

# Yale School of Medicine expands partnership to promote clinical trials and training in Puerto Rico <sup>[1]</sup>

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Delegación de la Universidad de Yale, el Recinto de Ciencias Médicas y el Fideicomiso de Ciencia, Tecnología e Investigación de Puerto Rico en una pasada visita educativa. Suministrada.

An expanded partnership between the Yale School of Medicine and research institutions in Puerto Rico is set to foster collaborative clinical research and training opportunities in both countries.

The agreement, which began May 1, 2017, expands on a partnership first announced on February 3, 2016, between the School of Medicine, the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation (YCCI), the Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust (PRSTRT), and the Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation (PRCCI)\*. The partnership's goal is to improve the health of Latino people through clinical research and trials, and to train Latinos in Puerto Rico and the United States to become clinical scientists and health services researchers.

Since 2016, YCCI, the School of Medicine's center for providing clinical research infrastructure for Yale scientists conducting translational research, has been working with PRCCI as a strategic partner. The expanded agreement will enable additional community training and shared services for multisite clinical trials in Puerto Rico. YCCI has also become PRCCI's external quality partner, performing monitoring of the PRCCI members/sites as needed. YCCI staff members have traveled to Puerto Rico to train researchers there in a variety of topics essential to clinical

research, such as quality management, budgeting, grant writing, and clinical research operations.

In the past year, representatives from Yale have trained more than 120 people in Puerto Rico. In October, Yale staff conducted training on research conduct, quality, community partnerships, electronic medical record implementation, budgeting, and other clinical trials infrastructure functions. Last November, Patrick O'Connor, M.D., and Eugene Shapiro, M.D., conducted a mentoring training workshop in collaboration with UPR and PRCCI.

In the coming year, these collaborations will continue, with a group from Puerto Rico set to visit Yale this summer to discuss further collaborations, and Yale staff will return to Puerto Rico for additional training sessions. Additionally, the YCCI Cultural Ambassador community partners, Junta and the AME Zion Church, will partner with PRCCI to train community advocates and patients in Puerto Rico in support of a clinical trials awareness campaign.

The partnership has an educational component which will expand as well. The first students from the program's combined M.D./Ph.D. collaboration, which invites students from the University of Puerto Rico to enroll in Yale's Combined Program in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences, have arrived in New Haven and begun their work. Additionally, William Tamborlane, M.D., received a grant to support a scholar in the Pediatric Endocrine Program at UPR. The trainee has joint mentorship from a senior faculty member at Yale and UPR and spends time at Yale also.

Program facilitator and Associate Professor of Cell Biology and Neuroscience Daniel Colón-Ramos, Ph.D., says that by connecting researchers from each institution through their students, the new program "aspires to act as a spearhead to create clinical research links" between Yale and Puerto Rico.

The partnership would also see a stronger representation of Latino people in clinical trials not only in Puerto Rico but in the United States. More than half of Connecticut's Hispanic population is of Puerto Rican descent. "This is an excellent opportunity for us to examine environmental factors that affect diseases such as diabetes, which have a high impact on the Hispanic population, allowing us to compare individuals both here and in Puerto Rico," says YCCI Director Robert Sherwin, M.D.

Since its inception in 2005, the mission of the YCCI has been to establish a home for the training of the next generation of clinical and translational scientists and to provide a robust infrastructure that promotes innovative and collaborative research directed at improving patient care.

\*PRCCI is a not-for-profit cooperative of academic and private research institutions, including the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). Its aim is to enhance clinical research endeavors in Puerto Rico. It was founded by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust (PRSTRT), a not-for-profit organization created in 2004 seeking to foster innovation and economic development

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