Mount Sinai Ranks No. 1 in Diversity and Inclusion Among U.S. Health Care Institutions for Second Year

For the second consecutive year, the Mount Sinai Health System has ranked No.1 on the “Top 12 Hospitals and Health Systems” list of DiversityInc, the nation’s leading publication in advancing diversity management.

Among the best practices that led to Mount Sinai’s honor on the 2018 list were advancing the care of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients; creating a women’s advocacy employee resource group; and increasing the focus on people with disabilities. In ranking the top hospitals and health systems, DiversityInc used a 500-question survey of criteria, including talent pipeline, talent development, leadership commitment, and supplier diversity.

Mount Sinai works to meet those criteria and then exceed them, a strategy that helped the Health System rise to No. 5 on the 2016 list, and to No. 1 for the last two years. “We should celebrate that, acknowledge all the hard work that went into getting to this point, and then look forward,” says Gary C. Butts, MD, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Mount Sinai Health System, and Dean for Diversity Programs, Policy and Community Affairs, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

The overarching goal is to make diversity and inclusion an integral part of the Health System’s “organizational fabric,” says Pamela Y. Abner, MPA, Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). She and Dr. Butts are the executive leadership team of ODI, continued on page 3

Conference Addresses Lack of Research on Female Brain Injury

The Friedman Brain Institute (FBI) in May cosponsored a program with the Brain Injury Research Center of Mount Sinai and the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine that focused attention on the little-known and -discussed incidence of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in women. CTE is a neurotrauma-associated neurodegenerative condition that is most often found in males who are professional athletes and soldiers.

The program, held in Goldwurm Auditorium and hosted in conjunction with the nonprofit organization Pink Concussions, addressed the lack of research on CTE in women and highlighted its prevalence among females who sustain head trauma each year as a result of sports injuries, accidents, domestic violence, or military duty.

In his opening remarks, Eric Nestler, MD, PhD, Nash Family Professor of Neuroscience, Director of The Friedman Institute, continued on page 4
More than 200 alumni gathered recently to celebrate 50 years of education at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai’s annual Alumni Reunion and Awards Ceremony.

Eleven distinguished alumni of the Icahn School of Medicine and St. Luke’s-Roosevelt (SLR) received awards at the event on Wednesday, May 16, at the New York Academy of Medicine. The event also included a keynote discussion by two panelists on the diverse communities cared for by the Mount Sinai Health System: Theresa A. Soriano, MD, MPH, ISMMS 2001, Professor of Medicine, and Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, spoke about patients’ social and economic challenges, and Scott Jelinek, MD, ISMMS 2018, focused on Mount Sinai’s leadership in caring for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients.

Both physicians represent the future of medical care, said David Muller, MD, Dean for Medical Education, and the Marietta and Charles C. Morchand Chair for Medical Education, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. “People like Scott and Theresa make us better. They make us a better school, better people, better doctors,” Dr. Muller said.

Before the ceremony, current medical students presented research projects to alumni and led a tour of the School of Medicine. The anatomy lab and the library were familiar to all, but alumni were intrigued by some newer aspects of student life. For example, students who do not attend lectures in person can watch later on videos—sometimes playing them at double speed to save time. And most exams can be taken online. “The tests are timed, but you can take them in your bedroom, or wherever you have Wi-Fi,” said tour guide Evan Garden, Class of 2021. “There are so many initiatives to improve student wellness, and this is definitely one of the more popular ones.”

The tour ended at Guggenheim Pavilion, site of a major exhibition of Innovators in Science and Medicine. The display focuses on the work of 48 physicians and scientists at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai who have made advances in fields as diverse as genomics, immunology, orthopedics, transplant surgery, environmental health, and equity in health care. The innovators all have a common goal, the exhibition states: “Striving to generate better scientific understanding and treatments that will change lives.”
Mount Sinai Ranks No. 1 in Diversity (continued from page 1)

along with Chief Program Officer Ann-Gel Palermo, DrPH, MPH, Associate Dean for Diversity in Biomedicine, Icahn School of Medicine. “Diversity works when it becomes part of an organization’s thinking and vision and planning,” Ms. Abner says. “If you are addressing a patient, choosing a vendor, or mentoring staff, you should ask, ‘Am I being inclusive?’”

ODI is continuing to expand education and training about unconscious bias, in close coordination with the Health System’s efforts to improve the patient experience, since biases can affect care. “Race can be part of it, but it can be age, it can be where you come from, or how you speak,” Ms. Abner says. The office also focuses on community engagement, for example, helping minority- and women-owned businesses get certified and signed on as vendors with Mount Sinai. Its three other domains of focus are diversity in hiring and promotion; employee engagement; and disparity in the quality and outcomes of health care.

“Of all the lifting, addressing health care disparities is the heaviest lift,” Dr. Butts says. With guidance from the New York State Department of Health, Mount Sinai is now piloting a standardized system for capturing data on patients’ race, ethnicity, and gender. “We expect that once the processes are right, and the data are accurate, then we can demonstrate whether there are variations in care and the outcomes of care,” he says. “And then we can make the case for more targeted, culturally tailored interventions.”

Other challenges remain, such as improving recruitment and retention, and increasing racial and ethnic diversity in upper management. But Dr. Butts took a pause to reflect on his office’s progress. “I am proud of the strength and integrity of our team and our partners across the system,” he says. “And I am inspired by the persistence and promise of our young people,” referring to programs, including the Center for Excellence in Youth Education, in which ODI mentors and supports students in underserved groups from middle school to medical school. Finally, Dr. Butts says, “I am proud that our community at Mount Sinai—the senior leadership particularly—is embracing diversity and inclusion. That gives me hope that we can advance and sustain the work we are doing and have an even greater impact.”

Fast-Tracking Research Discoveries to Help Patients

More than 100 researchers, venture capital firms, and entrepreneurs attended the launch event at Davis Auditorium on Thursday, April 12, for the Mount Sinai Innovation Partners accelerator fund that will provide commercial and business-development support to advance research discoveries that have great potential to help patients on a global scale.

The i3 Asset Accelerator (“innovation,” “inflection,” and “impact”) was established with an initial investment of $10 million over four years and additional philanthropic support, and is already funding two initial projects that aim to develop promising drug candidates for cancer and therapies for influenza B viral infections.

“Mount Sinai is making a major commitment to this initiative to ensure that we are bringing Mount Sinai discoveries to life,” Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz

funding and mentorship to advance nascent Mount Sinai technologies that will create partnerships and rapidly develop data that will reach the patient population. “i3 is the next step in engaging with the members of our life sciences innovation community, building upon our translational competencies, and evolving our commercial ecosystem to create major breakthroughs in health care,” said Erik Lium, PhD, Executive Vice President, Mount Sinai Innovation Partners.

The event also included a discussion on health care technology and the importance of i3, which was moderated by Dr. Lium and included Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai panelists Sean Ianchulev, MD, MPH, Professor of Ophthalmology, and Director of the Ophthalmic Innovation and Technology Program at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai; and Yiannis Ioannou, PhD, Professor of Genetics and Genomic Sciences.
Raising Awareness About Brain Science

The Friedman Brain Institute recently joined the Dana Foundation in its global efforts to increase public knowledge of the progress and benefits of brain research by hosting and supporting a number of activities aimed at educating students and the community about brain science in fun, interactive ways.

The Sixth Annual Brain Awareness Fair, held in Guggenheim Pavilion, delighted more than 450 New York City schoolchildren and residents of the East Harlem community, an effort that was organized by Mentoring in Neuroscience Discovery at Sinai and the Center for Excellence in Youth Education with the support of 100 Mount Sinai volunteers. Attendees interacted with top scientists and clinicians at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai who study and treat the brain, played interactive brain games, learned how neurosurgeons work, and walked through an oversized inflatable model of the brain to learn about brain anatomy, among other activities.

The Fifth Annual "Art of the Brain" exhibition, which was held in an East Harlem gallery, drew several hundred visitors over a six-week period and featured 39 works of art that showcased photographs, images, paintings, medical illustrations, and sculptures that celebrate the beauty of the brain as seen through the eyes of Mount Sinai researchers, physicians, and staff. Most of the exhibition items were available for purchase, with the proceeds placed in a Friedman Brain Institute philanthropy fund to support Mount Sinai’s “Diversity in Neuroscience” initiative.

Conference Addresses Lack of Research on Female Brain Injury

At the “Art of the Brain” exhibition, Prashanth Rajarajan, an MD/PhD candidate in neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, explained his photograph that depicts astrocytes, an important cell type in the brain.

New York City schoolchildren at the Sixth Annual Brain Awareness Fair.

At the Mount Sinai event, Yelena Goldin, PhD, Staff Neuropsychologist at Hackensack Meridian Health in Edison, N.J., explained that after reviewing thousands of studies on outcomes of traumatic brain injury, her team could find only 54 that factored sex and gender into their analyses. Additionally, Dr. Goldin said, there was no follow-up medical literature on female athletes in high school and college six months after they had recovered and were medically cleared to return to their sports.

One of the program’s speakers, a woman who experienced injuries to her head as a result of domestic violence, said the lack of medical or scientific research left her confused about her subsequent health problems, including menstrual issues, forgetfulness, depression, and anxiety. “At the time,” she said, “the only advice I got was that I would probably get some migraines.”

Another speaker, a woman who experienced injuries to her head due to domestic violence, said the lack of research made her feel helpless and confused about her subsequent health problems, including menstrual issues, forgetfulness, depression, and anxiety. “At the time,” she said, “the only advice I got was that I would probably get some migraines.”

Kristen Dams-O’Connor, PhD, Director of the Brain Injury Research Center at the Mount Sinai Health System, said recent studies from her group have not revealed any connection between traumatic brain injury and Alzheimer’s disease, although they did find damage to small blood vessels and the presence of Lewy bodies—abnormal deposits of protein, which are implicated in Parkinson’s disease.

Plenary speaker Trisha Meili said the lack of a definitive link between TBI and Alzheimer’s was welcome news to her. In April 1989, Ms. Meili, a young investment banker, survived a brutal attack while jogging in Central Park. The attack—which included a life-threatening blow to her head—made headlines around the world. During the program, Ms. Meili discussed her recovery and her life today. “Mentally, I will never be the same as I was before the brain injury,” she said. “Acknowledging this to myself, needless to say, is not a great feeling. But in another way, it gives me peace. I can live with it. I accept it. It’s a giant step in my healing.”

Brain Institute, and Dean for Academic and Scientific Affairs, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, said, “We know that lack of knowledge and an inability to treat brain injury in women and girls is a major gap in the medical profession.”

Dr. Nestler noted that the FBI is a strong proponent of establishing diversity in neuroscience and the advancement of women and those who are underrepresented in science and medicine. “Cohosting this program,” he said, “adds a whole other dimension to this initiative and highlights the need for greater attention to the medical conditions that affect women and girls.”

Pink Concussions founder Katherine Price Snedaker, LCSW, said she began researching the subject of brain injury when one of her sons sustained five concussions from playing sports. After hearing from the mothers of daughters who were also repeatedly experiencing them, she created a support group, which ultimately led to the establishment of Pink Concussions in 2013.
Ear Institute Celebrates a Decade of Making a Difference

The Ear Institute at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai (NYEE) recently celebrated its 10th anniversary of delivering safe, quality care to its patients. Leadership and staff enjoyed cake and cookies and took note of how the Ear Institute has continued to enhance its services. Recently, NYEE’s Hearing Aid Dispensary, and Hearing and Balance Testing departments were relocated to the Ear Institute.

The Ear Institute was created in 2008 when NYEE and Mount Sinai Beth Israel merged their Otology, Neurotology, and Cochlear Implant Centers to form a multispecialty institute. “The hospitals saw an opportunity to enhance their multispecialty and integrative care model by providing a place where physicians, audiologists, and other related professionals could collaborate and offer patients superior care,” James C. Tsai, MD, MBA, President of NYEE, said at the event.

Hiking to the Top of the World

Ramachandra Reddy, MD, in April, undertook a journey to the top of the world, successfully trekking 17,598 feet to reach the base camp at Mount Everest, in Nepal. Six months of physical preparation preceded the trip, in which Dr. Reddy, an Associate Professor of Cardiovascular Surgery, Mount Sinai Heart, participated in 10-mile hikes, and altitude and aerobic exercise training. His actual journey was arduous, nonetheless, as he overcame fatigue and Mount Everest’s notoriously fluctuating temperatures that dropped well below zero degrees. Dr. Reddy says he was inspired to take the trip by a patient with chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension (CTEPH)—high blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries, which often develops after the occurrence of a pulmonary embolism, and includes shortness of breath and an abnormally fast heart rate. After advising his patient to get into better shape, Dr. Reddy says, the patient “looked at me kind of funny and said, ‘You need to get in shape.’ The only thing that simulates what patients with CTEPH go through is high altitude,” says Dr. Reddy. “I decided to travel to the base camp in honor of them.”

Wall Street Run and Heart Walk

More than 400 faculty and staff at the Mount Sinai Health System participated in the annual three-mile Wall Street Run and Heart Walk on Thursday, May 17, in Lower Manhattan, and raised $66,144 for the event, which is sponsored by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. For the fourth consecutive year, the Mount Sinai Health System took home the “hospital cup” for raising the most money among participating health systems.

Participants included, front row, from left: Eileen Hughes, MA, RN, Clinical Director, Cardiothoracic Services; Claudia Colgan, Vice President for Quality Initiatives; and far right, Beth Oliver, DNP, RN, Senior Vice President of Cardiac Services.
Have you been to Thirteenth Street and Second Avenue recently? The view has started to change!

The new Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital will be built on the site of the former New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai resident building that is currently being demolished. The demolition of the 14-story building, which began earlier this year, is expected to be completed by the end of August. “Because we are in the middle of a thriving urban environment, our demolition team must take down the building brick by brick,” says Jeremy Boal, MD, Executive Vice President, and Chief Clinical Officer, Mount Sinai Health System, and President, Mount Sinai Downtown, and Mount Sinai Beth Israel. “The photos of the building below were taken in October as the scaffolding went up, and at the start of the demolition earlier this year, and show the continued progress that we have made.”

Epic Anesthesia, an anesthesia case management and documentation system, will replace the existing CompuRecord Anesthesia electronic documentation system at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai West in July. Epic Anesthesia is a vital part of the Epic application suite for Mount Sinai Health System hospital operating rooms and surgical centers.

The integration of Anesthesia with Epic Clinical Applications aims to:
- Improve workflow efficiencies, and increase patient safety and quality of care
- Enable providers to document preoperative evaluations, pre-admission testing, recovery care, post-procedure care, and more
- Provide seamless data accessibility between other Epic-enabled facilities
- Turn collected data into actionable information.

For more information, contact EpicSLWinpatient@mountsinai.org.

Mount Sinai St. Luke’s “Go-Live”:
Tuesday, July 17, early morning

Mount Sinai West “Go-Live”:
Sunday, July 29, early morning