Innovations in Pediatrics

Rady Children's Hospital San Diego

Rady Children's - A comprehensive system focused solely on children.

PEOPLE

Dr. Frias named president and CEO of Rady Children's

Patricio "Patrick" A. Frias, M.D., has been appointed as the top executive of Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego. He will assume the role from Donald B. Kearns, M.D., M.M.M., who is retiring as president and CEO and transitioning to an advisory role with the Hospital, concentrating his leadership on key initiatives. Dr. Kearns celebrated his 31st anniversary of service at Rady Children's this year.

Dr. Frias is currently the chief operating officer at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. He is also a pediatric cardiologist/electrophysiologist who spent his entire career at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, transitioning from patient care into administrative leadership roles with increasing levels of responsibility. Dr. Frias earned his undergraduate and medical degrees at Creighton University and the University of Nebraska College of Medicine respectively, and completed his residency and fellowship training at Duke and Vanderbilt University Medical Centers.

The recruitment of Dr. Frias was carried out by the search committee of Rady Children's Board of Trustees, which sought input from the entire Rady Children's community on the qualities they thought were important in a new chief executive. More than 60 people, including board members, physicians, leaders and staff members, participated in the interview process.

Dr. Frias plans to join Rady Children's by the end of the year. Dr. Kearns will remain in his role as president and CEO until Dr. Frias arrives. Learn more.

PROGRAMS

Rady Children's Hospital launches Project Baby Bear

Rady Children's Hospital is launching Project Baby Bear, the first California state-funded program to offer rapid whole genome sequencing (WGS) for critically ill newborns.

The $2 million Medi-Cal pilot program will provide genome testing for babies hospitalized in intensive care. Project Baby Bear will leverage rapid WGS as a first-line diagnostic test done by Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine for babies at four participating hospitals statewide.

"We are honored to be selected as the first California children's hospital to use the Medi-Cal platform to deliver access to this life-changing test to children who need it, regardless of their family's ability to pay," says Donald Kearns, M.D., M.M.M., president and CEO of Rady Children's. "California is once again leading the way in improving the lives of children and families with Project Baby Bear."

Whole genome sequencing has been used at Rady Children's to diagnose babies and children hospitalized in intensive care with rare diseases since July 2016, but only as part of clinical trials. As of Sept. 20, the Institute has sequenced nearly 1,200 children. More than one-third (34 percent) received a genomic diagnosis enabling physicians to make life-changing adjustments in care for 70 percent of those diagnosed.

Until the initiation of Project Baby Bear, whole genome sequencing has not been covered by insurance or Medi-Cal and was available only through clinical trials paid for by research grants or philanthropic donations.

Dr. Donald Kearns and Dr. Stephen Kingsmore joined by a patient family and state lawmakers at the program launch

"We are enormously grateful to the leadership of our elected officials in California for their willingness to support this important demonstration project," says Stephen Kingsmore, M.D., D.Sc., president and CEO of Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine. "It's our belief that rapid whole genome sequencing should become a first-line diagnostic test and standard of care in neonatal intensive care units everywhere." Learn more.

RECOGNITION

Genomic Institute honored for collaborations in science, tech

Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine received a 2018 RARE Champion of Hope Award from Global Genes®, a nonprofit patient advocacy organization for rare diseases.

Over 200 individuals and organizations worldwide were nominated by their peers for an award for their notable efforts in rare disease advocacy, teen advocacy, science, medical care and treatment, and collaborations. The Institute garnered an award for "Collaborations in Science and Technology."

The award recipients will be honored at the Champions of Hope Awards dinner on Oct. 4 following the RARE Patient Advocacy Summit. The Summit is the largest educational event for rare disease patients and advocates worldwide. It will be held at the Hotel Irvine in Irvine, Calif.

Rare diseases affect 1 in 10 Americans, 30 million people in the United States and 350 million people globally, according to Global Genes.

INNOVATIONS

Potential diagnostic test identified for Kawasaki disease

For the first time, researchers at Rady Children's Hospital, the UC San Diego School of Medicine and Imperial College London, with international collaborators, have determined that Kawasaki disease (KD) can be accurately diagnosed on the basis of the pattern of host gene expression in whole blood. The finding could lead to a diagnostic blood test to distinguish KD from other infectious and inflammatory conditions.

Dr. Jane C. Burns

Kawasaki disease is the most common acquired heart disease in children. Left untreated, roughly one-quarter of children with KD develop coronary artery aneurysms - balloon-like bulges of heart vessels - that may ultimately result in heart attacks, congestive heart failure or sudden death.

The researchers' study sought to identify a whole-blood gene expression signature that distinguishes children with KD in the first week of illness. The majority of participants with KD came from Rady Children's. The overall study group comprised 404 children with infectious and inflammatory conditions (78 KD, 84 other inflammatory diseases, 242 bacterial or viral infections) and 55 healthy controls.

The researchers looked for tell-tale transcription in blood samples and found that a 13-transcript blood gene expression signature distinguished KD from the range of infectious and inflammatory conditions with which it is often clinically confused.

"A test incorporating the 13-transcripts might enable earlier diagnosis and treatment of KD, preventing cardiac complications and reducing inappropriate treatment in those with other diseases," says Jane C. Burns, M.D., one of the study's authors and director of the Kawasaki Disease Clinic at Rady Children's Hospital and the Kawasaki Disease Research Center at UC San Diego.

Results of the international study were published on Aug. 6 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

innovation belongs in every moment

Rady Children's Hospital San Diego