



The BRAINet SYNAPSE

BRAINet is a friends group of the OHSU Brain Institute (OBI) that helps build community awareness, interest, and support for neuroscience research at OHSU.

BRAINet Synapse Newsletter

October 2016

President's Message

*By Helen Richardson,
BRAINet President*

Every once in a while I come across something that makes me think, "Wow, the future is here!" The lecture by Dr. George Keepers about the Unity Center for Behavioral Health is one of those things. Four major medical institutions - Legacy, OHSU, Adventists and Kaiser Permanente - have come together to design, build and operate a cooperative center. There, children and adults experiencing a mental health crisis can come to be evaluated, treated and, when appropriate, referred on to outpatient care. The Center will operate under the auspices of Legacy and will have a Board of Managers made up of representatives of all four institutions.

Currently, people experiencing mental health emergencies often go to hospital emergency rooms where the environment can be chaotic and may exacerbate their situation. Also, there aren't enough beds for those who need them and people untrained in mental health issues sometimes are called in to handle the crisis.

Unity will combine existing resources and add to them to provide approximately 100 beds, 24 for a Children's Unit. Incoming patients will be met by "trauma informed" professionals, staff who understand the traumatic experience of incoming patients and have the skills to respond appropriately. The Children's Unit will serve adolescents for whom the current lack of beds

at times has had children waiting 3-4 days and even being sent out of state on some occasions.

OHSU will provide the doctors and nurse practitioners, all but one of whom has been hired, adding an additional 25 staff members to OHSU's team. Medical students will do their mental health inpatient rotation at Unity, providing them with an excellent learning opportunity outside of an ER environment.

Dr. Keepers showed us drawings of the building's interior. It is designed to create an atmosphere of calmness helping to reduce patient anxiety. The reception areas are open and well lighted with many windows and the rooms are spacious and airy. There are rooms available at a remove from common areas where individual needs can be attended to.

Unity is scheduled to open January 9, 2017. The anticipation is that 70% of mental health patients currently using ERs will be able to come to Unity, freeing up the ERs for medical emergencies and most of the time bypassing the need for police involvement.

The time, effort, expertise and resources that have gone into the creation of the Unity Center for Behavioral Health make it, I think, a model for the kind of cooperative, patient-focused approach to care that exemplifies the best in those who manage health care systems. Perhaps the future is closer than we think.

Regards,

Helen Richardson, President

October Lecture Luncheon

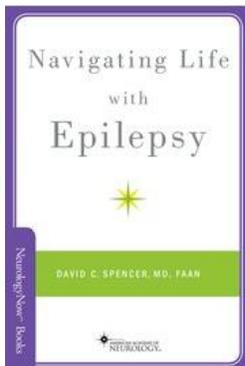
Join us on **Monday, October 17, at 11:30 a.m.** at the Multnomah Athletic Club for a lecture from Dr. David Spencer on “Navigating Life with Epilepsy.”

Dr. Spencer is the director of OHSU’s Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, and the author of a forthcoming book of the same title as the lecture. He will discuss his background, the book, and education efforts around neurological conditions in general.



11:30 Registration and Lunch Served

12:00-1:00 Lecture



Cost

\$25 Members

\$25 Guests of Members

\$30 Non-Members

To register and pre-pay to secure your reservation (you can renew your

membership at the same time!), please visit:

<http://goo.gl/10JoFJ>

Registration will close at midnight on Wednesday, October 12.

This month we will be served Autumn Squash Ravioli.

Brain in the News

by George Ivan Smith, BRAINet member

An enzyme known as NMNAT2 may help protect against the effects of certain degenerative brain diseases, said Kevin Fryling in the July/August 2016 issue of Brain in the News.

Hui-Chen Lu at Indiana U. led a study that found that NMNAT2 (nicotinamide monucleotide adenylyl transferase 2) is a key neuronal maintenance factor.

Accumulation of proteins in the brain cause many disorders. These proteinopathies occur when proteins “misfold,” making them grow sticky and clump, forming “plaques” or tangles. NMNAT2 binds to misfolded proteins, preventing or repairing errors that cause the clumps.

Common proteinopathies include Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's and ALS. Degenerative brain diseases affect more than six million Americans.

Studying brains donated by more than 500 elderly people whose cognitive function they tested annually before death, Lu and colleagues found people with greater resistance to decline had higher levels of NMNAT2.

Lu's team tested the hypothesis in mice, damaging their brains with high levels of Tau, a toxic protein that correlates to increase in disease. Increasing the level of NMNAT2 in the hippocampus, a learning and memory region, significantly lowered Tau levels.

You can find the full study at this link:

<http://goo.gl/1ne1B6>.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Please click on the link for information on how to reserve tickets, unless otherwise noted.

[You and Your Racist Brain: The Neuroscience of Prejudice](#)

Monday, October 3, Revolution Hall

[Brain TLC: Vision and Dementia](#)

Thursday, October 13, Center for Health & Healing

[Ask the Health Experts: Brain Health and Aging](#)

Wednesday, October 19, Center for Health & Healing

OHSU Brain Institute Forum and Annual Meeting
THE MEETING OF THE MINDS
Clinicians and Researchers Dialogue
with presentations from



Marc Freeman, Ph.D.
Director, The Vollum Institute



Bitá Moghaddam, Ph.D.
Incoming Chair, Department
of Behavioral Neuroscience

Friday, November 18, 2016

(BRAINet Members Only)

Contact [Kate Stout](#) for more information.

Notice of Elections

At the November 14 Lecture Luncheon, we will hold elections for BRAINet board positions.

All paid members as of November 14 are eligible to vote.

Nominations:

President:

Helen Richardson

Vice President and President Elect:

Lee Golden

Secretary:

Vacant

Treasurer:

Tracy Morgan

Member-at-Large:

Vacant



For more information or to express interest in being nominated for a board position, please contact Helen Richardson (gsgam@comcast.net). Joining the Board is a way to further engage with BRAINet members and OBI scientists. We meet every other month in the Center for Health & Healing to discuss strategic goals and community outreach. We welcome fresh perspectives and ideas!

BRAINet Contacts:

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