

# Research and Education

## 2023 Institute Highlights



### Gratitude is in order

We have a lot to be thankful for as we consider some of the 2023 highlights from across HealthPartners Institute. There were many projects and initiatives in research, evaluation and education that generated impressive and impactful results. Once again, we present a sampling of highlights to provide a glimpse into another successful year in the Institute's journey.

Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion extended deep into our research and education efforts this year. In these highlights you'll see newly funded research studies, research participant recruitment, outreach to the community, and simulation education.

You'll also read about new ways we are leveraging the expertise of the Institute, including targeted planning and design to address HealthPartners' workforce needs, and innovative treatment development for traumatic brain injury.

Finally, we are grateful to have such deeply engaged and high-performing teams. Institute colleagues continue to rate their workplace satisfaction and engagement above other high-performing health care organizations. One hundred percent of our physician residents agree that they work in a supportive work environment. And several of our colleagues were recognized with President's Awards this year, our organization's highest honor. It is a privilege to work alongside this team.

Enjoy this 2023 HealthPartners Institute Highlights report.

With gratitude,

Nico Pronk, PhD  
President and Institutional Official  
HealthPartners Institute  
Chief Science Officer, HealthPartners

Jen Augustson  
Vice President  
HealthPartners Institute

### Role of Clinical Simulation expands in multiple ways

Our Clinical Simulation program continues to grow — in the training they offer and in square footage. With more than 9,500 health professionals participating in our programs, evolution and innovation are key to building experiential education that improves patient care and care team experience.

#### **Real-world experiences**

A patient in a dental chair suddenly slouched and slid to the floor. They were unresponsive and care teams had to act fast. Thankfully, the patient was a life-like manikin, and the episode marked the start of a seizure simulation. While medical emergencies are rare, the anxiety and high blood pressure some patients experience during a dental visit make preparing for the unexpected a must. We've been conducting dental simulations for 15 years.

The impact of simulation applies to more than clinical training. It is a powerful way to support diversity, equity and inclusion. We've trained more than 800 people to respond to incidents of racism and other forms of bias directed at care team members. Creating a safe space to react to simulated racism gives participants confidence to address real issues in the future.

#### **Practice makes perfect**

Opened in 2023, the Clinical Simulation Center at Regions Hospital allows care teams to practice everything from brain surgery to caring for a victim of a crash. The 7,000 square foot space offers training for all manner of medical scenarios using innovative tools like virtual reality headsets, three-dimensional printing, and high-fidelity manikins that mimic real-life. Donations from the Otto Bremer Trust, the Fred C. and Katherine B. Anderson Foundation and others contributed significantly to this space.



Ryan Aga, Director of Clinical Simulation, shows some of the features of the new simulation space.

*"The advantage of simulation? Going through the motions makes lessons learned easier to internalize and remember."*  
— Lori Winters, Simulation Specialist



## Supporting equitable health for pregnant people and children

Our Pregnancy and Child Health Research Center focused on several important projects to help advance diversity, equity and inclusion in our research. These included:

- An award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) has supported partnerships with colleagues, community members, health care professionals and parents of young children, with a focus on whole-child growth. Together, the group will co-create equitable guidelines for studying chronic disease prevention, eating, activity and whole-child growth. The award promotes vital collaboration with HealthPartners care group, the University of Minnesota and community partners at Northside Achievement Zone and Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio.
- We were awarded a \$250,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to examine race and language disparities in COVID-19 vaccine uptake among pregnant and lactating individuals.
- The Center hosted its second annual research symposium, a free public event. The keynote panel focused on youth mental health, including access to care, LGBTQ+ populations and gender-affirming care. Other topics covered during the full-day symposium included: attitudes about prenatal RSV vaccine; managing depression during pregnancy; and a conceptual model of postpartum depression in Black professional women.

## Contributions of residents and fellows extend beyond care

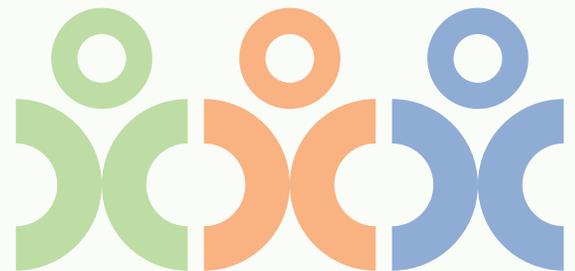
Residents and fellows training in our hospitals and clinics are active members of our care teams and contribute to the learning environment we seek to create. This past year, 100% of sponsored residents participated in scholarly activities, such as quality improvement projects, research or presentations. Through this work, important questions and ideas like the one below are explored.

With rates of substance use and mental health emergencies rising, so are the cases of patients experiencing agitation. Pre-hospital clinicians, such as paramedics, are attempting to provide care to these patients often in an unstable environment or moving vehicle. Physical restraints and/or sedation may be necessary to protect the patient and those around them as they are transported to the hospital.

Haley Taormina, MD, is a recent graduate from our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) fellowship program. She led a retrospective analysis to evaluate rates of physical restraint and sedation prior to hospital arrival to help determine opportunities for standardized care. Next up is education on pre-hospital use of sedation followed by measurement to see if standard use reduces the number of patients arriving at the hospital experiencing agitation. Dr. Taormina presented a poster of the team's findings at the National Association of EMS Physicians annual meeting.

We reached a milestone of recruiting more than 2,600 participants into

All of Us, a national precision medicine research program funded by the National Institutes of Health. We are one of eight health plans and 685 institutions across the country contributing to one of the largest, most diverse health databases. Across all sites, over 760,000 people have enrolled, with 81% from populations historically underrepresented in biomedical research.



Our Office of Health Professional Education onboarded 3,087 students for clinical rotations this past year. Students received essential training for their education and experienced our mission and culture at HealthPartners.

## Easing financial stress for people with type 2 diabetes

People with diabetes spend more than twice as much on medical expenses as those without diabetes. Could a promising new glucose monitoring technology help ease this economic burden?

It's an additional question that researchers at our International Diabetes Center hope to answer with \$840,000 in supplemental funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). The new funding expands the scope of an existing study – which PCORI funded with \$3.6 million in 2020 – that's comparing the clinical effectiveness of fingerstick blood glucose monitoring and newer continuous glucose monitoring (CGM).

We will analyze financial toxicity measures recently validated for patients with diabetes. This includes out-of-pocket costs incurred by patients with type 2 diabetes using CGM versus those using the fingerstick method of measuring blood sugar. Using ZIP code and socioeconomic data, we will explore how the financial distress of diabetes management varies by community.

To ensure the study addresses real-world concerns, it is informed by an advisory panel that includes patients with type 2 diabetes. This work will help guide strategies for reducing the financial distress experienced by patients with diabetes, particularly those at greater risk and lower economic status.

## A 30-year-old discovery leads to promising treatment for brain injury

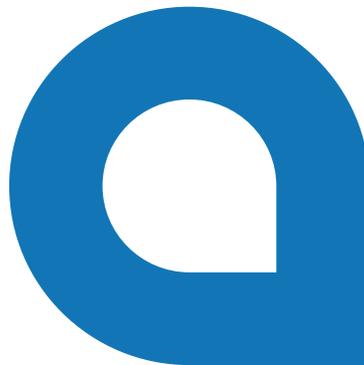
More than 30 years ago, researchers in our Neuroscience Research Center discovered that natural therapeutics could be delivered directly from the nose to the brain along the nerves involved in smell. This noninvasive intranasal delivery method was the first to bypass the blood-brain barrier to target therapeutic agents to the brain while reducing systemic exposure and unwanted side effects. In multiple clinical trials in patients with Alzheimer's disease and healthy adults, intranasal insulin safely improves memory and metabolism, increases brain cell energy and reduces white matter damage.

Fast forward a few decades and we are now using this intranasal delivery method to administer and test an insulin for treating traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI usually results from a concussion or an injury to the skull that damages brain tissue. Preclinical studies demonstrate that intranasal insulin looks promising as a treatment for TBI. It improves memory, increases cerebral glucose uptake and decreases neuroinflammation and brain damage. Phase 2 clinical trials are underway to continue testing the efficacy of intranasal insulin in patients with TBI and head injury. The goal is to gain Food and Drug Administration approval for commercialization of our patented use of intranasal insulin.

We launched a platform called CRISP (Clinical Research Investigator Partnership) to bring together colleagues interested in research. Sessions follow a Grand Rounds format where clinician researchers discuss current novel treatments and approaches in their areas of practice.

## Fixing the workforce pipeline with education, partnership

A movement is underway to change how we train, recruit and retain health care workers. And, it starts with listening. The Institute is partnering with departments across HealthPartners to better understand the root of their recruitment and retention challenges, and identify professional education opportunities that can support healthy, high-functioning and adaptable teams. Case in point: Laboratory Services was having difficulty filling positions. Our health professional education team partnered with laboratory leaders to convene a group of 20 stakeholders – from lab leaders, human resources partners, staff and others – to learn more about what's causing the scarcity of talent. Over several listening and design sessions, the group identified ways to improve processes and culture by creating a mobile learning lab, standardized training, and other learning opportunities. The laboratory services team celebrates the hiring of 200 colleagues and will continue to focus on key retention strategies in 2024. We are replicating these listening and design sessions to partner with other care delivery teams in creating an engaged and prepared workforce of the future.



# MMCORC celebrates 40 years of community cancer research

Metro-Minnesota Community Oncology Research Consortium (MMCORC) marked its 40th anniversary as a National Cancer Institute (NCI) Community Oncology Research Program. This is a special milestone for the consortium. From its beginnings in 1983 with just seven member hospitals and 27 investigators, MMCORC has grown to include 22 institutions and 157 investigators. Park Nicollet has been a member of the consortium since its start and HealthPartners joined in 2009.



MMCORC is a nonprofit research program sponsored by NCI and participating hospitals and clinics. The consortium brings cancer clinical trials to people in their own communities. It also provides access to national clinical trials that patients can participate in while being treated by their local cancer care team.

In 1983, MMCORC received one of the first NCI Community Clinical Oncology Program grant awards. It has now been awarded NCI grant funding continuously for 40 years. And it has enrolled more than 15,000 patients in cancer clinical trials across all member sites. HealthPartners Institute is proud to provide administrative services to the consortium.



Stay up to date with our portfolio of knowledge products. Check out our Knowledge Exchange. [healthpartners.com/knowledgeexchange](https://healthpartners.com/knowledgeexchange)

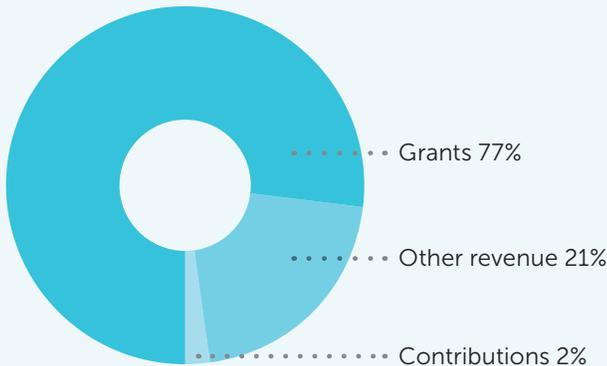


## FINANCIALS 2023

Operating Revenue  
\$48.9M

Operating Expenses  
\$53.4M

### Operating Revenue Sources



Total net assets \$77.8M  
100% of our net assets are unrestricted

Mission: To improve health and well-being in partnership with our members, patients and community.

Vision: Health as it could be, affordability as it must be, through relationships built on trust.

Visit our website to learn more about the Institute.

[healthpartnersinstitute.org](https://healthpartnersinstitute.org)

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