THRIVING

The iTHRIV Newsletter

December 2023

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iTHRIV Leaders Make an Impact at the 2023 National CTSA Consortium Annual Meeting

From left to right: Patricia Rodriguez-Lozano, Karen C. Johnston, Don Brown, Kathy Hosig, Sandra Burks, Andrew Barros

Leaders across iTHRIV contributed to the national Clinical Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program Annual Meeting, which took place from November 6-8, 2023 in Washington, D.C. The meeting focus was "**Leveraging Real World Data (RWD) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Advance Translation**" and covered topics including Decentralized Clinical Trials, AI in Clinical Research, Real World Data/Real World Evidence (RWD/RWE), and Training in the Science of Translation. Over 400 participants from across the nation attended the meeting. NIH-NCATS CTSA Program leadership also provided updates to the consortium.

The meeting goals are to provide CTSA leaders with an opportunity to:
- Network with their peers
- Share best practices for practical applications
- Gain knowledge through resource updates

iTHRIV leaders who participated in this year's meeting included:

- **Karen C. Johnston, MD** – Facilitated a session at the meeting about the use of RWD and AI in relation to big data research across the consortium. Dr. Johnston serves on the national CTSA Steering Committee and leads the Real World Data
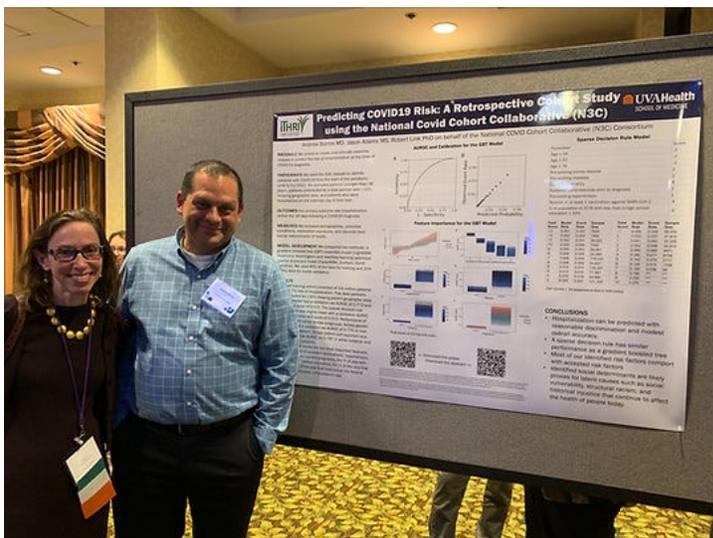
(RWD) Task Force for the consortium. She is also the Contact Principal Investigator for the NIH-supported iTHRIV CTSA.

- **Sandra Burks, RN** – Led a session at the CTSA Administrators meeting titled "Showing Impact of the National CTS Program." The CTSA infrastructure is poised to support the research community in the ever-changing challenges of clinical and translational science through strong collaboration and innovative programs. Sandra is the Program Director for iTHRIV and supports the work at all partner sites.
- **Patricia Rodriguez-Lozano, MD** – Served on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee and was a co-facilitator for a session on Decentralized Clinical Trials (DCTs) during the meeting. Discussion during this session supported the growing belief that DCTs and digital technology have the potential to bridge significant gaps with marginalized populations in clinical research and healthcare.
- **Andrew Barros, MD** – Presented his research, "Predicting COVID19 Risk: A Retrospective Cohort Study using the National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C)," during the Program Meeting Poster Session. Dr. Barros is a senior iTHRIV Scholar and his work was also supported by an N3C PHASTR Award to the University of Virginia.

Dr. Rodriguez-Lozano facilitating a session about Decentralized Clinical Trials

Congratulations to the entire iTHRIV team!

Dr. Barros and Dr. Melissa Haendel, Colorado University Anschutz Chief Research Informatics Officer at the CTSA Annual Program Meeting
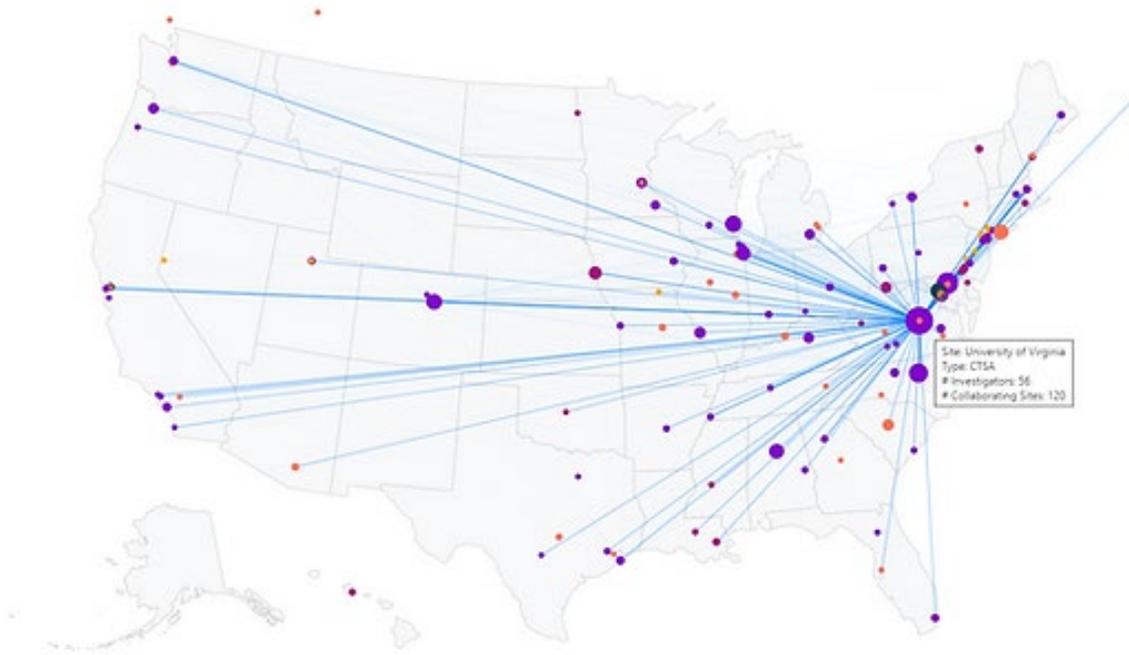

Dr. Barros presents his poster to Virginia Tech leader Dr. Kathy Hosig and NCATS Director Dr. Michael Kurilla

Catalyzing Research: iTHRIV's Trailblazing Efforts in the National COVID Cohort Collaborative

The National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C), spearheaded by the NIH-NCATS, has successfully established a centralized national data repository, providing scientists with a comprehensive resource to investigate COVID-19 and explore potential treatments. Hospitals and healthcare plans nationwide regularly contribute deidentified patient clinical, laboratory, and diagnostic data to the secure N3C Data Enclave, hosted on the cloud. N3C's robust data pipeline ensures the harmonization of electronic health record (EHR) data, linking it with demographic, mortality, and other datasets. This integration provides a clearer understanding of COVID-19 health outcomes across diverse communities. Leveraging advanced informatics technologies accelerates the identification of patterns, especially crucial in the evolving landscape of the pandemic. To date, over 82 healthcare institutions have contributed a wealth of data, totaling more than 20 million patient records.

Within the N3C collaborative network, the integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (iTHRIV), a Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program partner, stands out for its impactful contributions. Notably, Johanna Loomba and Andrea Zhou from iTHRIV's informatics team lead the national N3C Logic Liaison Team, a group of coders dedicated to sharing best practices and supporting all domain teams within N3C.

iTHRIV's trailblazing efforts are distinctive, evident in its Inter-institutional Collaborations involving 120 sites, over 60 local investigators, and 32 enclave projects. The institute's local authors have published 33 articles, displaying their commitment to advancing knowledge. Research studies led by iTHRIV encompass diverse topics such as stroke characteristics, cardiovascular disease outcomes, long COVID risk, pre-COVID vaccination impacts, and factors influencing COVID severity.

iTHRIV at UVA collaborative leadership and team science in the National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C)

Impressively, iTHRIV takes a leading role as one of the ten sites in a pilot program for the development of the National Clinical Cohort Collaborative—an expansion of N3C. This initiative repurposes systems and platforms initially designed for COVID research to support investigations approved by NCATS in any research area.
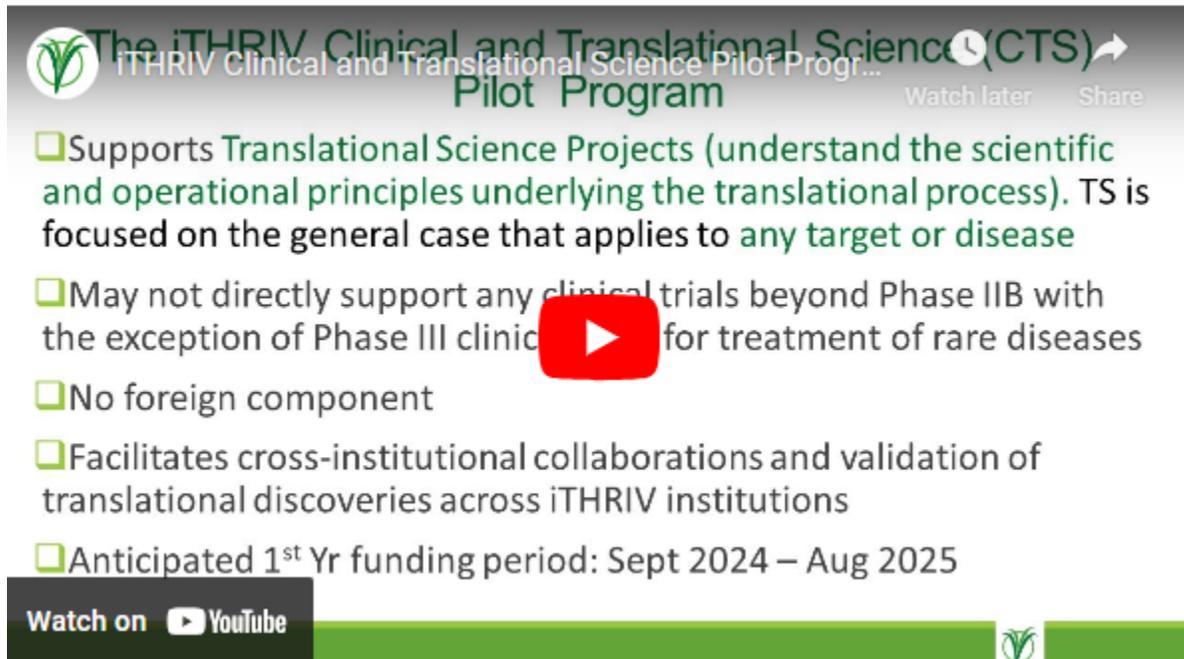
As iTHRIV continues at the forefront of these endeavors, there is an ongoing encouragement for researchers within the iTHRIV community to propose new research studies utilizing the existing dataset and analytics platform, reinforcing a commitment to ongoing innovation and scientific exploration.

For additional information, about iTHRIV and N3C please visit our portal page here.

Opportunities for Clinical Translational Science Research

Coming soon… the new iTHRIV Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) Pilot Studies Program. This video is a sneak peek of the program.

Please visit this Portal page to learn more about translational science.

iTHRIV Under the Microscope

Jennifer V. Phillips, RN, CCRC is an accomplished healthcare professional with a passion for clinical research. She is a highly skilled nursing professional with a vast surgical critical care and clinical research background. She has been a valuable member of the iTHRIV team since 2019 and has been a UVA Health Employee for 30 years. Before joining iTHRIV, she worked as the Clinical Research Manager for the Surgical Therapeutic Advancement Center (STAC) with the UVA Department of Surgery and was previously a critical care nurse.

In her time with iTHRIV, she has co-authored or authored several abstracts, articles and grants. As the Workforce Development Core Manager, she teaches, develops, or coordinates multiple programs including Inspiring Diverse Researchers in Virginia (iDRIV), Research Administration Program for Training and Resources (RAPTR), Mentoring Workshops, the iDRIV Leadership Academy, and the Proposal Development Series. She is also responsible for management of the current iTHRIV Pilot Studies Program. Jennifer's expertise and dedication have made her a valuable asset to the healthcare industry and the iTHRIV team.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Jennifer is passionate about outdoor activities. She loves to explore the area's mountain trails and has traveled to Arizona, Montana, and Tennessee for hiking trips. She is an avid walker who tries to get many miles in every day. Jennifer grew up in Charlottesville and is married with two adult children. When she is not working, she likes to unwind and relax with her friends and family at a local brewery. Her love of the outdoors and her commitment to a healthy lifestyle helps her to maintain a balanced and fulfilling life.

Meet an iTHRIV Mentor

Jamie Zoellner, PhD, RD

Professor & Registered Dietitian
Department of Public Health Sciences,
University of Virginia

"Dr. Jamie Zoellner is an extraordinary mentor, with extensive experience using a community-based research approach with special attention to obesity and cancer control research initiatives in rural regions. Using these skills, she pushes me to think critically about my study design, recruitment strategies, and analysis plan that have enhanced my work toward improving the survivorship of individuals with endometrial cancer."

- Shannon Armbruster, MD, MPH