

## News and Current Events

Department of Pediatrics

# PEDS R US

**MINNETTE MARKUS-RODDEN, MSN, RN, CPNP-AC,**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR  
OF  
PATIENT EXPERIENCE, SAFETY AND QUALITY



Minnette Markus-Rodden, MSN, RN, CPNP-AC, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, was appointed director of Patient Experience, Safety and Quality. Ms. Rodden has extensive background and leadership experience in health care as a provider, educator and administrator. As a faculty member and pediatric trauma coordinator, she has been active in multiple performance improvement and patient advocacy initiatives, responsible for data analysis and performance improvement, and in the Pediatric Intensive Care

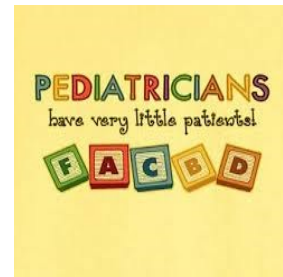
Unit at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. She has also managed the hospital's participation in the VPICU database, a national database that allows for the sharing of information, education, quality enhancement and improved access to pediatric critical care services.

Her multiple awards include the Patient Advocacy Award from the Medical College of Pennsylvania and Nursing Specialty Award from the Society of Critical Care Medicine, and she was honored at the White House by former First Lady Michelle Obama for her work on the Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge. In her new role, Ms. Rodden will lead many of our Patients First! initiatives, enhance patient experience through our partnership with the Studer Group and maintain regulatory compliance with safety and quality standards.



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Volume 2, Issue 3, January 2019



### In this Newsletter

**Promotions  
Recognition  
New Faculty  
Congratulations  
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Announcements**

*Department of Pediatrics*



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## **Deborah M. Spitalnik 2018 MyGOAL Autism Outstanding Professional of the Year**

**Deborah M. Spitalnik, PhD**, Professor of Pediatrics and Executive Director of The Boggs Center, was honored with the 2018 MyGOAL Autism Outstanding Professional of the Year Award for her dedication and service to individuals with autism.

The award was presented on Sept. 29 during the Annual Gala at the Pines Manor in Edison. Dr. Spitalnik also served as keynote speaker.



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## **Dr. Amisha Malhotra Featured on WNBC News about Flaccid Myelitis**

**Amisha Malhotra, MD**, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, was featured on [WNBC News 4 New York](#) (channel 4) and [Channel 7 Eyewitness News](#) on Oct. 18. Dr. Malhotra was interviewed about acute flaccid myelitis, the polio-like virus that has affected more than 60 confirmed patients and another 65 suspected, mostly children, in the United States, including in New Jersey.





## Drs. Thomas Hegyi, Barbara Ostfeld & Usha Ramachandran Participate in Family Festival hosted by First Lady Tammy Murphy

To address some of the social determinants that contribute to disparity, First Lady Murphy hosted the first New Jersey Family Festival on Oct. 14 at the Frank Lautenberg School in Paterson. The SIDS Center of New Jersey was represented by **Thomas Hegyi, MD** (*pictured*), and **Barbara Ostfeld, PhD**, Professors of Pediatrics, and Medical and Program Director, respectively, of the SIDS Center. In association with the extensive provider and community safe sleep education initiatives of the SIDS Center, New Jersey has one of the lowest rates of Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths in the United States. The festival enabled the SIDS Center to provide risk-reducing sleep practices in a forum that also helped families address the complex social determinants that contribute to these deaths.



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**Drs. Thomas Hegyi, Barbara Ostfeld & Usha Ramachandran  
Participate in Family Festival hosted by  
First Lady Tammy Murphy**

Usha Ramachandran, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Medical Director of Reach Out and Read New Jersey, participated in the New Jersey Family Festival hosted by First Lady Tammy Murphy in Paterson on Oct. 14. In recognition of the fact that literacy is an important indicator of health outcomes, the first lady's office invited Reach Out and Read New Jersey, a national non-profit organization that gives young children a foundation for success by helping pediatricians incorporate books into well child visits and encouraging families to read aloud together. Dr. Ramachandran spoke with families about how reading aloud daily with kids, starting from infancy, is a simple and effective way to foster nurturing and language-rich family interactions that support brain development and are a foundation for future success. Reach Out and Read NJ distributed more than 300 books to families at the event.



Pictured (left to right) are Haskell Berman, senior vice president, HealthCare Institute of New Jersey; Kim Byam, director, Reach Out and Read New Jersey; and Dr. Usha Ramachandran.

## Cystic Fibrosis Center Earns High State and National Rankings



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*Dr. Thomas Scanlin with patient Cameron Grant*

Read article featuring Dr. Scanlin from the fall 2018 RWJ Medicine Magazine— [http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/news\\_publications/publications/RURWJMedicineF18\\_Animated/index.html#page/6](http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/news_publications/publications/RURWJMedicineF18_Animated/index.html#page/6)

## STUDYING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TYPE 1 DIABETES AT THE PEDIATRIC CLINICAL RESEARCH CENTER



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*Ian Marshall, MD  
Associate Professor and  
Division Director*

The Pediatric Clinical Research Center (PCRC) at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is part of the TrialNet international clinical trial study effort to learn more about the development of type 1 diabetes. Genetic and immunological factors play a key role in the development of type 1 diabetes. A family history of type 1 diabetes makes a person's chance of also being diagnosed with the disease 15 times greater than someone with no family history of it.

Headed by Principal Investigator Ian Marshall, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, the research study being conducted at the PCRC aims to characterize the risk of those with a family history of type 1 diabetes for developing it themselves. Using a blood sample, the staff at the PCRC can begin to assess a person's risk for developing type 1 diabetes based on the presence of certain antibodies. Learning more about the natural history of type 1 diabetes will contribute to the development and implementation of studies aimed at prevention and early treatment.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 1.25 million Americans have type 1 diabetes, which can be life-threatening if it is not diagnosed in a timely manner or properly managed over time.

## DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES DIWALI



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From left to right: Janice Cato-Varlack, MD; Dayla Chefitz, MD; Lakshmi Moorthy, MD; Maya Ramagopal, MD; Christina Varghese; and Amisha Malhotra, MD.



Department of Pediatrics Resident Kabila Marepalli, MD (left), with her sister Aashritha Marepalli.

On Oct. 25, the Department celebrated the Indian culture and the holiday of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights. The morning was filled with educational presentations, dance performances by pediatric residents and attending physicians and food.

The next department celebration will be on Thursday, February 7, 8 a.m.—9 a.m. recognizing Black History Month.



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## **PEDS ED HAS A NEW HOME**



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The new Pediatric Emergency Department held an internal ribbon cutting on Tuesday, December 4, 2018 and officially opened on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, there are 17 large bays with room for family members when appropriate. Like the Adult space, all of the bays are private. Gone are the days of pulling a cubicle curtain for privacy.

Just inside the entrance to the Pediatric Emergency Department is a results waiting lounge which, if needed, can be reconfigured to hold an additional six patients who may not have an acute diagnosis. There also is an airborne isolation room that can be sealed off should a patient be infectious. Two bays are fit with operating room lights and resuscitation equipment.

Also, within the new space are three dedicated bays for behavioral health needs. Another bay is designed specifically as a sensory-sensitive area. That sensory space is geared toward patients with special needs, such as, but not limited, to autism. Everything in the room — lights, bubble tube, stars, projections — can be switched on or off independently. Medical equipment is tucked away so as to be less intimidating and distracting to patients.

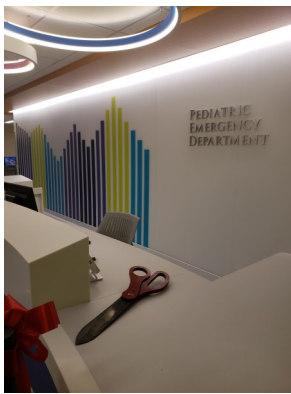
-content from mycentraljersey.com 12/11/18

Department of Pediatrics

# PEDS ED HAS A NEW HOME



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## World AIDS Day 2018



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On November 29, 2018, Robert Wood Johnson AIDS Program (RWJAP) partnered with Walgreens to commemorate World AIDS Day (December 1). In accordance with the theme **"KNOW YOUR STATUS"**, free rapid HIV testing was administered to 19 individuals. The team engaged the public in informational, educational and interactive activities on HIV prevention, care and treatment. Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) was highlighted in discussions on HIV prevention.

RWJAP recently become 1 of 34 PrEP sites statewide, obtaining a grant award of \$100,000 to develop and implement PrEP for HIV negative Latino gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (LGBM) at substantial risk of HIV infection. Though a target population is stipulated by our grantor (New Jersey Department of Health), the service is available to anyone who can benefit from PrEP. Brahian Erazo has been hired as PrEP Counselor for the program.

For more information about RWJAP's free HIV Counseling, Testing and Referrals (CTR) and PrEP services, call (732) 235-6142 or (732) 235-7074, Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm



Walgreens and RWJAP HIV CTR/PrEP staff: Left to right – Jeffrey Pasucal, Mumah Tawe, Vivianne Celario, Daniel Clavijo-Zapata, Joanne Ekpeni, Kanika Chandra, Brahian Erazo, Antonio Quirindongo and Amisha Mehta.

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## **RWJAP Holiday Party 2018**



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Every year, The Robert Wood Johnson AIDS Program (RWJAP) hosts a Holiday Party for families of the program.

On Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, organizations such as the Children's AIDS Network of Rutgers University, and volunteers from St. Helena's Church, came together to organize a day of festivities for the 50+ children and families to make their holidays brighter. Children conducted arts and crafts, interacted with each other and were visited by a special guest by the name of Santa Claus! Through the help of the community, families were pleased to receive, thoughtful gifts and the comfort of knowing that the community cares at this time of year. Children's AIDS Network (CAN) has been affiliated with the program since 1988.

The students provide support to the program by hosting HIV educational events on the RU campus and having fund-raising events. In 2018, the group raised over \$500.00, which was donated for patient needs.

RWJAP continues to have the support of several community benefactors who provide donations and assist at the party: Marlene Auciello and her family, St. Helena's R. C. Parish in Edison, and their Youth Group.

Other donors include the following: Emmanuel Lutheran Church –New Brunswick, St. Matthew's Edison, St. Robert of Bellarmine, Freehold, Lightbridge Academy, Iselin, St. Dorothea's Eatontown, and the Khoudary Family, East Brunswick.

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## **NEW FACULTY/STAFF**



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### **October 2018**

Kristin Capone, M.D., Assistant Professor, - Pediatric Gastroenterology  
Bishakha Ghoshal, Data Control Clerk II—RWJAP  
Christine Jurcsek, Staff Assistant— Chair's Office  
Mary Iruthayanathan, PhD, - Pediatric Lab  
Aishwarya Kumar— Pediatric Lab  
Advaitha Madrieddy, PhD, Assistant Professor—CINJ  
Samantha Nicolaro, Temporary Research Assistant—Neurology

### **November 2018**

Brahian Erazo— PrEP Counselor RWJAP  
Dr. Ahmed Khattab, Assistant Professor, Pediatric Endocrinology  
Dr. Payal Patel, Physician Specialist—Neurology  
Paritaben Patel, LPN—General Pediatrics  
Dyshira Wade, Medical Services Assistant—General Pediatrics

### **January 2019**

Beth Ann Custer, Training and Consultation Specialist—Boggs Center



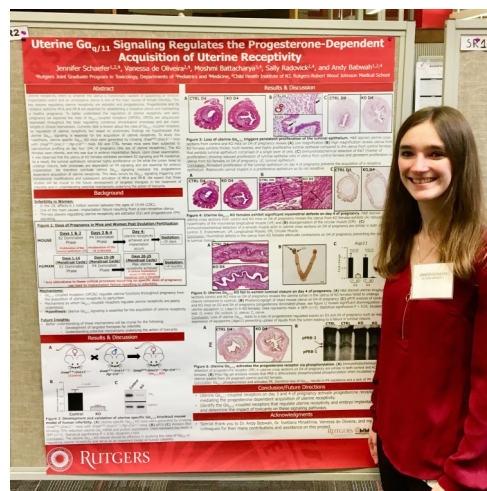
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## RECOGNITION, CONGRATULATIONS



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### Jennifer Schaefer Wins award for outstanding poster



Congratulations to Jennifer Schaefer (Yr 2, PhD Candidate, Joint Graduate Program in Toxicology) (Supervisors: Drs. Andy Babwah and Sally Radovick, Department of Pediatrics). Jennifer presented her research on the molecular regulation of uterine receptivity at the Mid Atlantic Society for Toxicology on 10/24/2018 and was awarded the prize (plaque and \$250) for outstanding poster.

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## RECOGNITION, CONGRATULATIONS



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**Peter D. Cole, MD**, professor of pediatrics, was awarded a \$3,417,089, five-year, multi-PI R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for "Identifying Children with Subclinical Neurocognitive Decline and Susceptibility to Oxidative Damage during the Early Months of Therapy for All."

\*\*\*\*From Dean's Weekly 11/9/18

[Rutgers Cancer Study Cites Improved Survival Rate With Combo Treatment](#) – Peter Cole, MD -- NJ101.5 \*\*\*Dean's Weekly 1/11/19

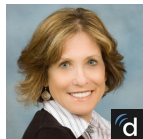
### New Jersey's Favorite Kids' Docs for 2018

#### Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics



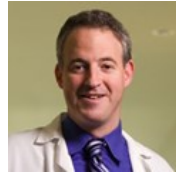
Anna Malia Beckwith, MD

*Pediatric Endocrinology*



Barbie Zimmerman-Bier, MD

*Child Neurology & Developmental Disabilities*



Ian Marshall, MD



Vikram Bhise, MD

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## **RECOGNITION, CONGRATULATIONS**



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### **Dr. Whitley-Williams honored**

Dr. Patricia Whitley-Williams was honored by the Caribbean Medical Mission on Saturday, December 8, 2018 at their 15th Annual Dinner Dance Gala with the Humanitarian Award for her clinical skills and stellar career as a pediatrician.





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## RECOGNITION, CONGRATULATIONS



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### Dr. Drachtman Receives Motolinsky Award\*\*\*



Congratulations to **Richard Drachtman, MD**, Professor of Pediatrics at the medical school and clinical section chief of the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Division at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, who has been named the 2018 recipient of the Melvyn H. Motolinsky Research Foundation Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his accomplishments and leadership in the field of pediatric cancer and blood disorders. The foundation has generously supported several initiatives at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School aligned with its mission, including The Melvyn H. Motolinsky Laboratory for Hematology Research; the Melvyn and Abraham Motolinsky Fellowship, a permanently endowed fellowship that supports a postdoctoral hematology researcher; and the establishment of the Melvyn, Ab and Yetta Motolinsky

Chair in Hematology.

\*\*\*Taken from the Dean's Weekly View 11/16/18

### Research at the PCRC for Stroke Prevention in Sickle Cell Patients led by Dr. Drachtman\*\*\*

The **Pediatric Clinical Research Center (PCRC)** is evaluating the implementation of preventative measures to mitigate the risk of stroke in pediatric patients with sickle cell anemia. This multi-center study is called **DISPLACE** (Dissemination and Implementation of Stroke Prevention: Looking At the Care Environment). One complication of sickle cell anemia is an increased tendency of blood cells to clot and result in ischemic stroke.

Using transcranial Doppler (TCD) measuring the cerebral blood vessel velocity, stroke risk is assessed in children ages 2-16 with sickle cell anemia. Based on the STOP (Stroke Prevention Trial in Sickle Cell Anemia) protocol, children identified as high risk of stroke by TCD are initiated on chronic red cell transfusion therapy for stroke prevention.

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## **RECOGNITION, CONGRATULATIONS**



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Led by principal investigator **Richard Drachtman, MD**, Professor of Pediatrics and clinical section chief of pediatric hematology/oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, DISPLACE looks to compare the current rate of TCD screening over the last five years with guideline-recommended practices and identify barriers and enablers of TCD screening. Patients with abnormal TCD should be started on chronic red cell transfusion therapy with a goal of increasing institutional initiation of the therapy in at least 95 percent of patients with abnormal TCD. Identifying and evaluating issues that affect access to screening and adherence to guidelines can improve outcomes for all children with sickle cell anemia.

\*\*\*Dean's Weekly 12/14/18

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A  
**BLACK HISTORY  
MONTH  
CELEBRATION**  
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 7TH 8AM  
CAB 1302

If you would like to participate in an African cultural dance or borrow African attire for the event, please contact Dr. Peta-Gaye Peterson at [whytepk@rwjms.rutgers.edu](mailto:whytepk@rwjms.rutgers.edu)

Would you like to participate in the African dance for Black History Month Celebration?  
Our first rehearsal will be Thursday, January 17 at 6:30pm in CHI 3101

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Date: October 25, 2018  
To: All University Faculty and Staff  
From: Vivian Fernández, Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness  
Subject: Adverse Weather Policy and Essential Employee Guidelines

Dear Rutgers Colleagues,

As we enter the time of year during which adverse weather conditions may become more prevalent, it is important to review Rutgers University's policies regarding operations during adverse weather events, as well as update essential employee rosters and adequately communicate responsibilities to employees designated as essential in the event of university closure or delayed opening due to weather conditions.

HR Policies 60.3.16 [http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/60.3.16%20-%20current\\_3.pdf](http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/60.3.16%20-%20current_3.pdf) and 60.9.58 [http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/60.9.58%20-%20current\\_0.pdf](http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/60.9.58%20-%20current_0.pdf) govern operations and reporting requirements during the declaration of a weather emergency at the university.

If you have any questions regarding the application of policy or essential employee designation, please contact the Office of Labor Relations at (848) 932-3400.

Sincerely,  
Vivian Fernández  
Senior Vice President for Human Resources & Organizational Effectiveness

Department of Pediatrics

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Dear RBHS Colleagues:

As this year ends, and we continue to focus on our goals for the upcoming year, we would like to take a moment to remind you that the annual HIPAA and Compliance training assignments are available for the 2019 Academic Year.

You will receive an automated email reminder from our contracted training provider HS-Alerts@healthstream.com when your training is available. This is a legitimate email from a trusted University vendor. Although the links in the email are safe, you may also access the training through the University Portal at [my.rutgers.edu](http://my.rutgers.edu) by logging in, and clicking on the "Mandatory Compliance Training" icon under myApps. You will also find a direct link to the training at [uec.rutgers.edu](http://uec.rutgers.edu) under the "Helpful Links" section.

We make the training available at the end of each year so that you will have ample time to renew your training. It is in your best interest to complete these trainings at your earliest convenience.

We know your time is valuable, and in an effort to ease the burden of training, we have kept the required modules short, so that you can complete them all at once, or one-by-one at your convenience. If you leave a training mid-way through, the system will resume based on your last completed section. The training may be completed on a variety of devices, including mobile devices and tablets, and we recommend using an updated internet browser with your pop-up blocker set to "disabled" or "allow all pop-ups."

If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to University Ethics and Compliance at [ethics@uec.rutgers.edu](mailto:ethics@uec.rutgers.edu) or 973.972.6859.

We appreciate your continued support and look forward to working together in 2019.

Sincerely,  
Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH  
Chancellor  
Timothy J. Fournier, EdD  
Senior Vice President and Chief Enterprise Risk Management, Ethics, and Compliance Officer

