Lori Sussel, PhD Named BDC Research Director

We are very pleased to announce that Lori Sussel, PhD has been named Director of the Basic and Translational Research Division at the Barbara Davis Center for Childhood Diabetes in the School of Medicine at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Dr. Sussel will join the Center on a part-time basis on January 1st, 2016, transitioning entirely to the BDC by April 1st, 2016. Her recruitment is supported by the Dean of the School of Medicine, the Children’s Hospital Colorado Research Institute and the Children’s Diabetes Foundation. Dr. Sussel is joining us from the Department of Genetics and Development and the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center at Columbia University Medical Center. She has served there as co-director of the University’s Integrated Program of Cellular, Molecular Biomedical Science Graduate Program and co-PI of the NIDDK funded Endocrinology Training Grant. She is also currently serving as interim co-director of their Stem Cell Program.

The main focus of Dr. Sussel’s research is to understand the complex transcriptional networks that regulate development, differentiation and function of the pancreas. Her early studies led to the ground-breaking discovery that a ghrelin-producing endocrine cell population normally resides in the fetal islet and she further discovered several novel regulatory pathways essential for normal pancreas development and maintenance of beta cell identity. At the Naomi Berrie Center for Diabetes her research has addressed issues relating to the regulation of beta cell identity and function with a specific focus on transcription factors and long non-coding RNAs. Her goal is to master the process of in vitro and in vivo generation of beta cells and apply this knowledge in future trials of islet regeneration and transplantation. At the Barbara Davis Center she will join an established team of scientists dedicated to finding a cure for type 1 diabetes, facilitating new avenues of research dedicated to understanding the complex interactions between beta cells and the immune system. Many thanks to the search committee chaired by Dr. Philippa Marrack from National Jewish Health and its members representing multiple departments and divisions of the School of Medicine for their commitment to this important recruitment effort that will benefit the BDC and diabetes research at AMC.