

# Center for Women's Health Research



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS | WINTER 2018

*Hello, everyone!*

*A lot has happened around the Center for Women's Health Research this past fall and early winter. As we look forward to another successful year, I wanted to take a moment to share some of our accomplishments and news from this past quarter.*

*In October, over 700 people came together for another Annual Community Luncheon at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. This event holds special importance for us, as it allows us to connect meaningfully with our community about important issues concerning women's health and sex differences research. The topic this year was "What Do Sex Differences Have To Do With It? Understanding Hormones and Health Across the Lifespan." The event featured a keynote address by C. Neill Epperson, MD, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, as well as an accompanying lecture by CWHR researcher Kerrie Moreau, PhD.*



*We were proud to host the Annual Directors' Meeting of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists (FRCS) in December at the Anschutz Medical Campus. The FRCS works to alleviate the attrition of physician scientists at academic medical schools due to unmanageable extraprofessional challenges such as serious illness with parents or children. It has benefited a number of CWHR researchers, as well as other scientists across the country.*

*We continued our mission to educate the public about women's health issues through our lecture series entitled "Let's Talk: Conversations About Women's Health." Last Fall, we organized two events, "Implicit Bias Matters" and "Head, Heart, and Hormones." As always, we received enthusiastic feedback and a great deal of community engagement with these programs.*

*Finally, we are always proud to announce the accomplishments of our faculty. This quarter, numerous CWHR researchers received awards for their dedicated work, which you can read about in the "Accolades" section of this newsletter. Your dedicated support for these researchers is a key element for their success.*

*We thank you for your continued support of the Center for Women's Health Research, and we hope to see you at an upcoming educational event.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Regensteiner".

*Judy Regensteiner, Director*

# Community Events

## C. Neill Epperson, MD, Delivers Keynote Address at Annual Community Luncheon

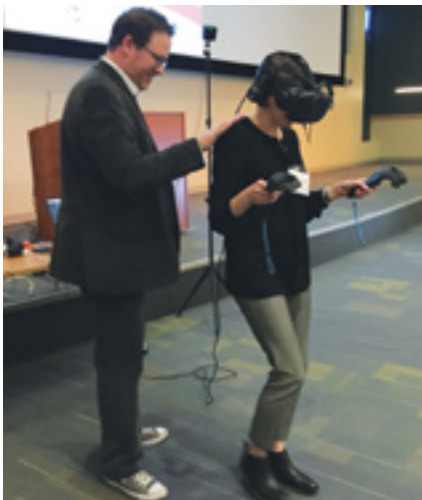
The CWHR's 2017 Annual Community Luncheon was a tremendous success, marking the 15<sup>th</sup> year of an event that brings together supporters of the Center and business and community leaders. Over 700 people attended the event.

C. Neill Epperson, MD, (pictured), Professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Pennsylvania, delivered this year's keynote address. Dr. Epperson is a leading clinical expert and researcher in mood and behavioral disorders across the lifespan. Her excellent lecture, entitled "What Do Sex Differences Have To Do With It? Understanding Hormones and Health Across the Lifespan," was accompanied by a presentation by CWHR researcher Kerrie Moreau, PhD.



## Let's Talk: Implicit Bias Matters

On October 26, the "Let's Talk: Conversations About Women's Health" series continued with a discussion on implicit bias in healthcare. The talk featured Brenda J. Allen, MD, who delivered a presentation on defining and demystifying implicit bias; Matthew Wynia, MD, who discussed an episode from his podcast, "Hard Call," that focused on mental illness and stigma; and Matt Vogel, MPH, who gave a demonstration of the ways virtual reality can help train people to mitigate the effects of bias.



*Left: Matt Vogel, MPH assists a participant with a virtual reality headset.*

*Right: Brenda J. Allen, MD, lectures about ways to define and understand implicit bias.*

## Community Events

### Let's Talk: Your Head, Your Heart, & Your Hormones

This installment of the “Let’s Talk: Conversations About Women’s Health,” held on November 28, focused on hormones’ affects on physical and mental health. The talk featured Nanette Santoro, MD, delivering a presentation entitled “Help! Menopause Has Taken Away My Waistline!”; Marc-Andre Cornier, MD, lecturing on brain function and overeating; and Huntington Potter, PhD, discussing his pursuit for an Alzheimer’s cure.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Women’s resting metabolic rate may drop by 25% around the time of menopause, due to hormonal decline and aging. This means that women cannot continue to consume the same amount of calories and expect to stay at the same body weight. You must decrease your consumption of calories by about 400 kcal or increase your activity to make up for this gap.
- Using functional MRI brain-neuroimaging, researchers found that people have increased brain response when shown images of highly caloric food (e.g. chocolate cake), versus images of less appetizing objects. Exercise can alter the brain response to pictures of food.
- People with rheumatoid arthritis rarely develop Alzheimer’s disease. Conversely, people with Down Syndrome are at a greatly increased risk due to their extra copy of chromosome 21, which carries the amyloid precursor protein gene that can lead to a buildup of plaques and tangles in the brain.

## Faculty Support

### Fund To Retain Clinical Scientists

On December 7, the University of Colorado School of Medicine and the Center for Women’s Health Research hosted the Annual Directors’ Meeting of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation’s Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists (FRCS) at the Anschutz Medical Campus. The Fund works to alleviate the attrition of physician scientists at academic medical schools due to unmanageable extraprofessional challenges such as serious illness and family obligations. In a competitive process, grants were awarded to 10 U.S. medical schools, including ours. The discussion among the Directors was wide-ranging, covering such topics as recruitment and retention of FRCS Scholars as well as challenges and obstacles common to the field of academic medicine. The grant recipients from the University of Colorado shared their personal stories, all of them touching and inspiring, and discussed their career challenges with the Directors.



*Judy Regensteiner, PhD, (right) with Betsy Myers, PhD, of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (left).*

## Faculty News

### Jane Reusch, President of the Science and Medicine Committee of the American Diabetes Association

CWHR Associate Director Jane Reusch, MD, traveled to Iran this October for Sanofi Iran's 2<sup>nd</sup> Iranian Diabetes Advancements in Research Event (iDARE). Dr. Reusch, President of American Diabetes Association (ADA), was one of a group of distinguished experts to speak at the event in Tehran, which brought together over 400 Iranian diabetes experts and aimed to encourage collaboration and advance strategies to improve diabetes care in Iran. Dr. Reusch discussed current ADA guidelines and strategies for integration of lifestyle change and medical treatments for individuals dealing with diabetes. "The people of Tehran were friendly, warm, and welcoming," Dr. Reusch says. "The caliber of the lectures was outstanding across the board. Very thoughtful, very evidence based. Questions from the audience were very insightful. And the opportunity to see some of the highlights of Tehran, including the recently built green bridge (designed by a 24-year-old female architect), was fantastic. I would be so happy to visit again. We, as Americans, have much more in common with the people of Iran than we tend to think."



### Judy Regensteiner, PhD, Travels to New York for World Diabetes Day

CWHR Director Dr. Judy Regensteiner was honored to represent the American Heart Association at a World Diabetes Day event at the Danish Consul's residence in New York City on November 14. Dr. Regensteiner was chosen because of her work on sex differences in the cardiovascular consequences of type 2 diabetes. The city illuminated One World Trade, pictured below, blue in honor of World Diabetes Day.



*Left: Dr. Judy Regensteiner at the World Diabetes Day event in New York City.*

*Right: One World Trade, illuminated blue in honor of World Diabetes Day.*

# Accolades



**Jane Reusch, MD**, received a Veterans Affairs grant to study microvascular contributions to impaired functional exercise capacity in diabetes. Dr. Reusch is testing a new strategy using nitrites to bypass the biological impairments created by diabetes. Dr. Reusch also received a VA Clinical Merit Review Award with CWHR Director Judy Regensteiner, PhD, to study sex differences in the cardiovascular adaptation to exercise training in people with and without diabetes.

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**Petter Bjornstad, MD**, received the 2017 Endocrine Society Young Investigator Award and the 2017 International Society of Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes Young Investigator Award. He was also awarded a Research Fellowship from Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) and the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes. In addition, he received NIH career development grant.

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**Kristen Boyle, PhD**, received the Innovative Clinical or Translational Science Award from the American Diabetes Association, a three-year grant, for her project aimed at identifying neonatal predictors of child metabolic health outcomes. She was also invited to give a lecture on obesity and adipose tissue biology at the 2019 Keystone Symposia in Alberta.

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**Corey Rynders, PhD**, received a career development grant from the NIH for his study entitled “Time Restricted Feeding and Circadian Rhythms in Metabolism.” The project will examine how the circadian timing of energy intake influences body weight regulation in men and women.

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**Vanessa Sherk, PhD**, received funding through the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute KL2 Research Scholar Award for her project entitled “Metabolic Dysfunction and Pediatric Bone Health.” Dr. Sherk will conduct a series of translational studies to elucidate mechanisms by which dietary fat influences bone development.

# Meet Our Researchers

## Josie Broussard, PhD

**Dr. Broussard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Integrative Physiology at the University of Colorado-Boulder. She received the Ludeman Family seed grant from the Center for Women's Health Research in 2017.**

**Your research focuses on a very interesting topic: sleep. Can you describe the inspiration that led you to pursue this work?**

The “a-ha” moment, the initial inspiration, came in graduate school. I was working on my PhD in a sleep lab, but all my coursework focused on molecular biology. I began to wonder—sort of wistfully—whether I would ever be able to look at human tissue and its relationship to a specific behavior like sleep. Luckily, I had a very supportive thesis committee. They all said, “Well, why can't you?”



**How has mentoring factored into your development as a researcher?**

I feel extremely fortunate, thus far in my career, to have received amazing mentorship and inspiration from strong women scientists who have shown me that it's possible to balance family life with academia. My first boss at Harvard had twins right before she received her first R01 award. She commuted from New Hampshire to Boston during those years and still managed to make it work. She would take days off to go skiing and call me from the gondola with an idea for work; in other words, she not only made a balanced life possible, she made it fun. My PhD mentors all had kids, too, but they nonetheless enjoyed the ebb and flow of science life, which can be quite intense and round-the-clock (especially for a sleep researcher). During my post-doc, I did a project that required 38-hour experiments, and I slept in the lab a lot. But there are quiet weeks, too, and I like the variety. I'm hoping to pass along the same attitude to my mentees. I want to teach them to appreciate the perks of science and know that, while sometimes you have to sleep in the lab, it's possible to have a life outside of work, too.

**What are your goals for the future of your research?**

I'm really excited about my current work because I feel it's in perfect alignment with all of my previous training and research interests. I'm eager to study how the disruption of sleep and/or circadian rhythms impacts individual tissues and individual cells. I want to follow this line of research to understand why every cell fundamentally needs sleep to stay healthy.

# Meet Our Donors

## Lyda Ludeman

Longtime CWHR supporter Lyda Ludeman considers herself to be very lucky—lucky to have had a long and engaging career in technology and to have found the Center for Women’s Health Research (CWHR). Lyda initially came to know the CWHR having been inspired by CWHR Director Dr. Judy Regensteiner’s enthusiasm and strong advocacy for women’s health and sex differences research. “I found this program and decided I wanted to learn more and do my part for women’s health,” says Lyda.



(Achievement Reward for College Scientists) Foundation, which supports undergraduate and graduate students pursuing STEM careers in research. Lyda saw a natural fit in also supporting the early careers of young PhD and MD scientists who are trained and funded by the CWHR.

Lyda has been especially impressed with how the CWHR has listened to her interests and has connected her to areas of research that

Over the past several years, Lyda has attended and generously supported the Center for Women’s Health Research Annual Community Luncheon. She has also been a loyal attendee of the CWHR’s Let’s Talk: Conversations about Women’s Health community education events. Lyda has spent time with CWHR scientists and has supported junior faculty through a seed grant.

Lyda’s passion for science and technology was rooted in her 25-year career with IBM. As one of the few women system engineers at IBM in the early 1970s, she worked closely with hospitals to install IBM hardware and health-oriented software packages for more efficient management of health care operations. Her interest in the CWHR blossomed out of her many years of volunteering with the ARCS

she wants to support. Of particular interest is how analysis of large databases can bolster personalized medicine, leading to more targeted diagnoses, disease management, and treatment options. She is also intrigued by how circadian rhythm and sleep affect the body. A CWHR seed grant that she has generously provided supports research in this area. You can find more details within the Meet Our Researchers section of this newsletter.

She appreciates having the opportunity to support what she so deeply cares about. “It is never too late to get involved. Funding for research is the greatest struggle. I am grateful to have the energy and interest to apply what I learned in the tech world to things that are worthwhile and helpful to us all – the health of us all,” says Lyda. The CWHR and its scientists are equally as fortunate and extremely grateful to be connected to and supported by Lyda!

# Donor Honor Roll

**The CWHR received gifts from the following donors between September 2, 2017 and November 30, 2017.  
We are incredibly grateful for your generous support.**

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