



## Center Without Walls Program PANELISTS

MS Forum

Saturday, September 5, 2020 @ 10:00 am

Webinar (Zoom) or Facebook Live

### Doctors and Researchers:

#### ***Lilyana Amezcua, M.D. – USC***



Dr. Amezcua is an Associate Professor of Neurology. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from University of California Irvine in Irvine, California, her medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, followed by neurology residency and clinical fellowship in multiple sclerosis at the University of Southern California (USC) under the tutelage of Leslie Weiner, MD and a NMSS multiple sclerosis clinical fellowship award. She received her Master of Science degree in clinical, biomedical, and translational science from USC, Preventive Medicine, under a Clinical Translational Science Institute NIH KL2 award under tutelage of Annette Langer-Gould, MD, and PhD. She serves as principal investigator on multiple clinical projects and her research interests includes defining racial/ethnic disparities and modifiable (environmental and sociocultural) from non-modifiable genetic factors involved in disease severity and progression. She also serves as council to several boards such as the NMSS multicultural advisory board, MS Minority Research Engagement Partnership Network, and the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America. She is active within her community and lectures both in English and Spanish and was recognized for her dedication in 2015 with an induction into the NMSS Health Professionals Hall of Fame.

#### ***Etty (Tika) Benveniste Ph.D. – UAB MS Center***



Dr. Tika Benveniste is currently Senior Vice Dean for Basic Sciences at the UAB School of Medicine, and holds the Charlene A. Jones Endowed Chair in Neuroimmunology. She initiated research as a postdoctoral fellow at UCLA in the emerging field of neuroimmunology, elucidating mechanisms by which cells of the immune system and the central nervous system communicate and influence functionality. Dr. Benveniste was amongst the first group of investigators to elucidate that endogenous glial cells participated in immunological reactions within the brain. These studies have implications for a number of autoimmune/neurodegenerative diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's Disease. She leads an active program in understanding the biologic basis of macrophage and neutrophil polarization, and CD4<sup>+</sup> T-cell differentiation in the context of experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, an animal model of MS. Her lab is studying the mechanisms by which two signaling pathways, JAK/STAT and CK2, contribute to the pathogenesis of EAE/MS, seeking to elucidate the mechanisms that lead to aberrant activation of these pathways in EAE and the use of specific JAK and CK2 inhibitors to block these pathways *in vivo*. Her laboratory has over 240 publications on these topics in journals such as *J. Clin. Invest.*, *Insight*, *PNAS*, *J. Immunol.*, *J. Neurosci.*, *Nature Immunol.*, *Cancer Immunol. Res.*, *Mol. Cell Biol.*, *Clin. Cancer Res.*, and others. Dr. Benveniste was elected in 2009 as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Dr. Benveniste has been very active in the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the NIH with respect to Study Section membership, grant reviews and leadership.

***Peter Calabresi, M.D. – Johns Hopkins***



Peter A. Calabresi, MD is a Professor of Neurology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Director of the Johns Hopkins Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Center and the Division of Neuroimmunology and Neuroinfectious. He attended Yale College and Brown Medical School, and trained in Neurology at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, NY and Neuroimmunology at the NIH in Bethesda, Md. As director of the MS Center Diseases at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Calabresi is the principal investigator on several clinical trials. He has designed and directed several clinical trials investigating combination drug therapies in MS and is on the advisory board for three national multi-center clinical trials. Dr. Calabresi also mentors trainees and also oversees translational laboratory research projects within the Division. His specific laboratory research interest lies in understanding how to more specifically target the disease-causing effector memory T cells in MS without compromising healthy immune responses. Dr. Calabresi is also the recipient of a new five-year National MS Society collaborative center grant to study mechanisms to promote remyelination.

***Monica J Carson, Ph.D. - Riverside***



Professor and Chair, Division of Biomedical Sciences, UC Riverside, School of Medicine  
Monica J Carson, PhD is Professor and Chair of the Division of Biomedical Sciences at the University of California Riverside (UCR) School of Medicine. She also serves as the Director of UCR's Center for Glial-Neuronal Interactions and as Editor-in-Chief for ASN NEURO, the official journal of the American Society for Neurochemistry. Her research has focused on microglial biology, multiple sclerosis and neurodegeneration since her graduate studies.

***Anne Cross, M.D. - Washington University***



Professor Neurology, Section Head of Neuroimmunology, Washington University. Anne H. Cross MD graduated summa cum laude from the University of South Alabama with a B.S. in chemistry and cum laude from the University of Alabama School of Medicine, where she was selected for the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honorary. She did neurology residency training at George Washington University, serving as Chief Resident in her final year. Dr. Cross then trained in clinical multiple sclerosis and neuroimmunology at the National Institute of Health and in neuroimmunology and neuropathology at Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York. She was named a Harry Weaver Neuroscience Scholar of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. She joined the faculty of Washington University in 1991, as a specialist in MS and neuroimmunology. Her research interests are in the roles of B cells and antibodies in MS and its animal models, the role of adipokines in regulation of neuroimmunologic disorders, and the development of imaging techniques to identify and quantitate demyelination, axonal loss and inflammation in the CNS of animals and patients.

### **Andrew D. Goodman, M.D. - University of Rochester**



Professor of Neurology, Chief of the Neuroimmunology Division and Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Center at the University of Rochester. Dr. Goodman is a graduate of Rutgers University and the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School; he did residency training in internal medicine and neurology at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York City. He completed a research fellowship in the Neuroimmunology Branch at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland under the mentorship of Drs. Dale McFarlin and Henry McFarland. Dr. Goodman's interests include clinical and experimental therapeutics research. He has been the lead investigator (or a member of the steering committee) for various national and international clinical trials of new therapies for multiple sclerosis including natalizumab and dalfampridine. He is currently a member of the protocol steering committee for the "SPRINT MS" study of ibudilast in secondary progressive MS sponsored by NeuroNext (NIH) and NMSS. Dr. Goodman is the Rochester co-PI (along with Steven Goldman, MD, PhD) of a project that plans to perform a phase 1, first in man, study testing the safety of transplanting oligodendrocyte progenitor cells into patients with progressive multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Goodman has been a member of the International Advisory Committee on Clinical Trials in MS and the ACTRIMS board of directors. He has served the National Multiple Sclerosis Society as Chair of the Long-term Care Committee and a member of the Executive Committee of the National Clinical Advisory Board. He is a past Chair of the Multiple Sclerosis Section of the American Academy of Neurology and is the current president of the NY State Neurological Society.

### **David Hafler, M.D - Yale**



David A. Hafler, M.D. is the William S. and Lois Stiles Edgerly Professor and Chairman Department of Neurology and Professor of Immunobiology, Yale School of Medicine, and is the Neurologist-in-Chief of the Yale-New Haven Hospital. He graduated magna cum laude in 1974 from Emory University with combined B.S. and M.Sc. degrees in biochemistry, and the University of Miami School of Medicine in 1978. He then completed his internship in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins followed by a neurology residency at Cornell Medical Center-New York Hospital in New York. Dr. Hafler was trained in immunology at the Rockefeller University and then at Harvard where he joined the faculty in 1984 and later became the Breakstone Professorship of Neurology at Harvard and was a founding Associated Member of the Broad Institute at MIT. In 2009 he moved to Yale as the Chair of the Department of Neurology. Dr. Hafler is a clinical scientist with a research interest in the mechanism of multiple sclerosis with over 400 publications in the field of MS, autoimmunity and immunology. He is a co-founder of the International MS Genetic Consortium a group that identified the genes causing MS. He has served as a member of the editorial boards for *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and *the Journal of Experimental Medicine*, and is co-founder of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies and leads the NIH Autoimmunity Prevention Center Grant at Yale. He was a Jacob Javits Merit Award Recipient from the NIH and has won many awards including Dystel Prize for MS research from the American Academy of Neurology, the University of Miami Annual Distinguished Alumni Award, the Raymond Adams Prize from the American Neurologic Association, and was the 2016 Frontier Lecturer at the AAN. Dr. Hafler has been elected to membership in the Alpha Omega Society, the American Society of Clinical Investigation, and the National Academy of Medicine.

***Adam Kaplin, M.D, Ph.D. – Johns Hopkins***



Dr. Adam Kaplin graduated magna cum laude from Yale University before receiving his medical degree and Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he was a Medical Science Training Program awardee. He went on to complete an internship in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and a residency in psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he served as the chief resident of psychiatry. Now an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Kaplin focuses on the psychiatric complications of neurological diseases.

He researches the immune-mediated mechanisms of depression and cognitive impairment in transverse myelitis, multiple sclerosis and related autoimmune neurologic disorders, and the role of cytokines in these processes. He is on the board of medical advisors to the Transverse Myelitis Association (TMA) and the Montel Williams MS Foundation. Dr. Kaplin is the inventor and co-developer of [www.mood247.com](http://www.mood247.com), an automated Web and SMS coordinated mood tracker and mobile electronic health diary."

***Daniel S. Reich, M.D., Ph.D. - NIH***



Chief, Translational Neuroradiology Unit, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institute of Health. After studying math and physics at Yale (1993), Dr. Reich earned a Ph.D. in visual neurophysiology at The Rockefeller University (2000) and an M.D. from Cornell University (2002). He subsequently completed residencies in neurology and diagnostic radiology and a clinical fellowship in neuroradiology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is currently board-certified in both neurology and diagnostic radiology. He performed postdoctoral research under the simultaneous supervision of Peter Calabresi and Susumu Mori

at Johns Hopkins, during which he applied MRI, particularly diffusion-weighted imaging, to study multiple sclerosis. The focus of the Translational Neuroradiology Unit is to develop new MRI methods to investigate the origin of disability in multiple sclerosis and related disorders and to apply those methods to patient care and to clinical trials of new drugs.

***Jonathan D. Santoro, MD - USC***



Dr. Santoro serves as the Director of Neuroimmunology and Demyelinating Disorders Program at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He is also an Assistant Professor of Neurology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California. Dr. Santoro completed his undergraduate, masters, and medical degrees at Tulane University. He subsequently completed residencies in pediatrics and child neurology at Stanford University School of Medicine and subsequently had sub-specialty training in neuroimmunology and pediatric

multiple sclerosis at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Santoro is and passionate clinician-scientist who has published over 35 peer-reviewed manuscripts. His clinical and research focus is endocrine dysregulation in pediatric onset multiple sclerosis and the neuroimmunology of Down syndrome. He currently serves on the American Academy of Neurology's Health Policy Sub-committee and as the representative of the AAN to the American Medical Association. Dr. Santoro is a long-standing advocate for persons with disabilities and has lobbied locally in California and on Capitol Hill.

***Nancy L. Sicotte, M.D. – Cedars-Sinai***



Nancy L. Sicotte, MD is professor and vice chair for education in the department of Neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. She is the Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Program and founding Director of the Neurology Residency Training Program. She is also the site director for the third-year UCLA medical student neurology clerkship rotation. Dr. Sicotte graduated with honors from Brown University with a BS in Psychology. She earned her medical degree from University of California Irvine School of Medicine and completed an internship in internal medicine, residency in neurology and fellowship in neuroimaging at UCLA Medical Center and has been a member of the faculty since 1999. Since joining the department of neurology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in 2010, Dr. Sicotte has developed an integrated multiple sclerosis program that includes patient care, education and research. Her research focuses on the use of advanced structural and functional imaging to study MS disease progression including cognitive impairment and depression. She is a founding member of the North American Imaging in MS (NAIMS) Cooperative, which utilizes state of the art imaging approaches across multiple centers in the US and Canada to develop reliable imaging markers of disease progression in MS. She has received numerous awards including Best Doctors in America. She has been a member of the volunteer faculty at the Venice Family Clinic since 1998.

***Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D. - UCLA***



Rhonda Voskuhl, M.D. received her medical degree from Vanderbilt University. She did neurology residency at the University of Texas Southwestern and an MS fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Voskuhl is currently the Director of the MS Program, the Jack H. Skirball Chair in MS Research, and Professor in the Dept. of Neurology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dr. Voskuhl was a recipient of the Harry Weaver Neuroscience Scholar Award from the National MS Society and lead two separate five-year MS Collaborative Center Awards from the NMSS. She is an internationally recognized expert in MS, focusing on translational work moving from the bedside (clinical observations) to the bench (research) to the bedside (novel clinical trials). Dr. Voskuhl has led four novel clinical trials in MS testing new treatments based on results from research in her laboratory. She received the Berlin Institute of Health Excellence Award for Sex and Gender Aspects in Health Research for 2018, a global award recognizing excellence in all areas of health research (not limited to MS). Dr. Voskuhl is also President of the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, an international organization dedicated to understanding sex differences in diseases to advance health in both women and men. Dr. Voskuhl's patient care focuses on the diagnosis of MS as well as on changes in MS treatment management. She trains the next generation of MS researchers, including junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduates. Her laboratory is currently funded by two grants from the National Institutes of Health to find new remyelinating and neural repair strategies for MS and by another from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation which translates basic research in neuroprotective strategies to MS patients.

***Emmanuelle L. Waubant, M.D., Ph.D. - UCSF***



Emmanuelle L. Waubant, MD, PhD, received her medical degree at the University of Lille, France. She then trained in France as well as at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in adult neurology, neuroimmunology and MS clinical research. She is currently Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at UCSF. She has served as the Race to Erase MS medical director since 2001. She also directs the Regional Pediatric MS Center at UCSF and is the secretary for the American Committee on Treatment and Research in MS. Dr. Waubant serves or has served on the clinical care, fellowship and research grant review committees of the National Multiple

Sclerosis Society and on the advisory board of the Society's Northern California Chapter. She is the Chair of the Clinical Trial Task Force of the International Pediatric MS Study Group. She is a member of the International Pediatric MS Study Group Steering Committee. She serves on the Nomination Committee of the American Neurological Association. She is a section editor for *Annals of Clinical Translational Neurology* and co-chief editor of *MS and Related Disorders*. She also directs several translational research projects and mentors medical students, fellows and junior faculty on various clinical, research and career development aspects in the field of MS and related diseases. In 2018, Dr. Waubant started an international consortium (international Women in MS) to foster a community of clinicians and scientists, and contribute to mentoring and blossoming of junior women in the field of MS. Dr. Waubant's specific interests include the translation of promising agents from the bench to bedside to advance patients' care, and risk factors for MS susceptibility and disease modification in pediatric and adult MS.

***Howard Weiner, M.D. - Harvard***



Howard L. Weiner is a neurologist, neuroscientist and immunologist who is also a writer and filmmaker. He performs clinical and basic research focused on Multiple Sclerosis and other neurologic diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease and Lou Gehrig's Disease. His work also focuses on autoimmune diseases such as diabetes. Weiner is the Robert L. Kroc Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Director of the Partners MS Center at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Co-Director of the Ann Romney Center for Neurologic Diseases<sup>[5]</sup> at the BWH in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Weiner has pioneered the use of immunotherapy and the drug cyclophosphamide for the treatment of multiple sclerosis and has investigated immune

abnormalities in the disease including the role of the innate immune system and regulatory T cells. He has also pioneered the use of the mucosal immune system for the treatment of autoimmune and other diseases. Based on his work vaccines are being tested in multiple sclerosis, diabetes, and most recently in Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Weiner is the author of "Curing MS: How Science is Solving the Mystery of Multiple Sclerosis" that chronicles the history of MS, his 30+ years in the research and clinical treatment of MS, and details his "21 point hypothesis" on the etiology and treatment of multiple sclerosis. He has also published *The Children's Ward*, a novel, and *Neurology for the House Officer*, a medical text.

### ***Vijayshree Yadav, M.D. – Oregon Health Sciences***



Dr. Yadav is a board-certified neurologist who is fellowship trained in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Neuro-immunology and honored with a Masters degree in Clinical Research. She serves as the Clinical Director of the MS Center of Oregon and is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon. As a clinician-scientist, she is very interested in improving health using complementary therapies such as dietary modification. She is the Principal Investigator of a clinical research investigating effects of low-fat diet intervention in MS. Her research has been funded by National Institute of Health and National MS Society and has been involved in clinical trials investigating role of oral lipoic acid in MS for the last several years. Dr. Yadav has published several articles and book chapters and is a regular presenter at the local and national meetings. MS Center of Oregon at OHSU has been involved in conducting clinical trials in MS more than two decades and is supported by clinicians, nurses and research assistants who take pride in providing the finest care for MS and being the leaders in the innovative research in MS. Dr. Yadav's research interests include complementary and alternative treatment options for multiple sclerosis including dietary and life style changes as well as supplements such as lipoic acid. She has published several peer reviewed journal articles and presented her research at national and international meetings.

### **Panelists with MS:**

#### ***Nancy Davis (Founder of Race to Erase MS)***



Nancy Davis, one of five children, was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. In 1987 she moved to California and now resides in Los Angeles with her husband and five children. Nancy is an active individual with an incredible zest for life. She skis, plays tennis, has a black belt in karate, exercises, and travels – living her life to the fullest. She is an extremely dedicated philanthropist, jewelry and now clothing designer and author. Most importantly, she is a full-time mother who is devoted to her five children. Nancy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 33 in 1991. After being told by her doctors that she would be “lucky” to operate a remote control on her TV, she realized she was too young and too busy to let the disease stop her life in its tracks. She was determined to devote her time, relationships and resources to finding a cure. Nancy’s hope, courage and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest, and is tireless in her efforts to finding the cure for MS.

#### ***Claudia Curry Hill (Moderator)***



Claudia Curry Hill was diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS over 30 years ago. An activist for women’s health and the disabled, she is very active in founding and serving on Non-Profit and Community Boards and Committees, including the Race to Erase MS and the Colorado, Wyoming MS Society Government Relations Committee and is a spokesperson for Multiple Sclerosis. Claudia is married, the mother of three and the owner of CCH Connections, a non-profit and event consulting group in Colorado.

She believes that exercise, a positive attitude and empowering yourself with all the information you can find will improve your quality of life until a cure is found.