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New game introduces youngest patients to the Clinical Center

App aims to make the hospital experience "less scary" for children

The NIH Clinical Center is giving its patients the chance to "level up" with a new app.

The Clinical Center Treasure Tour is a free game application created for the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. Launched in October, the app is aimed at children and their families. The goal is to help them understand the layout of the hospital, the programs and services offered on-site and the procedures and tests patients might undergo.

Treasure Tour is designed to be a fun and interactive game. Players can customize their character and explore the hospital before visiting in person. It can be played on web-based platforms and downloaded to iOS devices in the App Store or to Android devices in the Google Play Store.

"At the NIH Clinical Center we want to make every effort to ensure children and their families coming to receive treatment feel comfortable and can navigate the hospital with ease," said NIH Clinical Center CEO James K. Gilman.

Treasure Tour provides a look at six different patient care areas of the Clinical Center. Players can explore the hospital's pediatric clinic, one of the day hospitals, an inpatient unit, the phlebotomy lab, radiology and imaging sciences and the Department of Perioperative Medicine. All are presented in a kid-friendly way and are easily recognizable to anyone who has visited, or will soon visit, the hospital.

"Leaving home to receive care at a new hospital can be very frightening, especially to young children," said Dr. Lori Wiener, Co-Director of the Behavioral Health Core and Director for the Psychosocial Support and Research Program for the Pediatric Oncology Branch's Center for Cancer Research in the National Cancer Institute.

The game is another way to "help to reduce uncertainty, decrease associated distress and enhance adjustment to the new hospital and treatment," she added.



Kavya Nadella voices the narration of the Treasure Tour game

The game also has a behind the scenes connection to the Clinical Center. The narrator of the game is Kavya Nadella, a student at the University of Houston, majoring in Speech Therapy who is also a patient at the hospital.

"I was a part of the clinical research for Dock 8 immune deficiency and I was part of that study from when I first got in contact with NIH in 2014 to now," said Nadella.

Nadella spent a couple of weeks recording scripts daily this summer during a break from her studies. This was her first time doing voice-over work and she was excited to participate.

"When I was recording, I tried to stay as calm as possible. In hopes that my voice gives [patients] a sense of calmness as well," added Nadella.



Screenshot from the NIHCC Treasure Tour

"It was a really great project that I could be a part of and give back to the community and people that gave me so much."

The Clinical Center Office of Communications and Media Relations came up with the idea for the app and shepherded the project in close partnership with Dr. Wiener and her staff, as well as with guidance from the Pediatric Care Committee and the Department of Clinical Research Informatics.

Funding for the development of the app came from the National Cancer Institute's Center for Cancer Research. Ongoing support and maintenance for the game will come from the Clinical Center. The Treasure Tour app was built by Breakaway Games, a developer of real time strategy games that use entertainment game technology to solve real world problems.

Since this game is aimed at a young audience, a lot of thought was put into protecting users' privacy. Treasure Tour was designed to be a single-player game, so children aren't in a game environment with strangers. No personally identifiable information is gathered during play, and the app does not track the user's geo-location or use their social media in any way.

To learn more about how to play the Treasure tour game visit: www.cc.nih.gov/treasuretour To learn more about Treasure Tour's privacy policy visit: www.cc.nih.gov/disclaimers.html#notice Or contact treasuretour@nih.gov for more information.

- Donovan Kuehn and Maria Maslennikov

Collins Steps Down as NIH Director



Francis Collins playing piano in June 2020

Dr. Francis S. Collins announced he would be stepping down as NIH Director by the end of 2021. Collins served for over 12 years, becoming the longest tenured director since the 1950s.

As a physician-geneticist, he was noted for his landmark discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the international Human Genome Project, campaigning to grow NIH's budget grew by 38%, embarking on the Cancer Moonshot Initiative, and most recently, spearheading numerous COVID-19 research and engagement initiatives.

Less known was his quiet compassion and love of music. Occasionally, without fanfare, he would come to the NIH Clinical Center's atrium and play the piano to brighten the mood and promote tranquility for patients, staff and visitors.

Obesity shown to be a significant factor in COVID-19 complications

Nutrition researcher offers sobering statistics

People with obesity have an increased risk of catching the virus as well as intensified adverse effects - this topic was front and center at the Obesity and COVID-19 - Obesity Research Task Force Symposium hosted by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in September.

Dr. Barry M. Popkin, the W.R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Gillings School of Global Public Health, presented the lecture COVID-19 and Obesity: A Global Perspective. Popkin, who established and led the NIH-funded UNC Interdisciplinary Obesity Center, described a sobering worldwide situation. Studies from across the globe have shown that people with obesity were 40% more likely to contract COVID-19, and had a much higher likelihood of needing ventilation. Even more alarmingly, the mortality rate for this demographic is more than four times higher than the general population.

One study from England showed a clear relationship between body mass index (BMI) and COVID-19. Patients with a BMI of 23 or higher had an almost linear risk of being hospitalized - and the correlation to intensive care showed an even steeper slope.

Clinical Center informed consent process goes digital

A new way to electronically sign consents is now available at the Clinical Center. The system is called iMedConsent™ and it can be used while patients are onsite at the hospital or remotely.

The process of informed consent occurs when communication between a patient and a medical provider results in the patient agreeing to undergo a specific medical intervention.

Obtaining informed consent requires a thorough, thoughtful and detailed process. The ease and convenience of using the Clinical Center's new consenting tool will transform and standardize the capture of electronic signatures.

Additionally, this new system will help streamline the documentation and filing of consents and will help ensure patient safety within the Clinical Center.

NIH care teams will work with patients to see if they prefer to communicate by text message or email. Regardless of the type of mobile device patients have, the process will be the same.

"We remain committed to a thorough, thoughtful and detailed consenting process. The iMedConsent application will help streamline documentation and filing after the important conversations are completed," said Tricia Coffey, chief of the Clinical Center Health Information Management Department.

For questions email:

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"Individuals with overweight and obesity are at much greater risk of becoming COVID-positive and facing all the health risks of getting COVID [and] increased mortality," confirmed Popkin.

This is a troubling connection, as the pandemic itself has likely exacerbated weight gain. Internationally, there have been large decreases in physical activity, with some countries enforcing tight lockdowns to limit the spread of COVID-19 experiencing this even more acutely. The pandemic itself has caused huge declines in transportation activities and diet changes, causing increased risk of catching the virus as well as intensified adverse effects.

Is there anything that can be done to slow down this dangerous cycle? Popkin suggested one example. Peru has managed to buck this trend of unhealthy eating in the face of the pandemic; Peruvians have been eating fewer pre-packaged foods and more fruit and vegetables. This was attributed to very strong local messaging that eating healthy is important in protecting against COVID-19.

In addition to masks and hand hygiene, Popkin described how striving for a healthier lifestyle may help protect against COVID-19.

To find out more about this lecture event, visit <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/news/meetings-workshops/2021/Obesity-COVID-19-Obesity-Research-Task-Force-Symposium>.

- Dan Silber

Science, society and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

Collaboration and information management may have a lasting legacy

In addition to being a public health challenge, pandemics are also an economic and social challenge. This was Dr. Ashish K. Jha's opening message during the Great Teachers Lecture on September 8, when he laid out several lessons learned from this pandemic and suggested some solutions.

Dr. Jha is recognized as a global expert on pandemic preparedness and response. As an accomplished physician, health policy researcher and global health advocate, he has contributed his expertise to the public through appearances with local, national and global news outlets. He has also advised mayors, governors and members of Congress on the pandemic response. Jha recently ended his term as faculty director of the Harvard Global Health Institute to become the dean of the School of Public Health at Brown University.

Over the course of his remarks, Jha outlined three lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lesson #1: Scientists have made extraordinary progress in responding to pandemics. Science did an incredible job and was very successful in their relatively short rollout of an effective vaccine. They developed vaccines in record time and delivered 5.2 billion doses worldwide. They have conducted research and provided data on masks, diagnostics tests, therapeutics and cleaning indoor air.

Lesson #2: Some of the best information has come from outside the biomedical community. Information and findings have come from computer scientists, economics and sociologists. A lasting legacy from this health crisis should be continued and expanded collaboration among these fields.

Lesson #3: To change the public's behavior, we need to understand what people value. Science, data and facts do matter. However, to counter misinformation and disinformation, the public health community could improve its own communication.

In Jha's view, scientists should be open and honest about what they do or do not know, while still providing knowledge and best judgement. Too many times, the scientific community has been afraid of causing panic and has hesitated to sound the alarm. Scientific leaders need to communicate the fact that science is not an established set of facts, but a process.



Dr. Ashish K. Jha

He also outlined the need to tailor recommendations based on people's lived experiences. When advising people to stay home, for example, that guidance neglected to take into account those who could not do so, such as essential workers, and failed to recommend the steps they could take to stay safe.

Finally, Jha explored the rising tide of distortion and half-truths circulating through public discourse. The pandemic has created not only a lot of misinformation, but intentional disinformation. Unfortunately, everyone tends to live in his or her own echo chamber. We all listen to things that reinforce our current beliefs.

The misinformation machine is a large, sophisticated operation that requires not just experts, but all of us, to combat it. People can start by getting out of their own echo chambers. Actively seeking news from different sources and talking to people outside our bubble with kindness and understanding can help reveal why people think how they do.

"People want to participate, want to understand how decisions are made. We should welcome that. We should welcome people into the process and help them understand why experts believe what they believe," said Jha.

Jha closed by saying that people should not leave the job of communicating solely to experts. Every person has a role to play to counter misinformation, whether by social media, newspapers, television or just conversations with neighbors. To ensure an informed discourse, we all need to communicate good, high quality information.

- Debbie Accame

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Flu vaccine clinic for staff

Camp Fantastic goes virtual

NIH COVID-19 long-hauler initiative

Patient recruitment updates

Clinical Center News

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Clinical Center

NIH Clinical Center bids farewell to long-time staff and welcomes new ones

This year has been active on the personnel front with many people moving into new leadership positions at the NIH Clinical Center. Here's a summary of some of those changes.

Dr. Gwentyth R. Wallen stepped down from her role of the Chief Nurse Officer of the NIH Clinical Center in July. She served as the Acting Chief Nurse Officer for the NIH Clinical Center in January 2016, and was selected for the permanent position the following year. Wallen will be leading a new translational bio-behavioral and health disparities research branch at the Clinical Center.



Dr. Barbara Jordan

Stepping in as the Acting Chief Nurse Officer is Dr. Barbara Jordan, Nursing Service Chief for Nursing Operations. Jordan stated, "It is my great privilege to serve as the Acting Chief Nurse Officer and continue the excellent work underway in the CC Nursing Department as we continue on our Journey to Magnet designation."

Dr. Tara Palmore is moving on after 20 years at NIH to George Washington University, where she will be Hospital Epidemiologist at GWU Medical Center and Professor of Medicine in the GWU School of Medicine. During her time at NIH, she started in Dr. Anthony Fauci's office at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in September 2001 and ended her NIH career as Hospital Epidemiologist and Chief of the Hospital Epidemiology Service.



Dr. Brooke Decker

Dr. Brooke Decker will serve as the new Hospital Epidemiologist and Chief of the Hospital Epidemiology Service. She comes to the Clinical Center from the Pittsburgh Veterans' Administration hospital where she was Hospital Epidemiologist, Chief of Infection Prevention and Director of Antimicrobial Stewardship.

"I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the NIH Clinical Center as the Director of the Hospital Epidemiology Service. There is no more crucial enterprise to the progression of medical knowledge, and no greater honor than to serve these hallowed halls," said Decker.

Laura Lee ended 32 years of service at the Clinical Center as the Director of Patient Safety & Clinical Quality, to accept a position at Medstar Health. In her new position, she will lead the development of the hospital's patient safety initiatives.



Dr. David Lang

In August, Dr. David Lang was promoted to replace Lee. Lang has worked at the hospital since 2002, and as the lead clinician for the pediatrics consult service, he has a stellar record of ensuring the safety of the hospital's younger patients.

He is the first physician to lead the Patient Safety and Clinical Quality office, a group tasked with working within the hospital and with NIH partners to support the highest quality of patient safety, care and research support.

"I'm very excited and honored to have this opportunity. Patient safety and high-quality care are integral to the life changing clinical research we do," said Lang.

Bernard Harper, the former Chief of the Materials Management and Environmental Services Department, left the position that he held for over four years to accept a position with the Department of Defense. In 2020, Bernard received



Tsehai Crockett-Lynn

Clinical Center recognition as Co-Administrator of the Year for managing the hospital's medical supply chain and maintaining sufficient levels of personal protective equipment, masks and sanitizing products throughout the pandemic.

Tsehai Crockett-Lynn has accepted the position of acting chief of the Materials

Management and Environmental Services Department. She will set the strategic direction for the department and develop operational plans for the hospital as the pandemic continues.

"What an extraordinary privilege to lead this diverse and extremely talented team! Although it would seem a natural transition for me as the Deputy to step into the "gap" until a new leader is chosen, the trust and confidence bestowed upon me by the CC leadership is not something that I take lightly," said Crockett-Lynn.

Dr. Robert M. Lembo retired Oct 22, 2021 from his position as the director of Education and Training in the Office of Clinical Research Training and Medical Education (OCRTME). Lembo was responsible for administrative oversight of all



Dr. Thomas Burklow

graduate medical education-training programs at the NIH Clinical Center since 2006 and for maintaining NIH institutional and program-specific accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. During his 15 years at NIH, he has been recognized for his service with several awards.

Dr. Thomas Burklow will serve as Acting Director. Burklow serves as the director for the Medical Research Scholars program and coordinator for undergraduate medical student electives at the Clinical Center. He is the chair of the NIH CC Simulation Project Team and as a pediatric cardiologist, supports consults of children as part of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's Cardiology Consult Service.

Burklow noted, "I am grateful for Dr. Lembo's leadership of OCRTME, a small but highly capable team that facilitates many programs that the Clinical Center relies upon to carry out its core missions in clinical care, training and research, such as GME, CME, Grand Rounds and clinical research training."

- Debbie Accame

NIH Clinical Center wins 2021 Grace award

Hospital earns the highest honor of the American Health Information Management Association

The National Institutes of Health Clinical Center will have to get a bigger awards shelf.

In September, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) awarded the NIH Clinical Center its 2021 Grace Award. AHIMA serves as a leading authority in health information. The award honors organizations that demonstrate excellence in health information management.

AHIMA noted a number of impressive accomplishments from the hospital, including its innovative strides in recent years to use social determinants of health (SDOH) data. Social determinants of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the data can be a catalyst for improving community health and well-being.

For example, people who don't have access to grocery stores with healthy foods may find it harder to purchase nutritious food, which can raise their risk of health conditions like heart disease, diabetes and obesity and potentially lower their life expectancy relative to people who have access to healthy foods.

The Clinical Center's Health Information Management Department was credited with ensuring SDOH data are tracked, which led to a significant increase in codes being captured in 2021 compared to the previous five-year average. AHIMA representatives said the focus on health data is particularly important for a government entity like the NIH that serves all Americans.

"It's an honor to award the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center with the 2021 Grace Award for their visionary advances in both health information management and public health initiatives," said Grace Award Committee Chair Diana Flood. "Their innovation and passion for services that bundle high quality data and superior care for every life they serve, while simultaneously developing and nurturing leaders within the organization, sets the stage for a bright future [for] each person who walks through their doors."

Flood also said the health information team is involved in a new project that is establishing measurement protocols to help inform effective interventions that can reduce health disparities.

Dr. James K. Gilman, CEO of Clinical Center, said that he is "immensely proud" of the award.

He added that the hospital's "Health Information Management Department is a highly motivated, high performing group that are extremely well-led. Collectively they have transformed the way health information is managed on behalf of the patients who participate in clinical research protocols here at the NIH Clinical Center," added Gilman.

For more on the award and past winners, visit www.ahima.org/who-we-are/grace-award/

- Donovan Kuehn

Music in the Atrium carries on

Even with only strings and percussion instruments allowed due to COVID-19 precautions, our "Music in the Atrium" program continues to bring uplifting, healing music to the Clinical Center. Some performances this summer included:



The University of Maryland Jazz Combo performs regularly in the hospital's Atrium. The group of professors and alumni perform classic jazz, Brazilian classics and sometimes a little funk. The group includes Danny Villanueva on percussion, Joey Antico on drums, Gerry Kunkel on guitar, John Previti on bass and Jon Ozmet on piano.



Kenneth and Noelle Naito are siblings who have been performing here for years and we have watched them grow into accomplished performers. Noelle is 19 years old and is attending Cleveland Institute of Music. Kenneth is 21 and a senior at the Juilliard School.



Robert Masi is a two-year post-baccalaureate Cancer Research Training Award Fellow in Dr. Steve Rosenberg's lab and has a Bachelor of Arts in piano performance. For his piano concert, he performed classical works by Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin and Ravel, filling the atrium with sentimental melodies to triumphant exclamations.



The hospital welcomed the National Symphony Orchestra's (NSO) chamber group. The string performance was conducted by Lina Gonzalez-Granados.

NIH is going into its ninth year of the NSO Sound Health program; an initiative which explores the various ways music can reduce stress and promote tranquility and wellness for patients, staff and visitors.

- Debbie Accame

Clinical Center honors outstanding work during the pandemic

Three medical staff and two administrators garner recognition

Just as the pandemic has dominated the past year and a half for Americans, it has also shaped the winners of this year's NIH Clinical Center Clinical Recognition Program.



Dr. Heike Bailin

The program was launched in 2018 to recognize outstanding staff clinicians and nurse practitioners and physician assistants. In 2019, a third category was added to recognize outstanding administrators. Dr. Heike Bailin received the Staff Clinician of the Year award. Based in the Occupational Medical Service, her work included collaboration across the NIH to develop decision algorithms for COVID-19 testing. She also supported hundreds of volunteers coordinating NIH's COVID testing and vaccination programs and connected the data from contact tracing teams and scientific literature to continually develop and revise NIH's procedures and decisions to reflect the realities and knowledge gained during the pandemic.



Londa Hathaway

In addition to her COVID responsibilities, for much of the past year, she was the acting Occupational Medical Service Director, where she managed the day-to-day operations of the clinic. Londa Hathaway was co-selected as the Nurse Practitioner of the Year. A decade ago, Hathaway pivoted from 20 years in

cardio-pulmonary research with NHLBI to a new career in dermatology. She immersed herself into the field and became a certified Dermatology Nurse Practitioner. Even at the NIH, where excellence abounds, Hathaway was cited as an overachiever and a person who exemplifies outstanding, effective and compassionate patient care.

Hathaway was noted for her role as an educator, providing training for research nurses and nurse practitioners and having a major teaching role for visiting residents. She also has a talent for explaining to patients what dermatology consultations entail and how they will be performed in the best, most comfortable and safest manner. Her authentic, personal friendliness and empathy touches patients and staff alike.

Judy Chan was also recognized as a co-winner of the Nurse Practitioner of the Year award. Chan was described as the sustaining force behind NIH's successful COVID-19 vaccine clinic, present nearly every day during the clinic's five-month operation. The clinic's operations were impressive: administering over 30,000 vaccine doses and operating a model vaccine clinic that advanced the health and safety of the NIH community.

Chan helped establish clinical best practices and sought to maximize potential vaccine inventory by ensuring every dose was successfully administered.



Judy Chan

Few vaccine doses went unused over the course of the clinic's operation due to her relentless efforts to confirm patient appointments.

Chan also provided consistent care, empathetic support, kind and expert advice and has been instrumental in ensuring cross communication across all of the Occupational Medical Service COVID teams.

A nurse by trade, she is a caring coworker in action, who donned her medical gear to help coworkers manage the workload when clinicians were short staffed.

Recognition as Administrator of the Year was also split between two co-winners.

Michael Alexander works for the Clinical Center's Hospitality and Volunteer Services team and is a fixture at the Hospitality Desk in the hospital's north atrium. His encyclopedic knowledge of hospital's locations, departments and resources has been recognized by numerous patients, visitors and staff and his professional and pleasant demeanor create a welcoming atmosphere for patients and staff throughout the Clinical Center.



Michael Alexander

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has volunteered to cover when colleagues are sick, on deployment, vacation or the department is short on staff and has worked extra shifts to allow colleagues with health issues to work less and reduce their risk of infection.

Alexander was cited for providing his expertise and leading without hesitation.

The other co-winner was Daniel Rinehuls. Rinehuls has built up an outstanding body of work for his management of the Clinical Center finances over the last 20 years.

Rinehuls' keen business acumen and sound financial counsel was cited as critical for the hospital's operations over the past year.



Daniel Rinehuls

As the hospital implemented its pandemic response, Rinehuls ensured the hospital established a centralized process to evaluate and approve funding requests for COVID-19-related activities. This included developing a reporting format that could be easily reviewed and tracked in

real time to ensure the hospital was able to nimbly respond as circumstances changed.

All five award winners were announced by NIH Director Francis S. Collins at the Clinical Center's October CEO Town Hall meeting.

- Donovan Kuehn