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From the Editors:

For this first newsletter of 2022, the BCH Postdoc Association wishes you a Happy New Year! Hopefully, with all of us vaccinated and boosted, we are reaching the end of the pandemic. We expect to get together again soon for in-person career development and mentoring events, welcome-breakfasts and fun indoor and outdoor social events that the Postdoc Association committees are preparing for you. We hope that you will be more ready than ever to attend, enjoy, learn and network!

The BCH Postdoc Association would like to voice its support and express solidarity with the people of Ukraine and Russia, especially post-docs and their families who are affected by the recent invasion of Ukraine. The PDA is here for you and assist in finding the right people to help cope with your situation.

WE STAND WITH UKRAINE!



Meet our new BCH CSO, Nancy C. Andrews, MD, PhD

by Maria N Barrachina, Colin Niaudet, Alexis Caulier, Sreya Ghosh & Julie Sesen

First of all, thank you for your time and agreeing to this interview. This is a wonderful opportunity for the whole Research community, especially the Research and Clinical fellows, to learn more about you, as you start your new roles as the **Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)** at Boston Children's Hospital.



Nancy, it is nice to meet you, could you please tell us more about your background. Can we say that you are "returning" to BCH?

NA: Yes, I'm returning after 14 years away. I spent the first 20 years of my professional career at Children's. I came for my pediatrics rotation as a Harvard MD/PhD student in 1985, right after I finished my PhD with David Baltimore at MIT, so my mind was still on science. I loved how science was infused into clinical education and patient care at Children's, and I felt very much at home. I returned in 1987 as a pediatrics resident, then did a pediatric hematology/oncology fellowship at Children's and Dana-Farber. **My own postdoc experience was in Stuart Orkin's laboratory.** The tradition in the hematology/oncology division has been to keep many of the physician-scientist fellows on as junior faculty members, so I became an assistant professor after my fellowship and opened my first lab in the Enders building. I was fortunate to become a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator a few months later. I stayed on at Children's and Harvard, rising through the faculty ranks, until 2007 when I left to become **Dean of the Duke's medical school.** In 2017, after two five-year terms as Dean, I was ready for a change. I stepped down as Dean and used some of my extra time and energy for work with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academies of Science and Medicine, several biopharma companies, and other organizations. Those have all been great experiences and I've learned a lot, but I was starting to think about how I could contribute in a more focused way. When I was approached about the Children's CSO role I was excited about the opportunity to enable outstanding science at an institution I admire tremendously.

"About the Children's CSO role, I was excited about the opportunity to enable outstanding science at an institution I admire tremendously."

As I am sure you know, February 11th was the "International Day of Women and Girls in Science", and as a woman in a leadership position, did you face any challenges in achieving your goals? What would be your advice for the next generations of Women and Girls in Science?

NA: Yes, there were challenges, for me and probably for most women of my generation (and certainly for those before). **I didn't anticipate the challenges.** I was in high school in the early 1970s, at a time when huge strides were made in leveling the playing field for women. I started college assuming I would have the same opportunities that men had. But the pace of change stalled. **As I moved up in my career the disadvantages became more apparent.** I was often the only woman or one of only a couple of women in the room for committee meetings, HHMI investigator meetings and various kinds of leadership roles. I felt that it was a struggle to make my voice heard. That I was underestimated and just had to wait until people realized that I was competent, that I knew what I was talking about. When I became a dean – first as Dean for Basic Sciences and Graduate Studies at Harvard Medical School and later as Dean of the School of Medicine at Duke – I found that people were paying attention, that I could use my influence to help other women, and to promote diversity and equity more generally.

"I felt that it was a struggle to make my voice heard."

My advice for the next generations – be persistent, be resilient, and don't let the hard parts get you down. "Let it go" was almost a mantra for me, to get past the things that didn't go well, the times when I felt unfairly treated. Find support from family, friends, and colleagues. Give support to other women and help lift them up, too. And make sure you're putting your energy and talent into something that is fulfilling for you, that makes you happy.

Recently, you worked as the Dean of the School of Medicine and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Duke University. How did your experience at Duke influence your work culture? What were the biggest challenges that

you faced and overcame?

NA: There's real benefit to experiencing more than one institution. Duke has much in common with Harvard and Children's, but some of its priorities and ways of doing things are different. It was valuable to see different areas of science emphasized, and to compare approaches to find best practices. The biggest challenge, I think, was that I only knew a few people at Duke when I first went there. I was responsible for more than two thousand faculty members and several large educational programs. I interacted often with alumni and external organizations. Lots of people to get to know! But it was fun because my new colleagues were talented and eager to contribute. I was very fortunate to work closely with a terrific group of vice deans and associate deans. **I think we accomplished a lot together.**

As a successful, prestigious scientist, and holder of multiple leadership positions, how do you expect your experience to shape your new role at Children's?

NA: I feel lucky to have had experiences that were relevant to this new role in diverse but intersecting ways. My stints as Dean for Basic Sciences at Harvard and Dean of the School of Medicine at Duke taught me a lot about academic administration and gave me experience dealing with issues that come up repeatedly at different institutions. They also broadened my scientific knowledge because I was responsible for research in areas very different from my own. My volunteer leadership experiences with honorary organizations – the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine and American Academy of Arts and Sciences – have helped me recognize what it takes to achieve in science at a very high level. Sitting on boards of a major pharmaceutical company, a pre-clinical contract research organization and a biotech company has helped me learn about the critical steps in moving from a scientific insight to a drug or a biologic that will make a difference in patients' lives. All of these experiences inform my new role.

What is your vision for the Basic and Clinical Research at BCH? How do you see them working together?

NA: My vision is for Children's to be the recognized leader in creating and using knowledge to prevent, treat and cure diseases of childhood. For Children's **to be the place where we imagine the future of pediatric medicine.**

To do this we need basic science, translation, clinical research, and community research. I think we're most effective at attacking problems and finding solutions when we bring diverse approaches, skills and backgrounds together.

I see my role as enabling and supporting our diverse community of investigators so that they can apply their talent and imagination to world-class research that either directly or indirectly addresses unmet health needs of children and adolescents.

Since you were postdoc at BCH, how has the postdoc condition evolved, according to you?

NA: There are more services to support postdocs now – like your postdoc association. Institutions make **more of an effort to look out for the interests of postdocs.** And most postdoc mentors, I think, are more supportive of those who choose non-academic careers, or academic careers that don't involve being the PI of an individual lab. I think these are all good changes.

What would be your last word for postdoc community at BCH, and how should we support each other for the next years?

NA: I think you said the key words in your question. **Support each other.** You understand the challenges and rewards of being postdocs better than anyone else. And peer support matters. Down the road I think you'll find that the people you got to know as postdocs will become an important network of contacts for you throughout your career.

"Peer support matters."

Thank you very much again for your time answering these questions. The [BCH Postdoc Association](#) is looking forward to working with you soon.

Discover the BCH Ombuds Office with Jennifer Mahony, BCH Ombuds Office Director

by *Maria N Barrachina, Colin Niaudet, Alexis Caulier, Sreya Ghosh & Julie Sesen*

The term Ombuds or Ombudsman (om-budz-man) comes from Sweden. An ombudsman is one who assists individuals and groups in the resolution of conflicts or concerns. There are many types of ombuds, including organizational ombuds who, like the Ombuds Office at Boston Children's, are internal to organizations. As a highly trained conflict resolution professional, the Ombuds listens and helps untangle and clarify issues, define goals, explore diverse perspectives and potential outcomes for resolution, and support greater confidence in moving forward effectively. Harvard Medical School established an **Ombuds Office** (<https://hms.harvard.edu/departments/ombuds-office>) in 1991. Following this example, Boston Children's Hospital started its own and it is now open for visits, since January 2022. **Jennifer Mahony is the Director of the BCH Ombuds Office** and accepted to answer some questions for us.

Hello Jenn, thank you so much for your time answering the questions and welcome to BCH! The Ombuds Office can be a great resource and an essential support for BCH postdocs so, we are grateful to have you on board.



JM: It's great to connect with you all this way. Thank you for the opportunity!

Jenn, can you please tell us a bit more about your background, your academic journey, and your career experience?

JM: I'd be happy to! I've been involved in **resolving work-related conflicts and issues for 20 years.** During that time, I've had the privilege to serve in the roles of ombuds, mediator, facilitator, conflict coach, and educator. I also practiced employment law for 10 years, have managed large teams, and have designed and

implemented large-scale dispute resolution systems and mechanisms. Becoming an ombuds has been an interesting and enriching experience as neither my career path nor my academic path were straightforward, which has turned out to matter to what I do now: I'm able to bring a lot of different disciplines and lenses to my ombuds work. My focus is on using and teaching restorative practices so that people can feel successful at work and in their working relationships.

My undergraduate work was in music composition and theory, with a performance concentration in voice. After getting my Bachelor of Music, I went on to law school, getting my J.D. from Emory University School of Law in 2001. I practiced law, mediated, and made a lot of music for ten years before moving to New Zealand in 2010, where I was fortunate to work for a dispute resolution organization where I ombudsed, adjudicated, mediated, educated, consulted, and designed dispute resolution systems. Missing home, I returned the US at the start of 2020 to join the National Institutes of Health's Office of the Ombudsman. Not long after that, Boston came calling and I joined BCH in October 2021.

It's important to me to stay on top of best practice in the field. I'm a member of the International Ombuds Association, where I serve on a number of committees, and the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand, where I am a Fellow in Arbitration and serve on their mediation panel.

Can you please introduce the Ombuds Office, why is this Office important to BCH and what triggered its creation?

JM: The office provides the opportunity for completely **off-the-record conversations for any and all members of the Boston Children's** enterprise to safely explore, untangle, and clarify work-related issues and conflicts. I help people problem-solve, both one-to-one and in groups and teams. Whether that's about a work relationship that isn't going as well as either person would like, preparing for difficult conversation or "ask", understanding formal resolution processes available at BCH, getting referrals for other supports, or simply just making sense of one's experiences. It's important for folks to know that as the

Ombuds, **I act as a guide.** I'm not a decision-maker, or part of any formal investigations or processes. Some of the ways I can help is by listening and providing perspective; exploring options with you; facilitating conversations between individuals and within teams; and using coaching techniques to help you build communication skills.

Having a place to go where people can count on being able **to safely and freely raise issues** is important for maintaining a well-functioning and healthy organization. The office supports individuals and groups in the specific situations they bring. It also supports the enterprise as a whole by sharing opportunities for systemic improvement and change through aggregated and anonymized reporting focused on trends and patterns.

While I hadn't joined BCH yet when the organization began creating this office, I understand its creation was a direct response to requests for an Ombuds. Additionally, in my experience, implementing an ombuds office is a sign of organizational maturity.

What is your mission and what are your tools to address it?

JM: I am committed to supporting everyone in feeling successful in their roles at BCH and having greater confidence in how to move forward effectively, both individually and together. It's through these acts that individuals, groups, and organizations can achieve positive growth and change. An Ombuds office can play an important role in achieving these goals.

It's important for BCH and the enterprise as a whole to know that while I can't meet these goals for them, I can help them find confidence in the steps they will take to make desired change a reality.

In addition to these supports, I'm grateful for my experiences in conflict resolution, conflict system design, project management, employment law, people management, mentorship, community boards, educational design and instruction, and music (yes, even my work in music!) to help me better assist others as they work through what is often really difficult stuff.

There are five supports and requirements I rely to ensure this can happen:

1. The office is a confidential place
2. It provides an informal way to work through issues and explore options
3. It is independent of management and other leadership
4. It is impartial, supporting everyone in feeling successful in their roles
5. It's a voluntary space. No one can be forced to work with the office

Did you ever work with postdocs? What specific challenges postdocs are facing? How can the Office help?

JM: I was fortunate to work with many postdocs at NIH while I was part of NIH's Office of the Ombudsman. From experience, I think **postdocs are often grappling with having to both lead and be led at the same time.** This can create uncertainty, a sense or experience of power imbalance, and feeling ill-equipped to negotiate issues or address conflict in a productive and healthy way. For many, they may experience some of their first work-related tensions and issues as a postdoc. My hope is that this office can be a place where they can safely explore and address these issues.

Most BCH postdocs are foreigners and depend on their job at BCH to keep their visa and to stay in the country, they may fear retaliation if they speak up. Do you have a message for postdocs who are facing challenges in their role and are still hesitating to come to you for help?

JM: This is such a great question. What I want everyone to know, and especially postdocs, is that this is a visitor-led process. I don't do anything with the information shared with me. (There are always exceptions to this, most notably if someone does or says something that makes me believe that they or someone is in imminent threat of danger or harm). **Absent threats of harm/danger, my goal is to help you feel confident about whatever decision you make.** I often work with folks who for very valid

reasons decide not to speak up about their particular situations. That doesn't mean that the organization as a whole doesn't get the benefit of that information. It becomes part of an overall picture of patterns and trends that I share across the enterprise in way that ensures no one can be individually identified.

How can we reach you? Where can we find more information?

JM: Great question! The Ombuds Office has an internal page on Web2, which you can access [here](#). An external website will be online in early March 2022.

In either location, you can find information about the office, including FAQs, the office charter, and resource sheets, as well contact: by secure [webform](#) and by telephone **(617) 355-2865**.

The office also posts weekly articles on Scope360 about issues, books, and other resources relevant to conflict resilience, good communication, and conflict resolution. Give us a follow!

Thank you so much again and we are looking forward to working with you in the future. Thank you for supporting and contributing to BCH employees' well-being in their position.

Interested in a virtual scientific event or an online career development course but there's a fee?

The PDA will fund up to \$100 towards your registration fees!

Please submit an application by emailing postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu with the following information:

- Full name and Lab
- Title of the course
- Date of the event
- 4-5 lines about what motivates you to attend this course

BCH Postdoc Achievements!

If you would like to share a recently published a paper or award recieved, contact us at postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu (provide your full name, lab, title and journal for publications and information on sponsor for awards).
Congrats to the authors and awardees!

Publications from BCH Postdocs

Sanna Gudmundsson, O'Donnell-Luria Lab (Genetics & Genomics) published a review: "Variant interpretation using population databases: Lessons from gnomAD" in Human Mutation. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

Karen Aymonnier, Wagner lab (PCMM) published: "Inflammasome activation in neutrophils from patients with severe COVID-19" in Blood Advances. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Aristides Hadjinicolaou, Peters & Pearl labs (Neurology) published: "De novo pathogenic variant in SETX causes a rapidly progressive neurodegenerative disorder of early childhood-onset with severe axonal polyneuropathy." in Acta Neuropathol Commun. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

Greysa Rivera-Cruz, Morton lab (Newborn Medicine) published: "How a woman's myomectomy saved her father's life: evidence of fumarate hydratase-deficient uterine leiomyoma and early detection of germline variants in fumarate hydratase" in Fertility and Sterility Reports. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Hyunyong Koh, Poduri lab (Neurology) published: Genetic Determinants of Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics, Genetics in Medicine. This work is supervised by the "Robert's Program" at BCH. [\[Link\]](#)

L. Alexander Liggett, Sankaran lab (Hem/Onc) published: "Clonal hematopoiesis in sickle cell disease" in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Peter Hong (Clinical Informatics), published: "Use of clinical data to augment healthcare worker contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic" in Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Lasse Dissing-Olesen, Stevens lab (F.M.Kirby Neurobiology) published: "The Creatures in Your Head" in Frontiers for Young Minds. 2021. [\[Link\]](#)

Samantha Bento (Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine) published: "How Mind-Body Skills Can Reduce Pain and Improve Comfort" in Frontiers for Young Minds. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Leyla Yavuz Saricay (Ophthalmology) published: "Topical Recombinant Nerve Growth Factor for the Treatment of Neurotrophic Keratopathy—Biologicals as a Novel Therapy for Neurotrophic Keratopathy" in Cornea Journal. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Keunjung Heo, Schwarz lab (F.M.Kirby Neurobiology) published 2 papers:
- "APP and DYRK1A regulate axonal and synaptic vesicle protein networks and mediate Alzheimer's pathology in trisomy 21 neurons" in Molecular Psychiatry. 2022 [\[Link\]](#)
- "The serine/threonine phosphatase PP2A regulates the transport of axonal mitochondria" in Frontiers in Cellular Neuroscience. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Jacquelyn Russell, Camargo lab (Hematology/Oncology - Stem Cell program) published a review: "Hippo signalling in the liver: role in development, regeneration and disease" in Nat Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2022. [\[Link\]](#)

Awards to BCH Postdocs

Adam Fiseha Kebede, Shi lab (Newborn Medicine) was named one of the 1,000 Inspiring Black scientists in America by *Cell Mentor* in 2020. [\[Link\]](#)

Aristides Hadjinicolaou, Peters & Pearl labs (Neurology) received the "Trainee Travel Scholarship" from the American Clinical Neurophysiology Society (ACNS). [\[Link\]](#)

Edina Szabo (Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine) received the "Anesthesia Research Distinguished Trailblazer Award" from the Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine. [\[Link\]](#)

Isabelle Becker, Italiano lab (Vascular Biology Program) was awarded with the Walter Benjamin Fellowship by the DFC (German Research Foundation).

Maria Barrachina, Machlus lab (Vascular Biology Program) received the ASH Research Restart Award sponsored by American Society of Hematology.



International Day of Women & Girls in Science



Once again this year, we successfully highlighted the **BCH women in science** for the **International Day of Women & Girls in Science** with this beautiful poster and the posts on our Twitter account (@BCHPostDoc), we invite you to check them out, like and retweet!

We warmly **thank all the participants for sending their picture** and describing their roles in science. Again, we apologize for those who are not on the poster, but we encourage you to participate again next year!

Celebrating March as the Women's History Month!
#WomenInScience

Past Events!

Career Development (CD):

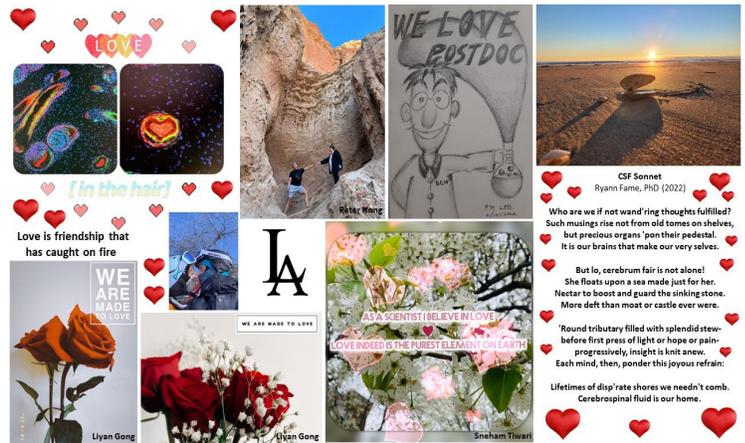
Jan 25: Understanding Research Misconduct with Dr. Delia Wolf Cristiani.
Feb 17: Transition to Core Facility with Amélie Julé, PhD & Elizabeth Buttermore, PhD

Networking & Outreach (NOC):

Feb 14: Valentines Celebration (postdoc's artworks - right)

Public Affairs (PA):

Feb 11: International Day of Women & Girls in Science (poster in page 7)



Upcoming Events!

Look out for our emails and subscribe to our calendar to find out about new events: tinyurl.com/BCHPDACalendar

Career Development

March 23rd 2-3pm: CV Workshop with Lauren Celano
April 12th 3-4:30pm: Imposter Syndrome with Dr. Valerie Young

NOC

March: Visit of the Isabella Gardner Museum
April: Postdoc Breakfast
→ Stay tuned for more details!

Mentoring

Stay tuned for our upcoming Young Minds Science Mentorship event in June (poster to the right).
Applications of science mentors will open soon!

Leaving soon?

Send us your personal email address at postdoc@childrens.harvard.edu to register as **BCH Alumni**, to keep in touch with us and share your career path with the postdoc community.

OUR TEAM

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To submit comments, articles, or ideas for future newsletters, please contact: Postdoc-publicaffairs@childrens.harvard.edu.

For more information on the postdoc association, find us on:



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