

Hackensack Meridian Health Center for Discovery & Innovation

OUR MISSION is to rapidly develop and translate innovations in biomedical sciences to better prevent and treat life-threatening diseases in people with cancer, infectious diseases, and other disabling and chronic conditions.

OUR VISION is to be a proven leader in the innovative application of discovery science to improve human health.



A Unique Translational Science Ecosystem

The CDI was established to take advantage of the extensive clinical assets of one of the region's largest and most comprehensive health care systems. As an academic accelerator, the CDI represents a unique translational ecosystem to integrate academic scientists with clinicians as well as small and large companies with the objective of taking innovative science and moving it rapidly into clinical settings to improve patient outcomes.

Collaborations distinguish CDI including its interest in partnering with innovative life science companies - some of which will be located on site in state-of-the-art research and development (R&D) lab and office space. This highly integrated network includes the strong partnerships of researchers, physicians and health care professionals at Hackensack Meridian Health's 17 network hospitals as well as the faculty and medical students of the School of Medicine located on campus. Other partners are HMH's John Theurer Cancer Center, and the National Cancer

Institute-designated Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, which provide access to thousands of patients and greatly expand CDI's impact.

CDI Translational Ecosystem accelerates science application for patients by developing tests, treatments, and preventions for unmet clinical needs. This involves CDI scientific teams collaborating with experienced medical professionals and researching specific diseases in-depth, in order to introduce more effective mechanisms for improving clinical outcomes and thereby alter or redefine existing standards of care. CDI translational-science model is driven by a combination of incentive-based systems that have improved patient outcomes as a key metric.

It is agile and dynamic to rapidly address novel challenges. The principal outcome is disease intervention and/or prevention, often resulting in a change in standard-of-care, which may involve development of a marketable drug, vaccine or diagnostic.

CDI Translational Ecosystem

Innovation drives next generation clinical practice



Clinical



Academic



Commercial

Clinical Practice

- John Theurer Cancer Center
- HMH Network
- Community Health





The Center for Discovery & Innovation (CDI) was established in 2019 to tackle some of the world's most urgent health challenges related to cancer, infection, and behavioral health. CDI brings together exceptional scientists, clinicians, and industry experts in a cutting-edge research environment that prioritizes the practical application of innovative science to deliver real-time solutions for patients.

Over the past five years, CDI has experienced remarkable growth. It now comprises 32 state-of-the-art laboratories with a team of over 200 scientists and staff, along with research commitments which exceeded \$53 million FY 2023 alone. CDI's early achievements include forging valuable clinical partnerships in the field of cancer research through collaborations with the John Theurer Cancer Center and the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Together, we have made significant advancements in understanding cancer recognition, detection, prevention, and therapy. Notably, CDI has placed particular emphasis on developing next-generation immunotherapies for blood cancers and solid tumors. The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged less than a year after CDI's inception, highlighted the critical need for advanced molecular diagnostics, laboratory capabilities, and the ability to effectively respond to infectious disease outbreaks. CDI played a pivotal role in developing groundbreaking technologies for diagnostics, surveillance strategies, and treatments, which proved crucial in addressing and mitigating the public health crisis caused by the pandemic.

While the urgency of the pandemic has diminished, CDI remains dedicated to creating solutions that can prevent future crises caused by new pandemic viruses or threats posed by antibiotic resistance. To this end, CDI has established two National Institutes of Health (NIH)-designated national centers of excellence: the Center of Excellence in Translational Research (CETR) and the Metropolitan AntiViral Drug Accelerator (MAVDA). The CETR program is focused on developing next-generation antibiotics to overcome drug resistant bacterial health threats, while MAVDA supports the accelerated development of new drugs for SARS-CoV-2, other coronaviruses, and potentially pandemic-causing viruses.

The CDI operates on a real-time discovery and translation model, structured around four key thematic areas:

- **Cancer:** Researching hematologic malignancies and solid tumors to push the boundaries of understanding cancer development, improving treatment strategies, and even preventing its progression at a molecular level.
- **Infectious Diseases:** Addressing high-threat bacterial, fungal, and viral infections through innovative approaches.
- **Immunology:** Advancing cell-based and other immunotherapies to enhance the field of immunology and its clinical applications.
- **Behavioral and Neurocognitive Health:** Exploring the intersection of behavioral health and neurocognitive conditions, striving to develop effective interventions and treatments.

CDI's
MAVDA grant
was the
top federal grant
in New Jersey
for three years.

CDI places significant emphasis on disease prevention, both locally and globally, particularly concerning cancer and community and healthcare-related infections. The CDI develops and implements novel technologies for population and behavioral health and actively recruits world-class researchers to drive further advancements in these areas. To address the diverse range of 21st-century challenges, CDI has established dedicated institutes such as the Cancer Prevention Precision Control Institute, the Institute for Multiple Myeloma and Lymphoma, and the Institute for Immunologic Interventions.

In addition to its research endeavors, CDI is committed to engaging with the public and maintaining relevance in their lives. It strives to ensure that patients, their families, friends, and future patients are aware of the cutting-edge scientific work being conducted on their behalf. CDI achieves this through robust community outreach initiatives and by leveraging the extensive network of hospitals and healthcare resources provided by Hackensack Meridian Health.

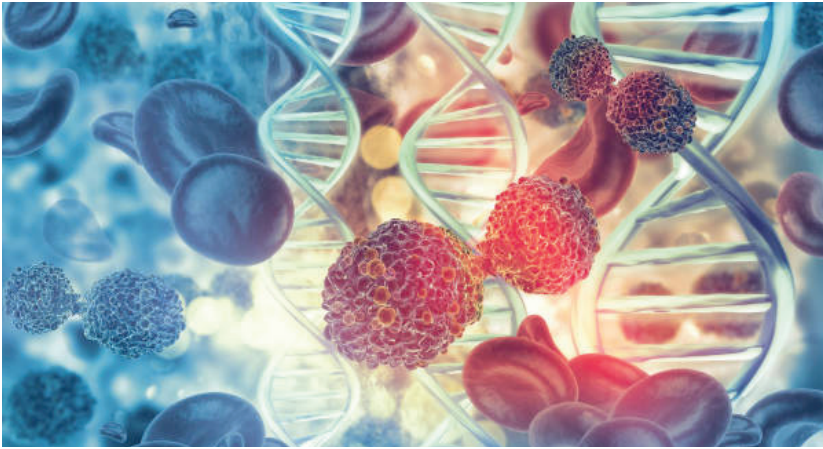
Notably, CDI shares its location with the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, which enhances collaborative opportunities and strengthens their partnership. Both institutions are situated on the historic site formerly occupied by the Hoffmann-La Roche Institute of Molecular Biology, a renowned global center for medical innovation from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Once again, a new translational science hub to benefit human health has emerged at this historic location, and its growth and progress continue unabated. At the HMM-CDI in New Jersey, a new chapter in transformative applied science is being written. Join CDI on this exciting journey.

David S. Perlin, Ph.D.

Chief Scientific Officer and Executive Vice President
Hackensack Meridian Health Center for Discovery & Innovation (CDI)

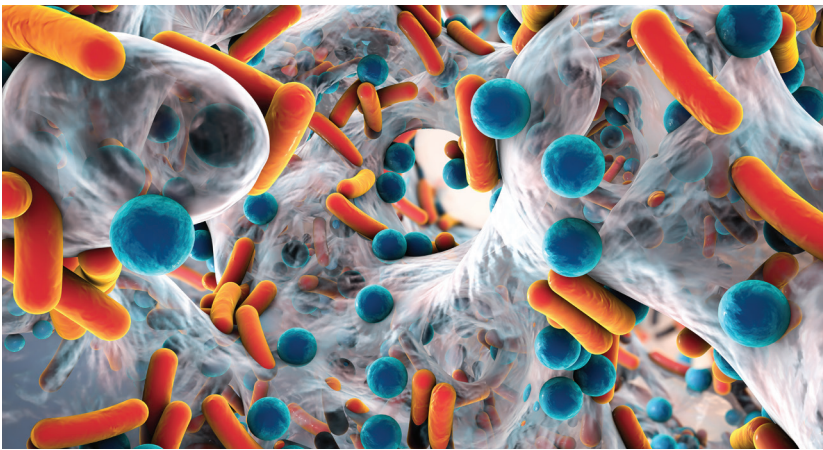
CDI is Focused on Solving Unmet Medical Needs



CANCER:

Hematologic malignancies & solid tumors

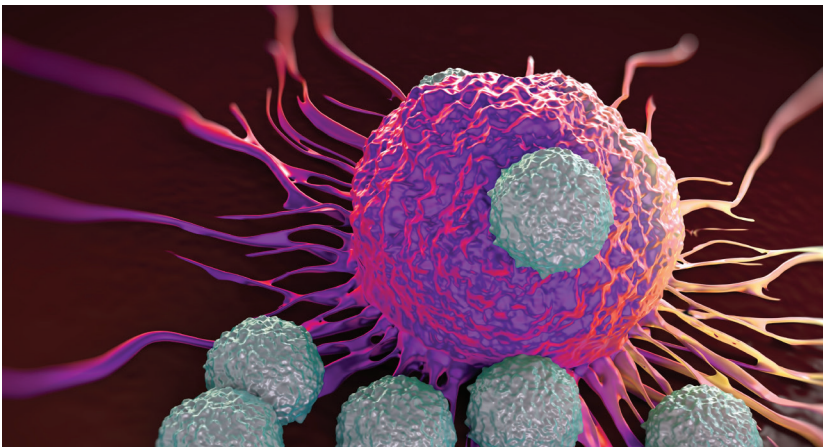
Diving into the mechanisms of cancer, how it develops and evolves, and what new treatments could extend and save lives.



INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

High threat bacterial, fungal, and viral infections

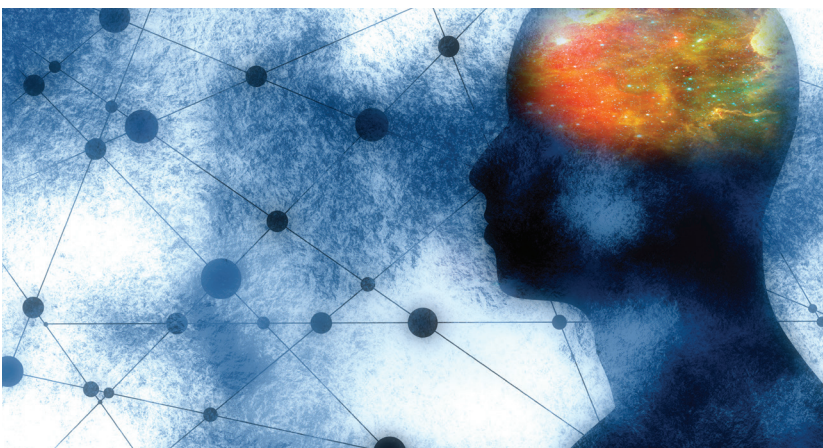
Better understanding, and treating, pathogens and germs which cause disease, from those with pandemic potential to opportunistic infections.



IMMUNOLOGY:

Cell-based and other immunotherapies

Discovering new horizons for cancer treatments and better vaccines, and better understanding T cell biology



BEHAVIORAL AND NEUROCOGNITIVE HEALTH

Assessing genetic and epigenetic changes which impact the brain, behavior, and disease

Executive Leadership



Sol J. Barer, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Board
Chair of the Board of Directors,
Teva Pharmaceuticals;
Managing Partner,
SJ Barer Consulting



David S. Perlin, Ph.D.
Chief Scientific Officer and Executive Vice President, CDI
Professor of Medical Sciences,
Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine
Deputy Director, Consortium Integration and Strategic Initiatives,
Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center
Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, Georgetown University

Center for Discovery & Innovation Board of Directors

The Center for Discovery & Innovation's Board of Directors includes world-renowned minds with proven records of success.

Jay Galeota

President and Chief
Executive Officer,
Inheris BioPharma, Inc.

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Chief Executive Officer,
Hackensack Meridian *Health*

Daria Hazuda, Ph.D.

Vice President of Infectious Disease
and Vaccines,
Chief Scientific Officer
(Merck Cambridge Research site),
Generate Biomedicines

Roger D. Kornberg, Ph.D.

Winzer Professor of Medicine
Department of Structural Biology
Stanford University
Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 2006

Garry A. Neil, M.D.

Chief Medical Officer,
Cerecor, Inc.

Andrew L. Pecora, M.D., F.A.C.P., C.P.E.

Chief Executive Officer,
Outcomes Matter Innovations;
Professor of Medicine and Oncology,
Georgetown University School
of Medicine;
Associate Dean, Technology and
Innovation, Hackensack Meridian
School of Medicine

Tom Polen

Chief Executive Officer and
President, BD (Becton, Dickinson
and Company)

Harlan F. Weisman, M.D.

Chief Executive Officer,
Chairman of the Board,
Flame Biosciences
Managing Director,
And-One Consulting, LLC

Clinical Leadership

David S. Siegel, M.D., Ph.D.

Founding Director of the
Institute for Multiple Myeloma,
Hackensack Meridian *Health*
Center for Discovery &
Innovation; Chief of the
Multiple Myeloma Division,
John Theurer Cancer Center;
Professor of Medicine,
Georgetown University Medical
Center and Rutgers University,
New Jersey Medical School

Andre Goy, M.D., M.S.

Chair and Director,
Chief of Lymphoma and
Director of Clinical and
Translational Cancer Research,
John Theurer Cancer Center;
Lydia Pfund Chair of Lymphoma,
Hackensack Meridian School
of Medicine;
Professor of Medicine,
Georgetown University
Medical Center

Louis M. Weiner, M.D.

Director, Georgetown Lombardi
Comprehensive Cancer Center,
Georgetown University
Medical Center
Director, MedStar Georgetown
Cancer Institute, MedStar Health
Chairman, Department
of Oncology, Georgetown
University School of Medicine
Francis L. and Charlotte G.
Gragnani Chair, Georgetown
University Medical Center

Ihor Sawczuk, M.D., FACS

President of Academics,
Research and Innovation, HMM
Founding Chair,
HMM Research Institute
Associate Dean of Clinical
Integration and Professor,
Chair Emeritus of Urology at
the Hackensack Meridian
School of Medicine

World-Class Faculty This academic-based entrepreneurial center is comprised of accomplished faculty members who have been recruited from leading academic centers including Columbia University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Boston University, Rutgers University, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the National Institutes of Health. Areas of expertise include genomics, epigenetics, drug resistance, stem cell biology, drug discovery, diagnostics and biomarker development, and pharmacology. These areas confront critical unmet needs in targeting a variety of cancers including multiple myeloma, lymphoma, breast cancer, brain tumors, and other deadly cancers, and address crucial medical problems in diabetes, sepsis, and opportunistic bacterial, fungal and viral infections. In total, the inaugural faculty have published more than 230 peer-reviewed papers in leading journals in 2023, including Nature, Nature Communications, and many others. In addition, they bring more than 126 grant and contracts, including 60 NIH awards, as well as numerous contracts with foundations, Pharma and biotech companies with research commitments exceeding \$53 Million in FY 2023.



Judy L. Aschner, MD

The impact of maternal, fetal and early childhood environmental exposures on child health and development across the lifespan



Abraham Aragon, M.D.

Cancer disparities, developing models to enhance cancer screening and prevention in minority populations



Jim Balkovec, Ph.D.

Discovery and development of novel anti-infective drugs against resistant bacterial, fungal and viral infections



Claire L. Carter, Ph.D.

Next generation imaging technologies to elucidate the biomolecular networks that drive disease progression in brain tumors and infectious diseases, with the goal of identifying druggable targets, for the development of curative therapies



Lisa Carter-Bawa, Ph.D., MPH, APRN, ANP-C, FAAN

Improving patient engagement and outcomes while addressing cancer disparities through innovative patient-clinician interventions



Neeraj Chauhan, Ph.D.

Biology and disease mechanisms of fungal pathogens of the Candida genus, primarily Candida albicans and Candida auris



Piero Dalerba, M.D.

Development of new therapeutic approaches against colon cancer and salivary gland malignancies (e.g., adenoid cystic carcinomas)



Véronique Dartois, Ph.D.

Pharmacology of hard-to-cure infections by high-threat pathogens



Heather Derry-Vick, Ph.D.

Examining pathways by which stress/behavioral factors impact health and quality of life in adults with cancer and other chronic conditions



Jigar Desai, Ph.D.

Investigating immune mechanisms responsible for mucosal and systemic fungal control



Thomas Dick, Ph.D.

Discovery of new medicines for treatment of TB and lung disease caused by Non-Tuberculous Mycobacteria



Rena Feinman, Ph.D.

Influence of the gut microbiome on antitumor immunosurveillance in patients with multiple myeloma (MM).



Ilona Fridman, Ph.D.

Digital health communication, innovative solutions to enhance patient-clinician communication



Martin Gengenbacher, Ph.D.

Immunopathology of bacterial pathogens and vaccine development



Derek Hanson, M.D.

Treatments for rare brain tumors, specifically embryonal tumor with multilayered rosettes (ETMR)



Barry Kreiswirth, Ph.D.

Molecular genetics of drug resistant Gram negative and Gram positive pathogens; overcoming health care associated infections



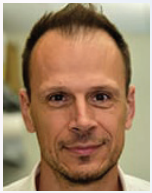
Gary Kwok, Ph.D.

Digital health innovation for adolescents and young adults (AYA) with cancer



Sivia Lapidus, M.D.

Pediatric rheumatologist/translational researcher physician scientist investigating underlying pathogenesis, specifically immunological mechanisms as well as genetic underpinnings, of autoinflammatory diseases and hyperinflammation occurring from infections such as COVID-19.

**Olivier Loudig, Ph.D.**

Biomarker (miRNA) discovery in breast cancer, and research projects on biomarker discovery in lung, prostate, and pancreatic cancers.

**Binfeng Lu, Ph.D.**

Mechanism-driven design of next-generation immunotherapy drugs for cancer

**Alvin Makohon-Moore, Ph.D.**

Evolutionary dynamics of cancer

**Liancai Mu, M.D., Ph.D.**

Peripheral nerve injury, muscle reinnervation, and pathophysiological mechanisms of swallowing and speech disorders caused by neurological diseases

**Jyothi Nagajyothi, Ph.D.**

Targeting immune/metabolic mechanisms of adipocytes/adipomes to identify biomarkers in the pathogenesis of metabolic syndromes, cancer, and cardiopulmonary diseases and to discover drug targets

**Chinwe Ogedegbe, M.D., MPH**

Development of Public Health strategies to address social determinants of health to reduce cancer risk and improve outcomes in patients with chronic diseases

**David S. Perlin, Ph.D.**

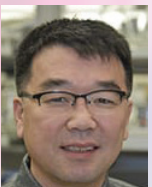
Diagnosing and overcoming drug-resistant fungal and bacterial infections in cancer, transplant and other high-risk patients

**Vidmantas Petraitis, M.D.**

Development and investigation of pharmaceutical agents with favorable pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic characteristics using advanced preclinical animal

**Rachel Rosenstein, M.D., Ph.D.**

Pathogenesis of cutaneous complications of cancer therapies

**Byungwoo Ryu, Ph.D.**

Reprogramming the epigenome of cancer cells by chemically and/or genetically targeting epigenetic modifiers

**Jansy Sarathy, Ph.D.**

The development of relevant in vitro assays for tuberculosis drug discovery.

**JiYeon Shin, Ph.D.**

Investigation of hepatic steatosis and neoplasia.

**Erika Shor, Ph.D.**

Drivers of genome instability and emergence of drug resistance in fungal pathogen *Candida glabrata*.

**Kevin Tong, Ph.D.**

Modeling the genetic progression of colorectal cancer for targeted therapies and personalized medicine.

**Benjamin Tycko, M.D., Ph.D.**

Genetics and epigenetics in human development and disease.

**Hai-Hui Xue, M.D., Ph.D.**

Thymocyte development and T lymphocyte differentiation in response to infections and vaccination.

**Johannes Zakrzewski, M.D.**

Development of innovative therapies for the treatment of myeloma, lymphoma, and other cancers, as well as T-cell deficiency.

**Yi Zhang, M.D., Ph.D.**

Epigenetic therapy for programming T cell immunity and sensitizing tumors to immunotherapy.

Research Faculty

Nadine Alvarez, Ph.D. - Pre-clinical research aimed at drug discovery and vaccine development.

Milena Kordalewska, Ph.D. - Molecular mechanisms of drug resistance and stress tolerance in human fungal pathogens, especially *Candida auris*.

Natalia Kurepina, Ph.D. - Molecular epidemiology of mycobacteria including *Mycobacteria tuberculosis*. Virulence factors and drug targets.

Claudia Manca, Ph.D. - Antimicrobial resistance and infectious disease.



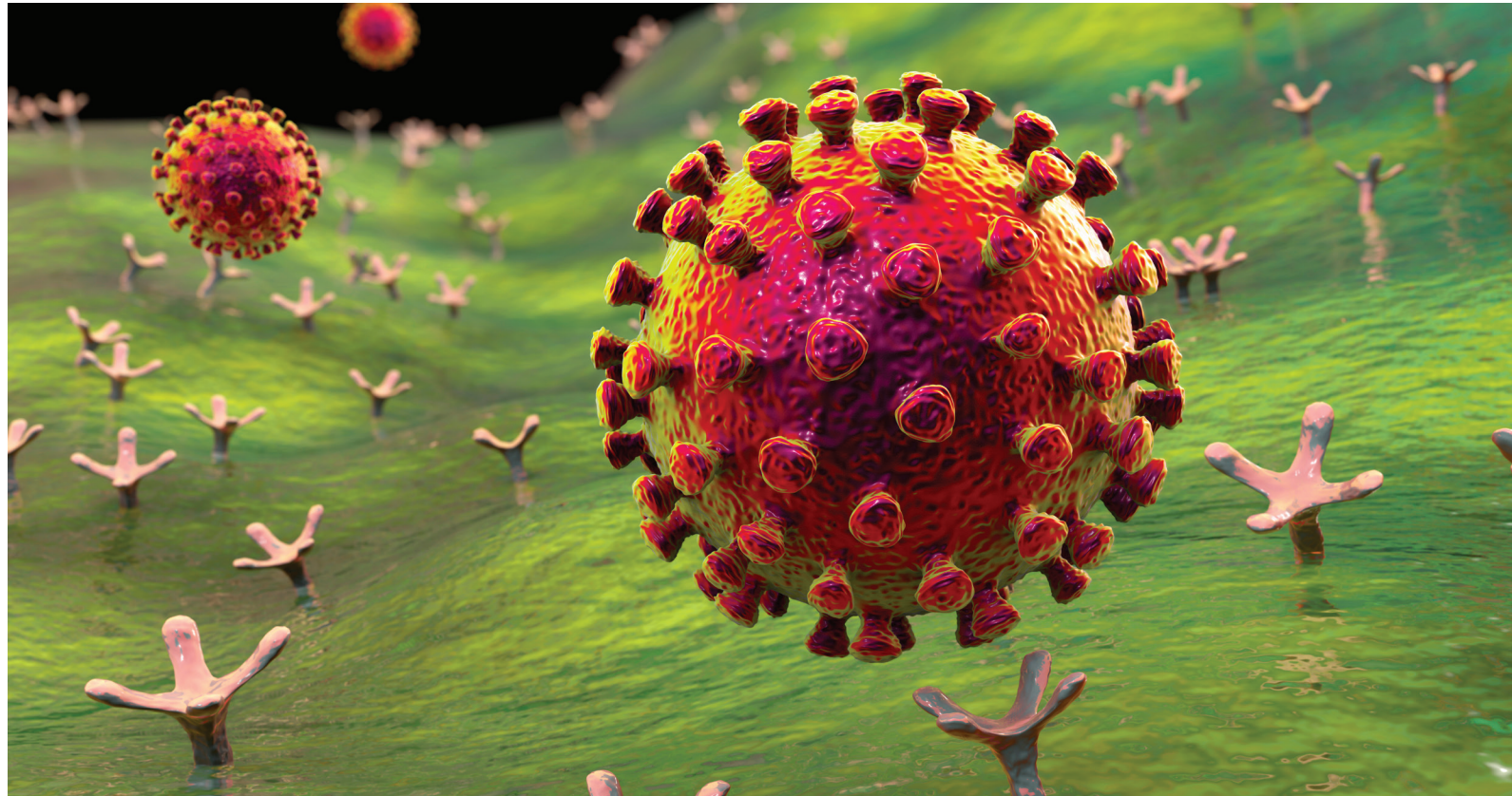
A Unique Biomedical Research and Life Sciences Hub

The CDI is located on the former site of Hoffman La Roche in Clifton and Nutley, N.J. But we are part of a fast-growing new biomedical hub. Our partners include the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine and the Seton Hall College of Nursing and School of Health and Medical Sciences; the North American headquarters for Eisai Inc., and the regional hub for Quest Diagnostics are our neighbors. The CDI's building itself is the former home of the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology, "The Birthplace of Interferon."

The CDI's core facilities include:

- The **Microscopy and Imaging Core** provides access to a wide array of state-of-the-art instrumentation for light, confocal and super resolution microscopy and other image analysis platforms.
- An advanced **Flow Cytometry Core** Facility that includes high parameter fluorescent activated cell sorting (FACS) and flow cytometry instruments and services.
- The **Mass Spectrometry Core** is equipped with state-of-the-art instrumentation providing cutting-edge technologies and expertise to researchers within CDI and the local scientific community.
- The **Clinical Immunology Core** provides cutting-edge immunological services and advanced technologies; expert guidance, and collaborative support in immunological research.
- The **Genomics and Epigenomic Core** provides targeted genomic services to researchers. Services are focused on targeted SNP genotyping and DNA methylation analyses, via high-throughput library preparations followed by Nextgen sequencing.
- The **Virology Core** is dedicated to supporting cutting-edge virological research by providing state-of-the-art instrumentation, expert guidance, and collaborative support to researchers within the HMH network and beyond.
- The **Bioinformatics Core** provides essential informatics support to advance research and facilitate data analysis in biological sciences, specializing in genomics, proteomics, and other data-intensive projects.
- The **Grant and Manuscript Editing Core** offers HMH CDI faculty and research staff a comprehensive range of services to enhance the clarity, coherence, and impact of their grant proposals and manuscripts.
- **BioRepository** facilitates discovery and innovative research to improve medical care by using high quality annotated biospecimens for Scientists from Hackensack Meridian Health, other universities, and government-based companies.
- **Research Animal Facility (RAF)** a six-story, 38,000 GSF building, that was customized to meet the unique needs of scientists and researchers in the fields of genetics, infectious diseases, oncologic and regenerative medicine. The RAF houses three high-containment ABSL-3 units for conducting work on highly contagious pathogens.
- **Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) containment laboratories**, including a 3,000 GSF ABSL-3 facility, to safely study highly infectious pathogens. Renovations to include an additional 1,000 GSF of BSL-3/ABSL-3 space is currently under construction with an opening date of June 2024.
- **Unique skybridge** linking research facilities and School of Medicine, enabling scientists and research staff to easily interact.
- **A high-tech auditorium, board room and video conferencing centers** serve as venues for both internal and external speakers to present their research to CDI scientists, faculty and medical students.
- An **additional 24,000 GSF of lab space** is available for expansion of the research enterprise.
- 6,000 square feet of administration space for the **Cancer Prevention Precision Control Institute (CPPCI)**





The CDI Response To COVID-19...

CDI science is guided by unmet medical need and is intended to address clinical urgency. There has been no greater challenge posed to patient and community health than COVID-19, which struck less than a year into the CDI's existence. The scientists and staff members, including experts in global infectious diseases, embraced this unprecedented challenge. They have played a critical role in impacting clinical care through development of novel diagnostics, improved antiviral therapy, and support of numerous clinical trial regimens. CDI scientists are also studying the biology of the virus, host factors that impact disease progression, and discovery and development of novel drug candidates. The work was covered variously by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and 60 Minutes, among other outlets.





...and Forging the Way to Face the Next Global Health Challenges



A unique collaborative enterprise of academic and pharmaceutical experts in New York City and Northern

New Jersey have formed a regional drug accelerator to address the urgent need to develop novel antiviral treatments for SARS-CoV-2, its variants, other coronaviruses and pandemic viruses, and as well as future viral threats. The Metropolitan AntiViral Drug Accelerator, or MAVDA, will be funded by a three-year, \$65,141,731 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID)'s Antiviral Drug Discovery (AViDD) Centers for Pathogens of Pandemic Concern program. MAVDA combines world-class virologists and academic

drug finders from Rockefeller University, Columbia University and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) in New York City, and the Hackensack Meridian Center for Discovery & Innovation (CDI), Rutgers University and Princeton University in New Jersey, Yale University in Connecticut, University of Arizona in Arizona, University of California San Diego in California, along with proven antiviral drug developers Merck, the Tri-Institutional Therapeutics Discovery Institute (Tri-I TDI), and Aligos Therapeutics. MAVDA's mission will be to discover, optimize and test innovative small molecule antiviral drugs to target coronaviruses (CoVs), emphasizing SARS-CoV-2, and one or more select RNA viruses with pandemic potential. The goal is to rapidly develop drugs which can be given orally, and in an outpatient setting, in the near future.





Treating Cancer...

The Institute for Immunologic Intervention (3i)

The Institute for Immunologic Intervention at the CDI investigates T cell development in the thymus and T cell immune responses in peripheral tissues. The Institute is dedicated to advancing the understanding of T cell development, immunity to infections, tumor immunity, alloimmunity, and autoimmunity. By fostering collaborations with the CDI, John Theurer Cancer Center, and the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, our institute strives to apply this knowledge towards innovative strategies that enhance the effectiveness of cancer immunotherapy, interventions for autoimmune and alloimmune conditions, and the prevention of infections.



The Institute for Multiple Myeloma and Lymphoma

The landscape of partnerships in biomedical research and development is rapidly evolving. The Institute for Multiple Myeloma and Lymphoma, supported by a major philanthropic investment in 2017 by a long-time pharmaceutical partner, is a combination of a large institute, academic drug discovery center, and risk-sharing model, funded through philanthropic investment and future commercialization initiatives. Our decades-long industry collaboration, strengthened by the transformational gift last year, will benefit patients and their families, scientists, physicians, and shareholders, while also spurring economic development in northern New Jersey – all stemming from the joint commitment to cure multiple myeloma. The Institute for Multiple Myeloma and Lymphoma will hasten the development of breakthrough ideas to their full expression in clinical trials and approved interventions, ultimately offering life-saving care for patients.



... and Preventing It from Even Occurring.

The Cancer Prevention Precision Control Institute (CPPCI)

The CPPCI aims to create a transformational translational research Institute within the Center for Discovery & Innovation that connects science to practice with a tripartite mission focused on reducing disparities, improving patient outcomes through improved patient-clinician communication leveraging novel digital and social media outreach tools, and community-engaged participatory research methods.

Lisa Carter-Bawa, Ph.D., MPH, APRN, ANP-C, FAAN, leads the CPPCI.



- Leverage opportunities for community engagement in the greater New Jersey area to improve patient outcomes through cross-cutting cancer prevention and control-focused research;
- Increase the ‘precision’ of cancer prevention and control through tailored interventions as opposed to a ‘one size fits all’ approach;
- Employing innovative quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research methodology;
- Build a complementary research team at CDI that cross collaborates with the Georgetown Lombardi CPC research team to improve patient outcomes in the New Jersey and District of Columbia catchment areas (and beyond);
- Develop a community advisory board of diverse citizen scientists who represent the communities we serve to advise the CPPCI leadership quarterly on research needs, foci of clinical interest, and broader direction;
- Build a diverse, robust extramural funding portfolio; and
- Recruit and retain diverse, talented, innovative scholars making a meaningful contribution to advance the state of population sciences in cancer prevention and control.

- Dr. Carter-Bawa also is co-director of **John Theurer Cancer Center’s Cancer Community Outreach and Engagement (CCOE)** department. CCOE’s mission is to address critical gaps in cancer prevention, early detection, and education efforts in both community-based and clinically-based research in our catchment area. CCOE provides health and research-related education, connects the community to cancer screening and prevention resources, and navigates community members through the healthcare system. Our goal is to demystify the process of seeking screening, obtaining screening, receiving results, and following up with recommended actions. We aim to improve cancer outcomes in the Bergen, Passaic and Hudson County communities with early detection and prevention.



Cancer Community Outreach and Engagement (CCOE) has always been an important component of cancer centers funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) since the initiation of the program in 1971. In the present day, CCOE focuses on all aspects of a cancer center’s programs from basic and clinical research to translational and population-based science.

The John Theurer Cancer Center CCOE department’s mission is to address critical gaps in cancer prevention, early detection, and education efforts in both community-based and clinically-based research in our catchment area. CCOE provides health and research-related education, connects the community to cancer screening and prevention resources, and navigates community members through the healthcare system. The goal is to demystify the process of seeking screening, obtaining screening, receiving results, and following up with recommended actions. We aim to improve cancer outcomes in the Bergen, Passaic and Hudson County communities with early detection and prevention.





From the Clinic to the Bench

Judy Aschner, M.D. is a member of the CDI, and professor of pediatrics at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.

Dr. Aschner is an internationally recognized leader and physician-scientist in pediatrics, neonatology and perinatal biology. As a researcher and clinician, she believes in the vital connection between research and practice. There is a synergy between the clinical and research enterprises, because it is “how medicine moves forward and how discoveries in the lab become the next therapeutic breakthrough in care.” She has put this into practice in her work over roughly 40 years caring for some of the most vulnerable children - and finding better ways to do so.

The Aschner Lab’s most recent focus is the impact of environmental factors, broadly defined, on children’s health and development. Most recently, Dr. Aschner was the recipient of a multimillion dollar National Institutes of Health grant earmarked for the study of how environmental factors affect children with a variety of disabilities as part of a major nationwide study. The two-year, \$5.6 million grant is part of the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program (echochildren.org), a massive national cohort started seven years ago. The new funding will continue the long-term ECHO research of Dr. Aschner, who is also a professor of pediatrics at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.





Center for
Discovery &
Innovation

Member of Hackensack Meridian Health

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