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Research at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Stokes Institute
Introduces Organizational Changes

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The stellar reputation of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the Joseph Stokes Jr. Research Institute is deeply rooted in the many scientific discoveries and medical innovations made by our investigators and clinicians over the past 150 years. This long and storied history serves as a constant reminder of our great responsibility to both the organization at large, and to those that we serve — our patients and their families.

To fulfill these vital responsibilities, we must constantly evaluate how we do what we do. The critical question is, are we set up to provide unparalleled support of our mission and our people?

After a yearlong review, I concluded that we were not meeting these expectations to our fullest potential. Thus, over the past year, the Stokes Institute has undergone a major administrative reengineering that resulted in a new organizational structure that was implemented on July 1.

This special edition of Bench to Bedside provides an overview of the new organizational framework and introduces the people in charge. I encourage you to seek them out, ask questions and explore the ways in which they can assist and support you.

And, as always, we need your candid feedback on how we are doing. Our goal is simple: to serve you so that you can serve our patients. Let us hear from you!
Featured below are introductions to the administrative and scientific directors and managers for each department in the Stokes Institute’s new organizational structure. Each director and manager will be profiled in greater detail in a future issue of Bench to Bedside.

Peter Adamson, M.D., director of the Office of Clinical and Translational Research, oversees the Stokes Institute’s initiative to focus efforts and resources aimed at ensuring the rapid advances in biomedical sciences are efficiently moved into patient-oriented research in a scientifically rigorous yet pediatric-centric manner. He assists clinical and translational investigators in identifying scientific opportunities and forging productive collaborations through Children’s Hospital and the University of Pennsylvania. This effort also involves improving the clinical and administrative research infrastructure, including the Clinical Trials Office and Regulatory Affairs, to support investigators in their efforts to translate laboratory advances to the clinic and back again to the bench.

Jeanne Buckley, Ed.D., director of the Office of Research Planning, works closely with Stokes senior leadership to coordinate the planning efforts for the Institute by developing, implementing and coordinating the research strategic plan and integrating the plan with the Hospital’s. She also takes a lead role in evaluating Stokes programs, coordinating with various departments to prepare business plans for large institutional initiatives for Stokes, and synchronizing and tracking research faculty recruitment.

Sara Dubberly, Sponsored Projects and Research Business Office director, oversees the sponsored projects officers, research business managers, and grants and contracts specialists. They assist the research community with applying for, negotiating and financially managing sponsored project funding. This includes serving as a primary administrative liaison with funders and with peer institutions collaborating with Hospital researchers. The group works with the research community to provide appropriate stewardship of externally provided resources, to ensure compliance with all sponsor regulations and Hospital policies, and to implement administrative practices that support and strengthen the scientific program.

Kim Gossin, Research Acquisitions and Contracting manager, leads her team’s efforts to ensure the timely procurement of the highest quality goods and services at the best overall cost to support the Hospital’s innovative research. Specifically, Kim and her team assist divisions with expediting orders, processing returns/repairs and providing requested reports on received/non-received items. She also administers new and existing service/supply price protection agreements by managing the bidding process, identifying bid opportunities and maintaining a bid cycle for routinely purchased items and services.

Lynn Bevan, IRB Operations director, maintains the infrastructure to support the work of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committees including electronic systems, budget and financial tracking. She implements and maintains all IRB management systems, and takes the lead role for training IRB staff, investigators and study coordinators. Lynn also collaborates with various Stokes Institute directors to ensure the IRB policies and procedures, educational activities and operational systems enable the IRB’s and Hospital’s human subjects protection programs to function effectively.

Joseph DiDonato, J.D., Office of Technology Transfer director, leads the office’s efforts to identify and evaluate novel research discoveries that may be developed into commercial products, facilitates the intellectual property protection of discoveries through the patenting process, and works with inventors and commercial partners to introduce discoveries to the marketplace. Joseph also oversees the office’s efforts with respect to corporate-sponsored research collaborations and the negotiation of all clinical trial, material transfer and consulting agreements. In addition, he works with researchers seeking to identify sources for corporate-sponsored research and start-up company opportunities.

Howard Eck, Research Resources director, heads a team that partners with faculty and staff to establish the physical infrastructure required to support the research enterprise. These efforts include managing minor renovation projects as well as coordinating the relocation of research programs, and the department provides a single point of contact for faculty and staff to request services from Hospital support service groups. In addition, Howard leads his department’s efforts in strategic and long-range planning, construction and assessment of research space and inventory development.

Jennifer Long, director of Research Communications, directs and oversees the communications program aimed at effectively describing and promoting the Stokes Institute and its research. She works closely and coordinates with various Stokes and Hospital departments as well as investigators, and oversees a team of writers, graphic designers and Web designers to enhance media exposure of Stokes, produce research publications and Web content, enhance internal communications and other communication services for administration, investigators and research staff.
Jay Matthews, Special Projects director, manages multiple strategic research and institutional projects and key deliverables supporting the conduct of research. Working with other members of Research Special Projects, Jay helps direct the professional, technical and operational aspects of projects, facilitating communication with key stakeholders, managing project expectations and project implications affecting governmental, regulatory, legal or Institutional Review Boards.

Lisa Speicher, Ph.D., Clinical Trials Office director, provides study coordinators, assists with submissions to the Institutional Review Board, develops budgets for clinical research, and prepares Investigational New Drug and Investigational Device Exemption applications. Lisa also serves as associate director for the Office of Clinical and Translational Research. In this role she facilitates research collaborations among investigators, sponsors and academic institutions, matching investigators to funding opportunities, and developing procedures to enhance clinical and translational research experience across the Institution.

Steve Wiley, Research Finance director, coordinates the financial activities of the Research Institute including accounting, financial administration, planning, internal and external reporting and establishment of financial policies and procedures. In addition, Steve is responsible for representing the unique needs of the research enterprise and restricted fund accounting both within the Hospital and with external agencies. Steve and his team coordinate audits, ensure compliance with federal cost principles, assist investigators with closing out sponsored projects, and maintain responsibility for budgeting and monitoring the research institute’s financial position.

Denise Outlaw, Research Human Resources manager, designs and develops goals for the Human Resources Research Service team to align with the Stokes Institute's strategic and operational business plans and goals. She also investigates discrimination and harassment charges, develops resolutions, and manages the recruitment strategy and development of staff plans. In addition, Denise provides advice on staff retention, employee/labor relations, and performance-management implementation and management.

Virginia Stallings, M.D., director of the Office of Faculty Development, directs the Stokes Institute’s efforts to create an environment that promotes the success of all faculty members. Dr. Stallings spearheads and assists in facilitating the successful transition from fellow to faculty investigator, encourages and supports activities that lead to promotion, engenders the spirit of mentorship for the future and provides tools for achieving work-life balance for all faculty members.

Wendy Williams, Ph.D., Research Education director, assesses and facilitates the design, delivery and evaluation of Hospital-wide education and training programs in research- or sponsored projects-related areas. Wendy serves as senior faculty in delivering training or provides content area staff with training in instructional methods and delivery, and works on the development of training materials, curricula and evaluation methods. She also provides internal consulting services to leadership to meet the strategic learning and effectiveness needs of the research enterprise, and chairs the Committee on Postdoc Affairs.

Rebecca Wiltshire, D.V.M., director of Laboratory Animal Services, maintains responsibility for the institution’s animal care and use programs, providing veterinary care, surgery and animal husbandry, and works with investigators to design and implement experiments involving animals. Dr. Wiltshire also manages the ongoing development of the Laboratory Animal Facility, including animal management, veterinary research services, population management, and the design and commissioning of new or renovated animal facilities.

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Pete Witzleb, Research Information Systems director, plans, coordinates and implements the information technology and support needs for the research community. He manages a unit that provides specialized IT support, serves in an advocacy role with senior leadership for research IT issues, engages in active brokering and coordination across providers of research IT at the Hospital, and provides capabilities and expertise for advanced scientific computing for research.

The new organizational structure at the Stokes Institute includes a director of the new Office of Research Compliance and Regulatory Affairs. This position, for which a candidate has yet to be selected, will focus on developing a comprehensive compliance program to enable the Stokes Institute to promote integrity and compliance throughout all research and sponsored programs.
Below is the organizational chart for the senior leadership of the Joseph Stokes Jr. Research Institute. This chart, as well as those for each department and office, can be found at http://stokes.chop.edu/forms/ResearchOrgCharts.pdf.