‘At the Forefront’
Kovler Leadership Board hosts first-ever interactive diabetes laboratory tour

PLUS:
✓ Celebrating Five Years
✓ Announcing Kovler for Kids
✓ American Diabetes Month

University of Chicago Medical Center President Sharon O’Keefe, RN, MSN, with Kovler Leadership Board member Warner Saunders
As we approach the holiday season and reach the milestone of our five-year anniversary, we have much to celebrate. With the enormous support of our University of Chicago leadership, our faculty and generous donors, and the talent and dedication of our team, Kovler has established a reputation as a premier destination for diabetes care as well as continuing its reputation for world-class scientific research.

One of our visions was to bring together a collection of physicians, nurses, educators, nutritionists, psychologists, podiatrists, and other key staff in a single team to facilitate patient care, follow up and communication. The standard of care at Kovler is to ensure that we take care of individuals – from infants to adults – all in one place. We are very pleased with the reception our clinical programs have received, including Kovler for Kids, InTransit, telemedicine programs for pumps and sensors, and our ability to provide psychological support and assessment for patients and families right on site.

Looking toward the next five years, Kovler will build on its body of knowledge and expertise with a number of exciting and innovative new projects:

- **Sleep, Obesity and Diabetes**: The connection between sleep disturbance, obesity and diabetes is a very important emerging area of clinical research, and this nexus may be an important contributor to the epidemics of obesity and diabetes. Several of our faculty are world leaders in this area, highlighted by a significant new NIH grant awarded to Drs. David Ehrmann and Eve Van Cauter, Director of the Sleep, Chronobiology and Neuroendocrinology Research Laboratory. Other faculty working in this broad area of sleep and metabolism include Drs. Plamen Penev, Matthew Brady, Ronald Cohen, Nanduri Prabhakar, and David Gozal, Chairman and Physician in Chief of Pediatrics at Comer Children's Hospital. These faculty have made the University of Chicago an international center for sleep research and will continue to illuminate this field for years to come.

- **The Beta Cell**: Several key faculty members have research programs that focus on the beta cell and its survival and development. This is a very large group with sage intellectual leadership provided by Dr. Donald Steiner and Dean Kenneth Polonsky, MD. I’d like to highlight our Dr. Christopher Rhodes, who is adding to his impressive list of accomplishments in how the beta cell works by teaming up with Dr. Eugene Chang in our GI section to understand the role of intestinal microorganisms in obesity and diabetes. Dr. Sasha Chervonsky, Chair of the Committee on Immunology, is developing exciting new insights into the gut microflora regulating autoimmunity in diabetes.

I look forward to sharing our next accomplishments for many years to come; we are proud of our history and energized by our work. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

Stay well!

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**A Message from Dr. Philipson**

**Diabetes and Genetics**: Our outstanding diabetes genetics team - led by Drs. Graeme Bell and Nancy Cox; our Dean, Dr. Kenneth Polonsky; with Drs. Siri Atma Greeley and Rochelle Naylor and myself - is already known as a national resource for monogenic diabetes. Not only are we helping patients all over the world with these forms of diabetes, the insights from these important genes help us to better understand the more common types of diabetes.

**Health Care on the South Side**: The University’s efforts in the Urban Health Initiative now includes a spectacular research effort for diabetes care in underserved communities headed by Dr. Marshall Chin and his colleagues. His efforts recently resulted in a new NIH grant entitled “Chicago Center for Diabetes Translation Research,” with more than $3 million in funding for the next five years.
More than 50 guests enjoyed an exclusive reception and interactive laboratory tour at Kovler Diabetes Center, hosted by the Kovler Leadership Board on October 5.

Guests included Leadership Board Members Sally Kovler, Khalid Alagel, Mary Jo Basler, Dirk Degennears, Jay Franke, Warner Saunders and Donald Steiner, MD; Sharon O’Keefe, RN, MSN, President of the University of Chicago Medical Center; Susan Mandell, Co-founder of Friends United, a Highland Park-based research foundation that supports Kovler and diabetes research initiatives; Margery Teller, Founder of Friends for the Cure; Walgreens representative Denise Scarpelli, PharmD, Market Pharmacy Director, Chicago Market; and many other friends and benefactors.

After a warm welcome from Kovler Leadership Board Chair Sally Kovler and Kovler Research Director Christopher Rhodes, PhD, guests received an overview of some of Kovler’s most promising research initiatives. The highlight of the evening was the interactive tours of the laboratories, provided by PhD students who are part of the University of Chicago Committee on Molecular Metabolism and Nutrition.

The laboratory tour included four stations highlighting the work of Kovler’s researchers:

- Dr. Lou Philipson’s insight into insulin secretion
- Dr. Matthew Brady’s look into type 2 diabetes and obesity
- Dr. Graeme Bell, Dr. Lou Philipson and Dr. Siri Greeley’s insights in diabetes and genetics
- Dr. Christopher Rhodes’ look at the future of stem cells

These four stations represented Kovler’s cross-disciplinary environment, in which investigators in multiple fields work together to create translational “bench-to-bedside” research.

The evening concluded with a dynamic question-and-answer session with researchers and PhD students. The event was an important way to showcase Kovler’s innovative research, and to provide friends, benefactors and other faculty with an opportunity to see this amazing work behind the scenes. Kovler’s Leadership Board and executive team hope to make this an exciting annual event.

Peggy Hasenauer, MS, RN, Executive Director of Kovler Diabetes Center, recently met with the Illinois Diabetes Legislative Caucus for the first-ever Illinois Diabetes Summit. The group discussed its common goals, as well as steps that can be taken in Illinois to advocate for the needs of individuals with diabetes, as well as their families.

Attendees included friend and House Minority Leader Representative Tom Cross; Kate O’Connor Grubbs, CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI); Nicole Sisen, Director of Community Health Education for NKFI; State Representative Patti Bellock; Dr. Kris Bordeneuve, of Humana; Patrick Reedy, Executive Director of JDRF Illinois, and many other passionate individuals.

Kovler is a member of the Illinois Diabetes Policy Coalition (IDPC), an independent consortium of health care organizations who have joined together to advocate on behalf of people with diabetes and who suffer diabetes complications. The IDPC is a source for unbiased information on diabetes education and care and its mission is to engage in policy activities and support initiatives that:

- Reduce the burden of diabetes and are evidence-based
- Thoughtfully address the health disparity associated with diabetes
- Improve diabetes prevention methods and increase access to education and early detection.

“I was proud to be part of this meeting and look forward to hosting these legislators and IDPC members at the Kovler Diabetes Center’s first ‘World Diabetes Day’ lunch and press conference, on November 14,” Hasenauer said.

“The University of Chicago and Kovler Diabetes Center not only have the ability to care for individuals but we provide support throughout the state through our guidance and insight,” Hasenauer said.

“The future of our health and our ability to prevent and treat diabetes in Illinois depends on it.”

The Illinois Diabetes Policy Coalition can tell you about pending legislation in Illinois that could affect diabetes patients. To learn more, please call (312) 321-1500.
Today, Spencer M. is a healthy 12-year-old boy. He likes sports, games and gadgets, like anyone his age. But just last summer, he was rushed to the hospital with a blood glucose level of 776 mg/dL, compared to a normal range of 70 to 120 mg/dL for a child his age. “He was having migraines, so we took him to a neurologist,” said his mother, Jennifer. “But his uncle has diabetes, so I asked them to do a blood sugar test. When the results came back, the doctor said, ‘He absolutely has to go to the hospital right now.’”

While Spencer was treated at an emergency room in the Illinois suburbs, his parents called his uncle, as well as others they knew with diabetes. “After talking with our most trusted and knowledgeable friends, it became clear that the University of Chicago is where we needed to be,” said Spencer’s father, Patrick. Within a few hours, Comer Children’s Hospital was ready to take Spencer. “The transfer was amazingly smooth,” Jennifer said. “The nurses were so at ease with all of us, and I think they respected the emotional rollercoaster we were on.”

For Spencer, the experience was unsettling, but not completely a shock. He knew about diabetes because of his uncle and a family friend with the condition. “At first, it was a little frustrating, because I didn’t really understand what was going on,” the seventh-grader remembered. “But over time, I understood, and it got easier.”

At Comer, physicians gave the family a full medical report, and diabetes educators helped the family come up with a game plan. “The educators really brought it down to an understandable level for us,” Jennifer said. “And they included Spencer as much as possible. At times, he was just playing computer games, and they would say, ‘OK, Spencer! Quick quiz!’ And they would make it a game. He learned really fast. They would tell him, ‘You’re doing an awesome job.’”

Patrick said he was impressed by the level of preparedness. “Everybody knew exactly what role they were playing, and it was all very well thought out,” he said. “We got a diabetes backpack from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, full of materials we could take home. We also received a diabetes management book. The resources were very helpful.”

The physicians, nurses, staff and educators “had a knack with the kids,” Jennifer added. Spencer also made new friends at Comer in the activity room for teenagers, where he liked to play pool. At one point, he told his parents, “This isn’t a scary place. I kind of like it here. Everyone is so nice.”

The family went home armed with a glucometer, insulin, nutrition and exercise plan, reading material and the telephone numbers of endocrinologists and other staff. Spencer’s friends from school had a surprise waiting for him: a sign in his front yard listing hundreds of famous athletes who had diabetes. “The last name on it was, ‘Spencer M., famous lacrosse player.’ It was pretty awesome,” said Spencer, who plays football and lacrosse.

The family also hosted a ‘welcome home’ party where Spencer had a chance to explain diabetes to his friends. “At first, they were kind of freaked out by the glucometer and the lancet,” he said. “But now, it’s like nothing to them.”

Patrick has created a spreadsheet program in which Spencer enters his carbohydrate intake and blood sugar levels every evening. The family is far more knowledgeable about diabetes now, and they credit the staff at Kovler Diabetes Center and Comer Children’s Hospital.

“Everybody was extremely attentive,” Jennifer said. “They took a negative experience and turned it into something very positive.”

To learn more about Comer Children’s Hospital, please visit http://www.uchicagokidshospital.org/ or call 1-888-UCH-0200.
The University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center is excited and proud to announce the celebration of Kovler for Kids, a comprehensive, enhanced, signature program for infants, children and families offering diabetes care, education and support.

This enhanced diabetes program for children was developed by the Kovler team and showcases an amazing group of psychologists and therapists who work with children and families in the Kovler clinic every day – at no additional cost. Our staff members support children's emotional needs and help them identify how stress plays a role in diabetes care, not just for the child, but for the whole family. Kovler for Kids is focused on children under 12 and allows for children to “graduate” to Kovler’s InTransit program for teens and young adults. Families also receive a comprehensive “welcome packet” and a special list of resources and educational tools to help guide them on their journey with diabetes.

As always, children will have access to games, puzzles, quizzes and other activities that help teach them the “ins and outs” of diabetes, in a fun and challenging way. Kovler also offers special events throughout the year with prominent Chicagoans and athletes, such as Chicago Bears Quarterback Jay Cutler. These role models encourage children with diabetes to follow their dreams and manage their diabetes effectively. Kovler diabetes educators are trained to teach kids how to do this, using age-appropriate language and concepts. So that siblings don’t feel “left out,” our educators also reach out to them, teaching them about diabetes and how they can help their brother or sister to manage the disease.

Kovler Diabetes Center is here for families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with pediatric endocrinologists and diabetes educators who can answer questions. Please call Kovler at 773-702-2371 OR 800-989-6740.

Kovler for Kids Offers:

- Diabetes educators with special training to work with children
- Psychologists supporting children and families...at no extra cost
- Special educational events for children
- Sibling education initiatives
- Innovative approaches to ongoing education through play, technology

Announcing

KOVLER FOR KIDS

About 1 in every 400 children has diabetes.

Twins Take on Special Project for Kovler

It was an important time in the lives of 13-year-old Peyton and Shayle Arenson. The twins were about to spend several months preparing for their B’not Mitzvah, and they needed to select a public service project. Then their father, Gregg Arenson, was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in January 2011, and that sealed their decision.

“They chose to raise funds for the University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center,” said their proud father. “I have wonderful daughters who care enough about their father, and others, to try and make a difference.”

The girls learned much about diabetes in the process. “It was important to us,” Shayle said. “We wanted to support my dad, and other people with diabetes.”

“We found out that a few of our classmates had diabetes,” Peyton added. “They were happy that we took on the cause as well.”

After doing some research about diabetes, the girls visited Kovler and met Executive Director Peggy Hasenauer, MS, RN. Afterward, Peyton and Shayle wrote a letter to about 300 relatives and friends. The letter began:

“Approximately 26 million adults and children, or 8.3 percent of the American population, have diabetes. This number is not shrinking, in fact it has grown just under 10 percent in the last five years. Diabetes research and treatment are at the forefront of the Kovler Diabetes Center at the University of Chicago and we hope that you will join us in making a donation to help further their great work for the cause.”

They didn’t stop there. Peyton and Shayle volunteered to spend an afternoon staffing the Kovler booth during the annual American Diabetes Association Diabetes Expo, at Navy Pier. Later, the girls volunteered at Camp Confidence, a summer camp for children with diabetes.

During the bat mitzvah itself, in June, the girls spoke about their service project during their dvar Torah – the public address at the end of the service. “We talked about donating to the Kovler Diabetes Center,” Shayle said. “It’s important to help Kovler so they can continue to help people with diabetes, both those who can afford to pay and those who can’t.”

Gregg and Caron Arenson said their daughters have grown intellectually and personally through the project. “I think they are incredibly supportive, and far more educated about diabetes,” their mother said.

Peyton and Shayle help their father at home by asking their parents for sugar-free foods and healthy meals. Both active in school sports, they encourage their dad to keep exercising. “We want to get him to a weight where he doesn’t have diabetes,” Peyton said, making her father smile.

Arenson said his diagnosis was “like a whirlwind” but gave him the kick-start he needed to move back into a healthier lifestyle. After being diagnosed by his personal physician, he received a phone call from a friend: Sally Kovler, founder and president of the Kovler Leadership Board. She referred Arenson to Kovler Diabetes Center.

Sally and Jonathan Kovler were among those who attended Peyton and Shayle’s bat mitzvah ceremony.

Glad to have their father under top-class care, Peyton and Shayle noted that diabetes runs in their family, and they’ll need to be on guard for it in their own lives. “They know that type 2 diabetes comes around if you don’t take care of yourself,” Gregg Arenson said.

Peyton said after this special bat mitzvah project, she and her sister are far more knowledgeable about diabetes. “We plan on staying involved in the fight to end diabetes for a long time,” she said.

Kovler soon was receiving donations by mail. The girls also sold keychains bearing the Kovler Diabetes Center logo, with proceeds benefiting Kovler.

Warner Saunders Celebrates Birth of Grandchild

Kovler Diabetes Center congratulates Warner Saunders on the birth of his new grandson! Mr. Saunders is a longtime friend of Kovler and also a member of Kovler’s Leadership Board. His grandson, Braxton Saunders, was born in July. Kovler celebrates with the Saunders family and sends its best wishes to Braxton for a long, happy and healthy life!
When Susan McLaughlin’s son was 8 years old, he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, and her life changed forever.

“Parents don’t sleep well after that diagnosis, probably for years,” said McLaughlin, RN, BSN, CDE, a diabetes educator at Kovler. “You always have one ear out for a low blood sugar episode.”

Two years after her son’s condition was confirmed, McLaughlin – at the time, a critical care nurse – went back to school and earned her certification as a diabetes educator. Today, she helps outpatients at the University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center, as well as inpatients at the University of Chicago Medical Center and at Comer Children’s Hospital.

“Parents can be overwhelmed,” she said. “It can seem like their child’s diabetes just fell out of the sky. Parents ask questions like, ‘Is my son or daughter going to be OK, and can they live a normal life?’”

“Parents often need to ask a lot of questions. We’re sensitive to the newness of it all and the emotional needs of parents.”

Today, McLaughlin’s son is grown, healthy and about to enter college. But his diabetes influenced her work as a nurse. For McLaughlin, understanding and compassion are all part of a day’s work.

We’re sensitive to the newness of it all and the emotional needs of parents.”

With sensitivity, compassion and excellent training, McLaughlin offers information that can restore a sense of hope. She has extensive knowledge about medications and treatments, and works as part of the medical team to create an optimal individualized care plan during hospitalization, and when patients return as an outpatient.

Before each child or adult is discharged, McLaughlin makes sure they understand the prescribed medical plan and obtain the right prescriptions. They also are trained in glucometer use, insulin injection and a nutrition and exercise plan, developed in partnership with experienced dietitians. “We want them to be safe and confident at home,” McLaughlin said.

For adults and children leaving the hospitals, Kovler’s diabetes educators and/or endocrinologist are available 24 hours a day. When newly diagnosed children go home, their parents are encouraged to call every night to speak with a pediatric endocrinologist until they’re comfortable managing their child’s disease.

“We are very proactive with our kids,” McLaughlin said. “Parents often need to ask a lot of questions. We’re sensitive to the newness of it all and the emotional needs of parents.”

Extra Mile for Children, Adults—Especially During Hospital Stays

The Inside Team

Kovler is proud of its staff members who make it possible for us to do what we do for patients, every day. Here is a special “inside” look at the students who provide crucial support to administrators, researchers, physicians, nurses, educators and specialists.

Name: Jasmine Gregory, Diabetes Support Specialist
School: DePaul University
Major: English education
What I Like About My Job: The physicians, researchers, nurses and educators here are absolutely top-rate. They really care about the patients.
Career Goals: I’d like to be a high school English teacher.

Name: Jacky McCarthy, Student Administrative Support Specialist
School: University of Chicago
Major: Biology/History in Philosophy and the Social Sciences
What I Like About My Job: Peggy Hasenauer trusts us with a lot of freedom and responsibility, which really inspires us to do our best. I also work in the lab, and it’s an amazing opportunity to learn.
Career Goals: I want to be a doctor in immunology or internal medicine.

Name: Kevin Lanham, Web Content Management Specialist
School: Graduated from University of Chicago with a BA in psychology.
Kevin Lanham was the first student assistant at Kovler Diabetes Center.
What I Like About My Job: Because of my mom, who has diabetes, I really like to help diabetics patients.
Career Goals: I’m studying for a master’s degree in psychology and I hope to be a counselor.

Name: Elaine Naughton, Student Administrative Support Specialist
School: University of Chicago Major: History
What I Like About My Job: I gain experience in different fields, like research, statistics and the business strategy of running a nonprofit organization.
Career Goals: I want to go to law school eventually and maybe specialize in corporate law.

Name: Alyssa Skar, Student Administrative Support Specialist
School: University of Chicago Major: Biology/premedical
What I Like About My Job: I have relatives with diabetes, and I’m learning a lot about the disease. I’m hoping I can make a difference for many patients in the future.
Career Goals: I would like to be a general practitioner or internist, specializing in family medicine.
The ADA Lends a Hand to Latinos

Through a program called Por Tu Familia (For Your Family), the American Diabetes Association conducts a unique form of outreach to the Latino community nationwide, including Chicago’s estimated 1.7 million Latino residents.

“Por Tu Familia works on a number of levels,” said Martin Nava, Associate Director of Latino Initiatives for the American Diabetes Association. “It’s designed to engage with Latino-Americans in venues where they’re likely to be, and teach them how to take control of their health.”

Among other projects, the ADA sponsors Conferencia, an annual “mini-expo” in Cicero where Latinos can receive health screenings, attend workshops on diabetes and try samples of healthy food.

Diabetes Initiative in Little Village Neighborhood Inspires Physicians, Community Leaders

A University of Chicago Medical Center physician is taking special steps to help the Latino population in Chicago fight back against diabetes.

Little Village is a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood in Chicago that has a diabetes-related mortality rate higher than the national average and the average in Chicago. Arshiya Baig, MD, General Internist and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago, has established a unique program to involve local churches in educating Latino Americans about diabetes.

“Since the church has an important role in many Latino cultures and families, working with churches to address diabetes is one method of tailoring diabetes programs to this community,” Dr. Baig said.

With community members and two partner churches — St. Agnes of Bohemia and Our Lady of Tepeyac — she launched Picture Good Health/Imagínate una Buena Salud, a bilingual, eight-week educational program.

The curriculum uses an innovative technique called “photovoice” where participants receive disposable digital cameras to document their lives with diabetes. These photos are then used to guide classes in problem solving.

Participants also have access to exercise groups within the churches. The program also includes a patient navigator service that assists participants in finding a local primary care physician.

“We motivate our participants to live a healthy lifestyle and provide them with tools to do that in a fun, creative, and supportive atmosphere,” Dr. Baig said.

Louis H. Philipson, MD, PhD, Director of Kovler Diabetes Center, was a mentor to Dr. Baig. He noted that her work reaches a population that sometimes faces obstacles in receiving health care.

“In the Cicero/Berwyn area, there are more than 90,000 Latinos,” noted Lou Philipson, MD, PhD, Director of Kovler Diabetes Center and a member of the local and national boards of the ADA. “There’s a major Latino population there.”

“Many recent immigrants tend to lack formal education in their home country, and when they are here, they tend not to ask questions of their doctors,” Nava added. “We try to make them more comfortable about talking to their doctors. There’s no shame in not knowing information.”

Monica Peek, MD, General Internist and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago Medical Center, said the project holds great promise.

“Dr. Baig’s work uses innovative, culturally-tailored approaches to address a much-needed health issue in the Mexican-American community,” Peek said. “We’re excited about her work and its ability to improve the lives of people with diabetes here in Chicago, as well as serve as a model for others throughout the country.”

The program is currently being piloted at the two partner churches to assess its impact on diabetes control.

“Dr. Baig is doing important work to better understand the impact of diabetes in the community and to help devise ways to improve the lives of people with limited access,” he said.

In reality, much of diabetes care and management happens outside of the clinic, Dr. Baig noted. Additionally, an important aspect of the Latino culture is its emphasis on family and community. With this program, the participants can invite family members for a graduation party on the last day of class.

“The family gets to celebrate the participant’s achievements and see how much they have learned,” she said.

For more information on Picture Good Health, please contact the study team at 773-702-0770.
Kovler Expands Its Global Reach

Experts from Kovler Diabetes Center will travel to Dubai in December for the World Diabetes Congress, sponsored by the International Diabetes Federation. An estimated 15,000 diabetes experts from around the world will convene for a series of seminars and symposia on new diabetes research. The event is one of the world’s largest health-related congresses, featuring more than 1,000 speakers and attracting representatives from more than 160 countries.

Christopher Rhodes, PhD, Research Director of Kovler Diabetes Center, will co-chair the meeting, and Kovler diabetes educator Amy Hess Fischl, MS, RD, CDE, will represent Kovler Diabetes Center and the American Dietetic Association.

“I am excited to be attending the meeting,” Hess-Fischl said. “I plan to discuss diabetes treatment with other diabetes educators from around the world, and may meet with government officials from the United Arab Emirates regarding the collaboration with the University of Chicago. I’m also looking forward to bringing back new ideas.”

This is the first World Diabetes Congress to be organized in the Middle East/North Africa Region, an area where 9.3 percent of the adult population has been diagnosed with diabetes. (Globally, only North America has a higher prevalence, with 10.2 percent.) Kovler has increased its reach globally, engaging specialists in the Middle East to discuss joint clinical research trials as well as potential patient referrals to Kovler Diabetes Center.

Recently, Kovler welcomed Dr. Ali Fahim and Dr. Ali Obaid, both from the United Arab Emirates, who visited the Medical Center and met with its leaders. Dr. Fahim has an office in Dubai and supports international patients in partnership with Kovler’s physicians and its International Office. Joining him was Dr. Obaid, Director of Health Regulation for the Health Authority – Abu Dhabi (HAAD). It was Dr. Obaid’s first visit to the University of Chicago Medical Center and to Kovler.

Spotlight On: Kristen Allen, Clinical Support Specialist

On an average day, more than 100 individuals with diabetes visit the University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center to receive care, education and consultation. Kristen Allen is there to greet each one of them.

Allen acts as the “first contact” for patients, signing them in, answering phones, making appointments and explaining how they can learn more about Kovler’s education programs, support groups, and community events.

“I’m sort of the ‘front person,’” she says with a laugh. “It suits me. I like to meet people, and I especially like the patients at Kovler. They’re kind and respectful, and they really understand the treatment process here. They’re well-informed.”

Allen attributes that to Kovler’s careful support of each patient. “We make sure they have the medical attention and education they need,” she said. “Everyone is invested in their health.”

Allen originally studied business management and X-ray technology at South Suburban College. She came to the University of Chicago Medical Center in April 2008, and hasn’t looked back.

“It’s a wonderful place to work,” she said. “I have two children, and this has given them an example of how fulfilling a good job can be.”

Congrats to Jay Franke on another amazing Chicago Dancing Festival

Congratulations to our Leadership Board member and friend, Jay Franke, who serves as Founder and Artistic Director for the Chicago Dancing Festival! This week-long dance extravaganza took place in August, with dance seminars and performances throughout Chicago. Aficionados of dance and choreography flocked to the special shows, which celebrated the art in all its forms. Hats off to Jay!
Kovler Calendar

For the General Public

November is American Diabetes Month

November 6, 2011
Kovler for Kids FREE Event
9-11:30 a.m., Kohl Children’s Museum
kovlerdiabetescenter.org/Kovler-for-Kids

November 12, 2011
Kovler for Kids FREE Event
10 a.m.-Noon, University of Chicago Pediatric Specialists
kovlerdiabetescenter.org/Kovler-for-Kids

Join Dr. Elizabeth Littlejohn from the University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center for an interactive, family celebration.

• This gathering is for families with children living with diabetes, including their siblings, parents and caregivers
• Learn what’s new in diabetes research and care for children
• Attendees will also enjoy food, prizes and a parting gift

November 14, 2011
World Diabetes Day Lunch
Lunch and press conference with Illinois Diabetes Caucus and Kovler Diabetes Center Leadership Board

December 14, 2011
Kovler Leadership Board Dinner
Jonathan and Sally Kovler will host a year-end celebratory dinner for Kovler Leadership Board Members. Kovler extends its thanks to Jonathan and Sally Kovler as well as the entire Leadership Board for its exceptional service this year.

Events

ADA ‘Step Out: Walk to STOP Diabetes’ - October 22

Team Spirit: The University of Chicago Kovler Diabetes Center was well represented at the event.

Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament to Raise Money for ‘Step Out: Walk to STOP Diabetes’ event for the ADA - October 19

(Left) Ozzie Rivero, Director of Transplant Procurement and Tournament Winner and University of Chicago Medical Center President Sharon O’Keefe. (Right) Dr. Rob Sargis and Kathy Reilly, RN do battle.

Comer Classic - October 2

Team Kovler!

Kevin Lanham and Dr. Louis Philipson.

All Hyped Up for Kovler for Kids - August 18

Ross Bartolomei, Peggy Hasenauer, Carissa Bartolomei and Jim Peterik celebrate Kovler for Kids at the All Hyped Up Event by Salon Hype.

Kovler Daily Blog

Our blog, Kovler Daily, is managed by a comprehensive and diverse team of specialists, researchers, patients, parents and administrators and provides perspectives and updates from all facets of the organization.

Read new stories at:
kovlerdaily.wordpress.com

Connect with Us!

Find Us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or join our mailing list at KovlerDiabetesCenter.org

Guests enjoying the evening festivities.

Grammy-winner Jim Peterik gets the crowd rocking with “Eye of the Tiger.”

10 • Kovler Diabetes Center • Fall/Winter 2011
An innovative study is giving scientists at the University of Chicago a fascinating glimpse into the relationship between insulin, sleep and body fat.

Matthew Brady, PhD, associate professor of medicine in the Section of Adult and Pediatric Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, has been studying small biopsies of abdominal fat from volunteers who have taken part in sleep deprivation studies.

“We’re finding that when you’re sleep-deprived, you’re more likely to experience insulin resistance,” said Brady, a published researcher widely known for his studies on metabolism, insulin and obesity. “This means that after you eat a meal, your body has to produce higher-than-normal levels of insulin to handle the blood glucose levels in your bloodstream.”

Brady is collaborating on the study with Eve Van Cauter, PhD, and David Ehrmann, MD, internationally recognized researchers from the University of Chicago. Ehrmann is known for his studies on polycystic ovary syndrome, while Van Cauter conducted a range of widely published research that revealed an association between sleep deprivation and higher levels of body fat.

Normally, when insulin is released into the body, it releases a chemical that signals body cells – primarily in muscle, liver and fat tissue – to absorb glucose from the bloodstream. This process is known as insulin signaling.

Brady’s staff has found that in sleep-deprived individuals, the insulin signaling process somehow goes awry, specifically at the site of fat cells.

“Fat is actually your friend,” Brady said. “This fact gets lost sometimes in the literature. The adipose (fat) tissues are here to help you out. They’re a repository for long-term energy storage in the body.”

When adipose tissues can’t “do their job” and absorb blood glucose, the body senses that its own fat cells are starved for energy. It begins to resist weight loss, slowing its metabolism to conserve energy. The brain then produces chemicals leading to cravings for high-calorie foods.

Over time, insulin resistance also progresses into diabetes and heart disease, and it’s a known risk factor for breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, lymphoma, dementia, kidney disease, nerve damage and heart attack.

Why sleep deprivation causes a “short” in insulin signaling remains a mystery. While the immediate solution may be obvious – get more sleep – some individuals struggle with chronic sleep disturbances, such as periodic limb movement disorder, which leads to wakefulness throughout the night. The problems can last for years despite attempts at treatment.

Brady is studying the effects of various medications on insulin-resistant individuals, in hopes of finding a drug that restores the normal insulin signaling process.

“We’re also looking at the effects of bariatric surgery on insulin signaling,” he said. “The procedure is a drastic intervention, and somewhat of a ‘last resort’ in morbidly obese people. But we know that one to two weeks after the surgery, there’s a marked improvement in the patient’s metabolic health.

“A lot of patients will go off their diabetes medications, including insulin, because their own insulin levels have returned to normal. The question is, how does insulin signaling change after the surgery? At this time, that’s completely unknown.”

Brady said the studies promise to shed new light on insulin signaling at the molecular level.

“It’s been a privilege to collaborate with Dr. Van Cauter and Dr. Ehrmann,” he said. “The insulin signaling study crosses traditional boundaries of what we think of as sleep science or clinical science. It’s an exciting new frontier.”

Interested in being involved in a sleep study?
If you have type 2 diabetes and are 18 years of age or older, please call the University of Chicago at 773-795-0141 for more information.

Congratulations to Dr. Yu
Kovler Diabetes Center congratulates adult and pediatric endocrinologist Christine Yu, MD, on the birth of her second child. Dr. Yu’s son, Dillon, was born in July. We wish Dr. Yu and her family all the best!
InTransit Focus

Name: Julia Bartolomei
Age: 13

Julia doesn’t let her type 1 diabetes hold her back. “I started dancing when I was 4,” she said. “I do poms at school, and I take lessons at a dance studio. Hip-hop is my favorite.”

The active teen has had time to get used to her diabetes. Diagnosed just before the age of five, Julia quickly had to deal with changes in her diet. “It’s hard sometimes, because I can’t just snack,” she said. “I try not to have high-carb meals. Mostly, I try to pick healthy, lower-carb stuff.”

Julia said her life changed for the better in 2010, when she chose to start using an insulin pump. “Before I had the pump, my blood sugar levels varied a lot,” she said. “I had to check them all the time. Now, my blood sugar is more consistent.”

Before making the change, Julia talked to her physician, Dr. Lou Philipson. “He explained the different kinds of pumps there are,” she said. “But he left it to me and my parents to make the final choice.” Julia chose a waterproof pump that allows her to swim. The pump also is tubeless, making it simpler to use.

Julia admits that living with diabetes has challenges. “I think the hardest aspect is that I don’t know a lot of people with diabetes,” she said. “You know you’re different from other people in a way.”

But she said friends and a supportive family have made a difference. “One of my really good friends understands diabetes because I’ve explained it to her,” she said. “It helps to have my friends around. And my family has been great.”

Her advice to other young people with diabetes: “When you first get diagnosed, you’re really worried about it,” she said. “You’re going, ‘My gosh, what is this?’ And once you get older, you understand it and try to make better decisions. I would say be active, eat healthy and take care of yourself.”

A special note: We want to thank the Bartolomei family for hosting a phenomenal fundraiser on September 18 to support Kovler for Kids. The event, “All Hyped Up,” took place at Capri Ristorante in Burr Ridge, Illinois. With more than $35,000 raised, we are truly honored to know Carissa, Ross, and their amazing daughter, Julia.

InTransit
Empowering Teens and Young Adults to Manage Their Diabetes and Create a Healthy Future

The Kovler Diabetes Center is going to take part in a major research project that is part of an initiative designed to accelerate the search for a cure for type 1 diabetes, led by the Brehm Coalition. The Brehm Coalition is a multisite endeavor involving researchers at the University of Chicago, Columbia University, the University of Michigan, the University of Florida, the University of California – San Francisco, the University of Colorado, Yale University and the University of California – San Diego.

The coalition is led by nine senior scientists who represent the fields of immunology and beta-cell biology, the two key disciplines related to the cause and probable cure for type 1 diabetes. Christopher Rhodes, PhD, Research Director of the Kovler Diabetes Center, is the leading scientist in the Brehm Coalition representing the University of Chicago branch. Behind these nine leading scientists is a network of more than 100 researchers nationwide who are putting their collective expertise behind this multiyear endeavor, including Kovler pediatric endocrinologists Siri Greeley, MD, PhD, and Elizabeth Littlejohn, MD.

The Brehm Coalition is distinct in its approach to research. Most funding for basic research typically comes from government and foundation grants. While the grant evaluation processes of those institutions are governed by the best of intentions to keep risk to a minimum, they usually involve time-consuming procedures and administrative constraints. As a result, the research is highly risk-averse by nature.

The Brehm Coalition concept accelerates this process with minimal paperwork through private funding that is intended to catalyze research activity. Public funding will augment the coalition’s support; this innovative approach does not limit the scientists from seeking federal or foundation support for their joint efforts under conventional procedures.

Yet it gives the scientists complete freedom to develop their own research plans and procedures, as they themselves measure the risk and potential benefits. They thus have great flexibility to change course quickly, to expand their work to colleagues, and to sponsor side studies of promising ideas that develop spontaneously at the bench.

The coalition grew from the support of Bill and Dee Brehm, who are longtime supporters of diabetes research at the University of Michigan. Dee Brehm was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 19 and has lived with the disease for more than 60 years. Bill Brehm, a University of Michigan graduate, is board chair of SRA International, a leading information technology consulting and systems integration company based in Fairfax, Virginia. The University of Michigan continues to serve as a central point of coordination, administration and logistical support for Brehm Coalition initiatives.

Christopher Rhodes, PhD, is Research Director of the Kovler Diabetes Center.

For more details on research at Kovler, please visit kovlerdiabetescenter.org/research-and-discovery.

A FINAL WORD
from the Research Director

Kovler Joins Innovative Nationwide Research Coalition

Christopher Rhodes, PhD