



NEWSLETTER
Spring 2012

A Letter from Center Director Kathryn A. Phillips, PhD

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As the seasons slowly shift from winter to spring, it seems appropriate that we here at TRANSPERS are also going through a period of growth and renewal. Though we continue to pursue our current research trajectory – investigating the utilization, economics and evidence base of personalized medicine – as the pace of technology accelerates, we are also turning toward an exciting new direction in research: whole genome sequencing.

And just as we are shifting and expanding our research focus, we are also happy as our collaborators shift and expand. We're thrilled to welcome back a long-time team member, and happy to wish other colleagues well as they receive well-deserved promotions and take hard-earned retirements.

It's a season of change, and of new beginnings. We wish you well this spring.

Kathryn Phillips, PhD
TRANSPERS Center Director

TRANSPERS Center News

TRANSPERS was highlighted at the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies Advisory Board meeting recently. The board is comprised of many well-known scientists and scholars, including Susan Dentzer, Editor-in-Chief of *Health Affairs*; Diane Rowland, Executive Vice President of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Executive Director of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured; Robert Valdez, Executive Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy; and Robert Reischauer, President of the Urban Institute.

Additionally, TRANSPERS collaborator **Deborah Marshall was a plenary speaker at the Health Canada and Canadian Institutes of Health Research Personalised Medicine in Canada: A Multi-Stakeholder Workshop to Examine the Canadian Perspective.** Her talk was titled Measuring Value in Personalized Medicine.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that TRANSPERS received a **UCSF Resource Allocation Program grant to build cross-disciplinary breadth for research on adoption of new technologies, focusing on personalized medicine.** We have already begun work on a main objective with this project, which is to focus on research project planning with junior faculty. With this grant, we will carry on a main goal of TRANSPERS, which is to expand our reach and to continue to foster the careers of new translational researchers.

TRANSPERS Welcomes Back Long-time Colleague

Previous TRANSPERS Executive Director, Stephanie Van Bebber, has returned as **Director of Research Operations.** Ms. Van Bebber brings expertise in preferences and economics research, as well as health policy analysis. Ms. Van Bebber graduated with a Master of Science in Economic Evaluation and Outcomes Research from the University of Toronto and has published extensively in peer-reviewed publications.

**To learn more about
TRANSPERS Center
research, please
visit our website at
<http://transpers.ucsf.edu>**

TRANSPERS Moves Into Exciting Research Area

Whole genome sequencing, or the sequencing of a person's entire genome, has dropped dramatically in price. Indeed, we are moving ever closer to the promised \$1,000 genome every day.

It's a provoking development in personalized medicine; one that brings with it a host of unanswered questions. What information do patients, caregivers and payers need to facilitate their decisions on whether to accept/utilize/ pay for the service? What are their attitudes and preferences? What are their needs?

We at TRANSPERS have jumped into the research area of whole genome sequencing with both feet:

- TRANSPERS founder Dr. Phillips was the **plenary speaker on WGS at a recent cancer consortium sponsored by Life Technologies**
- We are developing projects **to examine benefit-risk tradeoffs made in the course of considering and implementing WGS**, including payer views and economic value
- TRANSPERS Executive Director Julie Sakowski is **collaborating with local health care providers to develop projects that explore attitudes about WGS implementation** in the community practice setting
- Dr. Phillips will soon **meet with scientists at Stanford University**, who are sequencing 40 of their scientist peers and carrying out a study on patients who are similarly being sequenced

TRANSPERS Colleagues On the Move

We are always excited to see our colleagues experience growth and change in their careers.

Sara J. Knight, Ph.D. has accepted the position of Deputy Director of VA's Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D), and assumed her Deputy Director responsibilities on March 11, 2012. Dr. Knight currently serves as Acting Director of HSR&D's "Program to Improve Care for Veterans with Complex Comorbid Conditions," based in San Francisco, CA.

Dr. Knight received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Southern Illinois University. Her research interests include decision making in cancer care, palliative medicine, genomics and personalized medicine. She has received research funding from the VA, Department of Defense, National Institutes of Health, and National Cancer Institute, and has authored or co-authored more than 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals. We are proud of Dr. Knight's accomplishments and wish her continued success in this next phase of her career.

Martin Brown, PhD, a long-time colleague and TRANSPERS Project Director, will soon retire from his position as Chief of NCI's Health Services and Economics Branch, a position he's held since 1999. He received his Ph.D. in Natural Resource Economics from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1981. His most recent research has focused on the economics burden of cancer prevention and control, and he has worked to improve the system of healthcare delivery organization and financing by studying the impacts of socioeconomic status, estimating the cost-effectiveness of specific cancer prevention and control strategies, and developing and evaluating methods of estimating the cost-effectiveness of various programs and policies.

Dr. Brown will be missed.