



NETWORK UPDATES

Pilot Study – Effects of Vitamin D3 [25(OH)D3] on Vascular Function and Cardiovascular Risk Factors

The pilot study teams at Morehouse and Charles Drew University are working closely with the staff of the Data Technology Coordinating Center (DTCC) to implement the network's first clinical study.

- The teams are working on the Manual of Procedures (MOPs).
- On September 18, the NIH Protocol Review Committee presented its comments to the Principal Investigators and the DTCC staff on the Pilot Protocol which will require revision before it can be approved.
- There have been preliminary discussions with the IRBs at all three institutions: Morehouse, Charles Drew and Jackson State University, to familiarize them with the concept of a translational research network. With this background, the IRB's should not impose significant delays once the approved protocol is submitted.
- The clinical data services and the IT divisions are working to validate systems, participating in training sessions, and finalizing mandatory SOPs, Work Instructions and HIPAA certifications in preparation of the pilot launch.

Translational Research Clusters

The formation of the RTRN Translational Research Clusters (TRC) is in progress. These clusters will focus on five disease areas: HIV/AIDS and Infectious diseases, Cancer and Immunological diseases, Cardiovascular and related diseases, Obesity, Diabetes and Metabolic diseases, Neurological and Mental Health disorders, and Community-Based Participatory Research. Community representation is incorporated in each cluster to ensure that projects are identified and implemented which are relevant to the local communities.

- Several RCMI researchers experienced in these specific areas have agreed to lead the clusters and will be working to recruit investigators from across the RCMI community, identifying and applying for various grants as well as organizing sub-clusters with special research interests to broaden the current research spectrum.
- A series of meetings with TRC leadership are being scheduled. Information will be disseminated via LISTSERV and posted to the RTRN web site.
- Any researcher interested in participating in one or more of the TRCs can visit the RTRN web site, http://www.rtrn.net/research_clusters/index.htm for more information and can complete the on-line participation form.
- RTRN management is hoping to have all the research clusters meet during the 11th Annual RCMI International Symposium (11th RCMI Symposium). Details are still in development.

Steering Committee and Subcommittees

We have requested that the members of the RTRN Steering Committee and the subcommittees attend the meetings scheduled for Sunday, November 30, 2008 at the Waikiki Sheraton in Honolulu, Hawaii. The

meetings will be held in conjunction with the 11th RCMI International Symposium, (December 1-4, 2008, <https://www.mpi-evv.com/2008RCMI/researchpath/default.htm>).

- The Subcommittees will meet from 9:30AM – 12pm. Each should have a chair and a co-chair, one of whom is not a Steering Committee member.
- Subcommittee chairs will present key issues from their group's discussion during the Steering Committee's Meeting, which will start at 1:30pm.
- Subcommittees, excluding Steering Committee members, will be able to resume discussions in their meeting areas, while the closed-session Steering Committee Meeting continues.
- Steering Committee will meet from 1:30pm – 5:00pm.
- **Steering Committee members are encouraged to submit agenda items to the Committee Chair and confirm attendance by October 30, 2008, by sending an e-mail to communications@rtrn.net.**
- Finalized information will be distributed the week of November 3, 2008.
- Minutes and Action Items from previous meetings can be obtained by logging in to the RTRN Portal or contacting Traci Hayes, Communications Director at 601.979.0333 or traci.hayes@rtrn.net.

DTCC Activities

- M. Theresa Perry has been hired as the Director of Clinical Data Services and Informatics for the RTRN DTCC. Prior to joining DTCC, Perry was a Manager for the Clinical Data Management division at i3Statprobe and the Clinical Data manager/Grants Manager and In-house Statistician at the University of Louisville. In addition to supervising clinical data services and informatics division, Perry will lead the data management working group.
- Andrew Dent, II, joined the DTCC staff as Program Analyst in the Information Security and Technology Integration (ISTI) division. During his nine years at the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, he worked as a business systems analyst, programmer analyst and database analyst.
- The DTCC Biostatistical division, headed by Dr. Jae Eun Lee, has completed an assessment of the RCMI biostatistical capabilities. The final report has been posted to the RTRN web site. The division continues to work with biostatisticians across the RCMI community and has formed the Biostatistical Working Group. The Working Group will host a series of webinars with the first session tentatively scheduled for October 15. Dr. Daniel Sarpong, Jackson Heart Study at Jackson State University will discuss experimental clinical study design.
- The working groups: Data Management, Biostatistics, and Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, are planning to meet on Friday, December 5, 2008, in Honolulu, Hawaii (after the conclusion of the 11th RCMI Symposium). For more information or to participate in the working groups, contact the DTCC at 601.979.0332 or visit http://www.rtrn.net/subcommittee_wg/rtrn_working_groups.htm.
- The DTCC Capabilities Statement has been drafted and posted to the RTRN website, <http://www.rtrn.net/DTCC/management/about.htm>

- Charles Drew University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse School of Medicine, University of Hawaii at Manoa, and University of Puerto Rico along with the DTCC are working on proposals for the NIH RCMI Infrastructure for Clinical and Translational Research (RCTR) RFP. The deadline is November 18. Becoming an RCTR will better position institutions for conducting clinical and translation research by facilitating the development of each institution's research capacity; facilitating collaborations and partnerships; developing synergy between clinical and translational research training and career development activities in CRECD, CTSA and other NIH training awards; and facilitating participation in the RCMI Translational Research Network consortium.

RTRN Web site

The RTRN web site, www.rtrn.net, was launched in August with a new look and functionalities. We worked to incorporate the many recommendations and suggestions to improve the use and look of the site. Upon review, you will notice:

- An easy-to-follow homepage that navigates directly to key service areas of the network
- A more detailed and comprehensive section on the Translational Research Clusters equipped with a searchable database for RCMI investigators working in those specific research areas
- A complete and detailed breakout site for the DTCC which identified Center leadership, personnel, services and capabilities and core technologies
- An on-line tutorial for the Portal that reinforces information presented during the regularly scheduled training sessions
- An enhanced News and Communications session that provides helpful information for promoting the network and submitting your Center's news, activities and research highlights.

We will continue to work on the site to ensure it becomes more dynamic. We strongly encourage you to submit any information about your Center that you would like to share with the RTRN community to communications@rtrn.net.

RTRN Training Portal

The Fall schedule for the RTRN Portal Training Sessions has been posted to the web site, http://www.rtrn.net/education_training/portal_training.htm. We are encouraging all members of the Steering Committee and subcommittees who have not participated in a training to do so. It is a helpful resource for understanding and utilizing the secure Portal. You will be able to share and work on documents with your colleagues, access information about meetings and research discussions, and/or schedule and host forums.

- The sessions will be hosted by Omar Aldaoud, Director of Information Security and Technology Integration at the DTCC.
- Upcoming sessions:
 - Thursday, October 9 at 9:30am – 10:30am CST or 2:30pm – 3:30pm CST
 - Tuesday, October 21 at 9:30am – 10:30am CST or 2:30pm – 3:30pm CST
 - Thursday, October 23 at 9:30am – 10:30am CST or 2:30pm – 3:30pm CST
 - Tuesday, October 28 at 9:30am – 10:30am CST or 2:30pm – 3:30pm CST

This Network Update has been prepared for the Steering Committee and Subcommittee members. We will distribute these updates on a monthly basis. Please provide comments and/or suggestions to communications@rtrn.net.