Emeritus

A NEWSLETTER FOR OHSU FACULTY

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OHSU

NEWS

After months of collaborative work, OHSU has filed a robust, comprehensive Health Care Market Oversight, or HCMO, notice with the Oregon Health Authority that outlines their vision and shows how their plan for an integrated, full-service public university health system will improve the health and well-being of people in Oregon and beyond. OHSU approached the HCMO filing with the goal of providing significant detail and transparency. This work was mostly guided by OHSU and Legacy subject matter experts, clinicians and staff, organized through work groups focused on quality, access, cost and health equity. Additional work with community-based partners and others will follow. The OHSU-Legacy integration is different from typical hospital acquisitions because OHSU is a public university health system with a state-mandated mission to serve the people in Oregon. OHSU is publicly accountable, locally controlled and responsive to the specific needs of our state, and, as a public entity, provides unique and specialized care not available elsewhere. "The OHSU-Legacy integration gives Oregon what it urgently needs to ensure people get the right care at the right place and at the right time, and to limit cost growth by preserving and improving existing community resources and services," said **OHSU President Danny Jacobs, M.D., M.P.H., FACS**. "Becoming one public university health system will ultimately benefit everyone, including those who have been historically underserved, and propel Oregon forward as a local and national leader in health, education and science." OHSU has committed to making $1 billion in strategic investments in buildings, equipment, technology and other infrastructure at Legacy Health. This capital investment is necessary to maintain and expand access to high-quality essential health services and will ensure Legacy Health facilities and services thrive over the next decade and beyond. At closing, Legacy Health Foundation will transform into an independent organization with a new name and board and will focus on promoting health equity and access in Oregon and southwest Washington. The independent foundation will fill a critical role in the health ecosystem and will partner with community to address social determinants of health. The state's oversight review is complex and expected to take six months or longer. Over the coming months, leaders from OHSU will engage with community organizations and members, hearing what people would like to see from their integrated public university health system, and talking about the transformational opportunities ahead.

OHSU opened a centralized Mission Control center — the first time since the coordinating effort launched in 2017 that all of the technology and teams have been in one centralized location. Driven by the coronavirus pandemic, OHSU grew its original Mission Control concept — monitoring and tracking bed and resource capacity across the OHSU Health system — to coordinate data sharing among health systems across the state. The new OHSU Mission Control Center continues to manage OHSU Health system capacity, and now also houses the Oregon Medical Coordination Center, or OMCC, which uses real-time data about available hospital beds and critical care services to efficiently place patients in facilities where they can be treated, and the Oregon Behavioral

Health Coordination Center, or OBCC, which does the same for inpatient behavioral health care. As OHSU, like the rest of the country, faces ongoing challenges with health care resources and staffing, expanding and innovating statewide information sharing has helped Oregonians receive the care they need, when and where they need it. The new facility will streamline staffing and operations for Mission Control. "Without centralized information and coordination, patients' care teams are calling around to colleagues for higher level of inpatient care than they can provide to their patient, trying to find the one hospital which has capacity right now to take their patient," said **Matthias Merkel, M.D., Ph.D.,** professor of anesthesiology and perioperative medicine, School of Medicine, and OHSU senior associate chief medical officer for capacity management and patient flow. "Now we are instead working with unprecedented collaboration, better connecting Oregon's health services, improving access for Oregonians, and supporting clinicians at every level of care through OMCC and OBCC."

Matthias Merkel, M.D., Ph.D., professor of anesthesiology and perioperative medicine, School of Medicine, and OHSU senior associate chief medical officer for capacity management and patient flow *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

OHSU and Postdoc Workers United are pleased to announce that they ratified an agreement on a four-year contract. Highlights from the agreement include:

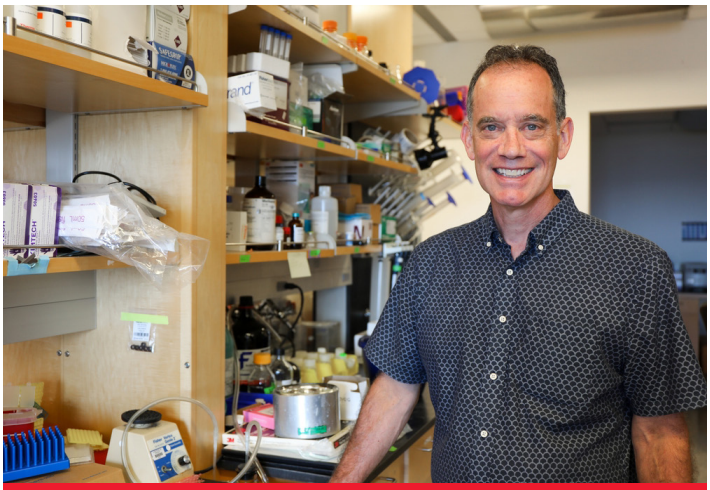
- A salary schedule above the NIH's current salary table, including a 6% pay increase, and annual increases thereafter of 3.5% in years two, three and four
- A $2,000 one-time, lump-sum payment, to be paid Friday, Sept. 27
- Additional supports for postdocs with international visas, including reimbursement for initial and renewal visa fees, and up to 10 days of additional paid leave accessible to eligible international postdocs
- More accessibility and visibility to benefits and resources for postdocs, such as DEI trainings, income verification forms, leave/accommodation, relocation reimbursement, and support for utilization of NIH Family Friendly Incentives
- Increased access to paid time off
- Commitment to a joint labor management committee

At the conclusion of the first week of medical school, M.D. students slip on their white coats for the first time as part of long-standing tradition to signify the beginning of their journey in medicine. This tradition continued Aug. 16 as 150 OHSU medical students donned their coats for the first time at Portland State University's Viking Pavilion. The 2028 White Coat Ceremony marks the 10th anniversary of the YourMD White Coat celebration at OHSU, and was led by Tracy Bumsted, M.D., M.P.H., professor of pediatrics, School of Medicine, and associate dean for undergraduate medical education. Of the 150 M.D. students who started this fall:

- **80%** are **Oregonians** or of Oregon heritage
- **68%** come from a **disadvantaged background**
- **57%** identify as **female**
- **46%** come from **racial** or **ethnic backgrounds** other than white
- **21%** come from a racial or ethnic group **underrepresented in medicine**
- **20%** come from a **rural** background
- **9** have completed **military service**
- **6** are **Wy'east Pathway Scholars**

From left: **Vienna Cordova**, OPIP Projects Coordinator; **Colleen Reuland, M.S.**, director of OPIP at OHSU and an instructor in pediatrics in the OHSU School of Medicine; and **Reece Jose, Sr.** research assistant. *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

A new metric developed by the OHSU Oregon Pediatric Improvement Partnership, or OPIP, will measure and incentivize young children's social-emotional health treatments from clinicians contracted with Coordinated Care Organizations. This effort aims to improve the health care system for patients from birth to 5 years old, for both immediate development benefits and long-term health outcomes. Oregon's Coordinated Care Organizations, or CCOs, provide community-based, integrated care for individuals covered under the Oregon Health Plan, serving roughly 93% of children enrolled in Medicaid across the state. The novel metric will be implemented as part of the Oregon Health Authority's CCO Incentive Metric program, beginning January 2025, and is a continuation of ongoing efforts by OPIP to improve how Oregon's Medicaid system supports the social-emotional health of children. OPIP leaders say access to services that support social and emotional health is more crucial now than ever before, particularly because early learning environments such as preschool and childcare have suffered during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. "Pediatric providers are caring for a rising number of youths with anxiety and depression, substance use, suicidality and school absenteeism. It is imperative that we support children from a young age to prevent many of these challenges," said **Lydia Chiang, M.D.**, associate professor of pediatrics, School of Medicine, and medical director of OPIP. "An incentive metric that pushes our health care system to focus on the healthy social-emotional development of young children and build up a behavioral health workforce to support their families will have enormous lifelong impact."



Tom Scanlan, Ph.D., professor of chemical physiology and biochemistry, School of Medicine, worked for decades toward the initial discovery of the compound, and to develop the technology that now underpins the company's ABX-002 program. *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

Autobahn Therapeutics — a biotechnology company first established out of a lab at OHSU — has generated a $100 million round of private investment to develop new treatments for people affected by neuropsychiatric disorders, such as depression, and eventually for other central nervous system disorders. The funding raised by San Diego-based Autobahn Therapeutics will be used to advance the company's pipeline of brain-penetrant small molecules, meaning molecules capable of crossing the blood-brain barrier. Their research is led by the OHSU-discovered compound known as ABX-002, a first-in-class brain-targeting thyromimetic agent — that acts by mimicking the effects of thyroid hormones — to treat patients with major depressive disorder and patients with bipolar depression disorder. Together, the disorders affect more than 27 million people in the United States alone. **Tom Scanlan, Ph.D.**, professor of chemical physiology and biochemistry, School of Medicine, worked for decades toward the initial discovery of the compound, and to develop the technology that now underpins the company's ABX-002 program. OHSU licensed the compound to Autobahn in 2018. "This is huge," Scanlan said. "I've always believed these drugs would be useful in the clinic. I've always believed that very strongly. It's exciting to see us getting closer and closer."

The funding round is especially notable at a time when biotechnology funding worldwide has become much more conservatively managed. In 2022, Autobahn announced research that supported its plans to advance ABX-002, the OHSU-discovered compound, into clinical testing for major depressive disorder. After announcing successful results in 2023, Autobahn now plans to advance ABX-002 in two trials: a Phase 2 clinical trial for patients with major depressive disorder and a Phase 2 trial for patients with bipolar depression. Scanlan's hope is that the compound is ultimately approved for clinical use to treat different forms of depression, and eventually other central nervous system conditions, as well. "Depression is a very large and growing clinical need that must be addressed," he said. "I'm confident that this compound and the innovative research at Autobahn will lead to other important clinical uses, as well."

Three newly minted physicians are the first trainees of the Three Sisters Rural Track Program, or RTP, a three-year family medicine residency program that is Central Oregon's first graduate medical education program. OHSU and St. Charles Health System jointly established Three Sisters RTP to help grow Central Oregon's health care workforce and meet the unique health needs of rural Oregonians. Organizers hope many of the new program's participants will continue to live and work in Central Oregon after they complete their residency. The trio of residents began their advanced medical training at OHSU this month. Next summer, the residents will head to St. Charles Madras — a 25-bed critical access hospital located about 50 miles north of Bend — for two more years of training. The program creates a pathway for specially trained physicians to dramatically improve health care access in Central Oregon, where many towns have a shortage of providers. Research has shown that about 55% of physicians stay within a 100-mile radius of their residency site. This means, within 10 years, Three Sisters RTP is estimated to produce 23 physicians who would reside in Central Oregon and provide care for 20,000 to 40,000 patients in the region. The program's launch is part of larger efforts to expand residency programs statewide. OHSU recently achieved the milestone of having more than 100 accredited residency and fellowship programs.

Maria Rodriguez, M.D., M.P.H., professor of obstetrics and gynecology in the OHSU School of Medicine conducts an ultrasound on a patient. Rodriguez is now director of the new OHSU Center for Reproductive Health Equity. *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

It's been two years since the United States Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization overturned Roe v. Wade, which for nearly 50 years had legally protected the ability to have an abortion. Since then, many states have passed extreme restrictions on abortion care, with 14 states banning abortion completely. Yet the number of abortions in the United States has risen and remains consistently elevated compared with pre-Dobbs levels. OHSU's Center for Women's Health continues to see a rise in patients seeking abortion care from out-of-state — a trend reflected nationwide. The latest data from the Society of Family Planning's #WeCount — a national abortion reporting effort that includes OHSU and aims to capture the shifts in abortion access by state — show that abortion volume was higher in 2023 than in 2022. Oregon has experienced a nearly 40% increase since 2020. Clinicians note that these individuals are often extensively delayed in accessing care due to financial constraints, managing time off work and childcare, travel logistics and health care system barriers. "What the numbers continue to tell us is that restrictions don't eliminate the need for abortion care, they make care unsafe and inaccessible. This is especially true for people who already face barriers to the health care system, including people of color, immigrants, low-income individuals and LGBTQ+ people," said **Maria Rodriguez, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, School of Medicine, and director of the OHSU Center for Reproductive Health Equity. "It's heartbreaking to see the obstacles patients face to receive what should be basic health care." In response to increased demand, OHSU launched a telehealth program, which effectively doubled clinical visit capacity and significantly increased service for many of Oregon's most rural counties. "For many patients, especially those living in rural areas, access to abortion services can be hours away," said **Alison Edelman, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, School of Medicine, and division director of Complex Family Planning. "We don't want anyone to be delayed in receiving care because of where they live or their personal circumstances. By expanding our telehealth services, we can provide a more efficient, lower-barrier option for patients."

A new generation of health care, research and education professionals are graduated from OHSU. A total of 1,050 degrees and certificates were awarded. Graduates assembled for the all-school commencement ceremony at 1 p.m., Sunday, June 2, at the Oregon Convention Center. The keynote speaker was Oregon Health Authority Director Sejal Hathi, M.D., M.B.A. The all-school ceremony was followed by separate hooding ceremonies for the OHSU schools of medicine, dentistry and nursing, and for the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health. The OSU/OHSU Doctor of Pharmacy Program also held a reception that day, in addition to a separate graduation ceremony held in Corvallis. The OHSU School of Nursing held additional commencement events on its Ashland, Klamath Falls and Monmouth campuses.

The OHSU School of Dentistry awarded 84 degrees this year.

The OHSU School of Medicine awarded 359 degrees and certificates.

The OHSU School of Nursing awarded 441 degrees.

The OSU/OHSU Doctor of Pharmacy Program awarded 57 degrees.

The OHSU-PSU School of Public Health awarded 109 degrees and certificates.

An innovative partnership between OHSU and CareOregon will establish a new residency program designed to improve the health of individuals, but also whole communities. CareOregon is providing $2.5 million through 2030 to launch the OHSU Preventive Medicine Residency Program. It will be the state's only preventive medicine residency when its first two residents begin training in summer 2025. Potential participants can apply starting this fall. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education recently granted the program accreditation, helping OHSU achieve a milestone of having more than 100 accredited residency and fellowship programs. "Preventive medicine physicians are needed now more than ever after the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the many daunting challenges Oregonians face while trying to lead healthy lives," said **Joyce Hollander-Rodriguez, M.D.**, associate professor of family medicine, School of Medicine, and associate dean for graduate medical education. "The OHSU Preventive Medicine Residency Program will prepare the next generation of health leaders to tackle these pressing issues head-on." In 2019, about 2,475 physicians in the United States were board-certified in preventive medicine. However, experts have estimated that public health agencies alone need as many as 23,500 physicians. A recent American Journal of Public Health essay advocates for more preventive medicine residency training programs like OHSU's to address the "large burden" of preventable health issues and reinforce the public health workforce. The OHSU Preventive Medicine Residency Program will be directed by **Brian Garvey, M.D., M.P.H.**, associate professor of family medicine, School of Medicine, who also completed the previous residency program.

Central Oregon will have a new option for people wanting to become nurses starting this summer, thanks to close collaboration among OHSU, St. Charles Health System and Central Oregon Community College. The OHSU School of Nursing's Accelerated Bachelor of Science Program has opened a new location in Bend, and the program will begin teaching its first group of eight Central Oregon-based students in July. Previously only available to Portland- and Ashland-based students, the 15-month-long program is geared toward people who want to change careers and become a nurse. It helps individuals who have already earned a bachelor's degree in another field to quickly earn a second bachelor's degree in nursing. "OHSU is honored to bring our well-established accelerated curriculum option to Bend in partnership with St. Charles, Central Oregon Community College and many other local leaders," said OHSU School of Nursing Dean **Susan Bakewell Sachs, Ph.D.**. "The OHSU School of Nursing is proud to both help students from Central Oregon become nurses without having to leave home, and also to help the Bend area grow more of its own nurse leaders."

AWARDS

A chemical biologist at OHSU has become just the second researcher in the institution's history to receive a prestigious Avenir Award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, known as NIDA, of the National Institutes of Health. **James Frank, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of chemical physiology and biochemistry, School of Medicine, will use the award to develop new tools to improve understanding of an alternative suite of receptors in the brain believed to be involved in opioid addiction. Existing medications to treat opioid use disorder target the brain's opioid receptors, yet the recent surge of fentanyl into the illicit drug supply has supercharged an opioid epidemic that now kills 80,000 Americans annually. Fentanyl is 100 times more potent than morphine, which makes existing medications to treat addiction less effective. "Because fentanyl is so potent and sticks to its receptors so effectively, the opioid-targeting drugs that we have in our toolkit don't work as well," he said. "So, we're trying to develop new therapies that act on receptors outside of the opiate system."

OHSU has once again been recognized for providing safe and quality health care experiences for all, including members of the LGBTQ+ community. The Human Rights Commission Foundation has named OHSU a 2024 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader. It is the tenth time that OHSU has received this recognition since 2011. Healthcare Equality Leaders are health institutions that receive a top score of 100 through the commission's Healthcare Equality Index, a national benchmarking tool that evaluates policies and practices related to the equity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ patients, visitors and employees. Of 1,065 facilities that actively participated in the 2024 index, 384 hospitals nationwide — including three in Oregon — were designated leaders.

Kristin G. Cloyes, Ph.D., M.N., professor of nursing, School of Nursing, and Ph.D. program director was appointed the Elnora E. Thomson Distinguished Professor. Her research investigates the social contexts of family and unpaid caregiving, particularly for people and communities that have been historically underrepresented and underserved in health care research and services. The research program focuses on how the informal, personal networks of family, friends and close others provide caregiving and social support for people with chronic illness and at end of life, with the goal of generating real-world, real-time understanding of social support resources and needs. Cloyes mentors interdisciplinary researchers and scholars at all levels of development who are passionate about pursuing research careers at the intersections of social and health equity, caregiving, chronic illness and end-of-life.

A team of researchers at OHSU were awarded a landmark five-year, $16.4 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to develop and test data-driven approaches that can more precisely predict mental health diagnoses and outcomes in children. For over a decade, experts at the OHSU Center for Mental Health Innovation have used machine learning to develop advanced computational models that can improve clinical prediction of a variety of mental health conditions across childhood and adolescence, including ADHD, anxiety, depression and substance use disorder. These models — which provide insight on the predicted age of condition onset, severity and prognosis, ideal treatments and more — can serve as a valuable tool in clinical decision-making processes, and may ultimately inform more effective mental health intervention and prevention efforts, said **Bonnie Nagel, Ph.D.**, professor of psychiatry, School of Medicine, and director of the Center for Mental Health Innovation. After demonstrating the models' success in the lab, the grant takes the work of OHSU scientists to the next level by allowing the team to transition its research algorithms to a clinical setting and determine the real-world effects they may have on clinical decisions and mental health outcomes.

Bonnie Nagel, Ph.D., director of the OHSU Center for Mental Health Innovation, is co-leading a team of researchers who are leveraging machine learning to predict youth mental health conditions. *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

Andrea (Anne) Smeraglio, M.D., associate professor of, School of Medicine, and director of Health Systems Science, was recognized by the Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM) for her time, dedication, expertise and leadership as co-chair of the AAIM Project ECHO Program Director Patient Safety and Quality (PDPQ) Collaborative Learning Community.

Raina Croff, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Layton Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Center at OHSU, is a recipient of the scientific research award from the American Academy of Neurology.

Raina Croff, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine, School of Medicine, is a recipient of the scientific research award from the American Academy of Neurology. This award recognizes a neurologist or neuroscientist who has demonstrated their commitment to health equity and addresses health disparities through clinical research, service, or leadership role. "Equity research first takes equity work," Croff said. "Only through first investing in DEI — like creating research pathways for underrepresented scholars and connecting meaningfully with the underrepresented communities we wish to engage — can equity research be impactful. My own research, and receipt of this award, are possible because of the time and energy poured into DEI, and with the tremendous support of my team, mentors, department, and the AAN. Thank you."

The Peace Corps recently announced its rankings of colleges and universities that have produced the highest all-time number of Peace Corps volunteers since the agency was established in 1961. Over the last six decades, more than 240,000 volunteers from more than 3,000 colleges and universities have accepted the agency's Bold Invitation to serve in 144 countries. This year, OHSU ranked No. 4 in the small enrollment category, with over 440 alumni serving as Peace Corps volunteers to date. Through service, the Peace Corps equips alumni of schools such as OHSU with adaptive leadership, intercultural competence, and problem-solving skills that are highly valued by employers across federal, state and local governments, non-profits, and the private sector. "Today's world requires problem solvers and people who understand that it is only through shared impact that we will change the trajectory of global issues. Curiosity and openness to others are cultivated in school, but must be nurtured throughout our lifetimes," said Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn. "I am so grateful to these outstanding institutions for challenging and inspiring their students to not only be exceptional students but also to go on to be informed and intentional global citizens."

Brandon Wilder, Ph.D., associate professor in the Vaccine & Gene Therapy Institute, received funding from the Hypothesis Fund, which supports innovative, early stage health and climate change research. Wilder's project, "Intracellular antibodies as a paradigm-shifting strategy for antibody-based therapeutics," was selected for the boldness of the science, his willingness to take risks and go after a big idea, and the potential long-term impact of his work. Wilder and team are exploring innovative antibody therapies that may help treat almost any disease that relies on proteins doing something bad inside the cell. This includes viral/bacterial infections, tumors and metabolic diseases.

Melanie Gillingham, Ph.D., professor of molecular and medical genetics, School of Medicine, recently won the Emmanuel Shapira Society for Inherited Metabolic Disorders award for First Author of Best Publication in Molecular Genetics and Metabolism. Established in 2003 in memory of its eminent member Emmanuel Shapira, M.D., Ph.D., this annual award is given for the best paper in the field of biochemical genetics and metabolism published in Molecular Genetics and Metabolism by a Society for Inherited Metabolic Disorders member or member's trainee. This is Gillingham's second time winning this honor from the SIMD, a national society for biochemical genetics; the first was in 2007.

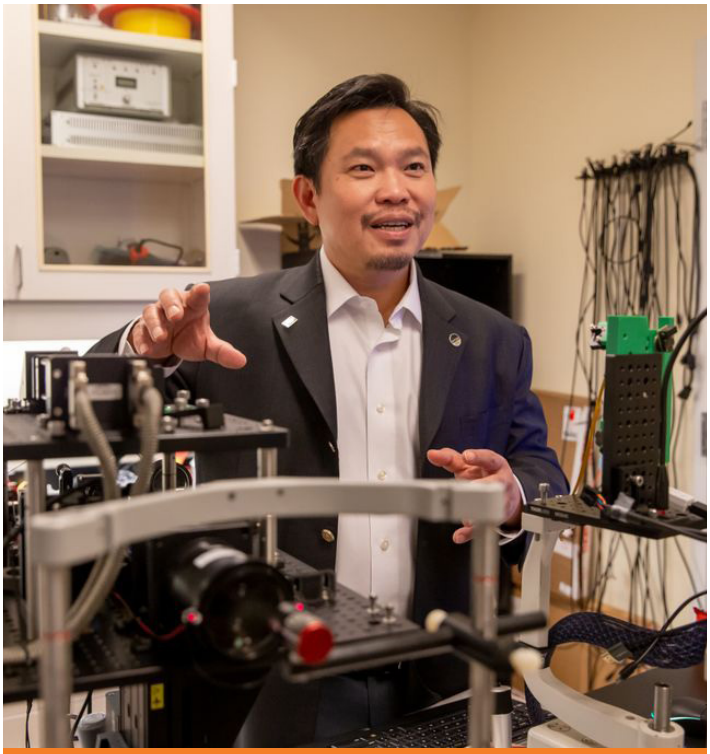
Bob Moore, center, with his wife, Charlee, an internationally recognized icon of nutrition and health, an innovative Oregon business leader, a visionary philanthropist and a longtime friend of Oregon Health & Science University, died Saturday, Feb. 10, at age 94. *(OHSU)*

The OHSU Bob and Charlee Moore Institute for Nutrition & Wellness was chosen to support the White House challenge to end hunger, improve nutrition and health and reduce disparities, as part of President Biden's National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health. The Moore Institute's commitment will expand the reach of the Nutrition Oregon Campaign — a statewide network of connected communities, organizations and individuals working to end chronic disease — to all 36 counties in Oregon. Plans include mini-conferences, speaking engagements, a social marketing campaign and adding five "hubs" by 2030. Hubs are comprised of local organizations, individuals and initiatives within a specific geographic area that are working toward a common vision of eliminating chronic disease in their communities and mobilizing around the science of the developmental origins of health and disease.

Ryan Cummings, M.S.N., instructor of surgery, School of Medicine, is one of three Hearst Foundation Endowed Scholarship recipients announced by the Hartford Center of Gerontological Excellence. The goal of the funding is to support clinical scholarship and prepare advanced practice nursing students in the care of older individuals.

Eriko Onishi, M.D., assistant professor of family medicine, School of Medicine, received the 2023 VitalTalk Faculty Leadership Award, recognizing her exceptional work in helping clinicians have empathetic conversations with seriously ill patients, and for being a diligent educator devoted to enhancing the quality of patient care through communication.

David Huang, M.D., Ph.D., professor of ophthalmology, School of Medicine, has been named a 2024 Oregon History Maker by the Oregon Historical Society. Since 2009, the society has bestowed the award onto individuals and organizations that are "positively shaping the history, culture, and landscape of Oregon." Huang co-invented the ground-breaking biomedical imaging technology known as optical coherence tomography, or OCT, in the early 1990s, when he was an M.D./Ph.D. student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. The technology has transformed the way physicians detect and manage eye diseases and is also increasingly used for conditions of the heart, skin, esophagus and more.



David Huang, M.D., Ph.D., was presented with the National Medal of Technology and Innovation for developing optical coherence tomography at a White House ceremony on Oct. 24, 2023. *(OHSU)*

Yabing Chen, Ph.D., M.B.A., professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, School of Medicine, and new vice chair of research, received the 2024 Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology (ATVB) Women's Leadership Committee Award for Outstanding Mentorship of Women from the American Heart Association's Council on ATVB Women's Leadership Committee. The award recognizes Chen as a member of the ATVB Council whose actions have demonstrated exceptional service in the mentorship, support, advocacy and sponsorship of women in ATVB fields.

OHSU School of Dentistry Dean **Ronald Sakaguchi, Ph.D., D.D.S.**, was elected as vice president at the Omicron Kappa Upsilon general business meeting. He will serve a one-year term as vice president, then ascend the officer ladder to become president-elect. Omicron Kappa Upsilon is a prestigious honor dental society in which only the top 12% of the dental school graduating class is selected for membership. Achieving a national officer position in the organization requires service and dedication to the profession and society. Omicron Kappa Upsilon was founded in 1914 at Northwestern University, Chicago, by Professor G.V. Black. The society has maintained a leadership role in academics and the dentistry profession.

Brigit Hatch, M.D., M.P.H., associate professor of family and preventive medicine, School of Medicine, was named the OHSU School of Medicine Charles R. and Velma E. Sharp Professor. "It has been an incredible honor to be appointed to the Charles and Velma Sharp Professorship," Hatch said. "I am incredibly grateful for this generous opportunity, and I am eager to start planning how to maximize its impact." The establishment of this professorship was made possible through the estate planning generosity of OHSU School of Medicine graduate Charles Sharp, M.D., class of 1935, and his wife, Velma. In addition, the Sharp family endowed a scholarship to support students in family medicine. The tenure of the professorship is five years, with the possibility of renewal. The award carries an annual stipend.

Laurel Hallock-Koppelman, D.N.P., assistant professor of medicine, School of Medicine, has been selected as a region 10 director of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. Selected by members during the March 8-31 voting period, Hallock-Koppelman is among several exemplary nurse practitioner leaders who will set the strategic direction for the association and play an instrumental role in guiding the profession forward. The association is a member-driven organization, with nurse practitioners informing the association's actions and determining the future of their profession.

Mary Zelinski, Ph.D., professor, Oregon National Primate Research Center, recently received a Society for the Study of Reproduction Distinguished Fellowship Award. This fellowship recognizes active Society for the Study of Reproduction members for their outstanding contributions to the field of reproductive biology and the society, illustrated by sustained high-impact research, leadership, service and mentorship.

The Commonwealth Memorial Fund and Healing Works Foundation has awarded a $431,230 grant to OHSU's **Deborah Cohen, Ph.D.**, professor of family medicine, School of Medicine, and vice chair of research for her team's research into primary care reforms. The official study is called the "Workforce Configurations and Cost Required to Provide Comprehensive Primary Care." Cohen's team includes **Stephan Lindner, Ph.D.**, associate professor of emergency medicine, School of Medicine, and a health economist at the Center for Health Systems Effectiveness.

Bahareh Ajami, Ph.D., assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, School of Medicine, is the inaugural recipient of the Tambourine ALS Breakthrough Research Fund. The fund aims to help change the understanding and treatment of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as ALS, by supporting innovative basic and discovery-focused research globally. The award should help solicit and fund creative, high-risk, high-reward ideas that might not otherwise fit existing grant programs, but hold the potential to generate breakthrough insights. Ajami and her team are studying ALS from the angle of cellular immunology, using samples with sporadic cases of ALS. The preliminary data is promising, Ajami said. However, it is high-risk project that has been difficult to get funding. Ajami will receive $600,000 for two years with the possibility of an extension for a third year.

Delaram Safarpour, M.D., MSCE, associate professor of neurology, School of Medicine, and medical director of the deep brain stimulation program in the OHSU Brain Institute, was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. The induction recognizes Safarpour's commitment to placing human interests, values and dignity at the core of teaching and practicing medicine and reflects a lifelong dedication to compassionate care and the values of humanity. The Gold Humanism Honor Society is a community of medical students, physicians and other leaders who have been recognized for their compassionate care. The society reinforces and supports the human connection in health care, which is essential for all.

John Kaufman, M.D., M.S., professor of interventional radiology, School of Medicine, has been named president-elect for the American Board of Radiology Board of Governors. Kaufman has more than 30 years of experience in his field. He holds the Frederick S. Keller endowed professorship in the School of Medicine and continues clinical practice. He has been serving in leadership roles through the American Board of Radiology for several years, contributing to interventional radiology being named the most recent medical specialty by the American Board of Medical Specialties, as well as helping establish interventional radiology residency programs, which are among the most competitive for graduating medical students.

The Gender Equity in Academic Health and Medicine Leadership Conference celebrates exemplary individuals who support the success of women and gender-diverse individuals in academic health care. The following OHSU awardees were recognized this year:

Mentoring Award: **Leah Reznick, M.D.**, associate professor of ophthalmology, School of Medicine

Discovery in Science: **Ana Paula Piovezan Fugolin, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D.**, assistant professor of restorative dentistry, School of Dentistry

Emerging Leader: **Laura Chess, M.D.**, assistant professor of emergency medicine, School of Medicine

Clinical Excellence: **Danielle Moyer, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of pediatrics, School of Medicine, and **Mary Marsiglio, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of family medicine, School of Medicine

Diana Lozano, Ph.D., assistant professor of ophthalmology, School of Medicine, has been awarded the 2024 Genentech Career Development Award for Underrepresented Minority Emerging Vision Scientists by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Foundation. Lozano will receive a two-year grant totaling $100,000 to support research and personnel costs for establishing an independent vision research program.

During the 2023 Distinguished Faculty Awards Ceremony hosted by the OHSU Faculty Senate the following faculty were recognized:

Affiliated Units and Institutes Outstanding Teaching Award – **Maria Trinidad Thompson, M.S.**, assistant professor of radiation therapy, School of Medicine, and assistant program director of clinical education for radiation therapy

School of Dentistry Outstanding Excellence Award – **Jens Kreth, Ph.D.**, professor of restorative dentistry

School of Medicine: Outstanding Service Award – **Brian Duty, M.D., M.B.A.**, professor of urology

School of Nursing: Outstanding Research Award – **Andrew McHill, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of nursing

OSU College of Pharmacy: Outstanding Leadership Award – **James Lewis, Pharm.D., FIDSA**, Clinical supervisor for infectious disease

OHSU/PSU School of Public Health: Outstanding Collaboration Award – **Jonathan Snowden, Ph.D.**, associate professor of public health

RESEARCH

OHSU researchers have found that despite legislation in 19 states requiring insurers to cover a 12-month supply of contraception, patients aren't receiving a year's worth of their prescription; most receive just three months or less. Their study recently published in the journal JAMA Health Forum shows that policies requiring coverage of a 12-month supply of short-acting hormonal contraception — most commonly the birth control pill — have not been fully implemented, resulting in no substantial increases nationally in year-long prescription orders. This leaves many patients at an increased risk for unintended pregnancy. A common cause for decreased effectiveness with the pill is breaks in use, often due to running out of a prescription or a lapse in obtaining a refill. However, dispensing a longer-term supply of contraception — six or 12 months — is linked to improved continuous use, fewer breaks in coverage and health system savings. "The decision of when or if to become pregnant is deeply personal," said **Maria Rodriguez, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, School of Medicine, and director of the OHSU Center for Reproductive Health Equity. "It shouldn't be impacted by a delay in getting to your pharmacy for a refill, or a pill package running out while on vacation." To address this barrier, policymakers in 19 states have enacted 12-month contraceptive supply policies, which require insurers to cover the cost of dispensing a full year of coverage at once per prescription. However, OHSU researchers found that these policies have not been fully implemented and have failed to change current prescribing practices. "Our findings suggest a significant gap in knowledge both for patients and prescribers, and we hope this serves as a call to action to make 12-month supplies the standard prescribing practice," Rodriguez said. "This is low-hanging fruit for improving birth control access, especially for people who live in states with more restrictions on reproductive health care."

Patients who initiated treatment for opioid use disorder through a telehealth mobile app stayed with treatment at a greater rate over six months than those who started treatment in a physical clinic, a new study led by OHSU found. The study, published in the Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment, is among the first to compare patient retention between telehealth and traditional office-based treatment. The comparison was possible only because a federal exemption during the COVID-19 pandemic enabled clinicians to initiate treatment with buprenorphine through a phone or tablet rather than an in-person visit. The exemption is due to expire at the end of this year, raising the significance of this new finding amid an illicit drug use crisis that continues to kill more than 100,000 Americans annually. "This finding reinforces the idea that telehealth is effective in starting and continuing treatment for people with opioid use disorders," said lead author **Brian Chan, M.D., M.P.H.**, associate professor of medicine, School of Medicine.

William Hersh, M.D., professor of medical and clinical informatics students, School of Medicine, found himself curious about the growing influence of artificial intelligence. He wondered how AI would perform in his own class. So, he decided to try an experiment. He tested six forms of generative, large-language AI models — for example ChatGPT — in an online version of his popular introductory course in biomedical and health informatics to see how they performed compared with living, thinking students. A study published in the journal npj Digital Medicine, revealed the answer: Better than as many as three-quarters of his human students. "This does raise concern about cheating, but there is a larger issue here," Hersh said. "How do we know that our students are actually learning and mastering the knowledge and skills they need for their future professional work?" The role of technology in education is nothing new, Hersh said, recalling his own experience as a high school student in the 1970s during the transition from slide rules to calculators. Yet, the shift to generative AI represents an exponential leap forward. "Clearly, everyone should have some kind of foundation of knowledge in their field," Hersh said. "What is the foundation of knowledge you expect people to have to be able to think critically?" The study is the first to compare large-language models to students for a full academic course in the biomedical field. Hersh and Fultz Hollis noted that a knowledge-based course such as this one may be especially ripe for generative, large-language models, in contrast to more participatory academic courses that help students develop more complex skills and abilities. Hersh remembers his experience in medical school. "When I was a medical student, one of my attending physicians told me I needed to have all the knowledge in my head," he said. "Even in the 1980s, that was a stretch. The knowledge base of medicine has long surpassed the capacity of the human brain to memorize it all." Yet, he believes there's a fine line between making sensible use of technical resources to advance learning and over-reliance to the point that it inhibits learning. Ultimately, the goal of an academic health center like OHSU is to educate health care professionals capable of caring for patients and optimizing the use of data and information about them in the real world. In that sense, he said, medicine will always require the human touch. "There are a lot of things that health care professionals do that are pretty straightforward, but there are those instances where it gets more complicated and you have to make judgment calls," he said. "That's when it helps to have that broader perspective, without necessarily needing to have every last fact in your brain."

Cachexia is a condition that causes weight, muscle and fat loss, as well as physical weakness, in people with cancer. To date, there are no Food and Drug Administration-approved medications to prevent or treat cachexia, making it an urgent, unmet need in cancer research and treatment. New clinical trial results published in The New England Journal of Medicine suggest a promising new therapy could help. The Pfizer-sponsored study enrolled 187 participants across the world — including 10 from OHSU, the most of any clinical trial site in North America — in a study to better understand if the therapy ponsegromab could help participants increase body weight and appetite, and help with other cachexia symptoms. "This monthly subcutaneous injection improved weight, appetite and quality of life in ways I have not seen," says medical oncologist **Eric Roeland, M.D.**, associate professor of medicine, School of Medicine. "Suddenly, people were gaining weight, they were hungry, and they were enjoying food. That's not something you typically hear from people living with advanced cancer and receiving cancer therapy. Food is usually a huge struggle. This study marks a major step forward in this field." The participants in the phase II randomized controlled study were undergoing treatment for one of three types of cancer — lung, colorectal or pancreatic cancer. Participants were given a once-monthly injection of ponsegromab, a monoclonal antibody that stimulates the immune system, and the resulting data were clear: The treatment demonstrated improved weight gain — 6.6 pounds in the highest-dose group — compared with those who received the placebo over 12 weeks. Study participants who received ponsegromab also reported improvement in appetite and cachexia symptoms, overall physical activity and skeletal muscle mass.

Archie Bleyer, M.D., professor of radiation medicine, School of Medicine, remembers the day his research focus shifted. His 12-year-old grandson's classmate and soccer teammate died by a firearm. He knew the boy's mother and said that her son "left a note and used the gun but didn't need to die because he had a bad day." In another instance, his patient awoke when hearing his son kill himself with a gun. These events changed Bleyer's life. He has been a pediatric oncologist since 1971, focused on prevention and treatment of cancer in the adolescent young adult population, ages 15 to 39. He continues to do cancer research, but in the past decade, his attention has turned toward a disturbing trend: More young people are now dying from bullets than from cancer. And the number is going up. Bleyer is lead author of a recent study in the journal PLOS One examining mental health disorder and firearm data from 2000 to 2019. Using data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation Global Health Burden, the researchers compared the United States to 40 countries with similar sociodemographic profiles. They found that while the prevalence of mental health disorders in the U.S. is similar in all major categories to its 40 comparable sociodemographic countries, death by firearms is 20 times greater. "We have the same degree of mental health issues as other countries, but our firearm death rate is far greater and continuing to increase," Bleyer said. "In most of the countries, firearms deaths are decreasing." Since 2000, the rate of total firearm deaths increased 23%. In the other 40 countries combined in the study, firearm deaths were down 27% in that same time.

OHSU researchers have identified a combination of treatments that show promise in slowing the progression of cancer and reducing tumor growth. Their research lays the groundwork for developing more effective treatments for triple negative breast cancers and mesotheliomas — both aggressive forms of cancer that are difficult to treat. The new study was published Friday in Cell Reports Medicine. "Current immune therapies are effective for only a small percentage of patients with these types of cancer," said **Sanjay V. Malhotra, Ph.D.**, professor of cell, developmental and cancer biology, School of Medicine, and the co-director of the Center for Experimental Therapeutics in the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute and co-senior author on the study. Malhotra is the Sheila Edwards-Lienhart Endowed Chair in Cancer Research, and the co-director of the Center for Experimental Therapeutics in the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute. "This is a serious gap in treatment, and new medicines are needed." Solid tumors — like triple-negative breast cancers, known as TNBC, and mesothelioma, cancer that forms in the internal organs — are often not responsive to chemotherapy or certain immune therapies, such as checkpoint inhibitors, which are drugs that block checkpoint proteins to boost the body's immune system so it can fight cancer. "Only a subset of patients, about 20% to 40%, with advanced solid tumors derive clinical benefit, and of those, a substantial portion progress over time," said **Shivaani Kummar, M.D.**, professor of medicine, School of Medicine, and co-author on the paper. "The ability to do combination immunotherapy-based screens and quickly move promising combinations forward for clinical development could provide more effective therapies for patients with a variety of cancers."

New research from OHSU reveals negative health consequences for people who are overweight and ignore their body's signals to sleep at night, with specific differences between men and women. The study published this week in The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism. The study recruited 30 people, split evenly between men and women. All had a body mass index above 25, which put them into an overweight or obese category. Generally healthy participants contributed a saliva sample every 30 minutes until late in the night at a sleep lab on OHSU's Marquam Hill campus to determine the time at which their body started naturally producing the hormone melatonin. Melatonin is generally understood to begin the process of falling asleep, and its onset varies with an individual's internal biological clock. Participants then went home and logged their sleep habits over the following seven days. Researchers assessed the time difference between melatonin onset and average sleep timing for each participant, categorizing them into two groups: those who had a narrow window, with a short time duration between melatonin onset and sleep, and those with a wide window, with a longer duration between melatonin onset and sleep. A narrow window suggests someone who is staying awake too late for their internal body clock and is generally associated with poorer health outcomes. The new study confirmed a variety of potentially harmful health measures in the group that went to sleep closer to melatonin onset. It also found key differences between men and women. Men in this group had higher levels of belly fat and fatty triglycerides in the blood, and higher overall metabolic syndrome risk scores than the men who slept better. Women in this group had higher overall body fat percentage, glucose and resting heart rates. "It was really somewhat surprising to see these differences present themselves in a sex-dependent manner," said senior author **Andrew McHill, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of nursing, School of Nursing. "It's not one size fits all, as we sometimes think in academic medicine."

A new study from OHSU, supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, finds that while routine prenatal iron supplementation reduces the incidence of iron deficiency and related anemia during pregnancy, there is no significant effect on maternal or infant health outcomes, such as maternal hypertension and preterm birth. This means for the average pregnancy, additional iron supplementation — which can cause nausea and constipation — may not be necessary. The study, published today in the journal JAMA Network Open, will inform new recommendations by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a group supported by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to make evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services. "There's a lot of marketing out there targeting various vitamins and supplements for pregnant people, and it can be overwhelming," said **Amy G. Cantor, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor of medical informatics and clinical epidemiology, School of Medicine, and the study's lead author. "It's best to keep it simple: If you don't have any risk factors outlined by your clinician, then a standard prenatal vitamin should be sufficient to ensure a healthy pregnancy."

A study published in this month's issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry found a small but statistically significant benefit of white and pink noise on task performance among children and college-age young adults with ADHD. Color noises represent a different combination of frequencies and volumes along the spectrum of sound, each with their own distinct characteristics and effect on the brain. Just as white light includes all the colors of the rainbow, white noise contains all frequencies of noise and sounds like static. Pink and brown noise are similar, but with a higher proportion of low frequencies; they may sound like rain or a waterfall. As clinical understanding of ADHD continues to broaden, interest in identifying novel, low-cost supports for those diagnosed with the condition has grown. One such support that has recently sparked great interest is the potential use of color noise exposure — including white, pink and brown noise — to enhance focused performance during attention-demanding tasks. "Although outcomes are much improved with current treatments, ADHD still can dramatically increase the risk of serious and complex long-term health outcomes, because treatments are only partially effective, and adherence is

difficult," said **Joel Nigg, Ph.D.**, professor of psychiatry, School of Medicine, co-director of the OHSU Center for Mental Health Innovation and lead author of the study. "It is critical that we continue to investigate complementary and alternative supports for those living with ADHD. "Our priority is identifying new and improved tools to empower each individual to live their healthiest and most productive life, as well as providing evidence-based guidance on popular ideas in the public domain such as white or brown noise."

A study in nonhuman primates found a dramatic decrease in levels of the monkey form of HIV after one shot of Therapeutic Interfering Particles, or TIPs. The study's results suggest that one TIP shot could prevent a person living with HIV from passing the virus onto anyone else. Results from this research will be used to inform a planned clinical trial in people. *(OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)*

A single shot of an experimental injection dramatically reduces levels of the monkey form of HIV in nonhuman primates for at least 30 weeks, according to a study published today in Science. The new research suggests that the lab-made shot has the potential to offer a simple and durable alternative to the current standard treatment for people living with HIV, which is effective but demanding. The collaborative study between OHSU and the University of California San Francisco found Therapeutic Interfering Particles, or TIPs, reduced HIV levels in nonhuman primates by at least 1,000-fold in five of six treated subjects. The primate form of HIV was so low in one treated animal that the virus became undetectable. TIPs are small, lab-engineered segments of the HIV virus that do not cause disease. TIPs reproduce so rapidly that they compete with HIV and are designed to suppress HIV in an infected person. "There's really nothing that can change the course of disease like this," said co-author **Nancy Haigwood, Ph.D.**, professor in the Oregon National Primate Research Center. "If TIPs can reduce HIV in people like it has in our nonhuman primate study, this technology could open the door to alternative approaches to HIV care and mean people won't have to take medications for the rest of their lives. That is incredibly exciting." Haigwood and colleagues are conducting a follow-up nonhuman primate study to assess how a single TIPs injection could work after infection is already established and controlled with antiretroviral therapy, to control virus when the therapy is halted.

A clinical trial at OHSU suggests that a subset of older adults with a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease may benefit from fish oil supplements. The study published today in the journal JAMA Network Open. The results come amid claims that fish oil supplements can improve brain function in people with memory problems. The study found no statistically significant benefit for all older adults in general. However, among those enrolled in the study who also carry a gene associated with Alzheimer's disease, it showed a reduction in the breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. The study's senior co-author from OHSU indicated that fish oil may be worthwhile for people who carry the APOE4 gene, which indicates a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's, but not necessarily for all older adults. "Our findings showed that over three years, there was not a statistically significant difference between placebo and the group that took fish oil," said **Lynne Shinto, N.D., M.P.H.**, professor of neurology, School of Medicine. "I don't think it would be harmful, but I wouldn't say you need to take fish oil to prevent dementia." The study enlisted 102 participants who were 75 years old or older who had relatively low blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fish oil. Participants underwent magnetic resonance imaging, or MRIs, of their brains first as they were enrolled and then again at the conclusion of the three-year study, to assess the amount of change in white matter lesions in the brain. These lesions may inhibit the delivery of nutrients through blood vessels to the brain, which raises the risk of developing dementia later in life.

New research led by OHSU reveals a promising approach to developing a universal influenza vaccine — a so-called "one and done" vaccine that confers lifetime immunity against an evolving virus. The study, published today in the journal Nature Communications, tested an OHSU-developed vaccine platform against the virus considered most likely to trigger the next pandemic. Researchers reported the vaccine generated a robust immune response in nonhuman primates that were exposed to the avian H5N1 influenza virus. But the vaccine wasn't based on the contemporary H5N1 virus; instead, the primates were inoculated against the influenza virus of 1918 that killed millions of people worldwide. "It's exciting because in most cases, this kind of basic science research advances the science very gradually; in 20 years, it might become something," said senior author **Jonah Sacha, Ph.D.**, professor in the Oregon National Primate Research Center. "This could actually become a vaccine in five years or less." Researchers reported that six of 11 nonhuman primates inoculated against the virus that circulated a century ago — the 1918 flu — survived exposure to one of the deadliest viruses in the world today, H5N1. In contrast, a control group of six unvaccinated primates exposed to the H5N1 virus succumbed to the disease. Sacha said he believes the platform "absolutely" could be useful against other mutating viruses, including SARS-CoV-2. "It's a very viable approach," he said. "For viruses of pandemic potential, it's critical to have something like this. We set out to test influenza, but we don't know what's going to come next."

Jonah Sacha, Ph.D., senior co-author of a study published today in the journal Nature Communications, says new research could lead to a universal influenza vaccine withing five years. (OHSU/Christine Torres Hicks)

In a new study, OHSU researchers find that women veterans who had recently attempted suicide were more likely than men to feel social rejection and betrayed by military institutions. They also reported feeling less independent and compassionate toward themselves. The findings, recently published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, suggest that women veterans may be at higher risk of repeat suicide attempts. It's the first longitudinal — meaning following individuals over time — national study aimed at understanding how psychosocial symptoms change over time among veterans who recently attempted suicide; it's also the first to specifically focus on differences between genders in the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. "Historically, a lot of the research done on veterans in suicide prevention have enrolled samples that are predominantly men, and that's partly an artifact of the fact that the veteran population is predominantly men," said lead author **Lauren Denneson, Ph.D., M.S.**, professor of psychiatry, School of Medicine, and associate director of the Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care at the VA Portland Health Care System. "A lot of what we're seeing likely goes back to women's experiences in society," Denneson said. "For example, in studies of depression, women have higher rates of depression because of harmful relationship experiences and lower power in society. "In addition," she continued, "across all our qualitative and quantitative data, women veterans did not receive as much social support as men. Men reported they had spouses, children, neighbors rallying around them in a way that women didn't. In fact, when women tried to seek social support from a spouse, family member or friend, frequently those people were not only not supportive, but retraumatized them." Denneson said their findings speak to the need to bolster existing therapies to improve self-compassion and address healthy relationships, as well as developing new interventions that help women veterans in these areas. "We shouldn't limit ourselves to only current therapies," she said. "We need creative solutions to address these concerns and support our women veterans."

In France, the majority of people with an opioid use disorder — 87% — receives access to medication designed to treat it. In the United States, where more than 100,000 people are dying annually from drug overdoses, less than 20% of people with opioid use disorder receive methadone or buprenorphine. A new study published in the International Journal of Drug Policy highlights differences between the two countries — and a prime opportunity for the U.S. to better address an opioid epidemic that continues to ravage American families and communities. "Americans are dying at persistently unacceptable, unthinkable rates," said lead author **Honora Englander, M.D.**, professor of medicine, School of Medicine. "This doesn't need to be political; this is science. Methadone is a life-saving medication that is inaccessible to most people who need it in the U.S. because of current regulations. Policymakers can change that." Overdose rates are 32 times lower per capita in France than in the U.S., she noted. Englander is spending a year conducting addiction and public health research at le Centre Hospitalier Vinatier in Lyon as a Fulbright Scholar. She said she is most surprised by the ease at which people with addiction can access care, compared with the firmly regulated landscape she's accustomed to in the U.S. "The French system is far from perfect," she said, "but it's just night and day what a system like this would mean for the patients I care for in Oregon."

About 79% of clinical trial participants experienced measurable improvement after receiving experimental, CRISPR-based gene editing that is designed to fix a rare form of blindness, according to a paper published today in the New England Journal of Medicine. "This trial shows CRISPR gene editing has exciting potential to treat inherited retinal degeneration," said **Mark Pennesi, M.D., Ph.D.**, a corresponding author on the paper, an ophthalmologist and OHSU's lead scientist for the Phase 1/2 BRILLIANCE trial. "There is nothing more rewarding to a physician than hearing a patient describe how their vision has improved after a treatment. One of our trial participants has shared several examples, including being able to find their phone after misplacing it and knowing that their coffee machine is working by seeing its small lights. "While these types of tasks might seem trivial to those who are normally sighted, such improvements can have a huge impact on quality of life for those with low vision."

Private equity firms now account for as much as a quarter of practices providing behavioral health services in some states, according to a new study by researchers from OHSU, the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University. The finding, published today in the journal JAMA Psychiatry, appears to reflect a growing trend across medicine as private equity firms acquire medical practices with an eye toward maximizing profits. The new study is a notable development for an area of medicine once thought to have scant profit margins. "At this point, there is no stone left unturned by private equity investors," said lead author **Jane Zhu, M.D.**, associate professor of medicine, School of Medicine. The interest among private equity investors likely reflects improved insurance coverage and reimbursement rates for behavioral health services nationwide in recent years, along with growing demand, Zhu said. Traditionally, many private practices have been relatively small, with only one or two practitioners. Acquiring multiple practices may enable private equity firms to gain operational and administrative efficiencies with increased market power to negotiate commercial insurer reimbursement rates. "Private equity ownership of outpatient behavioral health clinics is very, very high in some states," Zhu said. "Given those high rates of penetration, it points to behavioral health as an area that needs attention from policymakers."

New research using live SARS-CoV-2 virus reveals an updated vaccine provides a strong immune response against previous strains and emerging variants. The findings by researchers at OHSU, published as a preprint in medRxiv, suggest a clear benefit in receiving updated vaccinations on a regular basis, especially among older people or those with underlying medical conditions. The study was subsequently published in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases following peer review. "The virus is still circulating, it's continuing to evolve, and it remains dangerous," said co-senior author **Fikadu Tafesse, Ph.D.**, associate professor

of molecular microbiology and immunology, School of Medicine. “Sooner or later, there will be another variant that evades the immunity we have already built up. Our study demonstrates that it’s worthwhile to update our immune repertoire.” The new study is the latest in laboratory research at OHSU testing variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The project relies upon more than 2,000 university employees who have volunteered to have their blood drawn before, during and after vaccination. The research project began early in the pandemic with antibody testing. “Overall, this work strongly supports use of the updated vaccine,” said co-senior author **Marcel Curlin, M.D.**, associate professor of medicine, School of Medicine and medical director of OHSU Occupational Health. “In the big picture, COVID-19 is not going away but lining up alongside the other common respiratory illnesses such as flu and RSV, which cause relatively mild disease for most people and a lot of harm to a few.”

APPOINTMENTS

Nathan R. Selden, M.D., Ph.D., has been appointed as dean of the OHSU School of Medicine. Dr. Selden has had an accomplished record of contribution to our clinical, scientific and educational missions during his 24-year tenure at OHSU. His demonstrated leadership and deep connections across the School of Medicine, the university and the community make him the right person to serve in this role during a time of rapid change, significant challenges and important opportunities. Dr. Selden joined OHSU and OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in 2000 as an assistant professor of neurological surgery. He has led major expansions of the neurosurgery residency training program, the division of pediatric neurosurgery and the department of neurological surgery, where he served as chair for the past 8 years. He is a professor of neurological surgery, holds the Mario and Edith Campagna Chair in Pediatric Neurosurgery and has served as interim dean of the School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Selden has led the creation of impactful partnerships in the clinical neurosciences with Legacy Health. The relationships he has built with key Legacy Health leaders and his own experience as a staff neurosurgeon at Randall Children’s Hospital provide a strong foundation as OHSU and Legacy embark on the next steps of our groundbreaking integration. Dr. Selden’s scientific research has focused on central mechanisms of pain sensation. He was the co-principal investigator and surgeon for the first-ever trial of human neural stem cell therapy. He also researches outcomes for neurosurgical care delivered to children with spinal congenital malformations and is an author of the Pediatric Traumatic Brain Injury Guidelines, which are used around North America and in many countries around the world to improve the care of seriously injured children. Dr. Selden has a national and international reputation for studying new methods of neurosurgical education and continuing education that promote patient safety and quality. He is a past-president of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, one of the largest neurosurgical professional organizations in the world, is currently president of the Society of Neurological Surgeons, the world’s oldest academic neurosurgical society, and is vice-chair of the American Board of Neurological Surgery. In 2013, he received the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education’s Parker Palmer Courage to Teach Award.

OHSU and OHSU Foundation announce that **Kate Azizi** has been named president of the OHSU Foundation. An accomplished fundraising executive with a track record of success in the academic health space, Azizi brings deep experience and a passion for igniting the power of philanthropy to improve the lives of people. Azizi joins OHSU Foundation from the Medical University South Carolina, where she has served for over four years as vice president for institutional advancement, overseeing all fundraising and alumni relations for MUSC’s six colleges and its health system, which includes 16 hospitals throughout South Carolina. During her tenure at MUSC, she has led her team to significantly increase dollars raised each year, nearly doubling fundraising over a four-year period. Previously, Azizi held senior development roles at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, University of Chicago Medicine, North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine and North Carolina State University College of Management.

TRANSITIONS

After serving as the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute's director for more than 17 years, **Brian Druker, M.D.**, professor of medicine, School of Medicine, will take on a new role as the institute's chief executive officer. The newly created position will allow Druker to focus on long-term vision and strategic planning, fundraising and donor engagement, as well as research and clinical growth. "Since I took on the role in 2007, the roles and responsibilities of the director position have expanded significantly in concert with the growth of the institute itself," says Druker. As the JELD-WEN Chair of Leukemia Research at OHSU, Druker had a pioneering role in shaping the fields of precision medicine and targeted cancer drugs. He was pivotal to the development of Gleevec, the first medication that specifically targeted cancer cells, proving it was possible to shut down cells that enable cancer to grow without harming healthy ones. This discovery gave patients with a once-fatal form of chronic myeloid leukemia, or CML, the expectation to live a normal life span. **Tom Sellers, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, professor of oncological sciences, School of Medicine, the new director for the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute, was recruited to OHSU in February 2023 as the institute's chief research officer in the OHSU School of Medicine. Sellers has extensive leadership experience, including serving as deputy director of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center, 13 years as director of the Moffitt Research Institute, and seven years as director of the Moffitt Cancer Center. He is an accomplished scientist who has authored more than 400 publications and garnered more than $100 million in grants as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

IN MEMORIUM

R. Mark Vetto
January 8, 2021

Emily Tufts Keller
October 26, 2019

Leornard W. Ritzmann
October 22, 2019