

**PENN PSYCHIATRY**

**MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER | RESURGENCE AND ANTI-RACISM**

OCTOBER 14, 2020



**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

Dear Faculty, Trainees and Staff:

Thank you so much for all of the work you are doing. I appreciate that many of you are dealing with not only work pressures but also the stress of quarantine, child or elder care, and financial stresses. The work you do is extremely important and as a team we have continued to fulfill our mission of patient care, research and education. We have a lot to be proud of!

As you know, we are fast approaching an important election. Some of you may have already voted. If you have, thank you! This is an important opportunity for all of us to express our opinion about the country's direction over the next 4 years and I urge you to take it. Voting really matters!

Finally, a reminder to take care of yourself. We were blessed with a beautiful, sunny day today and I hope you had a chance to take a peek at it and maybe even go for a walk or a run, while wearing a mask, of course. Sticking to your exercise, sleeping and eating routines is a key way in which you can stay resilient. However, if you need help, please use the resources listed below. You deserve to be well!

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**CLARENCE WATSON IS APPOINTED VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR INCLUSION,  
DIVERSITY AND EQUITY FOR PENN PSYCHIATRY**

Clay Watson has accepted the position for Vice-Chairman for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in the Department of Psychiatry. Clarence (Clay) Watson, a Philadelphia native, is the Program Director of the Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship at the Perelman School of Medicine – University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Watson currently serves as Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry and chair of the Task Force to Develop an Anti-Racist Culture for Penn Psychiatry. Prior to his medical career, Dr. Watson graduated from Villanova University School of Law and practiced law as an attorney in Pennsylvania. He received his medical degree from Sidney Kimmel Medical College – Thomas Jefferson University and completed internship training in Internal Medicine and residency training in Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. He also completed fellowship training in Forensic Psychiatry at St. Vincent’s Hospital – New York Medical College in Manhattan. In addition to his work involving mental health and the legal system, Dr. Watson has had an ongoing interest in the impact of race within the criminal justice system and cultural aspects of forensic evaluations.



#### **NEW INNOVATOR AWARD – HARNESSING CORTICAL NEUROMODULATION TO DISRUPT PAIN PERCEPTION**

The New Innovator Award supports unusually innovative research from early career investigators who have not yet received a research project grant or equivalent NIH grant. The award will support Corder’s efforts to research the mechanisms of chronic pain—a major health crisis in the United States, affecting millions, and a driver of the opioid epidemic.

Dr. Corder’s goal is to identify which parts of the brain are important for pain perception and which circuits impact pain relief from opioids. He hopes to decode how this neural activity evolves during chronic pain. Once the brain circuits and pathways that contribute to the suffering and perception of pain are identified, they can be targeted for potential therapeutics which could be more effective at reducing pain and without the addictive elements of prescription opioids.

Dr. Corder envisions these next generation pain therapeutics leveraging viral-delivered cell-specific gene therapies to disrupt the pain-processing circuits in the cortex. This would allow patients to sense pain but without the unpleasant aversion.

*“We currently have a limited understanding of the neural pathways in the brain that contribute to pain, which has been a significant barrier for treating pain efficiently, without negative side effects. But, if we can identify and understand these circuits, we can then try to rewrite the neural code of pain,”* Corder said. *“Picture being able to specifically target the one desired brain region or circuit that processes pain in order to provide pain relief. This research will help us lay*

*the groundwork for new classes of therapeutics, which could have a profound and broad impact for treating patients with chronic pain, while reducing the burden of the national opioid crisis.”*

## **PENN MEDICINE EXPERIENCE WEEK ANTI-RACISM DIALOGUE**

Puneet Sahota was invited to give a talk for all Penn Medicine employees at Penn Med Experience Week about the Cobalt groups she has organized for anti-racism dialogue. Thea Gallagher is also co-presenting with Puneet about their resilience groups.

Date: Monday October 19th

Time: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Title: Culture and Connection: Actions for Cultural Transformation and Resources for Resilience

A Blue Jeans link will get circulated to all Penn Medicine staff once the Penn Med Experience Week schedule is finalized.

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## **WELLNESS RESOURCES**

Click [here](#) to access our Wellness Resources.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.**

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### **Vision**

Promoting health for the brain and mind to transform lives and the world.

### **Mission**

Penn Psychiatry develops and implements new ideas to understand, prevent, and treat disorders of the brain and mind, through innovative research and discoveries, outstanding educational, world renowned clinical services, and transformational public health policies.