

MAGEE

WINTER 2020

A PUBLICATION OF MAGEE-WOMENS RESEARCH INSTITUTE & FOUNDATION

THE PANDEMIC PIVOT



FROM HIV TO COVID-19:

Nasal spray drug developed at MWRI targets coronavirus prevention

A STRANGER'S GIFT:

A Magee-trained doctor turns patient in a fight against ovarian cancer

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU:

How COVID-19 accelerated telemedicine in Magee's Prenatal Care

MAGEE

VOLUME 19 | WINTER 2020

MAGEE magazine is published two times a year for supporters of Magee-Womens Research Institute & Foundation.

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FROM HIV TO COVID-19: NASAL SPRAY DRUG DEVELOPED AT MWRI TARGETS CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION

By Niki Kapsambelis



“WE HAVE THE EXPERIENCE
AND CAPABILITY TO
ADVANCE DEVELOPMENT
OF PHARMACEUTICAL
PRODUCTS FROM DRUG
DISCOVERY TO CLINICAL
TRIAL INITIATION.”

DR. LISA ROHAN



When Lisa Rohan, Ph.D., decided to change career paths from the private pharmaceutical industry more than 20 years ago, she could not have known that it would lead her to the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. All she knew was there was a significant scientific knowledge gap related to women’s health, and she wanted to dedicate her career to changing that fact.

Along the way, she acquired a deep understanding of what it means to fight a pandemic. She is the principal investigator for the central lab component of the Microbicide Trials Network, and she also has developed drug products designed to prevent HIV transmission among some of the world’s most vulnerable populations. From that mission grew a project that could prove to be a key tool in the fight to contain COVID-19.

Dr. Rohan, an investigator with Magee-Womens Research Institute who holds a joint appointment as a professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, compares her lab to a mini-biotech company, which is unique to academics.



“WE KNOW HOW CRUCIAL A VIABLE PREVENTION DRUG IS FOR PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY FROM THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC, AND WE ARE EAGER TO MOVE FORWARD.”

DR. LISA ROHAN

“We have the experience and capability to advance development of pharmaceutical products from drug discovery to clinical trial initiation,” she says. “This capacity is quite exceptional in an academic lab setting.”

Among the products her lab has developed through Phase 1 clinical trials is Q-griffithsin, a broad-spectrum antiviral drug that Dr. Rohan and her team, including research associate Lin Wang, are now in the process of repurposing into a nasal spray to prevent COVID-19.

Originally formulated by Dr. Rohan’s team as an enema to prevent HIV transmission, Q-griffithsin is derived from an algae found in New Zealand. Dr. Rohan’s colleague, Dr. Kenneth Palmer at the University of Louisville, developed the methods to cultivate Q-griffithsin from tobacco plants. Through his funding from NIAID, the enema product has been advanced to an ongoing human clinical study conducted in Pittsburgh.

But in addition to preventing HIV, the drug also shows potential for inhibiting other viruses, including Ebola, herpes, hepatitis, SARS, and MERS, says Dr. Rohan. So, when the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact the United States in the spring of 2020, the team sought ways to repurpose the drug to stop the virus.

The prototype nasal spray was developed with the help of grants from the Mellon Foundation and Pitt’s Clinical and Translational Science

Institute. In August, Dr. Rohan’s group won a \$568,131 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to pay for key safety studies needed to obtain U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for human clinical trials.

The nasal spray for the safety studies will be manufactured at Dr. Rohan’s labs at Magee-Womens Research Institute and the Salk Pavilion at Pitt. Once the safety study is complete, Dr. Rohan’s goal is to have the product ready for the clinical team led by MWRI’s Dr. Sharon Hillier to begin human clinical trials in Pittsburgh by the end of 2020. The group continues to seek funding that will pay for those human trials.

The nasal spray would be taken once a day to prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering a person’s respiratory system. While the spray would not replace any successful COVID-19 vaccines, it would provide an effective level of defense against the coronavirus for people who cannot take vaccines, Dr. Rohan said.

“We know how crucial a viable prevention drug is for protecting our community from this global pandemic, and we are eager to move forward,” she said.



CEO UPDATE

First of all, I hope this issue of **MAGEE MAGAZINE** finds you safe, well, and happy. In my message from December 2019, we were looking forward to a year filled with in-person fundraising events and outreach. Like the saying goes, the only constant is change, and in 2020 we all faced a tremendous amount of it.

The international COVID-19 pandemic brought changes and challenges that would have been unheard of this time last year. From school shutdowns to state-wide lockdowns, from remaining in our homes for several months to the normalization of mask-wearing and temperature checks, the “new normal” has changed so quickly that adapting can feel overwhelming under the best of circumstances.

While it felt like much of the world paused in early 2020, the research at Magee-Womens Research Institute and the patient care at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital continued under drastically different circumstances. In a year of change, both organizations pivoted to adhere to the pandemic’s restrictions while still moving our crucial work forward. At the foundation, the fundraising efforts evolved into virtual opportunities in real time.

In this issue, you will read about the many different ways we at Magee pivoted during the pandemic. From UPMC Magee’s ability to transform thousands of in-person appointments to telemedicine visits to one of our largest fundraisers — Women who Rock — moving from an in-person benefit concert to a virtual, month-long event, we brought flexibility, urgency, and creativity to every aspect of the hospital, research institute and foundation.

Scientific research doesn’t stop in the midst of a pandemic — in fact, we learned just how critical laboratory research can be. At MWRI, our researchers continued to accrue grants supporting their work, which you can read about in this issue’s “Notable” section. In addition, you can read about Dr. Lisa Rohan’s work exploring the possibility of a nasal spray that could prevent COVID-19. What began as an HIV-prevention product has actually shown activity against a number of coronaviruses like SARS and MERS, and may turn into an additional possibility in the fight against COVID-19.

As 2020 comes to a close, we at Magee-Womens Research Institute & Foundation are hopeful. A deep commitment to scientific research is a way of life for us, and we are hopeful that science will bring us an effective vaccine for COVID-19 sooner rather than later. More than that, we believe the work coming out of the research institute will result in breakthroughs for women’s health — from lowering the risk of maternal morbidity to finding ways to stop ovarian cancer from spreading. Science is hope — against COVID-19, and so much more.

With warm regards,
Michael J. Annichine, President & CEO

A MAGEE-TRAINED DOCTOR TURNS PATIENT IN A FIGHT AGAINST OVARIAN CANCER



DR. CAROLYN KUBIK



DR. ROBERT EDWARDS

DURING HER 40-YEAR CAREER AS A MAGEE-TRAINED INFERTILITY SPECIALIST, CAROLYN KUBIK, MD, ESTIMATES THAT MORE THAN 1,000 CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BORN AS A RESULT OF PREGNANCIES SHE ASSISTED.

"It was amazing," she says of the training she received, first as a resident from 1978 to 1982, then later as a reproductive endocrine fellow, through which she studied infertility treatments until she graduated in 1986. "By the time I finished my residency and fellowship, I really felt that I had all the skills that I needed to go right into a practice."

But it was the care she received at Magee when she was unexpectedly diagnosed with Stage IV ovarian cancer that she credits with saving her life, along with the contributions of the ovarian cancer patients before her whose participation in clinical trials shaped her care.

AN UNEXPECTED DIAGNOSIS

She remembers the date so clearly: April 17, 2017, the day after Easter. "Like most patients who get this diagnosis, I had been feeling great and not experiencing any worrisome symptoms," says Dr. Kubik.

She had gone to see her internist for an annual exam, and she pointed out a "pooching" in her abdomen, which she thought might be a hernia. The internist referred her to a surgeon, who decided to conduct a CT scan.



Instead of a hernia, the scan revealed an ovarian mass, as well as cancerous implants throughout her abdomen.

"I was pretty mad. This was the last thing I thought would ever happen to me," she said. But she immediately faced her diagnosis head on, with characteristic determination.

Dr. Kubik's next call was to Dr. Robert Edwards, MD, chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital and an investigator with Magee-Womens Research Institute specializing in gynecologic cancer. The two doctors knew each other as colleagues.

Dr. Edwards looked at her CT scan results and scheduled her for surgery the next day.

"He saved my life," Dr. Kubik says, simply. "The surgery didn't really scare me ... the diagnosis was the big deal."

"It was a pretty aggressive surgery," acknowledges Dr. Edwards, who removed several small tumors from Dr. Kubik's abdominal cavity during the six-hour procedure.

At one point, he scrubbed out to give an update to her husband, Dr. Steele Filipek, MD, another Magee doctor who retired a month

before his wife's diagnosis. Dr. Edwards trained under Dr. Filipek as a resident; in fact, he delivered his first baby under Dr. Filipek as a third-year medical student at Pitt.

When Dr. Kubik woke up from surgery, the first person she saw was a nurse who had worked with her when she was a resident. And the first thing she asked was, "What time is it?"

When she learned that it was 6:30, she was relieved — judging by the length of the surgery, she realized that Dr. Edwards had been able to get all the cancer. And she went back to sleep.

Later, she would learn that the surgery had removed her uterus, ovaries, appendix, spleen, gall bladder, and portions of her liver, colon, omentum — a fatty apron — and peritoneum, or lining of the abdomen. She would spend 10 days recovering in the hospital where she had trained.

A month later, a laparoscopy showed no cancer cells. Dr. Edwards put a port in her abdomen and subclavian vein, and Dr. Kubik began 18 weeks of intravenous and intraperitoneal chemotherapy at UPMC-Passavant, a community hospital that uses a team-based approach to cancer treatment. The availability of such a treatment at a community hospital is unusual, Dr. Edwards notes; typically, it would only be available at a larger facility.

By Halloween, her ports were removed, and her tumor marker has been normal ever since.

"She's in about the best prognostic group you can be in," says Dr. Edwards, adding that the lack of recurrence is also a positive sign. "She was really quite the trooper."

A STRANGER'S GIFT

Dr. Kubik's treatment via combination intravenous/intraperitoneal chemo was part of a protocol that Dr. Edwards has been researching and promoting both locally and nationally for about 20 years and continues to study. Though not yet universally accepted, three clinical trials have demonstrated its effectiveness compared to standard therapy, Dr. Edwards notes.

"It's a little bit more rigorous to undergo, but Carolyn was game for it and really flew through it," he says.

Among the women who contributed to the earlier clinical trials was Darcel Fahy, who was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer in 2010 when she was just 25. She lived another 7 ½ years, beating the low odds against a five-year survival rate for patients with her diagnosis. Throughout that time, she dedicated herself to two goals: contributing her body to the research that advances treatment of ovarian cancer, and living her life to the fullest.

She accomplished both.



Today, Dr. Kubik — who served as the division director of reproductive endocrinology at Magee from 1995-2000 — is back to work in her practice and living with a new appreciation for life.

"It was really important to me to be strong for my staff and for them to see: I was not going to let [cancer] beat me down. I was not going to let it stop my career. I just wasn't letting it happen," Dr. Kubik said. "I also think it's important for patients who are anticipating going through this that you can't let it take over your life. You've got to take control of it and show it who's boss."

She sent Dr. Edwards a letter titled "The Ten Best Things About Chemotherapy," which he framed and hung in his office. In it, she expresses a new appreciation for the sunrise, for her family, and for the people who supported her, adding that her favorite quote is: It isn't about living or dying. It's about living until you die.

"I'm grateful for Dr. Edwards, for his team, for everybody," Dr. Kubik said. "But the people I'm most grateful to are the women who went through those clinical trials before me, who allowed me the benefit of having chemotherapy that is allowing me to live an enjoyable life. So that's who I'm most grateful to, and that's who I'm living for."



Darcel Fahy, who contributed to clinical trials in ovarian cancer prior to her death in 2017 (pictured here alone and with her mother).



“I’d undergone biopsies in the past, so I wasn’t too concerned. Everything had always turned out fine before.”

-Kathy Kulka, Breast Cancer Survivor

A Career Committed to Research — and Life-Long Friendship — Guide Cancer Patient’s Success

by Courtney McCrimmon

Over the last 35 years, Kathy Kulka has dedicated her career to medical research. She began by working in a laboratory that concentrated on understanding the pathology behind HIV/AIDS — today, she is the lab manager for Dr. Charles Rinaldo’s HIV lab at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health in the department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology. She oversees the daily operations and conducts experiments in a busy HIV research lab.

“Laboratory research helps people, even if the route from lab to the public isn’t always direct,” Kulka said. “I’ve remained in this career because I’ve been able to see how research develops and makes an impact over time.”

While she understands the importance of health research, like so many women, Kathy’s days were jam-packed. When she turned 40, her cousin and best friend, Denise Wickline, knew Kathy wouldn’t schedule her first mammogram on her own, so she started scheduling their screenings together.

“Kathy and I grew up across the street from one another. I’ve known her all my life, and I didn’t think she’d prioritize her mammogram, so I thought we could team up. We started going together every February,” Wickline said.

Thirteen years into routine screening, when she was 53 years old, Kulka received a call. Her mammogram showed a discrepancy, and she needed to undergo a breast biopsy.

“I’d undergone biopsies a couple of times in the past, so I wasn’t too concerned,” Kulka said. “Everything had always turned out fine before.”

This time, though, was different. Kathy had stage 2 breast cancer.

“I wasn’t so much scared as I was overwhelmed,” said Kulka. “I figured I would either come out of this okay, or I’d be reunited with my mom and dad. But I knew I couldn’t do this on my own.”

Denise stepped in. As a long-time employee of Magee-Womens Research Institute & Foundation, she understood the important role support people play during cancer treatment and recovery. She attended all of Kathy’s appointments, including the very first one with Dr. Shannon Puhalla, MD, an oncologist with UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital.

“Denise asked all the questions I didn’t know to ask,” Kathy said. “I was still absorbing my situation.”

At the time of Kathy’s diagnosis, Dr. Puhalla was overseeing a clinical trial studying whether a CDK 4/6 inhibitor called Palbociclib when combined with an aromatase inhibitor could be an effective pre-surgery treatment for shrinking breast cancer tumors.

“Kathy had estrogen receptor positive breast cancer initially, and at the time Magee had a clinical trial exploring Palbociclib in lieu of chemotherapy to reduce tumor size,” said Dr. Puhalla. “Because chemotherapy was the current standard of care for this treatment plan, Kathy had to be comfortable if she was randomized to a different option. Her tumors were slow-growing, and our Magee team was comfortable with her participation in the trial.”

“I understand how important clinical trial research is,” Kulka said. “I knew that I had the best possible doctors at Magee, so of course I agreed.”

The goal of the clinical trial was to see if this aromatase inhibitor could shrink breast cancer tumors better than endocrine therapy alone. The results of the trial have been published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* showed that as a whole, tumors did not shrink more, but the growth rate of the cancers stopped more.

“Kathy’s tumor didn’t shrink as well as we had hoped with this treatment,” Dr. Puhalla said. “We had a chance to study her cancer in more detail, which led us to learn that her tumor was more weakly estrogen positive at the time of surgery. Thanks to her participation, we learned something new about Palbociclib.”

Kathy’s contribution to research didn’t stop there. She also agreed to donate her tumor tissue to Magee-Womens Research Institute so researchers could study her disease more fully.

“Kathy participated in every way she could to help us better understand her breast cancer. When patients participate in clinical trials, they are directly contributing to research that improves outcomes — I can’t emphasize enough how critical this participation can be,” said Dr. Puhalla.

Today, Kathy is four years cancer-free. She credits her team at Magee, which includes surgeon Dr. Priscilla McAuliffe and Dr. Puhalla, and the support of her best friend, Denise, with getting through treatment as well as she did.

“Sometimes, I run into people on the street, and they ask me how I’m doing in this very concerned tone, and I forget, for a minute, that I had cancer and that’s what they are asking about. I feel incredibly blessed to be where I am today.”



THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU:

How COVID-19 Accelerated Telemedicine in Magee's Prenatal Care

by Niki Kapsambelis



As the mother of two small children, when Molly Knorr found out that telemedicine appointments were an option for her current pregnancy, she jumped at the opportunity to check in with her provider without the added challenge of finding a babysitter.

“I was on board from the get-go,” says Knorr, whose third child was born Sept. 9. “Overall, I think it’s a really positive thing, particularly for parents who have children.”

But in early spring, when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted widespread stay-at-home orders around the country, thousands of expectant mothers began to follow suit. At UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, the groundwork that staff had already laid for virtual visits proved invaluable for a rapid expansion of appointments to keep both providers and patients safe while simultaneously ensuring continuity of care.

“The scale and pace at which we did that was fairly ambitious; but within a week to 10 days, we were able to go from practices never having done this at all to really scaling up,” says Dr. Hyagriv Simhan, MD, MSCR, director of clinical innovation for the Women’s Health Service Line and executive vice chair for obstetrics.

Telemedicine is nothing new at Magee, having originated as a pilot project in the department about seven years ago as a consulting service to remote locations. Other tools include MyHealthyPregnancy, an app and digital engagement platform; ConnectedCare, which monitors women with postpartum hypertension and gestational diabetes remotely; and telelactation service to provide breastfeeding guidance. The hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit used telemedicine to consult with other hospital nurseries.

ANATOMY OF A TRANSITION

In late 2019, an innovation grant from The Beckwith Institute funded a pilot program to allow a few practices in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology to mix video visits in with traditional face-to-face appointments — which allowed patients like Molly Knorr the chance to sign up early. To encourage participation, Magee scheduled all new patients for a video visit unless they opted out, says Beth Quinn, a director of operations for the Women’s Health Service Line. It was an instant success.

“Patients really liked it,” Quinn says. “They thought it was a great way to engage, plus they didn’t have to drive to the city, pay for parking, or take time off from work.”

A nurse would call patients in advance of the first virtual appointment to make sure the patient was comfortable using the technology and that everything worked. Patients received blood pressure monitors and learned how to use them so their providers could supervise their health remotely.

But the pilot quickly expanded amid the pandemic.



“When COVID happened, we had this really big impetus. Prenatal care obviously needs to continue, but we wanted to keep patients and providers safe,” explains Dr. Simhan. “We used this technology to scale up prenatal visits and patient care across the entire department, rather than these couple of practices.”

For the Magee team, the effort was nothing short of herculean.

“My team of nurses went from 40 calls a week to over a thousand, basically overnight,” recalls Quinn, adding that the team expanded to accommodate the increased volume and rose to the occasion, helping patients understand what to expect in the virtual visit.

“It was very stressful for those few weeks for the staff, but they were able to manage it,” she adds. “Patients were usually very accepting and loved the call.”

Knorr used a combination of in-person and telemedicine visits for the duration of her pregnancy, delivering a healthy baby girl, Goldie Rosalyn, on Sept. 9. Her first postpartum visit was via telemedicine, and she planned to visit her doctor in person at the six-week postpartum mark.

“For me, it was absolutely perfect. I wouldn’t have changed it,” she says.

WORRISOME SYMPTOMS CAUGHT EARLY

For first-time mother Katie Love, telemedicine may have been a lifesaver. In April 2020, in the 32nd week of her pregnancy, her doctor’s office gave her a blood pressure cuff. During her first virtual visit, Katie mentioned that she was experiencing increased swelling in her face and ankles. Suddenly, she couldn’t fit into her shoes, and her fingers were completely numb. The doctor asked her to check her blood pressure while they were talking.



Throughout her pregnancy, Katie’s systolic pressure averaged 115; during the telemedicine check, it shot to 160.

“I don’t want to alarm you, but I think we need to end this visit, and you need to come get checked in,” she recalls her doctor saying. She also told Katie to pack a bag.

At Magee, Katie was diagnosed with preeclampsia, a potentially life-threatening condition characterized by high blood pressure in pregnancy. After determining that it was safe for her to return home, Magee staff continued to regularly monitor her blood pressure and the baby’s condition via ultrasound.

Each day, Katie received a link via text that reminded her to check her blood pressure. When she did, she entered the number and her heart rate; if it was high, she got a call from Magee to check on her.

Baby Adley was born at 36 weeks and spent a week in the neonatal intensive care unit before going home. Magee staff continued to monitor Katie’s blood pressure via telemedicine, and within a week of Adley’s birth, they lowered her medication. Katie appreciated being able to stay home with her daughter, and she credits telemedicine with quickly identifying a serious problem.

“I could have gone for weeks with this life-threatening complication if I had not had the blood pressure cuff and a telemedicine visit,” she says.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

An initial shipment of 1,000 blood pressure cuffs arrived at the hospital, and doctors, division administrators, even family members of the staff – including Quinn’s son – pitched in to get them to patients for remote monitoring. Dr. Halina Zyczynski, an investigator with Magee-Womens Research Institute and medical director of its new Erie location, delivered a batch two hours north to that city. When 5,000 more cuffs arrived, the process started all over again.

For providers, the transition turned out to be much smoother than expected. Working under the same pandemic constraints as their patients, they appreciated the added safety of practicing remotely, and they are also able to take more time with each appointment and not have the added pressure of other patients who are waiting in another examining room.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is now allowing billing codes to cover telemedicine, and indications suggest that this practice will continue, says Quinn. To date, more than 2,000 patients have used telemedicine visits as part of their prenatal care.

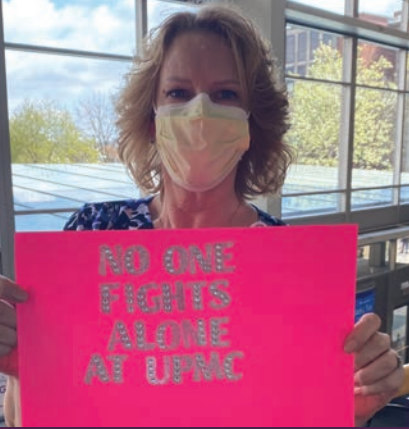
For the UPMC health care system, the next step in telemedicine will be Hatch, an initiative led by Dr. Simhan along with Quinn; Dr. Glenn Updike, medical director for clinical informatics for the Women’s Health Service Line as well as MyUPMC; and Jenn Chaney, a director of operations for the Women’s Health Service Line. One of the initiative’s goals is to accelerate advances in virtual care.



“The notion of how providers do outpatient care is fundamentally changed by a technology like this,” says Dr. Simhan. “I think we may get to a point in care where we have virtualists — people who provide care remotely by using technology, similar to the evolution of the hospitalist’s role.”

Quinn agrees that telemedicine is here to stay. “COVID is not going away for the foreseeable future, and has forever changed the way we practice health care,” she says. “When change is thrust upon you, it becomes easier to embrace.”





UPMC Highlight:

Pivoting During The COVID-19 Pandemic: UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital Leadership in Action

By Niki Kapsambelis and Courtney McCrimmon

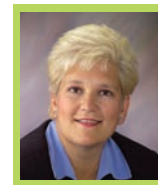


Patty Genday

On a typical day, the energy inside UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital is undeniable. Patients and their support people — as diverse in background as they are in the conditions bringing them to Magee — pass time in the waiting areas, coffee shops, and the cafeteria. They come to Magee for joyful moments and scary ones, for routine checkups and for access to some of the country’s best specialists. They come to receive the best possible care, and they receive it.

The international COVID-19 pandemic, though, caused Magee to change in previously unimaginable ways. Its leadership team had to examine every aspect of the hospital, from furniture spacing in the lobby to changing food preparation and staffing in the cafeteria.

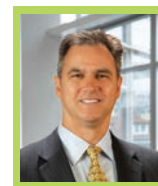
“As COVID-19 began to spread in the U.S., our team came together like I knew we would and could. With the world’s eyes on health care workers, we worked to make certain the hospital was safe for our patients and our staff, no matter how unpredictably the virus behaved.” said Maribeth McLaughlin, RN – Vice President of Operations.



Maribeth McLaughlin

The hospital had to ensure that it had enough protective equipment for the clinical staff and other employees, doling it out in the most responsible and optimal way possible. Related to that was the creation of screening practices for people entering and exiting the building, as well as managing visitation policies, says Dr. Richard Beigi, the hospital president.

The staff at Magee is, first and foremost, a family. For the hospital leadership team, it was critical not only that patient care be provided under the safest possible circumstances — it was paramount that hospital staff remained safe, too.



Dr. Richard Beigi

“For six weeks, much of the world around us shut down, and we did everything we could to empower our employees to do their work on their units, in their offices, and in some cases remotely. UPMC’s pay protection program helped us ensure everyone was paid, even if they weren’t doing their usual jobs in March and April.” said Patty Genday, MBA, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Care Services.

“Information and transparency are key. When employees know everything we’re doing to keep them and their patients safe, they can focus on what they do best — caring for our patients.” says Dr. Beigi.

Dr. Beigi began holding weekly town hall meetings to keep the Magee family informed without being overwhelmed.

Through these steps, the hospital was able to maintain its standard of care despite the logistical challenges the pandemic presented.

“Providing safe and excellent patient care has always been our top priority, and that never changed. We had to make difficult decisions, like limiting the number of visitors coming into the hospital in order to reduce the risk the virus posed. It was a sea change for us, and it happened in an instant.” said McLaughlin.

“Our leadership team, our physicians, every single member of our care team, from nurses to cooks and maintenance workers — it’s an incredible group.”

-Maribeth McLaughlin, RN

The Pittsburgh community rallied behind its doctors and nurses, providing support the best way it knew how – with food.

“We had so much food delivered. Local restaurants and volunteer groups coordinated drop-offs — it was overwhelming how generous the whole community was in giving back to our essential workers.” Genday said.

From drive-by baby showers for women hospitalized with high-risk pregnancies to pop-up piano concerts in the hospital lobby, Magee never lost its sense of community throughout the pandemic.

For now, strict COVID procedures remain in place, with temperature checks, self-screenings, and a reduction in the number of visitors allowed. Everyone looks forward to the return of operating closer to normal, but for now, the ability to maintain the sense of community through technology and innovation is deeply appreciated.

“Our leadership team, our physicians, every single member of our care team, from nurses to cooks and maintenance workers — it’s an incredible group. The way this virus arrived and changed our work and our lives in a matter of days was a shock to the system, but our team’s response was just as I would have expected. The pandemic is far from over, but we’re equipped to handle this virus and keep delivering the care the region expects from UPMC Magee,” said McLaughlin.

ROCK THE FUTURE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH

Women Who Rock™ is fighting for women's health by partnering with Magee-Womens Research Institute and the most talented women in music.

Join us by visiting WomenWhoRock.info, and follow us on Facebook & Instagram [@OfficialWomenWhoRock](https://www.instagram.com/OfficialWomenWhoRock) for the latest news, events, merchandise, and more!





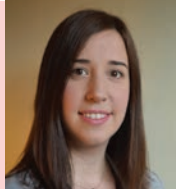
Megan Bradley, MD, received a 2-year, \$25,000 grant from the Pelvic Floor Disorders Foundation entitled "A Qualitative Study of Postmenopausal Women's Decision-making and Knowledge Gaps Surrounding Bacteriuria."



Ronald Buckanovich, MD, Ph.D., and Anda Vlad, MD, Ph.D., received a 5-year, \$2.2 million R01 grant from the NIH-NCI, entitled "ALDH Inhibition as Modulator of Tumor Immunobiology."



Catherine Chappell, MD, MS M.Sci., received a 2-year, \$466,000 R21 grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development entitled "A Phase 1 PK and Safety Study of Velpatasvir/Sofosbuvir for Chronic Hepatitis C Infection in Pregnant Women."



Christina Quesda Candela, a post-doctoral student, received a 2-year, \$200,000 grant from the Buck Institute, entitled "Proteasomal Targets Driving Meiotic Failure During Reproductive Aging."



Miguel Brieno-Enriquez, Ph.D., received a 1-year, \$11,000 grant from Ferring Pharmaceutical entitled "Effects of COVID-19 on Human Spermatogenesis."



Liz Krans, MD, and Marian Jarlenski, MPH, Ph.D., received a 5-year, \$3 million R01 grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse, entitled "Project STEPuP: A Prenatal Provider Education and Training Program to Improve Medication-assisted Treatment Use During Pregnancy and Maternal and Child Health Outcomes."



Robert Powers, Ph.D., received a 2-year, \$247,000 grant from the American Heart Association, entitled "The Effects of Perinatal Stress-Related Mood Disorders on Cardiovascular Health."



Judy Yanowitz, Ph.D., received a \$10,000 undergraduate student admirative supplement from the National Institute for General Medicine Sciences for her grant "Characterization of a Meiotic Crossover Surveillance System."

**MAGEE-
WOMENS
SUMMIT**

SAVE THE DATE

RE-IMAGINE THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

Please Join Us for a Premiere International Summit in Women's Health

The 2021 Magee-Womens Summit will convene scientific and clinical innovators, virtually and in person, to discuss transformative women's health and reproductive biology in the 21st century. The 2021 Summit themes are Healthy Beginnings, Shaping Metabolism, and Healthy Mind Through Transition. The centerpiece of the Summit will be the award of the Magee Prize, a \$1 million award for collaborative and transformative research within women's health and reproductive sciences.

WHO:

Scientists, clinicians, hospital administrators, trainees, industry experts, policymakers, funders, and health advocates

WHY:

To exchange information and ideas intended to focus on women's health research as a scientific priority across multiple disciplines.

WHEN:

May 26th and 27th, 2021

WHERE:

In person, at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA, and virtually, with full Summit program access.

For the most up-to-date information on the Magee-Womens Summit, including any changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit www.mageesummit.org.

Pandemic or Not, Savor Pittsburgh Tradition of Giving Continues

By any measure, 2020 has been a year that tested the flex of every corner in our culture. Organizers of Savor Pittsburgh — one of the city’s most delicious and widely anticipated events — were looking forward to two milestones: its 15th anniversary and its ninth year with Magee-Womens Research Institute & Foundation as its charity benefactor.

But as the COVID-19 pandemic began to enter western Pennsylvania, the Savor Pittsburgh planning team recognized the need to find new options for continuing the event’s momentum while raising critical dollars for women’s health research.

The region’s restaurants and event planning partners suffered through the pandemic, and many were forced to close their doors.

“It quickly became clear that we would not be able to safely host Savor Pittsburgh’s culinary competition, so we began creating new concepts and partnerships in the spirit of the event,” says organizer Christina Dickerson, founder and president of Dickerson Creative Communication.

From handmade pasta to meal deliveries to locally crafted wines, the partners responded; many had personal ties to Magee, which added extra motivation to their generosity.

Bleu Box Pittsburgh, a gourmet meal delivery service, donated \$25 for each subscription purchased; later in the summer, Bleu Box owners Kyle Vanderkemp and Kristen Tomkosky welcomed their baby son, Tinsley, at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital.

Similarly, Forma Pasta, a Pittsburgh-based company offering subscriptions for handmade pasta delivery, donates \$5 for every new monthly subscription to Magee, as well as 15 percent of all sales during their storefront’s opening weekend in October.

Owner Becca Romagnoli, former chef for the Vandal restaurant, viewed the partnership as a good way of both promoting her fledgling business and giving back to the community. She learned about MWRIF through Dickerson: “Meeting her, and seeing how special this organization is to her, made me think we could build this relationship,” Romagnoli says.

Liokareas Oils, a Pittsburgh-based company that sells gourmet olive oils and related products, promotes Magee research by donating 10 percent of sales from customers using the code SAVOR at checkout.

“Magee is in our backyard, but they provide research nationally. So we’re honored to be a part of them,” says founding partner Maria Dudek.

Pittsburgh Winery donates a portion of the sale of custom-labeled wines to Magee, and local artist Ashley Hodder created labels for two of them — a white blend and a petite sirah. Hodder gave birth to two preemies at Magee, and she expressed gratitude for her experiences there.

“I felt like Magee did a wonderful job of taking us through that whole process,” she says. “They gave us so much support, and help, and education ... they made it bearable.”

For Jim Ginocchi, founder and president of Coyote Outdoor Living, his Magee story began 19 years ago with the birth of his older daughter, Mia, who was six weeks early.



photos: Jessica Iacullo

“They always seem to be on the forefront of innovative technology to keep our kids and mothers safe. So how could you not support that?”

-JIM GINOCCHI

Today, his company offers a line of affordable luxury grills and appliances for outdoor living, growing from a small establishment to appearing in more than 1,000 dealers on three continents.

“I always looked for a way of giving back to the women and children in the community,” says Ginocchi, whose younger daughter, Giovanna, also was born at Magee.

In addition to providing masks for restaurant workers at the beginning of the pandemic, Coyote Outdoor Living also donated a grill worth nearly \$3,000 as part of a giveaway in July that benefited MWRIF; Ginocchi was part of a segment of KDKA-TV’s “Pittsburgh Today Live” at his home.

Coyote Outdoor Living is also sponsoring Seasoned and Savory, a cookbook featuring recipes from Pittsburgh-based culinary teams and restaurants as well as national celebrity chefs and influencers.

“The cookbook originally began as a chance to feature the incredible talent of the Pittsburgh culinary community, but the excitement and reach for the concept continued to grow,” says Dickerson, whose company is creating the cookbook. “We are excited to showcase the culinary talent of our local community, our culinary friends scattered throughout the country, and most importantly, raise dollars for women’s health research.”

All proceeds from the cookbook, which went on sale via Amazon Nov. 30, benefit MWRIF. It is also available on the MWRIF website at <https://mageewomens.org/giveandgiveback>.

“The work that they do is the never-ending battle,” Ginocchi says. “They always seem to be on the forefront of innovative technology to keep our kids and mothers safe. So how could you not support that?”



FORMA PASTA

Unique, seasonally changing, artisan, hand crafted pasta offered through a monthly subscription that includes custom recipe cards. Available for pickup or delivery (for a small additional fee). Use “SAVOR” as the promo code when purchasing a Forma Pasta Subscription. For every month purchased, Forma Pasta will donate \$5 to MWRIF. mageewomens.org/formapasta



LIOKAREAS OLIVE OILS

Liokareas has been pressing the best Greek Olive Oil you can actually get your taste buds on for more than five generations. 10% of proceeds from sales of Liokareas Olive Oils will benefit MWRIF and the science that creates healthier women, infants, and communities. mageewomens.org/liokareas



WINES FOR WOMEN COLLECTION

For every bottle purchased from Pittsburgh Winery’s Wines for Women series featuring Women Who Rock and Savor Pittsburgh, \$5 will be donated to MWRIF. Selections include Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot and more. Curbside pickup, nationwide shipping and free local delivery (6+ bottles) available. mageewomens.org/winesforwomen



From Virtual Concerts to the #MomsRockChallenge, Women Who Rock Finds New Ways to Support MWRI

By Courtney McCrimmon

When asked what music she's been listening to since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Brianne Blazosky pauses. It's definitely putting the Events and Account Manager of Women Who Rock (WWR) on the spot.

"With working from home, I needed something that wasn't too distracting. So at least while working, I've been listening to a lot of light, female country music," she said. "Melinda, however, has been creating new music."

Melinda Colaizzi laughs. "That's true, I have." In addition to being the founder of WWR, an organization dedicated to championing women and women's health awareness, Colaizzi is a musician in her own right, a working singer-songwriter who is passionate about rectifying disparities in the music industry and disparities in health care.

Together, the two women run WWR, and over the last nine months they've been busier than ever. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to cancel the annual WWR concert, which is held every May and benefits women's health research at Magee-Womens Research Institute (MWRI). Determined not to lose the momentum they've built over the years, they pivoted and created the virtual #MomsRockChallenge. Over the month of May, across social media platforms, individuals were asked to show their love, gratitude, and support for a mom or special woman in their life by dedicating a song to them on social media and donating to MWRI.

The challenge engaged prominent musicians, researchers, local Pittsburgh celebrities, and people from around the country.

"So many of us couldn't be with our moms on Mother's Day. Other people lost their moms, or have women they wanted to pay tribute to. It was such a fun and interactive campaign during an otherwise difficult time," said Colaizzi.

The two women have continued to adapt to the current, virtual landscape. During the month of October, they launched

a virtual concert series headlined by singer/songwriter Rita Wilson and featuring a line up including musicians Orianthi, Emily Wolfe, and Celisse. Held every Wednesday through the month of October, the concerts benefitted breast cancer research at MWRI. You can still watch these virtual concerts by visiting Gibson TV on YouTube.

"The more we work with MWRI, the closer we grow to the organization," said Colaizzi. "It's mind-blowing, the work the researchers do on a daily basis, across such a broad spectrum of women's health issues."

"Music is at the heart of so many people's lives," said Blazosky. "And everyone is touched in some way by women's health issues. We get to bring those elements together for a greater good — it's incredibly exciting."

While the lack of live concerts and, for Colaizzi, the ability to perform live, has been a struggle for both women, they also credit the unexpected downtime with a surge in their creativity.

"I was able to take a step back, and think about the larger picture for Women Who Rock," said Colaizzi. "We rebranded and forged new partnerships, like the one we have now with Gibson Guitars. That said, musicians thrive on live performances. We will be thrilled when we can return to the stage."



Due to the international COVID-19 pandemic, some of these dates are subject to change. Please visit <https://mageewomens.org/events> for the most current event schedule.

MARCH 11

THE MAGEE-WOMENS TELETHON: STORIES OF HOPE

Where: KDKA Studio - Tune in to KDKA Television from 4 - 8 p.m.

Throughout this four-hour telethon, viewers will witness the incredible impact of MWRIF. Now, more than ever, healthcare professionals and scientists are considered heroes. They give us hope. Science gives us hope. The telethon will highlight women's and infants' health research at MWRIF, where scientists and clinicians are making discoveries across a woman's entire lifespan.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Christina Dickerson at 412-657-3483 or christina@dickersoncreative.com. For details, go to <http://mageewomens.org/events>.

MARCH 21

MORRIS AND CAROLYN BARKON LECTURESHIP IN GYNECOLOGICAL ONCOLOGY SURVIVORSHIP

Where: Virtual

Made possible by Dr. Frank Lieberman and Dr. Beverly Barkon

We welcome Dr. Stanley Rockson, Director, Center for Lymphatic and Venous Disorders at Stanford University School of Medicine, who will discuss new and emerging treatments for patients with lymphatic disease. All oncologists, physical therapists and nurses, as well as survivors of all cancers are invited to attend.

RSVP by March 17 to Denise Wickline at 412-641-8950 or csdemail@upmc.edu. For details, go to <http://mageewomens.org/events>.

MAY 26-27

MAGEE-WOMENS SUMMIT

The Magee-Womens Summit and its \$1 million Magee Prize are premier forums for scientific exchange designed to harness the imagination and prowess of scientists from both developed and developing nations to enhance the health and wellness of communities worldwide.

For sponsorship opportunities for this international summit, contact Nicole Oshurak at oshurakn@mwri.magee.edu. For details, go to <https://mageesummit.org>.

JUNE 13

32ND ANNUAL MAGEE-WOMENS LIVEWELL SURVIVORSHIP BREAKFAST CELEBRATION

Where: The Priory, Pittsburgh, PA

Join us for a delightful breakfast, keynote speaker, raffle, and candle lighting ceremony to celebrate survivorship.

For sponsorship opportunities, call Denise Wickline at 412-641-8911 or wickdc@mwri.magee.edu. RSVP by June 1 by calling 412-641-8950 or emailing csdemail@upmc.edu. For details, go to <http://mageewomens.org/events>.

JUNE 20-21

14TH ANNUAL NOAH ANGELICI MEMORIAL GOLF EVENT

Where: Shepherd's Rock Golf Course at Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, Farmington, PA

Full day of golf at the beautiful Shepherd's Rock Golf Course. Proceeds benefit the Center for Advanced Fetal Intervention at Magee.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Jane Klimchak at (724) 350-2940. For details, go to <http://noahshouseofhope.com>.

JUNE 27

18TH ANNUAL KIDS AND CRITTERS NICU REUNION

Where: Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

All Magee and Children's Hospital NICU graduates and their families are invited to attend. Proceeds benefit the NICU family initiatives at Magee.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Denise Wickline at 412-641-8911 or wickdc@mwri.magee.edu. For details, go to <http://bidpal.net/2021nicureunion>.

TO BE ANNOUNCED IN 2021

3RD ANNUAL PITTSBURGH PENGUINS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION "CAST FOR A CURE"

Where: HomeWaters Club, Spruce Creek, PA

Enjoy two days of relaxing fly fishing as you are teamed up with Pittsburgh Penguins Alumni. Proceeds benefit metastatic breast cancer research through the Nicole Meloche Breast Cancer Research fund at Magee-Womens Research Institute.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Denise Wickline at 412-641-8911 or wickdc@mwri.magee.edu. For details, go to <http://mageewomens.org/events>.

AUGUST 11-12

11TH ANNUAL HOME DEPOT CLAYS FOR A CURE

Where: Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Delmont, PA

Team up and enjoy a day of clay shooting competition. Proceeds benefit A Glimmer of Hope Foundation in support of premenopausal breast cancer patient care and research at Magee.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Diana Napper 800-454-6746. For details, go to <http://symbolofthecure.com>.

SEPTEMBER 2

15TH ANNUAL SAVOR PITTSBURGH: A CELEBRATION OF CUISINE

Where: NOVA Place, Pittsburgh Northside

Celebrating its 15th year, Savor Pittsburgh is a fundraising event filled with appealing appetizers, mouth-watering entrees, decadent desserts, and signature cocktails. This event combines food, fun, and philanthropy for a delightful evening of entertainment you won't want to miss!

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Christina Dickerson at 412-657-3483 or christina@dickersoncreative.com. For details go to <http://savorpgh.com>.

SEPTEMBER 16-17

10TH ANNUAL WCRC FLY FISHING CLASSIC

Where: HomeWaters Club, Spruce Creek, PA

Enjoy two-days of fly fishing competition at the amazing HomeWaters Club. Proceeds benefit the Women's Cancer Research Center's efforts to reduce the incidence and death from women's cancers.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Denise Wickline at 412-641-8911 or wickdc@mwri.magee.edu. For details, go to <http://mageewomens.org/events>.


OCTOBER 16, 2021

4TH ANNUAL WOMEN WHO ROCK CONCERT

Where: Stage AE

Women who Rock connects all women through the power of music and helps to educate, support, and fund women-centric health research and music endeavors. We "Rock the Future of Women's Health" and shine a spotlight on women in music. Proceeds benefit women's health research at Magee-Womens Research Institute.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Melinda Colaizzi at 412-576-7776 or melinda@pitchconsult.com. For details, go to <http://womenwhorock.info>.



THREE WAYS
TO GIVE.
SO MANY LIVES
TO TOUCH.

MAGEE LEGACY SOCIETY

Making a planned gift to Magee-Womens Research Institute & Foundation, whether for research, patient care or education, is easy. This gift costs you nothing today and creates a meaningful legacy that touches the lives of so many others in the future.

BEQUEST

Bequests are by far the most popular planned giving option. Remember Magee through your will.

Please contact us for the appropriate wording.

BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

Name Magee as a beneficiary as part of your:

- IRAs and retirement plans
- Life insurance policies
- Donor advised funds
- Commercial annuities

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES

Securities and mutual funds that have increased in value and been held for more than one year are popular assets to use when making a gift to MWRIF. Making a gift of appreciated securities or mutual funds offers you great tax advantages while supporting life-changing research.

There are many other gift options to choose to support Magee. For more information about making a meaningful gift, please contact Janice Devine, Executive Director, Development at devineja@mwri.magee.edu or 412.641.8973.