

**CONTENTS**

- 1 **Message from the Director**
- 2 **The 411: What's coming up for the center**
- 2 **LA CaTS Center announces three new pilot projects**
- 2 **Featured Investigator: Dr. Amanda Staiano**
- 3 **Spotlight: New LA CaTS Center Visiting Scholar Program**
- 3 **The Health Literacy Corner**

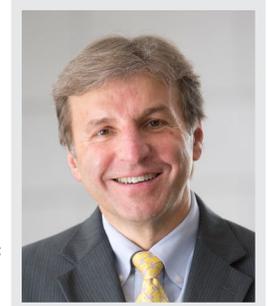
Sign up to receive announcements on funding and training opportunities at <https://lacats.pbrc.edu/about/listserv>

**Acknowledgment:**

The LA CaTS Center is supported through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Institutional Development Award program - [www.nigms.nih.gov/research/crcb/IDeA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/research/crcb/IDeA/Pages/default.aspx) - grant 1 U54 GM104940. The IDeA-CTR is led by the NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). The content of this information is solely the responsibility of the LA CaTS Center and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.

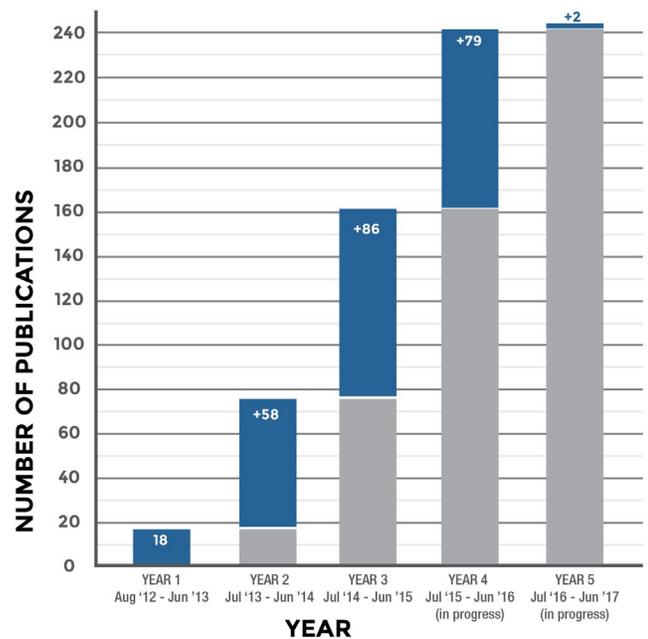
**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Over the past four years, the LA CaTS Center has emerged from the beginning stages of establishing a collaborative research infrastructure within our member institutions, to the well-functioning organization that supports numerous researchers across the state it is now. The purpose of the NIH funded IDeA-CTR program is to support the infrastructure to better translate basic biomedical science into improved care and public health by fostering partnerships between basic and clinical scientists in IDeA states. I have been extremely pleased with the progress of the LA CaTS Center IDeA-CTR and am enthusiastic on the steps we are making to improve health outcomes for the chronic diseases that are plaguing our state. This important effort could not be successful without the support of the NIH (and in particular the National Institute of General Medical Sciences) and all of our collaborating institutions and research partners - LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center, LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, Tulane University, Xavier University of Louisiana, LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport, Children's Hospital, and LSU A&M. We have also received much support from our IDeA state partner, Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). MUSC has helped us to establish a "front door" to the LA CaTS Center resources available to researchers through the implementation of the SPARC (Services, Pricing & Application for Research Centers) system, as well as many other efforts to better the Center.



I am proud to provide the brief update on our progress. To date, we have assisted over 140 investigators and funded over 35 pilot projects and 15 scholar awards. The Center has over 240 cited publications and our investigators have presented at over 150 professional meetings around the globe. Through the new Visiting and Community Scholar Programs, I anticipate seeing an increase the number of investigators with new skills, techniques and more community engaged research ideas among our institutions. The LA CaTS Center has also supported various workshops and educational opportunities so all institutions across the state can have access to expertise and innovation in research processes. I look forward to the continued success of the LA CaTS Center over the next year and the value it brings to Louisiana.

**William T. Cefalu, MD**  
Director  
LA CaTS Center



## THE 411: WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE CENTER

1. LA CaTS Baton Rouge Community Advisory Board Meeting - **May 26, 2016**
2. Pennington Nutrition Obesity Research Center (NORC) Pilot Grant Letters of Intent - **due May 28, 2016**  
For more information, visit: <https://norcfunding.pbrc.edu>
3. LA CaTS New Orleans Community Advisory Board Meeting - **June 16, 2016**
4. LA CaTS Round 5 Pilot Grants Competition, Letters of Intent - **due June 17, 2016**  
For more information, visit <https://lacatsfunding.pbrc.edu>
5. National IDeA Symposium of Biomedical Research Excellence (NISBRE) - **June 26-28, 2016**
6. Visiting Scholar Applications Round 2 coming soon!

For more information on our Calendar of Events, please visit [www.lacats.org/calendar](http://www.lacats.org/calendar).

To add an event, email us at [info@LACaTS.org](mailto:info@LACaTS.org).

## LA CaTS CENTER ANNOUNCES THREE NEW PILOT PROJECTS

The LA CaTS Center Pilot Grants Program recently awarded its fourth round of pilot projects to investigators at New Orleans and Baton Rouge member institutions. The top three scored projects were awarded with funds from institutional and/or NIH IDeA-CTR funds. Congratulations to the following awardees:

**Marie Krousel-Wood, MD, Tulane University**

*"Overcoming Immunity to Change: A Feasibility Study of a New Method to Promote Medication Adherence among Older Adults with Hypertension"*

**Jing Chen, MD, MMSc, MSc, Tulane University**

*"Effect of Combination Therapy with Sodium Nitrite and Isoquercetin on Endothelial Function and Inflammation among Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease"*

**Anne Gilmore, PhD, RD, LDN & Leanne Redman, PhD, Pennington Biomedical**

*"Unintentional Overfeeding of Formula Fed Infants"*

## FEATURED INVESTIGATOR

**Amanda Staiano, PhD, MPP**

LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center  
2013-2014 LA CaTS Meritorious Scholar Award Recipient  
2015-2017 LA CaTS Roadmap Scholar Award Recipient



Dr. Amanda Staiano grew up in Baton Rouge, graduating from LSU's University Laboratory School in the state's first International Baccalaureate diploma class. She graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of science in psychology from LSU. Dr. Staiano then earned a PhD in developmental psychology and master of public policy from Georgetown University. In 2011, she returned to Baton Rouge to complete a 3-year T32 postdoctoral fellowship (#DK064584) in obesity and physical activity epidemiology under the mentorship of Dr. Peter Katzmarzyk at Pennington Biomedical. As the first LA CaTS Center Meritorious Scholar and now as a Roadmap Scholar, Dr. Staiano was promoted to Assistant Professor in 2014.

**Read more about Dr. Staiano & her research:**

[www.lacats.org/news-and-publications/featured-investigators/amanda-staiano/](http://www.lacats.org/news-and-publications/featured-investigators/amanda-staiano/)

## SPOTLIGHT: NEW LA CaTS CENTER VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

The LA CaTS Center recently announced a new training opportunity through the Visiting Scholar Program. The first call for applications was released in fall 2015, with the second opportunity anticipated in late spring 2016. The program was modeled after the successful program at Mountain West CTR-IN. The overall objective of the program is to provide support so junior faculty can extend and enhance their skill set in research by visiting laboratories or research programs, and working with mentors to learn new techniques or obtain expertise in a specific topic area in a field outside of the LA CaTS Center institutions. Each award may be up to \$5,000 in direct costs, though this may vary per round.

**Read more about the program here:**

[www.lacats.org/research-funding/visiting-scholars/](http://www.lacats.org/research-funding/visiting-scholars/)

## THE HEALTH LITERACY CORNER

Did you know that health literacy has grown from an under-recognized “silent epidemic” to an issue of health policy and reform? Did you know that low literacy has a significant impact on the health and healthcare of Louisiana citizens and our ability to recruit and retain research participants from vulnerable populations?

Low health literacy (defined as the ability to obtain, process, understand, communicate and act on health information and services to make informed health care decisions) has a significant impact on the health of Louisiana citizens. Our state ranks lowest among states in health and 49th in literacy. Almost 1 in 3 adults in the state has low literacy with rates almost double for low income minorities according to the only national health literacy survey today. Extensive evidence exists documenting that low health literacy leads to poorer health outcomes. Adults with low health literacy have less knowledge, confidence and skills to manage chronic conditions or their children’s health. These individuals have poorer understanding of consent for procedures and clinical trials, poorer physical and mental health, increased emergency department use, preventable hospitalization and readmission, increased disease related complications and mortality.

The U.S. Department of Health’s National Action Plan for Health literacy has called for health information and services to be easier to access understand and act on. This means clinical research and health care need to reduce the complexity of information, more effectively engage patients and enable them to do what we are asking them to do to participate in clinical trials or manage their health.



Terry Davis, PhD



Connie Arnold, PhD

The LA CaTS Center has included health literacy consultation and training to help Louisiana clinicians and researchers make health information and services easier for our patients to understand and use appropriately.

To contact Dr. Davis and Dr. Arnold with the Health Literacy Core, email [literacy@LACaTS.org](mailto:literacy@LACaTS.org) or request a consultation on SPARC at <https://sparc.lacats.org>.

## FEATURED INVESTIGATOR TESTIMONIALS

“We utilized the LA CaTS Clinical Research Resources services provided by Pennington Biomedical Research Center in conducting my pilot study. In addition, the Biostatistics & Epidemiology Core provided great assistance in analyzing the data. I am indebted to the Clinical and Translational Pilot Grants Program, which allowed me to conduct my first clinical project as a junior faculty member upon arriving to Pennington Biomedical. I was able to collaborate with faculty from the LSU Food Science Department as well as the LSU AgCenter. I also became interested in how foods and botanicals can help to prevent and treat different diseases. I have applied much of what I have learned into planning and executing future projects. The experience I gained in conducting this pilot study through LA CaTS was invaluable for my young research career.”

**- Daniel Hsia, MD, Assistant Professor, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, LA CaTS Pilot Grant Awardee**

“I worked with the Biostatistics & Epidemiology Core associated with the LA CaTS Center both on the draft of my pilot application and after my application was awarded. This was a wonderful resource that ensured I designed my experiments with enough robustness to trust the results. This was critically important for the development of a scientific venture that looks to secure funding from the NIH. The LA CaTS application has allowed me to diversify the work of my laboratory and make me competitive (as evident by my R01 score) for national funding in the field of cardiovascular biology. This would have never been possible without the LA CaTS pilot grant award.”

**- Matthew Woolard, PhD, Assistant Professor, LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport, LA CaTS Pilot Grant Awardee**



**IF YOU ARE USING A LA CATS CENTER RESOURCE, YOU CAN:**

- 

Manage your project information and requests in one central location!
- 

Request or obtain pricing for research services across LA CaTS Center Institutions!
- 

Build your budget with budget development tools!
- 

Create patient visit schedules and indicate source of funding!
- 

Communicate directly with your service providers!

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [SPARC.LACATS.ORG](http://SPARC.LACATS.ORG)**



LA CaTS Center  
 Phone: 1-844-452-2287  
 Email: [sparc.support@lacats.org](mailto:sparc.support@lacats.org)