

## One Penn Medicine. One Research.

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*Editor's note: This is the 19th in a series of articles from the Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health Research Institute that describes ongoing research studies. Members of the LG Health staff who are conducting research and wish to have their studies described here are encouraged to contact the offices of JLGH at 717-544-8004.*

In the summer of 2015, when Penn Medicine acquired Lancaster General Hospital, the future of what that partnership would look like was far from realized. We continue to see, even now, the development of that relationship through the five-year strategic plan and new collaborative pathways. One of those pathways is the One Penn Medicine. One Research, initiative that “drives integrated, innovative research across the Penn Medicine Health System, providing technology advancements and care for our patients and community.”

Penn Medicine boasts a robust academic research center overseen by the Office of Clinical Research (OCR) at the Perelman School of Medicine within the University of Pennsylvania. OCR manages all clinical research at Penn and ensures it meets high levels of conduct, as well as maintaining compliance with all applicable regulatory and compliance standards. The University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board (IRB) maintains eight boards that review a wide variety of different types of research.

Lancaster General Health's research infrastructure, while smaller than Penn's, is well organized and comprehensive. The Research Institute employs a team of about 20 people, including clinical research nurses, research coordinators, research assistants, project managers, and administrative support staff. The oncology research program at the Ann B. Barshinger Cancer Institute is currently a distinct entity and not included in the Research Institute tally. Similarly, the trauma research team led by Lindsey Perea, DO, the nursing researcher program led by Christian Burchill, PhD, RN, and other independent practices conduct research projects within their specialties.

The Human Research Protection Program, the Compliance Department, and Business Intelligence are just a few of the departments that support research in invaluable ways at LG Health. The Lancaster General Hospital (LGH) IRB, which previously operated independently, is in the process of merging with Penn's IRB. Together, they will offer a more streamlined approach to collaborative studies and allow for consistency of processes (e.g., legal review, contract execution) without sacrificing the local expertise that LGH's IRB possesses.

The One Penn Medicine. One Research, initiative is an exciting aspect of the evolving relationship between Penn Medicine and LG Health. It will facilitate our access to Penn research projects and allow the LGH research community to be more involved in exciting academic studies.

Now, as more departments and groups merge across the health system, we are able to diversify how LG Health supports these studies. For example, there is a new Master Reliance Agreement between Penn's IRB and LGH's IRB that covers most research studies. This has shortened the start-up time required for collaborative studies and decreased the need for superfluous study documents.

For some studies, Penn continues to operate largely independently and the LG Health component is simply to provide regulatory oversight and local support as needed. For many others, there is a spectrum of involvement that could include an LG Health research coordinator conducting the informed consent process only, or it could see LG Health being an independent study site with its own study team and full participation in all aspects of the study. A small selection of current Penn studies taking place at LG Health is summarized in Table 1 on page 60.

One Penn Medicine. One Research, provides opportunities for our community in Lancaster County to access research studies at other Penn Medicine hospitals without needing to travel to Philadelphia or

surrounding areas. This not only benefits our patients, but also our providers and staff who are interested in getting involved in research. A collaborative study with a Penn team is a great way to ease into research for those who do not have prior research experience.

If you are interested in learning more about the research being done between LG Health and Penn Medicine, or if you want to get involved in a research study, contact the LG Health Research Institute at [LGHResearch@pennteam.upenn.edu](mailto:LGHResearch@pennteam.upenn.edu).

**Table 1. Selection of Penn Medicine Studies Taking Place at Lancaster General Health**

Study Name	Study Summary	LG Health Involvement
<p><b>The Whole Health Study: Collaborative Care for OUD and Mental Health Conditions</b></p>	<p>This study compares three care conditions to determine which condition is best to help people with opioid use disorder (OUD) and mental illness reduce their drug use and improve symptoms. The collaborative care model uses a team-based approach in which a primary care physician (PCP) and a care manager coordinate care.</p> <p>As part of this study, care managers will monitor patients with mental health conditions in the primary care practice. Participants will be offered medication such as buprenorphine, which, in combination with counseling, provides a whole-patient approach to the treatment of OUD.</p>	<p><b>Local Principal Investigator:</b> Caroline Barnhart, MSS, LCSW</p> <p>The local Behavioral Health study team manages all local aspects of the study from recruitment to follow-up, training of staff, and all other local needs.</p> <p>There is no involvement of operational staff from the LG Health Research Institute.</p>
<p><b>INFORM: Investigating and identifying the heterogeneity in COVID-19 misinformation exposure on social media among Black and Rural communities to inform precision public health messaging</b></p>	<p>This observational study is being conducted to understand how health information and misinformation are shared and interacted with through Facebook wall posts, X (formerly Twitter) posts, and Google and YouTube searches. We are interested in learning more about how people use information on social media and what people find the most interesting and useful.</p>	<p><b>Local Principal Investigator:</b> Jean David Dumornay, MD, MBA</p> <p>The research assistant at the Research Institute provides operational support for this study at LG Health. He facilitates patient recruitment and follow-up communications as needed.</p>
<p><b>Healthy Heart: Reducing Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (ASCVD) Risk Through a Comprehensive Heart Disease Prevention Program (HDPP)</b></p>	<p>This study aims to leverage access to patients across the primary care network, Epic tools for identifying eligible patients, and the <i>Way to Health</i> platform to launch. Patients will enroll into the Penn Medicine Healthy Heart, a six-month program for reduction of hypertension and hypercholesterolemia grounded in behavioral economics insights. The goal is to increase uptake of and adherence to evidence-based interventions to reduce ASCVD risk.</p> <p>Penn Medicine Healthy Heart emphasizes proactive outreach and prevention outside of a traditional visit model using data assets to identify and risk stratify patients. The program aims to relieve overburdened PCPs through automated hovering technology coupled with a centralized, leveraged team of non-clinical navigators and nurse practitioners.</p>	<p><b>Local Principal Investigator:</b> John Wood, MD</p> <p>LG Health personnel will help with administering the study, as well as collect and maintain data and provide study data to the Penn team.</p> <p>There is no involvement of operational staff from the Research Institute.</p>
<p><b>Cognitive Function, Self-Management and Health Outcomes Among Liver Transplant Recipients: The LivCog Cohort</b></p>	<p>This study seeks to characterize cognitive, psychosocial, and health trajectories in liver transplant recipients (LTRs), identifying those at higher risk of impairment. The Penn study team plans to enroll 450 LTRs and their care partners across diverse sites over a five-year timeline.</p> <p>The investigation includes assessing cognitive trajectories, identifying risk factors, and evaluating associations between cognitive function and various post-transplant experiences.</p> <p>The comprehensive study measures cover patient and care partner aspects, with a timeline spanning preparation, enrollment, and follow-up phases. The ultimate goal is to inform interventions that enhance self-management, health behaviors, and care partner support for optimal health outcomes in LTRs.</p>	<p><b>Local Principal Investigator:</b> Marina Serper, MD, MS</p> <p>No recruitment takes place at LG Health. However, many of the participants enrolled in the study receive follow-up care at LG Health. To allow for the study-specific follow-up to take place here, LG Health was added as a study site.</p> <p>There is no involvement of operational staff from the Research Institute.</p>

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