

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

QUARTERLY REPORT

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University of Colorado **Anschutz Medical Campus**

CLINICAL CARE

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JOHNSON DEPRESSION
CENTER JOINS THE
DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHIATRY

IMPROVEMENTS AND
ADVANCEMENTS IN
TELEHEALTH



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.

PSYCHIATRY WELCOMES JOHNSON DEPRESSION CENTER INTO DEPARTMENT

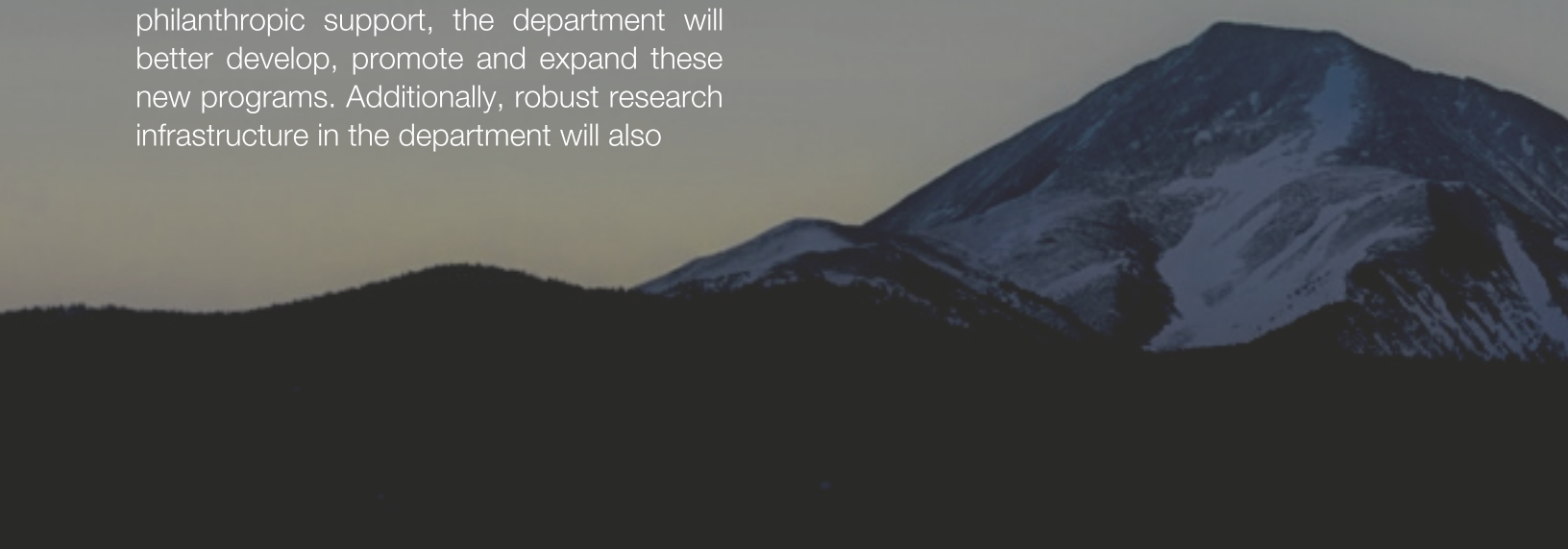
The Helen and Aurthur E. Johnson Depression Center (JDC) is dedicated to helping patients and families by providing transformative treatment of depressive illnesses and related mood disorders. As part of the National Network of Depression Centers, the JDC's innovative team-based and integrated care models are revolutionizing the mental and behavioral health landscape.

In January of 2021, the JDC moved into the CU Department of Psychiatry under the leadership of C. Neill Epperson, MD. The move represents the coming together of powers for mental healthcare treatment on campus and tremendous knowledge in the field combining as one united front.

The shared successes of the CU Department of Psychiatry and JDC will allow leadership to grow our state-of-the-art clinical programs and community education initiatives. By leveraging resources including philanthropic support, the department will better develop, promote and expand these new programs. Additionally, robust research infrastructure in the department will also

serve the JDC by fostering a strong environment for the creation of new treatments and therapies. The transition of leadership will help to further break down silos in mental healthcare and innovation, and will accelerate the creation of advanced therapeutics for the treatment of psychiatric and substance use disorders.

When asked to share her thoughts on the move of the JDC into the Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Epperson said, "Aligning the CU Department of Psychiatry and the JDC meets a core mission of advancing excellence in clinical care and creating a foundation for growing research that informs the future of medicine. We are fostering an environment for interdisciplinary education and training in mental healthcare and critical areas such as the neuroscience of behavior. Your support allows us to leverage our expertise to meet the vast needs of our state and the Rocky Mountain region."



ADVANCEMENTS IN TELEHEALTH

Amid the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, The Department has found itself turning a critical corner in its journey of providing world-class medical care. Although psychiatric care is traditionally rooted in in-person and pen-and-paper medicine, we have embraced the increasing importance of technology in the delivery of psychiatric services.

Since the arrival of COVID-19, digital care is no longer a valuable aid—it is an essential need for our patients. Under the direction of Dr. Jay Shore, the Department of Psychiatry moved to almost immediate implementation of telehealth services for our patients, while maintaining the highest levels of confidentiality and security.

While we were most thankful to not have any gap in care for the populations we serve, we were also surprised to learn that telepsychiatry is equally as effective as in-person care and with fewer cancellations and missed appointments. Telehealth actually made mental healthcare more accessible to many patients who were previously limited by time, travel or many other factors.



However, while it may seem like technology comes easy to everyone in today's digital world, there are still many individuals who find technology challenging, confusing and overwhelming. Keeping this in mind, we created thorough, multi-platform guidance documents for both our patients and our providers, to ensure the easiest experience possible. We also provided internet hotspot devices for patients without readily-available internet in order to maintain continuity of care.

The COVID-19 disaster will end, and in its wake, psychiatry will emerge altered by its new use of technology and by larger societal trends. While this time has been filled with uncertainty and fear, it has also allowed us to creatively problem solve without the luxury of time being on our side. We're proud of the metamorphosis we have undergone and are excited to continue this trajectory for growth and change.



RESEARCH

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DISORDER CONTRACT
WITH NIAAA

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POSTER SESSION

YOUNG INVESTIGATOR
PROGRESS



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.

NIAAA CONTRACT TO STUDY NOVEL TREATMENT DRUGS IN ALCOHOL USE DISORDER



KENT HUTCHISON, PHD

In March of 2021, Drs. Kent Hutchison and Joseph Schacht received a contract from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) to study a new medication in the treatment of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in adults titled, "University of Colorado Site for the NIAAA Medications Development Clinical Investigations Network." This contract establishes the CU Anschutz campus as a site in the NIAAA Clinical Investigations Network for the Treatment of Alcohol Use Disorder. Other sites include prestigious institutions such as Boston University, Brown University, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Johns Hopkins, the Medical University of South Carolina, UCLA, UT-Southwestern, and



JOSEPH SCHACHT, PHD

the University of Virginia. These sites will conduct future Phase 2 and Phase 3 clinical trials of new medications to treat Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), which affects about 14 million American adults a year. These trials will make cutting-edge pharmacological treatment for AUD available to Coloradans at no cost. We hope that they will eventually lead to the discovery of novel AUD treatments that reduce the burden of this disease on individuals and society. The contract will run through March of 2028.

Dr. Schacht was previously the site PI for a similar contract at the Medical University of South Carolina before moving to CU.



2021 POSTER SESSION

The Department of Psychiatry Poster Session was held during the first Quarter of 2021. The annual event was established over 30 years ago by Department Chair Dr. James Shore. His inspiration was for people to share the research they were presenting at the American Psychiatric Association and Society of Biological Psychiatry meetings with the Department of Psychiatry. The poster session has continued to evolve since its inception and is currently chaired by Dr. Kristina Legget, who has been in this role since 2017.

The event showcases research endeavors across the Department and its affiliate institutions, including Denver Health, the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center, and Children's Hospital. The event is a great venue for junior faculty and trainees to receive feedback on their work and, overall, to encourage interaction and collaboration among faculty, staff, and trainees.

A judging committee evaluates the submitted abstracts prior to the poster session, with the winners giving short oral presentations at the event. The judging committee (Drs. Amanda Law, Bob Davies, Joel Yager, Joe Sakai, and Susan Mikulich) represents both basic science and clinical research. In the years before 2020, the event was held in person. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was converted to a virtual format in 2020, with poster presenters interacting with "attendees" via video conferencing, followed by a group video conference meeting for the oral presentations. For the 2021 poster session, this virtual format was continued. This year, 23 people presented research posters, five gave oral presentations, and we welcomed 93 attendees throughout the day. While the virtual format has been quite successful and well received, we're hopeful that the event can be held in person again in 2022!

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

The Department of Psychiatry is not only home to world-class clinical care, but incredibly productive researchers. We're especially proud of our early-career researchers, rising stars in the area of clinical research. Below you will find highlights from several of our team members who have received grant funding in the last quarter.



**DR. AVIVA
OLSAVSKY**

Aviva K. Olsavsky, MD, an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and OB/Gyn, was funded through a NIDA/AACAP K12 Career Development Award to study mother-infant relationships. This study will examine how stressful life experiences and cannabis use impact the way that mothers' brains respond to infants. She aims to understand how these processes impact relationships, potentially guiding preventive interventions and treatments for vulnerable families.



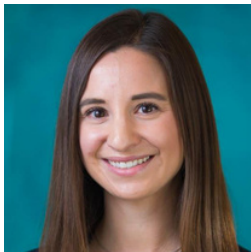
**DR. JESSE
HINCKLEY**

Jesse Hinckley, MD, PhD, an Assistant Professor, has a research focus of identifying novel biomarkers of regular cannabis use in adolescents. He received K12 Career Development Award through the NIDA in order to characterize changes in the endocannabinoid and endorphin systems, as well as studying sex differences and epigenetic changes. Integrating basic science research with clinical research, he hopes to help improve understanding and risk stratification of cannabis use disorder.



**DR. SARAH
KENNEDY**

Sarah Kennedy, PhD, an Assistant Professor, received a John and Polly Sparks Foundation Early Career Grant from the American Psychological Foundation. The grant will provide support to adapt an evidence-based, transdiagnostic treatment for acute care settings (e.g., partial hospitalization), pilot the treatment across care locations at CHCO, and examine effectiveness and implementation outcomes.



**DR. MICHELLE
CLEMENTI**

Michelle Clementi, PhD, an Assistant Professor received a grant from Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI) in order to study adolescent girls with headache disorders. Her study aims to learn more about the complex relationships between sleep and pain in teenage girls with headache disorders, with a specific focus on understanding how nighttime sleep impacts next-day pain (and vice versa) and examining differences in objective sleep domains between patients with chronic migraine versus episodic migraine.

COMMUNITY

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY &
INCLUSION WORK IN THE
DEPT. OF PSYCHIATRY

CARING FOR OUR
COMMUNITY

CARING FOR FIRST
RESPONDERS' MENTAL
HEALTH



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION WORK IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

Over the last year, the Department of Psychiatry's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has gone from idea to thriving fruition. The purpose of the (DEI) Committee is to support the Department of Psychiatry's faculty, staff, and trainees in promoting a culture of excellence, inclusivity and mutual respect. We are committed to continuous education, sustaining cultural humility, and effective action related to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in all facets and all levels of the Department of Psychiatry.

Lead by Interim Chair Dr. Robert Davies and Department Diversity Officer, Shaleeta Flagg, the DEI Team is comprised of about 60 members throughout the department serving on five subcommittees.

The committees include:

- Art
- Education
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Website

Because the DEI is not just a part of our department, but the true blood that runs through our mission and vision, we are working establish DEI representation at all levels of departmental work. We are working to establish book and film clubs that meet quarterly which is open to the entire department, not just the DEI committee itself.

We also hosted a diversity panel featuring members across our university community as well as sponsored a presentation and discussion with Dr. Brenda J. Allen, entitled "Race Matters in Psychiatry." This event provided an explanation of how and why race matters in psychiatry as well as explored ways to cultivate anti-racism within the Department.

DEI has a thriving online presence including a robust website with resources, features in departmental communication and social media. You can visit the page [here](#).

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Psychiatry immediately turned its efforts to support our community. We adopted a wide definition of "community" by providing various forms of care and support across our University state and even the world. We created a public-facing site with support and resources for our patients, families with small children, first responders and educators. We have also shared information about support groups, peer support sessions and resources to decrease stress. It has since been visited by over 20,000 unique users.

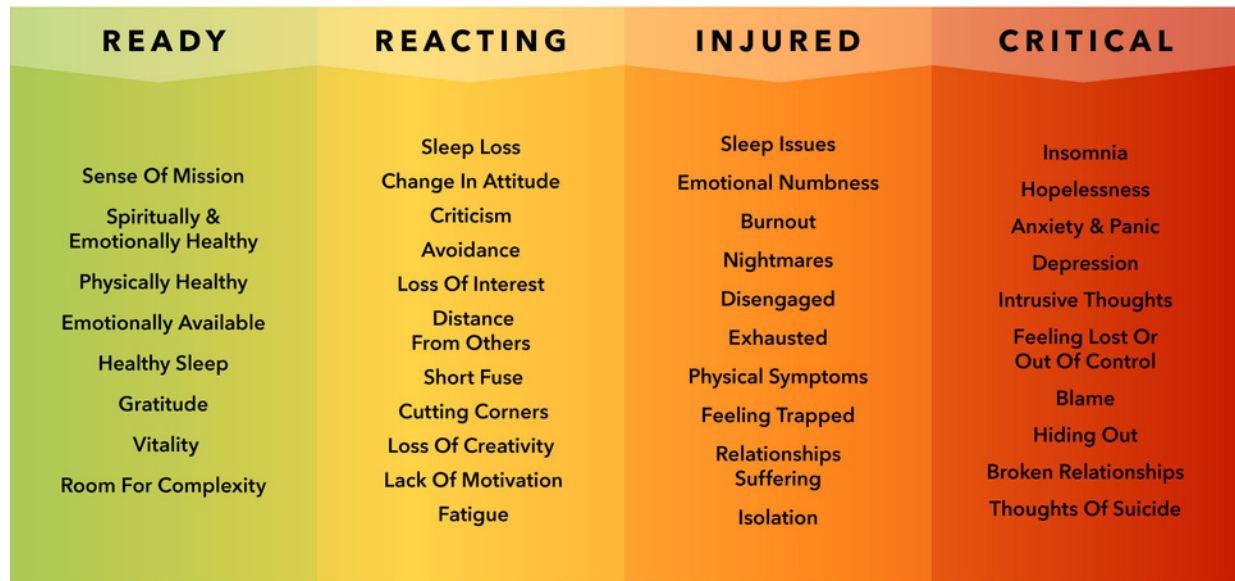
Additionally, we created the Well-Being Support Line, a call and text line available to all front line workers and educators across the state of Colorado aimed at providing a real-time listening ear. The WBSL also has the ability to serve callers in multiple languages and provides direct access to Virtual Behavioral Health for those truly in acute crisis.

We also conducted a University-wide survey to assess whether our colleagues were aware of and utilizing services provided on campus. We overwhelmingly found that faculty across the School of Medicine were least likely to make use of group-based support. With this in mind, we created a completely anonymous self-service website called the CU-Wellbeing Self-Assessment Tool. This site allows faculty to rate their current state as it relates to feeling of depression, anxiety, concentration issues, alcohol overuse and post-traumatic stress response. The answers are collated into unique scores and risk levels, with personalized recommendations provided based on the outcomes. Faculty can take the assessment as frequently as they would like and track their progress over time. This tool provided a direct referral to our newly formed Faculty & Staff mental Health clinic with short or no waitlist and specialized care. We're proud of the work we have done and continue to innovate for our community, near and far.



CARING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS' MENTAL HEALTH

RESPONDER STRESS CONTINUUM



ADAPTED FROM COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS FIRST AID BY LAURA MCGLADREY | RESPONDERALLIANCE.COM

As healthcare providers ourselves, the Department of Psychiatry knows how important it is to care for frontline workers, supporting their personal wellbeing and ultimately patient care. We created an initiative called "Past the Pandemic, aimed at supporting out frontline workers mental health and wellbeing. With support from federal grants obtained by the state of Colorado, we provided free mental health services including support groups, individual support and an eight-session series on building resilience to healthcare providers and workers across the state.

Through this program we provided an 8-session series for provides and staff working in healthcare settings. The program offered tools to navigate, normalize and hold space for worries and experiences during this pandemic.

We also hosted support groups across departments and centers as well as targeting groups for faculty and staff in various roles in the

University of hospital. These groups were offered at standing times with drop-ins welcome and scheduled ad needed based on staffing schedules or following a critical eventAs we know, physicians and faculty faced unique challenges when it came to caring for their own mental health. As such, we created the the Physician-to-Physician Support Line for MDs and PhDs that provided care to patients in Colorado and would like to talk to someone who is familiar with the particular issues facing our doctors.

Laura McGladrey, a Family and Psych Mental Health Nurse Practitioner also worked to advance the understanding of stress injury and recovery formation in responders. By using a stress continuum model first developed for deployment, she helped to create a common language for teams to assess burnout and mood. Many groups and departments now begin meetings by checking in with one another based on their "color" instead of using emotion words.

EDUCATION

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CREATION OF THE OFFICE
OF EDUCATION AND
TRAINING

INTRODUCING THE
CU-PATHWAYS RESIDENT
RESEARCH TRACK
TRAINING PROGRAM



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.



OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This year, the Department created the Office of Education and Training (OET), led by Robert Davies, MD, Vice Chair of Education, and Emmaly Perks, MA, CCRP, Education Manager. The creation of this unique training structure was driven by the expansion of the department in recent years, as well as greater demand for cross-disciplinary training. "The future of mental health care is clearly multidisciplinary and the department intends to be at the forefront of training the highest quality practitioners and researchers in all disciplines. The creation of the OET is an important step in our meeting this commitment," said Dr. Davies.

To form the new office, the department's previously distributed education administration was consolidated into a singular entity. The centralized structure allows for sharing of team members' skills and resources, cross-coverage for education staff needs, and collaboration among programs. Staff members of the OET now include program leaders and staff representing Graduate Medical Education (GME), Undergraduate Medical Education, Post-Doctoral training, Master's

and Undergraduate-level training programs, and other non-GME related training programs.

Six faculty disciplinary heads of training were identified within the OET to guide the future of training in psychology and psychiatry and to create and expand new training programs. Each of the faculty training directors serves on the OET Council, along with administrative team. The OET Council members are responsible for supporting the creation of new programs under each of the disciplines, as well as monitoring the expansion of existing programs, resource capacity, and staffing needs. Through this work, the DOP will create three new programs in 2020 (Master's of Social Work, Licensed Clinical Social Work, and Nurse Practitioner training programs), with plans for additional expansion of training in 2022 for Women's Behavioral Health, Psychosis, and Physician Assistant training.

The creation of the OET is a demonstration of the department's long-standing commitment to world-class education and to further promote the DOP's mission of "Brain Health for All, For Life."

CU-PATHWAYS RESIDENT RESEARCH TRACK

In March of 2021, Neill Epperson, Susan Mikulich, Joseph Sakai (Principal Investigators), and the Department of Psychiatry, University of Colorado School of Medicine, were awarded R25MH125758 by the National Institute of Mental Health. This grant will bring more than \$970,000 in funding across 5 years to support the CU-Pathways Resident Research Track (Pathways-RRT) of the University of Colorado School of Medicine Psychiatry Residency Program.

This program seeks to recruit 2 promising physician scientists each year, to foster their research development and strong productivity while still in residency, and ultimately to prepare them to successfully compete for competitive post-doctoral research positions and future grant funding. Pathways-RRT allows participants to complete all ACGME requirements for on-time residency completion and to sit for board certification, while also creating individualized pathways for research skills development and productivity during residency. The program provides between 14 and 18 months of research-dedicated time across residency (amount of time depends on whether participants choose the four-year general psychiatry residency or the five-year Child Fellowship training).



Residents are recruited based on their qualifications, demonstrated passion for research, and in part, upon their areas of interest being in sync with our current and growing pool of outstanding research faculty mentors. Program participants receive structured didactics focusing on research methods, biostatistics, rigor and reproducibility, the ethical conduct of research, sex differences in psychoneuroendocrinology, and grant writing. A bi-monthly seminar offers opportunities for work-in-progress sessions and presentations of research results (poster, oral) with faculty and peer feedback.

In their later years of training, Pathways-RRT residents have small grants available to support data collection targeting their important questions and that can also serve as pilot data for future grant applications. The program offers close mentorship via collaborative mentoring teams that consist of primary, secondary and peer mentors, and individualized research plans that are reviewed regularly and updated. Annual progress reports and surveys of residents and program faculty are used to evaluate program strengths and weaknesses to foster continuous program improvement. Participants benefit from complementary institutional commitment, including access to the Psychiatry Research Innovations services for support in grants administration, research operations, educational workshops, clinical research, and biostatistics. The CU-Pathways RRT program strives to address the dearth of physician-scientists in Psychiatry and to produce actionable resident-derived research products that enhance knowledge of mental illness and improve clinical outcomes for patients.



Department of Psychiatry

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**



BRAIN HEALTH for all, for life.