

A collaboration between Northwest Kidney Centers and UW Medicine



LEFT: Investigator Dr. Susan Wong presents on end-of-life care and dialysis practices at our annual Scientific Advisory Committee meeting Sept. 20 in Seattle.

RIGHT: Committee member Dr. Barry Straube and others listen to investigator presentations.

## Kidney Research Institute in the community

A message from the director

### DR. JONATHAN HIMMELFARB

We've had a busy summer and autumn at the Kidney Research Institute. In May, the KRI hosted the 14th annual Kidney Health Fair for African American families, led by investigator Dr. Bessie Young. In June, we held an open house at our new research space at Northwest Kidney Centers' Scribner Pavilion in north Seattle. In September, at the Washington State Fair, KRI research personnel hosted a table as part of the American Diabetes Association Day to raise awareness and funding in support of diabetes research, education and advocacy programs. We also launched Community Connection, a registry we'll use to recruit kidney patients for research studies. In October, for the second consecutive year, the KRI sponsored the Seattle Walk for Polycystic Kidney Disease. Investigator Dr. Beno Freedman led our team of 18, helping contribute to the nearly \$40,000 raised for the PKD Foundation.

We capped off a productive summer by hosting our 8th annual Scientific Advisory Committee where young KRI investigators presented on current research projects, gaining insight and advice from committee members. We also welcomed a new committee member, Dr. Barry Straube, who brings a unique perspective given his many years of service as former Chief Medical Officer for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Director of the CMS Office of Clinical Standards & Quality. Dr. Straube also served as Chairman of the End Stage Renal Disease and Clinical Laboratory Open Door Forum. The Scientific Advisory Committee remains supportive of the KRI's rapid growth and diverse research areas, and also advised the KRI to continue to focus on measuring how the work enhances the field of kidney disease research and positively impacts patient care.

We look forward to Northwest Kidney Centers' annual Discovery Gala in late October, a wonderful event benefiting kidney research. It's been a very productive 2016 and we'll use this momentum as we head towards 2017. We thank you for your continued support of the Kidney Research Institute.

## ON THE HORIZON

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**TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH  
INNOVATION AND DISCOVERY**

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## Kidney Research Institute opens research space in north Seattle, makes participating in studies easier for north end residents

The Kidney Research Institute held an open house June 10 at its newly renovated research space at Northwest Kidney Centers’ Scribner Pavilion, giving tours of the study visit rooms and sample processing space to members of the kidney community in Seattle.



TOP: Lori Linke, clinical research coordinator, gave tours of the renovated research space at the June 10 open house.

RIGHT: Dawn Lum, clinical research coordinator, welcomed guests; Nicole Robinson, clinical research coordinator, at the open house; Joyce Jackson, president and CEO at Northwest Kidney Centers, spoke at the event.

Although kidney research has been conducted at Scribner for many years, until now the facility didn’t have an in-house space for processing samples. Previously, samples were transported to lab space in downtown Seattle and processed there.

“Having study rooms here at Scribner makes being involved in a study that much easier for people in this area,” says Lori Linke,

clinical research coordinator at the KRI.

“Plus, being able to process samples directly after conducting study visits with participants really streamlines our work.”



## Free health screenings, prevention tips at Kidney Health Fair in Seattle

We were proud to sponsor this year’s Kidney Health Fair, held May 14 in Seattle and led by Kidney Research Institute investigator Dr. Bessie Young. Several hundred people stopped by for health screenings, healthy snacks, exercise demonstrations and to learn more about kidney disease and ways to prevent it.



TOP: Local chefs cooked kidney-healthy foods for Fair attendees.

RIGHT: Former King County Executive Ron Sims with Dr. Bessie Young, Kidney Research Institute investigator, at the Kidney Health Fair; the Senior Sliders dance group performed at the Fair.



## Investigators awarded top grants to hone research interests, further develop careers in kidney disease research

Three junior investigators at the Kidney Research Institute have recently been awarded grants that will help them launch independent research careers.



On Sept. 1, Dr. Susan Wong began a five-year K23 Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health, a grant that will allow her to continue her research on dialysis decision-making among adults with advanced kidney disease.

“Part of my research will involve conducting prospective studies using surveys and serial qualitative interviews with patients with advanced CKD and their healthcare providers to understand how decisions about dialysis and alternative therapies for advanced CKD, such as hospice and palliative care, are reached by these stakeholders,” says Susan.

Also in September, Dr. Cassianne Robinson-Cohen was named a recipient of a K01 Career Development Award from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases,



TOP: Dr. Susan Wong.

BOTTOM: Dr. Cassianne Robinson-Cohen.

a grant that provides salary and research support for three years.

“The award will allow me to get extensive training in genetic epidemiology, bioinformatics and genomic sciences,” says Cassy, who, as part of the grant, will spend three months training at UT Health in Houston. “I am very honored to have received the award. It is very gratifying and encouraging to know that the NIH wants to invest in me and my future and in the work that we do at the KRI.”

Earlier this year, Dr. Matthew Rivara was selected as one of the Institute of Translational Health Sciences’ KL2 Multidisciplinary Clinical Research Career Development Program scholars, receiving three years of training and financial support to pursue his individual research goals.

“The protected research time and research support that I will receive as a KL2 scholar will allow me to investigate associations of novel biological markers with uremic symptoms among patients with end-stage renal disease approaching the need for dialysis therapy,” says Matt. “The KL2 award will support my research efforts to better understand important patient-centered outcomes in the high risk transition period from advanced chronic kidney disease through the initiation of maintenance dialysis.”



Dr. Matthew Rivara.

## Kidney Research Institute launches Community Connection, a registry for participants interested in joining research studies

Research simply couldn’t happen without participants willing to join research studies. We need people with and without kidney disease to take part in studies to help us find better ways to treat, diagnose and even prevent kidney disease.

To help ensure we have participants on hand for our many ongoing research studies, we’ve launched Community Connection, a registry for people interested in taking part in research.

“The Community Connection provides an opportunity for kidney disease patients who are outside of the University of Washington system, as well as people without kidney disease, to volunteer for clinical research studies,” says Dr. Bryan Kestenbaum, an investigator at the KRI. “Being involved in research is a great way to play a part in finding new options for patients.”

Visit [kricc.org](http://kricc.org) to learn more about the registry and, if you’d like to join, fill out the simple online form with your contact details. We’ll then contact you if you match the criteria for current or future research studies. We’ll tell you more about the particular study you match with and, after that, you can decide if you want to join.



Steve, a participant in several Kidney Research Institute studies, talks about his experience in a new video about Community Connection, our registry for research participants. Watch the video and learn more about the registry at [kricc.org](http://kricc.org).



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'I really enjoy working  
with the participants. It  
feels good to feel like I'm  
contributing to helping  
investigators find out more  
about acute kidney injury.'  
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## Research coordinator Mary Bray conducts study visits for national study on impact of acute kidney injury

After working as an audiologist for 16 years, then taking time off to care for family, Mary Bray arrived at the Kidney Research Institute in 2011.

"I wanted to get back into working in a medical setting," says Mary, who conducts study visits with participants in ASSESS-AKI, an eight-year national study led by Drs. Jonathan Himmelfarb and Mark Wurfel that looks at the effect acute kidney injury has on a person's long-term health outcomes. "The Kidney Research Institute is a dynamic place to work. I like the people I work with, the supportive atmosphere and the collaboration."

ASSESS-AKI has 1,800 participants enrolled across four research sites; 425 of those are at the University of Washington.

"We're following people who have and have not had an AKI during their hospital stay. One of the goals of the study is to develop

a prognostic risk score that could inform providers and patients about the risks of adverse events after an episode of AKI.

"What's unique about our site is that all were enrolled while in the ICU at either Harborview or University of Washington Medical Center, making it one of the largest longitudinal studies of participants enrolled in the ICU setting in the U.S."

Mary conducts study visits with participants once a year, and calls them six months after each visit to check in. At each in-person visit, participants get their blood pressure checked, answer questionnaires, give blood and urine samples, have an ECG and discuss recent medical events.

"I really enjoy working with the participants. It's been great to get to know them over the years. It feels good to feel like I'm contributing to helping investigators find out more about acute kidney injury."