



## CO-DIRECTORS CORNER

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**Karen Johnson, MD, MPH**  
Co-Director, TN-CTSI



**Michelle Martin, PhD**  
Co-Director, TN-CTSI

### TN-CTSI TEAM

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**Karen Johnson, MD, MPH**  
Co-Director

**Michelle Martin, PhD**  
Co-Director

**Derita Bran, MSN, RN, CCRC**  
Director of Administration

**Margaret Lynn, LMSW, RDN, CCRP, CIP**  
Director, Clinical Research Development

**Laura Meyer, MA**  
Program Evaluator & Research Specialist

**Ashley Evans, MS**  
Community Engagement Specialist & Recruitment Manager

We would like to thank everyone for the continued support of the TN-CTSI. With your help and input, we were able to submit a grant application to the published funding opportunity, Clinical and Translational Science Award (U54) PAR-18-940. We eagerly await the feedback from the study section which will meet in late January. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) fund the CTSA program. It is our hope that this opportunity will strengthen our ability to accelerate clinical and translational research while reducing and working towards eliminating health disparities in across the state of Tennessee.

Karen C. Johnson, MD, MPH

Michelle Martin, PhD

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**Derita Bran, MSN, RN, CCRC**

### **Derita Bran, MSN, RN, CCRC, TN-CTSI Director of Administration**

As the Director of Administration, Ms. Bran is responsible for the overall day-to-day activities of the TN-CTSI. She is responsible for the integration of the core areas across the institution, state, and within the TN-CTSI; determining optimal staffing requirements and resources needed; and hiring and supervising staff. Ms. Bran provides communications management including communications planning; information distribution; progress and performance reporting; stakeholder communications; and management of campus and community activities. She ensures compliance with NIH regulations and generates required reports. Ms. Bran will foster community engagement within UTHSC and the larger community, statewide, and regionally, as well as educate research staff and investigators about developing study protocols, monitoring compliance, and assuring adherence to regulations.



**Margaret Lynn, LMSW, RDN, CCRP, CIP**

### **Margaret Lynn, LMSW, RDN, CCRP, CIP, Director of Clinical Research Development**

As the Director of Clinical Research Development, Margaret is responsible for training, education and compliance of clinical research staff. She holds two state of Tennessee healthcare provider licenses: Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist and Licensed Master of Social Work. She has twenty-seven years of experience with regulatory clinical compliance for public and private agencies inclusive of OHRP, FDA, GCP, CDC, OSHA, HIPAA, local and state health departments, and funding agencies. She has twenty years of healthcare and community-based research experience with seventeen of those years spent in clinical research. Margaret has been a Certified IRB Professional (CIP) since 2014 and a Certified Clinical Research Professional (CCRP) since 2009. She currently serves as a member of the UTHSC IRB Full Board Section 3.



**Ashley Evans, MS**

### **Ashley Evans, MS, Community Engagement Specialist and Recruitment Manager**

As the Community Engagement Specialist and Recruitment Manager, Ashley is responsible for developing and managing strategies for recruitment and community engagement across the state and with diverse populations. She oversees the Recruitment Innovation Center (RIC) and protocols for recruitment strategies; collaborates with locally affiliated groups' public relations efforts to address issues affecting the well-being of the people of the community; and affiliates with local/national community engagement committees to improve strategies and outcomes.



**Laura Meyer, MA**

## **Laura Meyer, MA, Program Evaluation and Research Specialist**

As the Program Evaluation and Research Specialist, Laura is responsible for the development, coordination, and completion of evaluative efforts to meet programmatic needs. She oversees data collection, to comply with TN-CTSI Core Metrics; manages datasets; conducts data analysis; produces process and outcomes evaluative reports; and provides formative feedback on TN-CTSI activities to best advance programs/services. Laura has over eight years' experience working at UTHSC, as a Research Project Coordinator, focused on program evaluation within community research.

## **MEET THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

The TN-CTSI believes community engagement is critically important for conducting research that is relevant and important to community members. With this credence in mind, the TN-CTSI aims to further the efforts of integrating community engagement into research through the establishment of a Community Advisory Board (CAB). Our goal is to collaborate with community members to address health and healthcare disparities across the state of Tennessee. Every newsletter, we will highlight one CAB member and their important work and efforts towards eliminating health disparities within Tennessee.

### **Meet Latetrica Wilson, a member of the TN-CTSI's Community Advisory Board**

Ms. Wilson, a native of Memphis, TN, cites her community and upbringing as the motivation behind her efforts of improving the quality of life for children in distressed communities of color. Ms. Wilson sees that many youth in Memphis face social obstacles such as poverty, exposure to violence, and low levels of civic engagement that impact their outcomes. However, Ms. Wilson envisions that Memphis youth will have more opportunities to develop pertinent life skills and other skills that prepare them for college and their future careers. As a CAB member, she hopes to collaborate with other members and researchers and utilize her own expertise and connections to fully address the concerns of communities. She hopes to help youth who have experienced trauma and stimulate greater opportunity for their positive outcomes.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Pilot Project Funding Awarded to Two UTHSC Researchers

The Tennessee Clinical and Translational Science Institute has announced the latest round of grant recipients from its Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies Program. Two UTHSC researchers were each awarded \$30,000 for a one-year period. The winners and their projects are:



**Dr. Karen J. Derefinko**

- Karen J. Derefinko, associate professor, Department of Preventive Medicine in the College of Medicine, for her project “Opioid reduction for total knee replacement patients.” This study is a randomized clinical trial examining safe, non-narcotic pain relief strategies for patients age 18 and over following total knee replacement surgery. It is a collaboration between UTHSC Departments of Preventive Medicine, Orthopedics, Physical Therapy, and Campbell Clinic Orthopedics. The results of this project could lead to alternative treatment practices at orthopedic surgery centers nationwide.



**Dr. Keiichi Sumida**

- Keiichi Sumida, MD, MPH, PhD, associate professor in the Division of Nephrology in the College of Medicine, for his project “Circulating small non-coding RNA profiles for premature cardiovascular death in hemodialysis patients.” This is a case-control study to profile novel epigenetic regulators (circulating-small non-coding RNAs) of cardiovascular disease in hemodialysis patients. The project will help identify potential new biomarkers for cardiovascular death in patients with end stage renal disease and will pave the way for future larger studies to develop target-driven therapeutics.

The Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies Program aims to stimulate innovative, interdisciplinary, team-based research led by UTHSC faculty members as principal investigators. The program provides seed funding for projects across the translational science continuum, from basic science to dissemination and implementation research.

“The TN-CTSI aims to bring evidence-based interventions and practices to community and clinical settings to improve human health,” Michelle Martin, PhD, co-director of the institute, said. “We are excited to expand our research portfolio to include these two projects and advance the mission we have for our institute.” Dr. Martin is also a professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and founding director of the Center for Innovation in Health Equity Research.

“The two projects funded are addressing important health problems in our community and will add to our knowledge of how to prevent disease and promote health,” Karen Johnson, MD, MPH, TN-CTSI co-director and endowed professor of Women’s Health and Preventive Medicine at UTHSC, said.

This is the third cohort of TN-CTSI pilot award recipients. To date, the program has awarded a total of \$135,000 to seven UTHSC researchers since its 2018 founding.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Library Series

TN-CTSI is collaborating with the UTHSC health sciences library to offer Library Research 101 for Clinical Researchers is scheduled for Fall 2021. The series is designed for anyone who would like to learn more about how the library can support clinical researchers: students, residents, fellows, staff, and faculty. Here are the session topics for this great learning opportunity:

- **Library Overview**
- **Writing Research Abstracts**
- **Getting Articles for your Research**
- **Staying Current with New Research Information Alerts**
- **Enhancing your Search Skills**
- **Managing your research flow with EndNote**
- **Identifying Publishing Opportunities**
- **An Overview of Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) Resources**
- **Library Support Services for Systematic Reviews**
- **Data Visualizations**
- **Understanding Research Impact**

This series will be offered October 2021 through November 2021. Look on our website, [tnctsi.uthsc.edu](https://tnctsi.uthsc.edu) for dates and times and registration information coming soon.

### Mid-South SOCRA Chapter



The TN-CTSI is collaborating with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Le Bonheur Children's Hospital to re-establish the Mid-South SOCRA chapter for the research community. SOCRA members will receive 1.0 Continuing Education Units for attendance, however, you do not have to be a SOCRA member to join the webinar.

**Next meeting: "Electronic Regulatory Documentation**

**September 2, 2021 at 11:30-12:30**

**For more info, visit the Events section on [tnctsi.uthsc.edu](https://tnctsi.uthsc.edu)**

**For all the latest events and full information on each, please visit the [TN-CTSI Events Calendar](#) on our webpage.**

## SERVICES & RESOURCES

### REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TESTIMONIALS

"I was looking for recruitment help but was not sure where to look. I came across TN-CTSI and found out they offer recruitment help for research studies. I filled out information on the form on their page which was easy. I got a quick response back from them and was scheduled for a meeting Instantly. Consulting TN-CTSI truly catalyzed my recruitment strategies for rare disease research and pointed me towards specific Information source, rather than looking all over the place. It truly helped me work smart and not hard."

-- Avnisha Patel BPT, MLT

Requests for assistance is always available through the TN-CTSI website: [REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE](#)

### INTERESTED IN CONDUCTING HIGH-IMPACT CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH (CTR)?

TN-CTSI has established CTR training programs that provide core competencies focused on study design, conduct, analysis, dissemination, and translation of clinical research. We offer online trainings, seminars and workshops, opportunities for mentorship, and other resources that will likely fit your needs. Learn more about what we offer [here](#).

### BECOME A TN-CTSI MEMBER

By being engaged and becoming a TN-CTSI member, you'll gain guidance toward specific resources that may be vital to the completion of a research project. As a member you will also receive information about the latest research news, training, and funding opportunities available to you through the TN-CTSI. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about becoming a member

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## CONTACT US

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