



## LA CATS CENTER INSIDER

2025 Spring Edition



### Message From the Director

Greetings! Spring is a time of strategic renewal, where every new initiative and opportunity blossoms into potential success. The LA CaTS Center IDeA-CTR has experienced remarkable growth, thanks to the commitment of all our stakeholders across the state. Click [here](#) to read more on our achievements to date. Through our collective expertise and institutional resources, I am confident that our achievements will continue to expand. I extend my wishes that this spring season brings renewed energy and abundant growth in all your endeavors!

Sincerely,  
John Kirwan, PhD  
LA CaTS Center IDeA-CTR Director  
Executive Director, Pennington Biomedical

## Join us on Friday, April 4th for our Annual Professional Development Plenary Talk!



**LA CaTS Professional Development Core Presents**  
*"Individualizing Diabetes Treatment Goals in Older Adults – The Role of A1c Stability"*



APRIL 4, 2025



◆ 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

### Guest speaker

**Paul R. Conlin, MD**

Harvard Clinical & Translational Science Center  
Chief of Medical Service, VA Boston Healthcare System  
Professor, Harvard Medical School

University Medical Center, 2000 Canal  
Street, New Orleans, LA 70112 Conference  
Center Rooms C & F

Note: This event is free and open to public     A light lunch will be provided for the attendees preceding the talk

Talk presented in person and virtually via Zoom

For more information, contact Michelle Wilson | [mwilso21@tulane.edu](mailto:mwilso21@tulane.edu)  
or Oriyan Ceasar | [oceaser1@tulane.edu](mailto:oceaser1@tulane.edu)  
Please click [here](#) to RSVP



[Register Now for Translational Science 2025](#)



Meet our LA CaTS Featured Investigator Dr. Tyra Gross. Dr. Gross is a LA CaTS Community Scholar from Xavier University of Louisiana.

Click on her name below to learn about her research and success.



[Tyra Gross, PhD](#)

[Xavier University](#)

Research Focus: Maternal & child health disparities



**LA CaTS Center's Participation in the 2025 SSCI Southern Regional Meeting**

[Get the scoop!](#)

# Congratulations



**Bijoyaa Mohapatra, PhD**  
LSU A&M

2025 LA CaTS Grant Development Award  
Program New Awardee

Received a small grant award to help develop a grant application to address "*Aging-Related Health Disparities in African Americans through a Multi-Level, Community-Engaged Intervention*"

## HATS OFF TO OUR RESEARCHERS



**Amanda Stalano, PhD**  
Pennington Biomedical

*Roadmap Scholar Cohort 4*

[Author of Childhood Obesity's Most](#)

[Downloaded Paper of 2024](#)



**Vivian Fonseca, MD**  
Tulane University

*Professional Development Core & Clinical*

*Research Resources*

[Received the 2025 Southern Society for  
Clinical Investigation \(SSCI\) Founders Medal](#)



**Keith Ferdinand, MD**  
Tulane University

**Community Scholar Cohort 4**

[Featured in The American Journal of  
Managed Care](#)



**Sarah Jolley, MD**  
LSU Health New Orleans

**Roadmap Scholar Cohort 4**

[Joins HHS's Long COVID Advisory  
Committee](#)



**Paul Fidel, Jr, PhD**  
LSU Dental School

**Clinical Research Resources**

**-Awarded R01 from NIAID**

**-Received the 2024 Medical Mycological  
Society of the Americas (MMSA) – Rhoda  
Benham Lifetime Achievement Award for  
Medical Mycology**



**Chris Axelrod, MS**  
Pennington Biomedical

**LA CaTS Investigator**

[First Place Poster Award at the 2025  
Southern Regional Meeting](#)

## Funding & Training Opportunities



**LA CaTS Grant Development Award Program** supports investigators with sufficient preliminary data to support collaborative grant-writing teams. Awards are up to \$5,000 in total costs.

**Open enrollment until the maximum numbers of awards are met.**

[More details](#)



**LA CaTS Visiting Scholars Program** supports training opportunities for junior investigators to enhance skills or learn new technique. Awards are up to \$5,000 in total costs.

**Open enrollment until the maximum numbers of awards are met.**

[More details](#)



**Short Experiences in Clinical Trials** support junior investigators in clinical or translational research, and to link them with clinical trial mentors to assist their development in the field. Each award may be up to \$5,000 in total costs.

**Open enrollment until the maximum numbers of awards are met.**

[More details](#)



## Calendar of Events



[UAB MHERC 2025 Health Equity Research Symposium: Health Equity Across the Life Course](#)

Apr 3, 2025  
Birmingham, AL



[2025 LA CaTS Professional Development Core Retreat & Plenary Talk](#)

Speaker: Paul Conlin, MD, Harvard Catalyst

Apr 4, 2025  
New Orleans, LA & Zoom



[RECOVER Research Review \(R3\) Seminar Series: Effectiveness of Paxlovid in Protecting Against Long COVID: EHR Insights](#)

Apr 8, 2025  
Zoom



[UAB Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education \(CEORE\) Methods Symposium](#)

Apr 10, 2025  
Birmingham, AL & Zoom



[Translational Science 2025](#)

Apr 14-17, 2025  
Washington, D.C.



[2025 Southeastern Regional IDeA Conference](#)

Sep 25-27, 2025  
New Orleans, LA



[2026 Southern Regional Meeting - Abstract Deadline](#)

Oct 3, 2025

[2026 Southern Regional Meeting](#)

Feb 26-28, 2026  
New Orleans, LA



[NISBRE 2026](#)

Jun 14-17, 2026  
Bethesda, MD

[See full calendar details](#)

## LA CaTS in the Community



### Forge AHEAD Community Micro-Grant Program Louisiana Townhall

The LA CaTS Community Engagement & Outreach Core hosted a townhall-style meeting to learn more about how community-based organizations in Louisiana can apply for the Forge AHEAD Centers Community Micro-Grant Program. LA CaTS Community Advisory Board members and community leaders interested in initiatives to address health disparities in Louisiana were encouraged to participate and submit proposals. Over a dozen community-based organizations from across Louisiana were represented in the online gathering. "Forge AHEAD

Center's Community Micro-Grant Program initiative is designed to support community organizations in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in developing innovative, community-driven projects that promote equitable health outcomes related to diabetes, obesity, and hypertension". Visit the [Forge AHEAD Community Micro-Grant Program website](#) for more information.



*Dr. Jen Caldwell, Director, Public Health Genomics Laboratory, Pennington Biomedical Research Center*

#### Advancing Health Equity Through Genomics

Dr. Jennifer Caldwell, a LA CaTS Roadmap Scholar and CEO Core member, is bringing public health genomics research directly to the community. Dr. Caldwell's focus is on increasing genetic testing awareness in African American communities through the *Genesis Ai* project. Her research explores how ancestry, culture, and behavior contribute to transgenerational health disparities. Through her work she is examining how knowledge of genetic risk for cardiometabolic disorders influences health behavior change.

Dr. Caldwell's Public Health Genomics Laboratory at Pennington Biomedical Research Center is also developing a digital genetics education platform to improve health literacy in African American communities. This research is a vital step toward bridging gaps between genetics and community health, ensuring that scientific advancements benefit those most affected by health disparities. By engaging communities in research, we empower individuals to make informed health decisions and drive meaningful change in public health.

Contact Dr. Caldwell at [Jennifer.Caldwell@pbrc.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Caldwell@pbrc.edu)  
[Genesis Ai Recruitment Trailer](#)  
[More Information](#)

#### Recent Publications

[Validation of a novel approach to assess metabolic flexibility to a high-fat meal in a whole-body room calorimeter.](#)

McDougal DH, Sanchez-Delgado G, Flanagan EW, Marlatt KL, Sparks JR, Yang S, Redman LM, Ravussin E. Obesity (Silver Spring). 2025 Mar 6.

[Effect of Early and Delayed Treatment With Remdesivir on Mortality in Patients Hospitalized With COVID-19.](#)

Makkar SR, Hansen K, Hotaling N, Toler A, Sidky H. Open Forum Infect Dis. 2025 Feb 27;12(2):ofae740.

[Deubiquitinating Enzymes Regulate Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Quality Control and Insulin Sensitivity in Patients With Type 2 Diabetes.](#)

Dantas WS, Heintz EC, Zunica ERM, Mey JT, Erickson ML, Belmont KP, Taylor AL, Davuluri G, Fujioka H, Fealy CE, Hoppel CL, Axelrod CL, Kirwan JP. J Cachexia Sarcopenia Muscle. 2025 Apr;16(2):e13763.

[Protocol for a randomised controlled trial of a weight maintenance intervention to promote fat loss in pregnant individuals with obesity.](#)



Redman LM, Phelan S, Apolzan JW, Beyl RA, Altazan AD, Dickey MS, Simeon E, Flanagan EW, Cabre HE, Sparks JR, Kebbe M, Caughey AB, Valent AM, Hsia DS, Yin E, Keadle SK. BMJ Open. 2025 Feb 25;15(2):e095804.

[Response to Comment on Nathan et al. Relationship Between Average Glucose Levels and HbA1c Differs Across Racial Groups: A Substudy of the GRADE Randomized Trial. Diabetes Care 2024;47:2155-2163.](#)

Nathan DM. Diabetes Care. 2025 Mar 1;48(3):e34-e35.

[Development and validation of the Food Noise Questionnaire.](#)

Diktas HE, Cardel MI, Foster GD, LeBlanc MM, Dickinson SL, Ables EM, Chen X, Nathan R, Shapiro D, Martin CK. Obesity (Silver Spring). 2025 Feb;33(2):289-297.

[Definition and diagnostic criteria of clinical obesity.](#)

Rubino F, Cummings DE, Eckel RH, Cohen RV, Wilding JPH, Brown WA, Stanford FC, Batterham RL, Farooqi IS, Farpour-Lambert NJ, le Roux CW, Sattar N, Baur LA, Morrison KM, Misra A, Kadowaki T, Tham KW, Sumithran P, Garvey WT, Kirwan JP, Fernández-Real JM, Corkey BE, Toplak H, Kokkinos A, Kushner RF, Branca F, Valabhji J, Blüher M, Bornstein SR, Grill HJ, Ravussin E, Gregg E, Al Busaidi NB, Alfari NF, Al Ozairi E, Carlsson LMS, Clément K, Després JP, Dixon JB, Galea G, Kaplan LM, Laferrère B, Laville M, Lim S, Luna Fuentes JR, Mooney VM, Nadglowski J Jr, Urudinachi A, Olszanecka-Glinianowicz M, Pan A, Pattou F, Schauer PR, Tschöp MH, van der Merwe MT, Vettor R, Mingrone G. Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol. 2025 Mar;13(3):221-262.

[Effect of nirmatrelvir/ritonavir \(Paxlovid\) on hospitalization among adults with COVID-19. An electronic health record-based target trial emulation from N3C.](#)

Bhatia A, Preiss AJ, Xiao X, Brannock MD, Alexander GC, Chew RF, Davis H, Fitzgerald M, Hill E, Kelly EP, Mehta HB, Madlock-Brown C, Wilkins KJ, Chute CG, Haendel M, Moffitt R, Pfaff ER; N3C Consortium. PLoS Med. 2025 Jan 17;22(1):e1004493.

[Impact of COVID-19 Diagnosis on Weight Trajectories of Children in the US National COVID Cohort Collaborative.](#)

Mottalib MM, Phan TT, Bramante CT, Chute CG, Pyles LA, Beheshti R. medRxiv [Preprint]. 2025 Jan 5:2025.01.03.25319927.

[Twenty-Five Years of Evolution and Hurdles in Electronic Health Records and Interoperability in Medical Research: Comprehensive Review.](#)

Shen Y, Yu J, Zhou J, Hu G. J Med Internet Res. 2025 Jan 9;27:e59024.

[Improving weight loss and cardiometabolic risk in black patients with diabetes or pre-diabetes: Rationale and protocol for a digital medicine hybrid type 1 implementation trial.](#)

Katzmarzyk PT, Price-Haywood EG, Apolzan JW, Denstel KD, Drews KL, Farris E, Harden-Barrios J, Hearld LR, Mire EF, Martin CK, Newton RL, Pisu M. Contemp Clin Trials. 2025 Feb;149:107806.

[Racial disparities in gestational weight gain and adverse pregnancy outcomes among Black and White pregnant people with obesity.](#)

Kracht CL, Harville EW, Cohen NL, Sutton EF, Kebbe M, Redman LM. Obesity (Silver Spring). 2025 Feb;33(2):395-404.

[The association between android-to-gynoid lean mass ratio and all-cause and specific-cause mortality in US adults: A prospective study.](#)

Fan Y, Ding L, Li W, Li W, Sun L, Li X, Chang L, He Q, Hu G, Wang B, Liu M. Diabetes Obes Metab. 2025 Feb;27(2):595-605.

[Using Geographic Momentary Assessment to Explore Spatial Environment Influences on Wellbeing in People With HIV.](#)

Gasik RE, Smith EA, Skeen SJ, Tokarz S, Clum G, Felker-Kantor E, Theall KP. AIDS Behav. 2025 Jan;29(1):342-355.

[Body mass index trajectories and time in target range after delivery and long-term type 2 diabetes risk in women with a history of gestational diabetes mellitus.](#)

Zhang L, Shen Y, Liu H, Li W, Wang L, Zhang S, Leng J, Li W, Liang Z, Yu Z, Yang X, Hu G. Diabetes Obes Metab. 2025 Jan;27(1):320-327.

[Modulators of Energy Expenditure Accuracy in Adults with Overweight or Obesity: E-MECHANIC Secondary Analyses.](#)

Matthews R, Höchsmann C, Erickson ML, Dorling JL, Spielmann G, Johannsen NM, Church TS, Martin CK. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2025 Mar 1;57(3):470-480.

[Associations between COVID-19 therapies and outcomes in rural and urban America: A multisite, temporal analysis from the Alpha to Omicron SARS-CoV-2 variants.](#)

Anzalone AJ, Beasley WH, Murray K, Hillegass WB, Schissel M, Vest MT, Chapman SA, Horswell R, Miele L, Porterfield JZ, Bunnell HT, Price BS, Patrick S, Rosen CJ, Santangelo SL, McClay JC, Hodder SL; National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C) Consortium. J Rural Health. 2025 Jan;41(1):e12857.

[Determination of Glucose-Independent Racial Disparity in HbA1c for Youth With Type 1 Diabetes in the Era of Continuous Glucose Monitoring.](#)

Christakis NJ, Gioe M, Gomez R, Felipe D, Soros A, McCarter R, Chalew S. J Diabetes Sci Technol. 2025 Jan;19(1):72-79.



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