



**Mount  
Sinai**

# inside

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## Margaret H. Baron Takes the Reins of MD-PhD Training

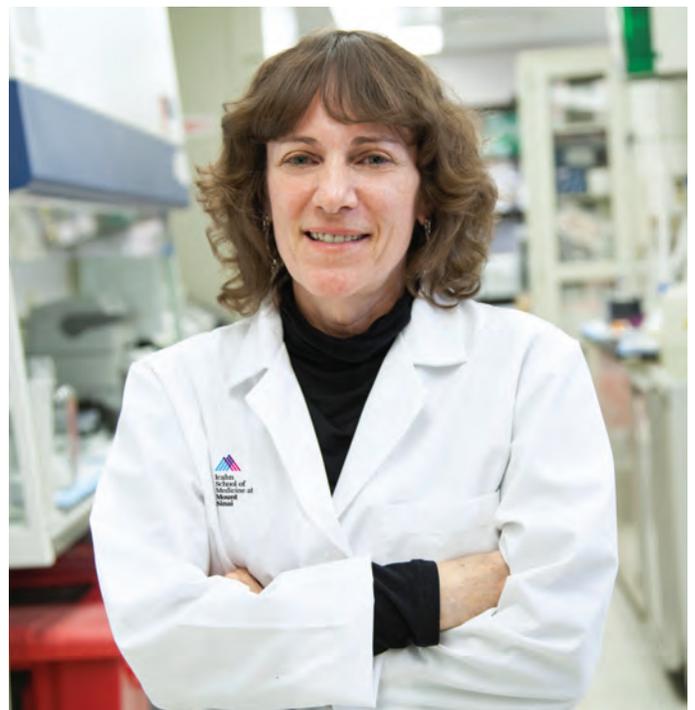
Margaret H. Baron, MD, PhD, an internationally recognized developmental biologist at the Mount Sinai Health System, has been named Senior Associate Dean for Education and Director of the MD-PhD Program at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. In her new role, Dr. Baron, the Irene and Dr. Arthur M. Fishberg Professor of Medicine, will draw upon her leadership experience in graduate education to train the next generation of physician-scientists at Mount Sinai.

“Not only did Dr. Baron go through rigorous MD-PhD training herself, but she has remained actively involved and interested in education for decades,” says David Muller, MD, Dean for Medical Education and the Marietta and Charles C. Morchand Chair for Medical Education at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. “Her tried-and-true leadership skills, along with her thoughtful and thorough approach, will help elevate our program to new heights.”

Going forward, Dr. Baron plans to create new courses in biomedical sciences that have a greater emphasis on experiential, team-based learning and combine case analyses with active problem-solving.

“I’d like to find ways to modify the path through the MD-PhD

*continued on page 2 >*



Margaret H. Baron, MD, PhD

## Uncovering a Stronger Link Between Obesity and Genes



Ruth Loos, PhD

Researchers from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, participating in the largest genetic study yet on obesity, have helped uncover stronger links between genes and body weight and body fat distribution.

The trailblazing discoveries were published in two companion papers in the February issue of the journal *Nature*, and were the result of a four-year international research project conducted by the Genetic Investigation of Anthropometric Traits (GIANT) consortium. Other key participating institutions included the Broad Institute of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, the University of Michigan Health System, and the University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

“Our goal was to get a better understanding of the genes and biological pathways that influence obesity,” says Ruth Loos, PhD, Professor of

*continued on page 4 >*

# Why Vaccinations are Critical to Children's Health

As a young resident making pediatric hospital rounds in Houston more than thirty years ago, Michael F. Tosi, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, remembers the almost daily presence of sick children under age 5 battling Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), a leading cause of bacterial meningitis.

"Some children died or became brain damaged from the disease," says Dr. Tosi, also Interim Chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Icahn School of Medicine. "Today, we have seen it nearly disappear. I imagine the generation of pediatricians before me had a similar experience watching polio vanish from the United States due to that vaccine."

Indeed, widespread U.S. immunization programs that eliminate preventable diseases such as Hib, polio, and measles have been among the country's greatest public health successes. A recent outbreak of measles in the United States, however, has renewed public discussion about the safety and importance of pediatric vaccines.

*Inside Mount Sinai* turned to two highly respected specialists to discuss why vaccinations are vitally important to children's health: Dr. Tosi and Ramon Murphy, MD, MPH, Clinical Professor of



Michael F. Tosi, MD, left, and Ramon Murphy, MD

Pediatrics and Preventive Medicine, Vice Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, Voluntary Affairs, and Director of Patient Care, Arnhold Global Health Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

## Q. Are pediatric vaccinations safe?

**Dr. Murphy:** The current recommended pediatric vaccines are extraordinarily safe and effective. Common side effects such as fever and local reactions such as tenderness or slight swelling at the injection site are easily managed with analgesics and cool compresses. While more severe reactions such as a high fever are rare, they can also be managed.

## Q. What are medically valid reasons for not vaccinating a child?

**Dr. Murphy:** I would recommend not vaccinating a child if he or she has previously had a severe reaction to that particular vaccine or to a component of the vaccine. Also, it is not advisable to administer certain live virus vaccines to someone who is immune suppressed, immune deficient, or pregnant.

## Q. In your work with underserved populations overseas, how often do you see these diseases?

**Dr. Murphy:** When children do not have access to vaccines, the consequences are dreadful, and many die from preventable diseases.

*continued on page 3* >

## > Margaret H. Baron Takes the Reins of MD-PhD Training *(continued from page 1)*

Program so that clinical and research training are better integrated," she says. "The challenge is to help students begin successful independent careers as early as possible without jeopardizing the quality and rigor of their research and clinical training."

Dr. Baron earned her MD from Harvard Medical School and her PhD in molecular and cellular biology under Nobel laureate David Baltimore, PhD, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, through the Harvard-MIT Program in Health Sciences and Technology. Following her training in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, she performed postdoctoral research at Harvard with

Tom Maniatis, PhD, a pioneer in modern molecular biology. After eight years as a Harvard faculty member, Dr. Baron joined Mount Sinai in 1997, where she has held a number of leadership positions.

"Her basic science research in stem-cell biology is highly cited and has opened up pathways for novel therapies in the field of blood disorders," says John Morrison, PhD, Dean of Basic Sciences and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the W.T.C. Johnson Professor of Geriatrics and Adult Development (Neurobiology of Aging) and Professor of Neuroscience. "We are very pleased to have her in this new, critically important leadership role in the Graduate School."

Prior to her appointment as Director, Dr. Baron served as Assistant Director of the MD-PhD Program, where she cofounded and codirected the Multidisciplinary Training Area in Developmental and Stem Cell Biology. Last fall, she and Robert Krauss, PhD, Professor of Developmental and Regenerative Biology, created an advanced stem-cell biology course for PhD and MD-PhD students. Dr. Baron is also Program Director of Mount Sinai's first National Institutes of Health-funded T32 Training Grant in Hematology Research and is Director of Research in Hematology and Blood Disorders in the Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology.

# Around the Health System

## Urgent Care Facility Opens in Inwood



Urgent care specialist Crissaris Sarnelli, MD, left, and Judah Fierstein, MD, Medical Director of the Mount Sinai Health System's Urgent Care Centers, are among the physicians caring for patients at Mount Sinai Urgent Care Inwood, which recently celebrated its opening at Broadway and 213th Street in Manhattan's northernmost neighborhood. The facility—part of Mount Sinai Doctors Faculty Practice—specializes in walk-in care for nonemergency injuries and illnesses for adults and children, seven days a week, including holidays.

## Pediatric Surgery Unit Has a New Look



Four-year-old Gabriela Espinal, sits with her mother, Monica Espinal, and enjoys a high-five with nurse Dana Annese, RN, following a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai (NYEE). The brightly colored patient rooms are part of a major renovation and expansion that was recently completed at NYEE's Pediatric Surgery Unit that included the addition of glass walls to enhance light, a new waiting room, new restrooms and lockers, and a storage space for strollers. The expansion will enable NYEE to meet growing demand for pediatric clinical and diagnostic care. NYEE performs more than 3,500 pediatric operations annually, most of which are same-day surgeries.

## Why Vaccinations are Critical to Children's Health *(continued from page 2)*

**Q. Has the elimination of childhood diseases through vaccinations led to a more laissez-faire attitude about their importance?**

**Dr. Tosi:** I think many people are unaware of the devastating effects these illnesses had in children before vaccines were available and may feel a sense of security that, ironically, leads some to refuse vaccination.

**Q. Why is it important to stick to a strict vaccination schedule?**

**Dr. Tosi:** The recommended vaccination schedules are designed to optimize the effectiveness of the vaccines in children being immunized. They are based on research studies that confirm the ideal dosages and intervals between vaccines. In unusual cases, it may be advisable to modify the schedule to accommodate the need for more rapid development of immunity in a particular individual.

**Q. Are all children in the United States able to receive vaccinations, regardless of their family income or legal status?**

**Dr. Tosi:** Nearly 50,000 U.S. providers and many city health departments administer vaccines under a federally funded program called "Vaccines for Children," regardless of the child's legal status or the family's ability to pay.

### Comparison of 20th Century Annual Morbidity and Current Morbidity: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Disease	20th Century Annual Morbidity †	2011 Reported Cases ††	Percent Decrease
Smallpox	29,005	0	100%
Diphtheria	21,053	0	100%
Measles	530,217	212	>99%
Mumps	162,344	370	>99%
Pertussis	200,752	15,216	92%
Polio (paralytic)	16,316	0	100%
Rubella	47,745	4	>99%
Congenital Rubella Syndrome	152	0	100%
Tetanus	580	9	98%
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i>	20,000	8*	>99%

† Source: *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2007; 298(18): 2155-2163

†† Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMWR January 6, 2012; 60(51); 1762-1775. (provisional 2011 data)

\**Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) <5 years of age. An additional 14 cases of Hib are estimated to have occurred among the 237 reports of Hib (<5 years of age) with unknown serotype.

## Saving Hearts by Eating Right

Harlem Healthy Hearts (HHH) recently kicked off its monthly series of workshops with “Saving Hearts by Eating Right” at the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Community Center on West 134th Street. The event included screenings for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight, and gave participants heart-healthy cookbooks, pedometers, and brochures.

Icilma Fergus, MD, FACC, Associate Professor of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, right, and American Heart Association volunteer Haykuhi Kirakosyan, offered heart health information at the workshop. In January 2012, Dr. Fergus cofounded HHH with Program Coordinator Nancy Thomas. Dr. Fergus is also Director, Cardiovascular

Disparities at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and President, Association of Black Cardiologists. At the event, she and guest speaker Mary Ann McLaughlin, MD, MPH, Director, Cardiac Health Program, The Mount Sinai Hospital, discussed the important link between a healthy diet and a healthy heart.



## A Celebration of Black History

A Black History Month program at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s recently featured attorney and scholar Judy Scales-Trent, who discussed the life of her father, William J. Trent Jr., the hospital’s first black trustee, who served as President of the Board of Trustees from 1970 through 1974. Mr. Trent was the first Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund and served in that position from 1944 to 1964.



“I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about the impact my father made on the African American community,” says Ms. Scales-Trent, Professor Emerita at the School of Law, State University of New York at Buffalo. At her request, James E. C. Norris, MD, a retired plastic surgeon from Mount Sinai St. Luke’s, was invited to the lecture. A fellow writer, Dr. Norris published a biography about his father, who was one of Virginia’s leading black physicians.

## › Uncovering a Stronger Link Between Obesity and Genes *(continued from page 1)*

Preventive Medicine at The Mount Sinai Hospital, Director of the Genetics of Obesity and Related Metabolic Traits Program in the Charles Bronfman Institute for Personalized Medicine, and a senior author who coordinated the collection and interpretation of data for the meta-analysis of both studies. Among the data sources was the Mount Sinai BioMe™ Biobank, which collects de-identified DNA and plasma used for a variety of research purposes from consenting patients.

Researchers analyzed genetic data from nearly 340,000 individuals to understand why some individuals gain weight more easily than others and why some people tend to store excess fat at their waists, whereas others at their hips. Findings revealed there are more than 140 locations across the genome that play roles in various obesity traits.

In the first research project, scientists examining the link between genes and body mass index (BMI) identified 97 sites across the human genome associated with obesity—triple the number previously known. “The next critical step is determining which genes in the neighborhood of each of them actually cause an increased susceptibility to obesity,” observes Dr. Loos. “That will require input from scientists with a wide range of expertise before our findings can be used toward targeted obesity prevention or treatment strategies.”

The BMI researchers also found that susceptibility to weight gain has a neurological—and not just a metabolic—component. “Many of the genes for obesity seem to be playing a role in the brain, where we believe they regulate food intake and influence appetite, hunger, and reward,” notes Dr. Loos.

The second research project pinpointed 49 sites on the genome associated with waist-to-hip ratio, a measure of body fat distribution. Individuals with greater amounts of belly fat are more likely to suffer from metabolic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease than those whose fat is distributed throughout the body. Figuring out which genes influence the specific areas where fat is deposited would help scientists better understand the biology behind these metabolic conditions.

Still, while genes are important, Dr. Loos emphasizes they are not the only factor in determining body weight. “Being physically active and maintaining a healthy diet can substantially reduce your genetic susceptibility to gain weight,” she says.

# The Power of Integrative Medicine

The Spencer Cox Center for Health, part of the Mount Sinai Health System's Institute for Advanced Medicine (IAM)—the largest provider of HIV primary care in New York State—recently added yoga classes to its roster of complementary programs, and the patient response has been overwhelmingly positive.

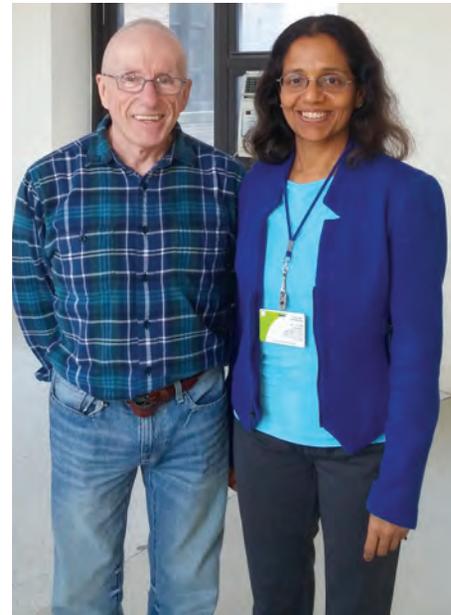
“After a yoga class I feel taller and more aligned, and I leave feeling elated and calm,” says Peter Weber, a patient at the Spencer Cox Center. IAM, formed in March 2014, is comprised of the Jack Martin Fund Clinic, the Comprehensive Health Program, the Peter Krueger Clinic, and three clinics at the Spencer Cox Center for Health—the Morningside Clinic, the Samuels Clinic, and the West 17th Street Clinic.

Vani Gandhi, MD, HIV and Infectious Disease Specialist, and Director of Integrative Medicine at the Spencer Cox Center for Health, says the clinics have been providing patients with mind-

body programs, such as massage and acupuncture, since 1996. The two weekly yoga classes are the newest additions to Spencer Cox's Integrative Medicine Program.

“We serve a population who would otherwise not be able to access yoga classes in the community,” says Dr. Gandhi. “In recommending the use of these complementary health care approaches, my patients are learning how to improve their well-being while receiving their standard medical treatment, and it leads to a better quality of life.”

In addition to yoga, Mr. Weber utilizes other complementary programs. “I have found that the massage and acupuncture programs have helped improve my sleep,” he says. “More importantly, I leave my sessions feeling exhilarated, and they have eased the distracting and disabling pain that comes with my neuropathy, as well as lessening my vertigo and stress.”



Patient Peter Weber and Vani Gandhi, MD

IAM's vision for the future, says Dr. Gandhi, is to provide these programs at all of its clinics.

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## Students Support Ebola-Relief Efforts in Liberia

Students at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS) have collected more than \$6,600 and 56 boxes of supplies to support the Liberia Mental Health Clinicians Association, a nursing organization in Liberia that is working to end the spread of Ebola in that country.

Mount Sinai's “End the Outbreak” campaign was created by first-year medical student Caitlin Driscoll last fall, after she says she perceived “a lack of conversation about what was happening around Ebola and felt, as med students, we should respond in some way.”

She and her fellow students organized a series of on- and off-campus fundraising events and began collecting supplies and monetary donations throughout the Mount Sinai Health System. Fundraisers included a trivia night, an evening held at Crank Cycling Studio on the Upper East Side, and an on-campus auction of services and items donated by students.



Front row, from left: Sally Salari, Shivani Kastuar, and Claire Mann  
Back row, from left: Allie Lockwood, Leela Chockalingam, Caitlin Driscoll, Emily Leven, and Lizzie Gromet

At the auction, Shari Kaplan, Director of the Care and Respect for Elders and Emergencies Volunteer Program at Mount Sinai, won an Indian cooking class in her home, led by first-year medical student Leela Chockalingam.

“Medical students bring such a wealth of diversity,” says Ms. Kaplan. “This was a lovely way to experience a taste of a different culture. And of course, it was for a good cause, which made the experience even lovelier.”

To make a donation, please visit: [philanthropy.mountsinai.org/donate](http://philanthropy.mountsinai.org/donate). Select “Medical Students

Making Impacts” in the designation drop-down menu and write “Ebola Relief” in the comments section. All donations will be used to purchase supplies and are 501(c) (3) tax deductible.

## EVENT

# 20th Annual Medical Student Research Day

Faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend this event on The Mount Sinai Hospital campus, which will feature a keynote speaker and student oral and poster presentations.

Thursday, March 12

12:15 - 2:15 pm

Keynote and oral presentations

Stern Auditorium

2:15 - 4 pm

Poster presentations

Guggenheim Pavilion Atrium

### Grand Rounds / Anesthesiology

J Mocco, MD, MS, Professor, Neurological Surgery, presents "Mechanical Thrombectomy for Acute Stroke."

Wednesday, March 11

6:30 - 8:10 am

The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus

Annenberg 13-01

### Grand Rounds / Medicine

Sally E. Wenzel, MD, Director, University of Pittsburgh Asthma Institute, presents "Making Difficult Asthma Less Difficult: Defining, Evaluating, and Phenotyping."

Tuesday, March 17

8:30 - 9:30 am

Mount Sinai Beth Israel

Podell Auditorium

### Grand Rounds / Psychiatry

Saul Levin, MD, MPA, Chief Executive Officer, American Psychiatric Association, presents "Psychiatry and Health Care Reform: Charting New Territory in the Medical Field."

Thursday, March 19

11:30 am - 1 pm

Mount Sinai Beth Israel

Podell Auditorium

### Visiting Professor Lecture Series / Ophthalmology

Jost B. Jonas, MD, PhD, Chairman, Ophthalmology, Medical Faculty Mannheim, Ruprecht-Karls University of Heidelberg, Germany, presents "New Aspects on Glaucoma, Myopia, Diabetic Retinopathy, Retinal Vein Occlusions, and Choroidal Thickness in Ophthalmology."

Thursday, March 19

6 - 7 pm

New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai

314 North Building, Conference Room

## Epic Upgrade in March

The Epic Electronic Medical Record (EMR) upgrade will take place Saturday, March 21 - Sunday, March 22.

### AFFECTED AREAS

- **Ambulatory, Inpatient, and ED:** The Mount Sinai Hospital and Mount Sinai Queens
- **Ambulatory:** North Shore Medical Group
- **Select Ambulatory practices:** Mount Sinai Beth Israel, Mount Sinai Roosevelt, and Mount Sinai St. Luke's.

### KEY UPGRADE FEATURES

- **Epic Chart Search:** Allows quick keyword search across the chart
- **Ambulatory:** Primary Activity Tabs and NoteWriter streamline workflows
- **Inpatient:** Note cosigns and attestations are merged into one note
- **Nursing:** AVS printout includes discharge medication comments.

Note: Epic meets requirements for Electronic Prescribing of Controlled Substances (EPCS). For more information, visit <http://intranet1.mountsinai.org/epcs>.

For more Epic upgrade information, visit

<http://intranet1.mountsinai.org/epic/upgrade.html>.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Third Annual Brain Awareness Fair

The Sinai Neuroscience Outreach Program, in partnership with the Center for Excellence in Youth Education, is hosting its Third Annual Brain Awareness Fair. The event will take place during Brain Awareness Week, a global campaign created to promote public awareness of brain research. People of all ages can participate in a number of hands-on activities and exhibits, and adults can discuss topics such as addiction, Alzheimer's disease, autism, and mental health with Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai faculty at the "Meet the Experts" booth.

Thursday, March 19

3 - 6 pm

The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus

Guggenheim Pavilion



#### INSIDE MOUNT SINAI

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