

GEISINGER Research Connections



December 2010

Linking the Research Community

New Chief Scientific Officer Views Geisinger as Potential Research Powerhouse

When David and Nikki Ledbetter were packing up their young family for the move from Georgia to Pennsylvania, there probably were two things too big to fit in any box or suitcase: David's excitement and optimism about Geisinger Health System's research prospects in an era of healthcare reform.



David Ledbetter, PhD

At a time when many leaders worry that government budgets and private sector resources could shrink dramatically, Geisinger's new executive vice president and chief scientific officer believes strongly that "there is always funding for the best ideas and the best projects." And Dr. Ledbetter views the unique culture and combination of resources at Geisinger as a potential powerhouse of research with "real world implications."

Ledbetter, who joined the Health System Nov. 1, brings a rich background as a teacher and leader in academic medicine,

David H. Ledbetter, PhD Appointed Chief Scientific Officer

Internationally respected geneticist David H. Ledbetter, PhD, FACMG, has been named executive vice president and chief scientific officer for Geisinger Health System.

Dr. Ledbetter comes to Geisinger from Atlanta's Emory University School of Medicine, where he was the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Human Genetics and served as director of the Division of Medical Genetics in the Department of Human Genetics since 2003.

Dr. Ledbetter will guide Geisinger's research endeavors, which will focus on personalized health. Together with Bruce Hamory, MD, he chaired the Research Advisory Task Force that created Geisinger's 10-year research strategic plan. Dr. Ledbetter will be responsible for research in Geisinger's research centers (the Weis Center for Research, the Geisinger Center for Health Research, and the Center for Clinical Studies), as well as the Institute for Genomic Medicine, the Geisinger Obesity Institute, and in clinical departments and service lines throughout the system.

He is a founding fellow of the American College of Medical Genetics, and serves on the board of the American Society of Human Genetics, and the Human Genome Organization. Prior to his work at Emory, he was professor and founding chair in human

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specializing in medical genetics. He was a professor of human genetics and director of the division of medical genetics at the Emory University School of Medicine in

Atlanta. He also held ranking research posts at the National Institute for Human Genome Research and the Baylor College

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The Hamory Legacy: A Decade Dedicated To Growing Geisinger's Research Enterprise

Bruce H. Hamory, MD, executive vice president and chief medical officer emeritus for Geisinger Health System, has been a driving force behind Geisinger's research for the past 10 years. Dr. Hamory has overseen research at Geisinger and



Bruce Hamory, MD

continues to lead Geisinger's efforts to extend its innovations in healthcare delivery to other groups and health systems. Dr. Hamory credits the evolution of Geisinger's research model to the contributions of his colleagues—contributions that have created a "dramatic and exciting" shift in Geisinger's research dynamic.

"Ten years ago, Geisinger had a small

group of researchers at the Sigfried and Janet Weis Center for Research who were largely into molecular medicine and physiologic process and a very small group that did clinical trials on drugs," Dr. Hamory explained. "Geisinger now has a robust and growing health services research enterprise that helps us to deliver better patient care."

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MyCode™ Project Expands Biobank to Include Range of Tissue Samples

Geisinger's centralized repository for research biospecimens (biobank) called My Code™ houses more than 72,000 samples of blood, serum and DNA, all of which have been collected, preserved and used for research purposes. Most recently, the biobank has expanded to include tissue samples, as a result of support from the NIH-funded National Community Cancer Center Program award. Tissue banking for research is being done in concert with

"What distinguishes Geisinger's biobank is that we have permission from our patients to link their samples to data in their medical records..." *David Carey, PhD*

Geisinger Clinical Laboratories and will significantly increase Geisinger's research infrastructure and ultimately reflect a wide cross section of disease, including oncological and cardiovascular.

David Carey, PhD, director of the Sigfried and Janet Weis Center for Research, emphasized that these samples are "being banked for future research by Geisinger researchers." Dr. Carey explained: "A researcher who wants to use blood, serum, DNA, or tissue samples from the bank, fills out a short form that provides information about the proposed use of the samples, quantity needed, and any additional special requirements. The researcher submits the form to the MyCode Governing Board, which meets monthly and includes representatives from each of the three Geisinger research centers, research administration and a non-researcher."

According to Dr. Carey, criteria for sample use include: does the biobank have the specific samples requested? Is the proposed research scientifically

MyCode™ At a Glance	
Individual patients	>32,000
Primary Care	16,714
Specialty Care	>15,000
Total of Samples	>72,000
Blood samples	21,408
Serum samples	31,063
DNA samples	13,931
Tissue samples	2,745

Common Conditions of the MyCode™ Primary Care Cohort	
Condition	Number
Osteoarthritis	4,177
Breast Cancer	387
Prostate Cancer	402
Coronary Artery Disease	1,495
Hyperlipidemia	9,214
Ischemic stroke	1,240
BMI >40	1,864
Type 2 Diabetes	3,727
Asthma	1,910

sound? Are the requested samples appropriate to answer the scientific question?

Although biobanking is not exclusive to Geisinger Health System, Dr. Carey maintained that Geisinger's biobanking program is among the nation's most elite because of its link with Geisinger's advanced electronic medical records system. "What distinguishes Geisinger's biobank is that we have permission from our patients to link their samples to data in their medical records—Geisinger has one of the best electronic medical records systems in the country, making it easier to retrieve data," Dr. Carey explained.

Researcher Maeng Focuses On Healthcare Economics

Daniel Maeng, PhD, divides his time between Geisinger Center for Health Research and Geisinger Health Plan.

As a healthcare economist, Dr. Maeng says he is eager to see how his academic background—he holds a doctorate



Daniel Maeng, PhD

from Cornell University in policy analysis and management, with a concentration in health economics and health policy—will affect his understanding of the day-to-day operation of the health plan. "I will have access to claims data, but also, when I have questions about certain insurance procedures and policies, I will have colleagues right down the hall who I can ask. This is the benefit of being an academic who is embedded in a health plan."

Dr. Maeng came to Geisinger from Penn State's Center for Health Care and Policy Research, where he worked on "Aligning Forces for Quality," an effort to increase the quality of healthcare, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. At Geisinger, Dr. Maeng hopes to further his research into "how the healthcare delivery system works at achieving quality."

Geisinger has an innovative advanced medical home model, ProvenHealth Navigator, which presents a nice opportunity for me to get involved and evaluate how the medical home model is working out."

New Chief Scientific Officer

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of Medicine in Texas. His career has been hallmarked by special interests in child health issues, particularly autism and a range of developmental disorders.

But he is quick to point out that academic medical centers often have competing missions and inherent structural issues that make collaboration and rapid progress difficult. And it was the special environment of "team science, team research, collegiality and shared goals" that made the opportunity to be part of Geisinger Health System so attractive. Chair of Geisinger's external scientific advisory board for the past seven years, he helped forge Geisinger's current genetics program, including the development of the Geisinger Clinic Genomics Core and the biobanking program. As co-chair of the Research Advisory Task Force, he helped form the system's 10-year strategic research plan.

Ledbetter views that plan as an "inspiring" platform encouraging an "entrepreneurial spirit" that will remove barriers to stronger bridges between the system's research and clinical disciplines. "Geisinger's excellent clinical programs in neuroscience are a prime example of how we can translate research into early diagnosis and intervention. Then it's easy to make the logical leap to link childhood health to adult disease and ability to influence health status later in life."

What about more global research such as the human genome project – an effort that has been a pivotal focus in Ledbetter's career? "This is knowledge that is ready to be integrated into so much that's already going on at Geisinger," he notes, singling out the system's work on population health and comparative effectiveness research. A recent study in the journal, *Health Affairs*, estimated that understanding which treatments are most effective and encouraging their use could save the Medicare program billions of dollars without affecting patient choice. "We are the ideal place to marry those lines of research."

Even with so many factors working in the health system's favor in the years of change ahead, tough challenges await. "In research we still have to compete for resources with those major academic medical centers and their medical schools." The answers, Ledbetter believes, will lie in some key recruitments and partnerships, bringing more recognition to the high caliber work already being done and growing the research portfolio. "That will mean a more inclusive agenda, and more investigators in more clinical divisions."

A tricky course to navigate? Ledbetter, whose recreational pastimes include skiing and golf, has confidence in Geisinger's ability to handle all the traps and turns. "The high level of teamwork here has exactly the right focus: the patient."

Ledbetter Appointed Chief Scientific Officer

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genetics at the University of Chicago, was a member of the U.S. Senior Executive Service, and was chief of the Diagnostic Developmental Branch, National Center for Human Genome Research at the National Institutes of Health. He also was professor at Baylor College of Medicine Institute for Molecular Genetics.

A magna cum laude graduate from Tulane University with a BS in psychology, Dr. Ledbetter went on to earn his doctorate in behavioral genetics and psychology at the University of Texas. Dr. Ledbetter has served on the editorial boards of several genetics and genomics journals, and is currently on the editorial board of *Prenatal Diagnosis*. His personal research interests include the development and application of high-throughput genomics technologies to improve diagnostics and patient care, particularly in the area of neurodevelopmental disorders including autism, intellectual disability, schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders. Other areas of focus include addressing the challenge of integrating the vast amount of genomics data now being generated in routine patient care into the electronic health record (EHR) in clinically useful ways, and point-of-care genetics educational information for all healthcare providers.

The Hamory Legacy

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With sustained investment in research Geisinger has been able to attract researchers as well as clinicians interested in research. What's more, Geisinger has grown its research program. For example, the Weis Center has grown from two scientists in 2000 to its current cohort of 12, and the Center for Health Research, launched

in 2004, is now nationally recognized for its outcomes, health services and e-health research. In addition, as Geisinger continues to improve its diagnostic and treatment capabilities, the clinical trials group has grown and is moving to larger trials, engage more patients.

While his years of service to Geisinger

involved a variety of roles, including leading its 800+physician group practice from 1997 to 2008, overseeing clinical activities on two hospital campuses, and expanding the clinical training programs, Dr. Hamory maintains that he is particularly proud of his Geisinger research legacy and its promise for the future.

Staff Publications

These publications feature Geisinger employees as authors with publication dates from June to October 2010. Publications with a Geisinger employee as the sole author have no special markings. But, when the publication is jointly authored by a Geisinger employee and employees of other institutions, the Geisinger employee's name is bolded or appears with an asterisk. The listings below follow National Library of Medicine format and were compiled using Ref Works.

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Staff Publications

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Staff Publications

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M, and **Sudol M**. The Y65C Missense mutation in the WW domain of the Golabi-Ito-Hall Syndrome protein PQBP1 affects its binding activity and deregulates pre-mRNA splicing. *J. Biol. Chem.* 285, 19391-19401

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Wilson ML, Elston DM, Tyler WB, Marks VJ, Ferringer T. Dense lymphocytic infiltrates associated with non-melanoma skin cancer in patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia. *Dermatology Online Journal.* 2010 Mar. 16(3):4.

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110. **Zhang S, Chen H, Gerhard GS**. Heme synthesis increases artemisinin-induced radical formation and cytotoxicity that can be suppressed by superoxide scavengers. *Chem Biol Interact.* 2010 Jun 7;186(1):30-5. Epub 2010 Mar 31.

Recent External Awards

This list includes new awards and competitive renewals from external agencies and Geisinger's Clinical Research Fund from June through October 2010. To protect sponsors' confidential information, we omit dollar amounts for clinical trials and industry-sponsored agreements and some clinical trial listings. If an award is inadvertently overlooked, please forward the information to Shawna Seger (smseger@geisinger.edu) for inclusion in the next issue.

Tammy Anderer, PhD
Center for Health Research
Predicting Adverse Outcomes in Children with Commonly Acquired Pneumonia
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
National Institutes for Health
\$49,748.00

George Argyropoulos, PhD
Weis Center for Research
Genetic Variants in the CACNAIG Gene Confer Susceptibility for Developing Obstructive Sleep Apnea
Administrative Committee for Research
\$50,000

Peter Berger, MD
Center for Clinical Studies
Protocol Development: Effects of Glucose Control on Critical Care outcomes for Subjects in a Critical Care Unit with Elevated Blood Glucose Levels without a History of Diabetes Mellitus
Hospira, Inc.
\$14,600

Center for Clinical Studies
Healthcare Utilization and Costs Associated with Progression from Impaired Fasting Glucose to Type II Diabetes
Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
\$179,106.00

Medical Record Data Pull Providing Sponsor with Aggregate Counts of PCI Procedural MI and Drug Use Data
Medicare Pharma, Inc.
\$15,400.00

Joseph Boscarino, PhD
Center for Health Research
Developing PTSD Risk Assessment Tools Using the World Trade Center Outcome Study
National Institutes for Health
\$238,000

James O. Brady, MD
Hematology/Oncology
A Phase 3, Multicenter, Randomized, Open-Label, Parallel Group Study of the Efficacy

and Safety of Lenalidomide (Revlimid) Versus Chlorambucil as First-Line Therapy for Previously Untreated Elderly Patients with B-Cell Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (The Original Trial)
Celgene Corporation

Susan Fetterman
Internal Medicine
Utilizing Mobile Technology to Bring Specialty care to Rural Hospitals
HRSA
\$99,000.00

Glen Gerhard, MD
Weis Center for Research
JAX2 Prevalence Study
Centers for Disease Control
\$235,000.00

Ronald Harris, MD
Endocrinology
A Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Comparison of the Effects of Two Doses of LY2189265 or Exenatide on Glycemic control in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes on Stable Doses of Metformin and Pioglitazone (AWARD-1: Assessment of Weekly Administration of LY2189265 in Diabetes-1)
Lilly USA, LLC

Matthew Indeck, MD
General Surgery
A Retrospective Study Evaluating the use of Permacol Surgical Implant in the Repair of Abdominal Wall Defects Surgical Devices, a global business unit of Tyco Healthcare Group LP (d/b/a Covidien)

John Kennedy, MD
Endocrinology
A Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Comparison of the Effects of Two Doses of LY2189265 or Exenatide on Glycemic Control in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes on Stable Doses of Metformin and Pioglitazone (AWARD-1: Assessment of Weekly Administration of LY2189265 in Diabetes-1)
Lilly USA, LLC

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Recent External Awards

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Fan Lin, MD

Laboratory Medicine
Evaluation of S100P as a Biomarker for Pan-
creatic Cancer
Administrative Committee for Research
\$42,048

Vache Minassian, MD

Obstetrics and Gynecology
Natural History of Stress, Urge and Mixed
Urinary Incontinence in Women
National Institutes for Health
\$552,938

Michelle Neff-Bulger, MD

Pediatrics
Prenatal to Pediatrics: Coordinated Interventions to Promote Tobacco-Free Homes
American Academy of Pediatrics
\$20,000

Thomas Olenginski, MD

Rheumatology
Phase 3, Randomized, Double-Blind Study of the Efficacy and safety of 2 Doses of CP-690,550 Compared to Methotrexate in Methotrexate Naïve
Pfizer Inc.

A Long-Term, Open-Label, Follow-Up Study of Tasocitinib (CP-690,550), for the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis (A3921024)
Pfizer Inc.

Anthony Petrick, MD

General Surgery
Surgery Fellowship
Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc.
\$65,000

Fellowship for Sages Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery
Covidien
\$70,000

Janet Robishaw, PhD

Weis Center for Research
Beta/Gamma Subunit Heterogeneity in G Proteins
National Institutes for Health
\$102,878.00

Brian Schwartz, MD

Center for Health Research
Population-Based Evaluation of Primary Care Patients with MRSA in Relation to Animal Feeding Operations in Pennsylvania
John Hopkins University
\$10,000

Nirav Shah, MD

Center for Health Research
Using Positive Deviance to Identify Effective Weight Loss Maintenance Program
Pennsylvania State University
\$6,172

Center for Health Research
HMO Research Network Cardiovascular Research Network
Kaiser Permanente
\$18,858

Kimberly Skelding, MD

Cardiology
EDUCATE: Endeavor Drug eluting stenting: Understanding Care, Antiplatelet Agents and Thrombotic Events

Medtronic Vascular, Inc.

Diane Smelser, PhD

Center for Health Research
Gene-Environment Interaction in Childhood Obesity
Administrative Committee for Research
\$66,669

Christopher Still, DO

Center for Nutrition and Weight Management
Peripheral Blood Markers for Steatohepatitis
Administrative Committee for Research
\$40,723

Identification of Molecular Marks for Nash
American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery
\$25,000

Randle Storm, MD

Cardiology
DETERMINE: DEfibrillators To REduce Risk by MagnetIc ResoNance Imaging Evaluation
St. Jude Medical Company

Marius SudoI, PhD

Weis Center for Research
DUSPS Gene Molecular Marker of Tumors that Harbor Activated SRC Onogene
Pennsylvania Breast and Cervical Cancer Organization
\$50,000

Steven Toms, MD

Progesterone for the Treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury
Temple University
\$141,795