAnn Difede, PhD**, launched the Military Family Wellness Center, which offers free treatment for deployment-related conditions to qualified military service personnel and their families. This effort was made possible by a generous donation to NewYork-Presbyterian and is being implemented at both Weill Cornell and Columbia. Dr. Difede and her colleagues are currently enrolling participants in a Phase II Clinical Trial which tests a novel pharmacotherapy for PTSD and they are continuing to enroll Service Members across the country for our multi-center PTSD treatment study funded by the Department of Defense.

The **Center for Autism and Developing Brain**, headed by **Catherine Lord, PhD**, is a premier program for the assessment and treatment of autism spectrum disorders as well as a training and research Institute. Dr. Lord received several new grants this year to study genetics of autism as well as an investigation of the potential link between febrile illness and parent-reported reductions in aberrant behaviors.

The **DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry** led by **George Makari, MD**, had a very productive year: Dr. Makari’s new book **Soul Machine** received over 30 reviews in venues ranging from New York Review of Books to Nature, and was chosen by Andrew Solomon as one of The Guardian’s best books of 2016. Dr. Makari delivered over a dozen lectures on this work including at the Freud Museum in London, the World Science

Festival, and the New York Academy of Sciences. The Institute's Mental Health Policy seminars were timely and focused on the opioid crisis and transgender mental health. The Oscar Diethelm Library added a number of rare 19th century books on neuropsychiatry to its unique collection.

The Pritzker Neuropsychiatric Disorders Research Consortium, of which Weill Cornell is a member institution and Drs. Jack Barchas and Francis Lee serve as co-Directors, was recently renewed for an additional five years. A new research initiative will involve a Weill Cornell-based study of borderline personality disorder. The broad goals of this research project will be to identify a repertoire of biological biomarkers in patients with borderline personality disorder that would guide diagnosis. In this study, the emphasis will be placed on the assessing potential biomarkers in a defined developmental window (adolescence and young adulthood) in which the disorder emerges. The study will be led by **Marc Dubin, MD, PhD**.

Congratulations to **Rosemary Stevens, PhD, MPH**, whose 400 page book A Time of Scandal: Warren G. Harding, Charles R. Forbes, and the Making of the Veterans Bureau, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in December. **Tony Ahmed, PhD**, received a Young Investigator Award from NARSAD and a pilot award from the Weill Cornell's Clinical and Translational Science Center to study the effect of cognitive training on impulse control in people with schizophrenia. **Julie Penzner, MD** and **Nina Freund, MD** have been awarded the American Psychiatric Association's annual Nancy C.A. Roeske, MD Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Medical Student Education, for outstanding and sustaining contributions to medical student education. **Janna Gordon-Elliott's, MD**, important volume: Fundamentals of Diagnosing and Treating Eating Disorders was published this year by Springer International. **Barbara Milrod, MD** was awarded the Ann Alonso lectureship established to honor Dr. Alonso, who founded the Center for Psychoanalytic Studies at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Milrod's lecture was titled "Psychotherapies for panic disorder: report of a two-site study." **Jonathan Avery, MD** was selected as the Weill Cornell Medicine nominee for the Herbert W. Nicken Faculty Fellowship, awarded by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and recognizing an outstanding junior faculty member who has demonstrated leadership in the United States in addressing inequities in medical education and health care. **Anna Dikerman, MD**, co-edited the book: Study Guide for the Psychiatry Board Examination published by the American Psychiatric Association. **Ted Shapiro, MD**, and colleagues had their book: Psychodynamic Treatment of Depression (2nd Edition) published by American Psychiatric Association. **Richard Kogan, MD**, will receive this year's Joan and Stanford Alexander Award in Psychiatry established in honor of Dr. Stuart Yudofsky, distinguished emeritus professor of the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at Baylor College of Medicine. **David Shapiro, MD**, was elected to the board of the Griffis Faculty Club. We thanks Drs. Kogan and Shapiro for their dedication to the successful Music and Medicine program that benefits Medical Students. In February 2016, **Janna Gordon-Elliott, MD**, was asked to step into the co-chair-elect position for the Oral Papers and Posters standing sub-committee for the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine (APM), the main national organization for Psychosomatic Medicine. **Shannon M. Bennett, MD** was accepted into the Weill Cornell Leadership in Academic Medicine Program. **John T. Walkup, MD** has been selected to serve on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Committee on Improving Health Outcomes in Children with Disabilities. **Richard A. Friedman, MD**, continues with his important contributions to the enhancement of public health knowledge as a Contributing Op-Ed Writer for the New York Times. **Gail Salz, MD**, also advances the education of the public on important health topics with her media appearances. Thank you to **Sylvia Karasu, MD**, for serving on the Medical College's General Faculty Council and to **James Nininger, MD**, for his work as President of the Payne Whitney Faculty Council.

Training and Education

Betsy Auchincloss, MD, Vice Chair for Education, leads a dedicated and collaborative team who coordinate our educational programs including **Julie Penzner, MD**, the Residency Training Director, and **Jimmy Avari, MD**, Assistant Training Director for NYP/Westchester and Residency Coordinator for the Geriatric Fellowship. We are

delighted to have appointed **Susan Samuels, MD**, to the role of Director for Medical Student Education and Clerkship Director and thank **Dimitry Francois, MD**, who is the Assistant Clerkship director overseeing the Medical Student program at NYP/Westchester. **Rebecca Rendleman, MD**, does an outstanding job of overseeing the Child and Adolescent Fellowship program along with **Breck Borcharding, MD**, who serves as the Assistant Training Director at NYP/Westchester. On the Psychology side **Susan Evans, PhD**, Director of Education for Psychology and founding director of our highly rated, accredited psychology internship, and **Megan Hughes-Feltenberger, PhD**, Assistant Director of Education for Psychology at NYP/Westchester, do an outstanding job overseeing multiple academically rigorous pre-doctoral and postdoctoral clinical training programs.

The medical school's Area of Concentration Fair was held on November 1st, at which pre-clinical students had the opportunity to meet faculty and hear about the various options for an AOC, which involves involvement in various departmental and educational activities, and culminates in a year-long scholarly project, mentored by faculty. A tremendous amount of interest was seen for our Psychiatry, Neurodevelopment, & Behavioral Sciences AOC, with nearly 30 students coming to ask about our department and the AOC. Many expressed their desire to pursue a career in Psychiatry following medical school.

The psychiatry residency continues with an exceptional class of interns who are off to a wonderful start. Second-year resident **Jihye Kim, MD**, was awarded Graduate Staff of the Month at a Key Personnel meeting in the fall. Under the leadership of second-year resident **Anne Clark-Raymond, MD**, the residency program earned 100% Club Gold Level status from the American Psychiatric Association, indicating membership by 100% of our residents, a feat we have never before achieved. Finally, every single senior resident, and almost half of the current residents in total, published work or presented at national meetings in the field of psychiatry last year, making strong contributions to our patients and our field.

We continue to attract the best and the brightest trainees into our clinical training programs. We thank our chief residents **Nisha Mehta-Naik, MD**, and **Simriti Chaudhry, MD**, from the general residency program and **Marta Galecki, M.D., M.Phil.**, from the child and adolescent program.

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

We enjoy a close collaboration with our accomplished faculty at MSKCC who are led by Chair of Psychiatry **William Breitbart, M.D.** The Weill Cornell Medicine-MSKCC joint ACGME Accredited Fellowship in Psychosomatic Medicine has successfully competed in the National Match for the 3rd year in a row, filling its class of 6 clinical fellows who join us from prestigious residency programs throughout the country. MSKCC has successfully established the MSKCC Psycho-oncology Education and Training Institute (POETI). POETI has conducted four national courses in its first year including one day courses on: "Meaning Centered Psychotherapy in the Oncology and Palliative Care Setting"; Assessment and Treatment of Tobacco Dependence in Cancer Care"; "Communication Skills Training for Health Professionals"; and, "Psychopharmacology in Cancer Care".

A National training program in Meaning Centered Psychotherapy in Cancer was established in 2016 and funded by an NCI R25 training grant- 300 clinicians to be trained over five years in meaning centered psychotherapy. Meaning Centered Psychotherapy for patients with advanced cancer was officially designated by the National Cancer Institute as a Research –tested Intervention Program (RTIPs) and listed on its RTIPs website <http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/>.

New clinical programs established by MSKCC in 2016 include; a) Cancer Caregivers Support Program; b) Program for the Care of the Family Affected by Cancer; c) the Biobehavioral Brain Program; d) the Bereavement Program; e) The Meaning Centered Psychotherapy Program

Our Partners

We are proud of the success of the Hospital's **Psychiatry Service Line** and our strong partnerships with **Jeffrey Lieberman, MD**, Chair of Psychiatry at Columbia, his faculty, and **Barbara Linder, MPA**, Director of the Service Line. And of course the generous support we receive from our donors and sponsors continues to enhance our ability to meet our missions, sustain excellence, and provide solid investment for our future.

We acknowledge **Javaid Sheikh, MD**, Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine–Qatar, and a member of the Department’s faculty for his extraordinary leadership.

The Department of Psychiatry is delighted to have launched a new website this year which can be found at psychiatry.weill.cornell.edu.

Thanks As Always To Our Sponsors

We are grateful for the support we receive from donors, whose funding enhances our ability to achieve our missions, sustain excellence, and provide needed investment for our future. We recognize the invaluable support from the DeWitt Wallace Reader’s Digest program of the New York Community Trust, the Mortimer Sackler Family and Foundation, the Dworman Foundation, the Siegel Foundation, the Pritzker Foundation, the McCormick Foundation, New York Collaborates for Autism, the Simons Foundation, Ms. Brooks Betts, the Tusiani Family, Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, Ms. Judy Zankel, and a number of other private individuals who facilitate new directions and talented scholars. We are also deeply appreciative of the generosity of faculty members, who provide donations and engage in philanthropic efforts to support program development.

We deeply appreciate the staff members who work with us including our senior administrators: **Nora Contract**, Director of Operations, NYP/Payne Whitney; **Calandra Branch**, Director of Operations, NYP/Westchester Division; and **Jennifer Walsh**, Vice Chair for Administration, Weill Cornell Medicine; **Brita Kube**, Assistant Administrator, and **Tim Clark**, Senior Manager, **Pamela Trester**, Administrative Coordinator, and our entire dedicated administrative staff: **Jude Allen**, **Christian Aquino**, **Catherine Carl**, **Shamila Dilmaghani**, **Zemfira Egelbaum**, **Andrei Gangal**, **Rebecca Hellman**, **Rebecca Lovell**, **Brittany Nelson**, **Sharon Pecache**, **JoAnn Rella**, **Jason Satterthwaite**, **Carolyn Sedotti**, **Rose Smith**, and **Nicole Vital**.

We wish you all a very happy holiday season and best wishes for the New Year.



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