



## September 2020 Newsletter

---

### NEWS

- UMass Medical School granted five-year, \$30 million Clinical and Translational Sciences Award
- TL1 Trainee receives NCI F31 award
- “Just-in-Time Alert” (JITA) Real Time Patient Recruitment Application

### COVID-19

- Clinical Research Nurses Needed for RADx Studies
- UMMS Update
- NIH Update
- COVID-19 Clinical Trials Database
- The National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C)

### EVENTS

- 2020 M2D2 \$200K Challenge Pitch-Off and Award Celebration
- Community Engagement and Research Symposium kickoff webinar

### FUNDING

- CCTS SPARK Program (Small Pilot and Research Knowledge)
- CCTS Small Conference Grants

### EDUCATION

- Greater Worcester Covid-19 Survey

### DID YOU KNOW

- HRPP QA/QI
- National Center for Data to Health (CD2H)

## NEWS

**UMass Medical School granted five-year, \$30 million Clinical and Translational Sciences Award:** UMass Medical School will bring the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science to its next level of innovation and collaboration with the five-year, \$30 million renewal of its Clinical and Translational Sciences Award from the National Institutes of Health. The center advances clinical and translational research through education and training, pilot funding programs, research cores, and services. Read the full story here:

[https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2020/08/umass-medical-school-granted-five-year-\\$30-million-clinical-and-translational-sciences-award/](https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2020/08/umass-medical-school-granted-five-year-$30-million-clinical-and-translational-sciences-award/)

**TL1 Trainee receives NCI F31 award:** Maira Castañeda-Avila is interested in understanding how various factors, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or cancer precursor diagnosis, influence healthcare utilization in the US and Puerto Rico. Supported by the UMCCTS TL1 training program, she has been investigating how the role of a diagnosis of Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (MGUS), an understudied precursor of multiple myeloma (MM), changes the way patients utilize health care.

Her mentor Mara Epstein, ScD, a previous UMCCTS KL2 scholar, encouraged Ms. Castañeda-Avila to apply for the TL1 program. “The TL1 Fellowship has helped me to build a strong foundation in epidemiology and advanced analytic skills and has allowed me to participate in national conferences and access external courses and workshops,” Ms. Castañeda-Avila said. She hopes that her research will lead to a better understanding of healthcare utilization patterns in a population diagnosed with a premalignant condition. Specifically, this research could elucidate potential clinical targets that may lead to improvement in the long-term overall health of patients with MGUS, and that could be the focus of future interventions.

She received the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (F31) funded by the National Cancer Institute, which will further her development as an independent investigator and support her research. After completing her training, she plans to pursue a position as an independent investigator at an academic institution where she can conduct population-based research on health disparities, focused on cancer prevention among underserved populations with particular interest in Hispanic populations in the US and Latin America.

**“Just-in-Time Alert” (JITA) Real Time Patient Recruitment Application:** Recruitment to clinical trials can be challenging especially when clinical trial teams are trying to identify potential study participants in real time, e.g. in an emergency department (ED) setting. In response to this challenge, Jomol Mathew, PhD and the UMCCTS Informatics and Recruitment Core Team designed, developed, and implemented a new strategy for real-time identification of potential study participants in health care settings. Leveraging the electronic health record (EHR) system, the informatics team developed the “Just-in-Time Alert” (JITA) application which receives messages from the EHR, processes those messages, and provides real-time alerts to clinical trial teams. After receiving an alert, the study team can approach and discuss the study with patients while they are still in the clinic, emergency room, or other health care settings.

In the development phase, JITA was tested for its ability to enhance enrollment of an opioid tolerance study being conducted in the ED and a gastroenterology study. JITA was able to help increase awareness of potential participants and enrollment. More recently, JITA has been used to identify patients who were newly diagnosed with COVID-19 for potential enrollment in a diagnostic device study in the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative. JITA was highly successful in identifying individuals with positive COVID results and notifying RADx study team members of potential study participants. Mary Co, MD, an investigator on the RADx device study wrote to the JITA team, “It is really just in time - the patients were still in the ER!” The UMCCTS Recruitment Core is collaborating with other CTSA’s to further develop and test JITA at other institutions who have similar EHRs and

processes. A more detailed description of JITA can be found in Lee V, et al. *JITA: A Platform for Enabling Real Time Point-of-Care Patient Recruitment*. AMIA Jt Summits Transl Sci Proc. 2020 PMID: 32477655. For more information please contact Mahesh Vangala at [Mahesh.Vangala@umassmed.edu](mailto:Mahesh.Vangala@umassmed.edu)

## COVID-19

**Clinical Research Nurses Needed for RADx Studies:** The Center for Advancing Point of Care Therapeutics (CAPCaT) has been designated as a national test center for the NIH Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) program. Our Center is looking for experienced clinical research nurses with an interest in working with people undergoing COVID-19 testing to collect information and specimens in order to validate new and innovative test devices coming to UMass from around the world. The positions are available immediately. If you are interested or if you have any questions, please contact Danielle Howard ([Danielle.howard@umassmed.edu](mailto:Danielle.howard@umassmed.edu)) or apply at <https://www.ummsjobs.com/job/5416/> or <https://www.ummsjobs.com/job/5000/>

**UMMS UPDATE** regarding human subjects research during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found here: <https://umassmed.edu/ccts/covid-19/>. This website is updated frequently.

**NIH UPDATE:** For up-to-date NIH COVID-19 information, including informational videos, proposal submission and award management resources, human subjects and clinical trials guidance, animal welfare, frequently asked questions regarding flexibilities for grantees, and funding opportunities, click here: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

**CLINICAL TRIALS DATABASE:** To search for active Covid-19 clinical trials at UMMS, please visit <https://www.conqueringdiseases.org/>. Conquering Diseases is an easy to use web-based search tool to find, share and save clinical studies relevant to patients. It also provides educational resources to help patients and families learn about and find clinical studies. It provides a patient-friendly and direct way to learn about clinical studies and a secure environment to share clinical study opportunities and communicate with study staff for screening and enrollment into clinical studies.

**THE NATIONAL COVID COHORT COLLABORATIVE (N3C):** The National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C) Data Enclave is now open to scientists looking for evidence-based answers to COVID-19 research questions. This centralized and secure national data analytics platform is for COVID-19 research, including studying potential risk factors, protective factors and long-term health consequences, as the pandemic continues to evolve. Its data and analytics capabilities will grow over time. [Learn more about the N3C data](#) and [applying for access](#).

## EVENTS

**2020 M2D2 \$200K Challenge Pitch-Off and Award Celebration:** M2D2 is thrilled to announce that we have officially rescheduled the 2020 M2D2 \$200K Challenge Pitch-Off and Award Celebration—now virtual and free of charge. Mark your calendars:

Finalist Pitch-Off: Thursday, September 17 at 5pm ET  
Awards Celebration: Thursday, October 1 at 5 pm ET

Register here to attend: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-m2d2-200k-challenge-pitch-off-awards-celebration-tickets-78510953375>

**Community Engagement and Research Symposium kickoff webinar:** The 9th Annual Community Engagement and Research Symposium will be a series of Webinars this year. Our first speaker is Peter D. Friedmann, MD, MPH, DFASAM, FACP. Title: The Opioid-related Syndemic in Rural Northern New England: Findings from the DISCERNNE Study. Registration for the Keynote Speaker Webinar being held on September 22, 2020 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm is now open. Registration link: <https://arcsapps.umassmed.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=8NHCTWPH9P>

## FUNDING

**CCTS SPARK PROGRAM:** Rolling application deadline. This program's priorities are to support studies that impact clinical care and research methodologies, support students/trainees, and provide access to funds to generate pilot and preliminary data for external grant submissions. For more information, click on this link: <https://www.umassmed.edu/ccts/funding/spark-program/>

**CCTS SMALL CONFERENCE GRANTS:** Rolling application deadline. This funding facilitates the development of faculty-to-faculty networks within the University system. Click on this link for more information: <https://umassmed.edu/ccts/funding/small-conference-grants/>  
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:** postdoctoral fellowships to prepare the next generation of scientists to conduct implementation research that addresses critical cancer prevention and control care delivery issues.

## EDUCATION

**GREATER WORCESTER COVID-19 COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY:** UMass Medical School, in collaboration with the City of Worcester and the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance is conducting the Great Worcester COVID-19 Community Health Survey. The online survey, which takes about **10 minutes to complete**, asks respondents about changes in their lives due to COVID since March 10, including their health, finances, activities outside the home, access to medical care, employment, housing and food security. The names of the street a respondent lives on and the closest cross street will be vital for understanding circumstances in specific neighborhoods. Providing contact information is optional for respondents who want to receive survey results, and who are willing to be contacted about the survey. The survey also provides a list of local resources for households experiencing distress due to COVID-19. **The survey is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Albanian and Russian.** To participate, please click [here](#).

## DID YOU KNOW?

**HRPP QA/QI:** The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) Program is a component of the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science. The program is independent of the IRB and helps study teams and investigators by conducting routine post-approval monitoring of on-going research to evaluate adherence with institutional requirements and federal regulations. If there are review findings, the QA/QI manager shares those findings with investigators and study teams, and provides direct education on the findings, including how to avoid making similar errors in the future. In order to support improvement at an institutional level, the QA/QI manager shares aggregated data from reviews with the HRPP leadership and the Research Community to identify trends and target areas for education. The program also makes [self-evaluation tools](#) available to investigators and study teams seeking to perform their own assessments. To learn more about HRPP QA/QI HRP-142, visit: <https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/ccts/ccts-media/irb/updated-sops-2015/hrp-142-hrpp-qa-qi-program-final.pdf>.

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR DATA TO HEALTH (CD2H):** The goal of CD2H is to make data more meaningful, open and accessible. The CD2H supports a vibrant and evolving collaborative informative ecosystem for the CTSA program and beyond. The CD2H harnesses and expands an ecosystem for translational scientists to discover and share their software, data and other research resources within the CTSA program network. The CD2H also creates a social coding environment for translational science institutions, leveraging the community-driven DREAM challenges as a mechanism to stimulate innovation. To learn more, click [here](#).

## SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY

Have you had [your research published](#) that cites the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science? Has [your patent been filed](#) on technology developed using Center funding or resources? Did your pilot project receive external grant funding? Share it with us at [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu). Sharing your success demonstrates the importance and effect of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science at UMass.

## CITE & SUBMIT

Please cite the NIH CTSA award any time you use The UMMS Center for Clinical and Translational Science resources, services and facilities or received funding through the Center. ***“The project described is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health, through Grant UL1 TR001453, (or TL1 TR001454, or KL2 TR001455, as appropriate). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.”***

**Newsletter Submissions:** *To be included in the CCTS Monthly Newsletter, please send announcements, including a link, to [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu). The newsletter is published the first week of each month.*