

## **Allergy Immunology and Infectious Disease**

RWJMS Medical Student Michael Enich prepared COVID patient education modules. The education modules are part of a DISC project with the RWJAP.

Video modules included hand hygiene, making cloth facemasks, face mask when going out, social distancing when going out, taking care/wiping down groceries, going for groceries when it is not crowded. Patients are provided a link to the modules.

## **The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities**

The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, a community health program, is New Jersey's federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, has responded to the myriad ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the on-going disparities experienced by the disability community.

The Boggs Center developed disability specific informational resources, converted community and student education programs to virtual platforms, and is engaged in advocacy. The Center has reached out to families of children and adults with disabilities, service providers, and state and community agencies, to address the loss of access to in-person special education and adult services, the increased demands on families for 24/7 caregiving, health concerns and prevention measures, social isolation and the grief and loss experienced due to COVID-19.

Informational resources created and curated are available at

<https://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/links/COVID-19Resources.html>

Planning for emergency situations in which a primary caregiver is no longer available, helping children understand and feel comfortable wearing face masks, developed in collaboration with Children's Specialized Hospital, helping children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities process grief and loss, and how stimulus payments affect disability benefits are among the available resources, as are guides to safe community participation.

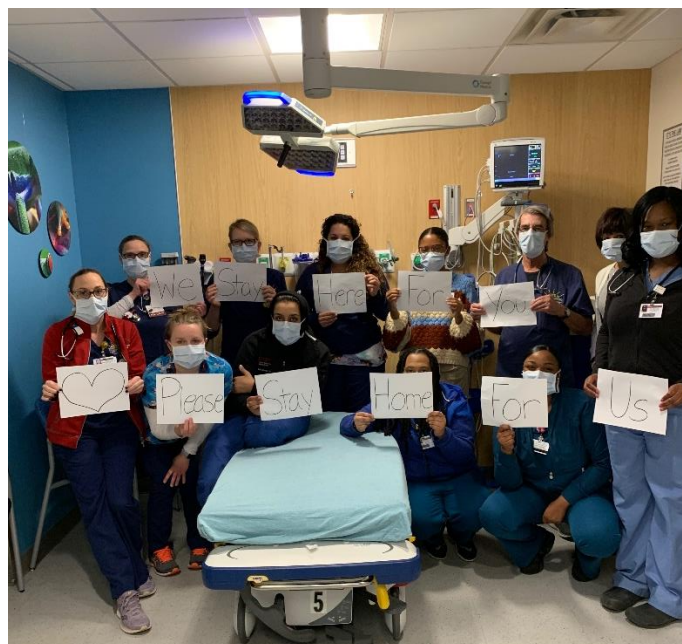
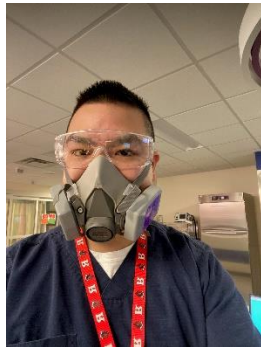
In April, the Center launched its "Just in Time" Webinar Series to provide virtual learning opportunities focused on emotional well-being, mental health, behavior supports, creating meaningful days, and Direct Support Professional skill building and self-care. Through a virtual format, the Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series reached over 1000 participants. The clinical interdisciplinary NJLEND program addressing autism, related disabilities, health disparities, and social determinants of health, conducted virtually since mid-March, graduated 14 leadership fellows, with an annual Maternal and Child Health Leadership Symposium highlighting cultural and linguistic competence and the inclusion of children with disabilities. All Robert Wood Johnson Medical School third year students received education in developmental disabilities through the Seminar on Family Centered Care and Developmental Disabilities, a required component of the Pediatrics clerkship. The Boggs Center continued to offer the Elective in Health Care for Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities, reaching 19 medical students. The seven MS 3 students who participated in the elective during the pandemic, participated through adaptations to distance learning, including phone visits rather than home visits with families, as well as the unique opportunity to develop projects to address COVID-19 for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Students developed materials around wearing masks, hand washing, stress reduction, and helping children with disabilities cope with the disappointment of not being able to attend summer camp. These direct contributions to children's well-being and safety, provided students with a sense of efficacy in a time where their education had been disrupted, increased their understanding of health policy, and increased their knowledge and skills about patients with disabilities.

In partnership with other federally funded agencies in New Jersey, The Boggs Center convened four “Town Halls in the Time of COVID-19”- listening sessions to develop an understanding of the impact of the pandemic on families, providing support to the community, and to guide our efforts in developing resources and programs. Advocacy efforts with governmental agencies addressed decision-making in the allocation of health care resources and the needs for support for patients with disabilities when hospitalized.

### **Pediatric Emergency Medicine**

The Division responded quickly and effectively at the onset of the COVID crisis. With the help of the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital two tents were constructed outside the Emergency department to enable the Division's telemedicine service to triage, and evaluate high risk patients, outside the department. This innovation served to quickly and effectively treat patients, mitigating risk and assuring patients of reduced possible COVID exposure. All of the patients were called in follow up at 7 and 14 days. Patient satisfaction was extraordinary, time spend in the Emergency department was cut in half, and most notably not one patient seen in the Tent returned for further care.

Keeping with the Academic Mission of the Medical School and Department, the Division responded by Initiating and number of studies. Cutting edge activities were begun evaluating Lung pathology with Ultrasound along with the evaluation of our prehospital telemedicine service. The division is also involved in studies evaluating abdominal pain, inflammatory heart disease, and the impact of the COVID Pandemic impacting Emergency Department volumes along with mental health utilization in the ED.



## **Medical Genetics**

The Medical Genetics Division at RWJH is pleased to report we have remained fully functional during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Division provides inpatient and outpatient genetic consultation services and offers state of the art genetic testing to children and adults served by RWJH. The Division Staff includes one full time clinical geneticist, one part-time clinical biochemical geneticist/clinical geneticist, one full-time and two part-time genetic counselors, one part-time advanced nurse practitioner, and one part time secretary. Our Program is supported in part by a newborn screening grant from the New Jersey State Department of Health. In addition to medical student, resident and fellow education and training across several specialties, the Genetics Division provides didactic and clinical training for graduate students enrolled in the Rutgers University Genetic Counseling Master's Degree Program.

Despite adverse conditions posed by the pandemic making clinical service a challenge, all facets of our Program were operational with the help of Telehealth. We were able to see both new and follow up patients with genetic concerns using a Telemedicine platform supported by the Medical School. For some patients we were able to proceed with a genetic evaluation and offer genetic testing if they had clinical evaluations that disclosed cardiac abnormalities such as a congenital heart defect, rhythm disturbance or aortic root enlargement, or family history of a specific genetic concern. For patients experiencing delays in acquisition of motor and speech milestones, we were able to begin the evaluation and initial genetic testing. Since a percentage of medical genetic evaluations rely heavily on features identified on physical examination, some evaluations needed to be postponed. As many members of our Division telecommuted, we have continued to perform genetic evaluations with the patient, genetic counselor, geneticist, advanced practice nurse, translator, pediatric resident, and medical and genetic counseling students in different locations.

Since the second week of March, our genetic center has received 19 abnormal newborn screen referrals, some of whom were at risk for acute, life-threatening metabolic disturbances. Following notification of an abnormal newborn screen by the State of New Jersey laboratory and follow-up program, our altered workflow included telephone consultation between our Genetics team and primary care provider to coordinate repeat filter paper screening and/or confirmatory genetic testing with commercial laboratories providing clinical laboratory biochemical services. Although testing is typically performed following outpatient consultation with our center, to minimize newborn and parent exposure to COVID-19, we facilitated testing through private pediatric provider offices, local hospitals, and our Pediatric Emergency Division. With close follow-up and follow through with providers, we achieved 100% compliance with testing recommendations and telemedicine consultation for non-urgent metabolic genetic visits was provided.

Many patients have personally expressed their gratitude for being able to receive virtual services for their children and themselves during these challenging times.

During the pandemic all Genetic Counseling Training Program coursework was completed remotely. Interviews for the incoming class of 2022 were also held remotely and an incoming class of 10 highly qualified students was selected. There are currently 9 second year students. A celebration of the 8 graduating students was held via zoom. We have now graduated 14 students and all are employed in genetics around the country.

As we cautiously and gradually develop our "new normal" routine we have gained knowledge, skill, and comfortable with Telemedicine and moving forward, will incorporate this vehicle to optimize our genetic services.

## **Nephrology Update:**

### ***COVID Update***

In Nephrology, we have been working hard during the pandemic to accommodate and support our patients. Once the pandemic started, we changed the majority of our clinics to telemedicine. We are using both video and phone encounters to connect to our patients in any way possible. Telemedicine has allowed us to continue to provide care to patients from the safety of their home. As our clinics are now reopening, we are able to accommodate patients both in person and in clinic.

Our outpatient dialysis center at Davita has done a wonderful job ensuring the safety of our dialysis patients during the pandemic. We have been able to continue to work with them to ensure the health and safety of our hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patients.

On the research side, we have worked with Dr. Moorthy on a grant that looks at the impact of the pandemic on patients on immunosuppressant medications. In Nephrology, we will focus on the impact on our lupus, nephrotic syndrome and kidney transplant patients. The grant has been submitted and we are waiting for it to be reviewed.

We also continue to work with Embrace Kids and our subspecialty nurse navigator to help and support our patients. Our nurse navigator has worked closely with us to help orient patients to telemedicine and ensure patients are getting the appointments they need.

### **Pediatric rheumatology updates during the COVID-19 pandemic**

#### **Division highlights:**

- Telehealth visits
- 2 Rheumatology grand rounds presentation in May 2020: Dr. Cynthia Salvant on CRMO and Randy Cron on Cytokine Storm Syndrome
- Meeting as a team regularly
- Continuing with resident rotations with teaching

#### **News from Damaris Soto**

- Telecommuting from home and working in office part-time
- *Caregiving for elderly patient*

#### **News from Nicole Perez**

- Engaging in work-telecommuting, problem solving, and continuing education
- *Spending more time with my husband and son who will be one soon, being able to see Carter crawl and take his first steps, video chats with the family, trying out new vegetarian recipes*

#### **News from Daniel Horton:**

- Submitted R01 to NICHD to study safety of psychotropic drugs in children - collaborators include Drs. Lentzner, Pappert, Chugh, Wassef, Kleinman, and Radhakrishna
- Co-Director of Epidemiology Core for [NIAID-funded study](#) of SARS-CoV-2 in health care workers (Rutgers Corona Cohort Study)
- Investigator for RWJUH SARS-CoV-2 screening study, two COVID-19 clinical trials (in collaboration with Dr. Gaur), and related ancillary studies
- Preparing new R01 to study the biologic determinants and natural history of SARS-CoV-2 infections
- Submitted two COVID-19-related manuscripts, one [published](#) and one under review and [posted as pre-print](#)
- Watching Cirque du Soleil on YouTube and “training” as a family

#### **News from Cynthia Salvant**

- Created a Welcome Packet for general pediatricians who care for patients with Rheumatologic diseases so to improve collaborative efforts in provide optimal care to patients.

- Weekly physical exam sessions with 2<sup>nd</sup> year medical students
- Power point presentation to CHEMED. Topic: Rheumatology from a General Pediatricians perspective
- Presented Grand Rounds “ Chronic Recurrent Multifocal Osteomyelitis”
- Presenting Grand rounds at NJMS in July. Title to TBD.
- Working on 2 non-COVID19 related case reports: Development of CRMO in young girl with Psoriasis and Crohns while on Infliximab and IgG4 related disease involving the stomach.
- Participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> Evidence Based Pediatric Update Symposium in November 2020
- *Cooking more Haitian meals. Exercising using Peloton app and planning on purchasing the peloton bike as well.*

#### **News from L. Nandini Moorthy**

- Submitted three COVID-related grants (2 internal and one to Pfizer)
- Working on COVID-19 related case report with residents
- Presenter at the NJAAP Q and A session on KD – MIS-C disease
- Mentoring outgoing residents on non-COVID19 related case report and research studies
- Completing grading and feedback for the PCM session.
- Reviewed pediatric rheumatology grant for CARRA as a member of the Scientific Review Committee
- Setting up a rotation for a student who enjoyed rooming in patients for me and loves pediatric rheumatology
- Trying to exercise more regularly

#### **Undergraduate Medical Education**

Along with other medical schools in this region, Rutgers-RWJMS pulled medical students from clinical rotations at the end of March. With no immediate end to the COVID-19 pandemic, medical school curricula has adapted!

Our **Pediatric Clerkship** is now a combination virtual/clinical clerkship. The third-year medical students fulfill some of their clerkship requirements in a 2-week virtual curriculum which includes didactics via Webex from our faculty members, case discussions with the clerkship director, completion of online Aquifer cases as well as mock NBME questions using TrueLearn software.

For the time being, the **Pediatric Sub-Internship** is also partially virtual. During the 2-weeks of virtual sub-internship, students follow a mock patient throughout the week and complete tasks based on that patient: writing and presenting an admission H&P and SOAP notes, calling a consult, having a difficult conversation with a parent, providing discharge instructions to parent and journal club. The sub-Is also participate in several teaching rounds with Pediatric faculty.

The fourth-year **Pediatric Bootcamp** course was completed in April entirely virtually with the help of many of our Pediatric faculty members. Throughout the 2-week course, fourth-year students completed workshops that helped prepare them for their upcoming Pediatric Internship. Some of these workshops included instruction on resuscitating newborns and sick children, writing prescriptions, identifying appropriate evidence-based literature, and writing discharge summaries.

In this new COVID-19 era, student education will change along with medicine. As medical students join us clinically again, their experiences will be modified – and enhanced. Along with learning all the things that every physician should know about pediatrics, they will certainly become well-versed in telehealth. Using COVID-19 as an example, we can teach our students about the ambiguity of medicine – and how children (yet again) are not just little adults!