

# MINDSCAPES

MASS GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS | WINTER/SPRING 2023

## There's No Place Like Home

*Americans are living longer, and most of us want to age in place, at home, as long as we can. Unfortunately, our health care systems are not designed to accommodate this wish. That's why two pioneering Mass General psychiatrists and experts in older adult health, Olivia Okereke, MD, and Anthony Weiner, MD, are leading Care for America's Aging, a four-year project exploring a new way to provide high-quality, preventive care at home — while lowering costs, improving patient outcomes and quality of life and accelerating the career trajectories of home health professionals. We sat down with Drs. Okereke and Weiner for a conversation about how this critical work will benefit the 46 million Americans aged 65 years or older — and the 18 million people who will turn 65 by the year 2030.*

### What is *Care for America's Aging* trying to achieve?

**Dr. Weiner:** I've been a physician for 32 years, focused primarily on care for older adults and their families. Three years ago, I started thinking about what care for an aging population across this country will look like in the decades ahead. And it's clear that it will be at home. So, the question is: how do we make that work?

**Dr. Okereke:** Care for America's Aging is a study where we take a small intervention, test it out, and see how its application benefits people. In this case, our goal is to help a group of older adults living at home with cognitive impairments or dementia — a group that we know faces limitations to their ability to stay at home.

### Got it. So how is *Care for America's Aging* designed?

**Dr. Okereke:** We have two groups of people: first, older adults with cognitive impairment and their familial care partners; and second, home health aides, who we train in a new way to be optimally suited to help those older adults and care partners. Optimizing the interaction between these two groups will enable older adults to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

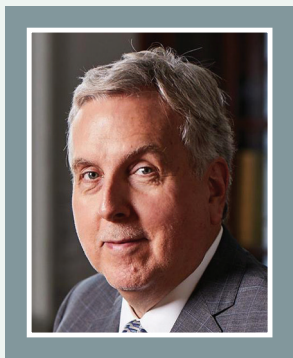


**Dr. Weiner:** The project is based on elevating and supporting the role of home health aides, making this work more appealing, to attract and retain people in the workforce. We will provide additional training, technology-enabled tools and transportation solutions for homecare workers, and we will grow partnerships with local educational institutions to offer career advancement or increased earning

potential for those who wish to further develop their professional skills.

### What does this model look like, in the real world?

**Dr. Weiner:** I think of the example of my 94-year-old patient who was facing enormous challenges to living independently, including falling, not taking her medication accurately and having the



## A Message from the Chief

Welcome back to another edition of *Mindscapes*. In this issue, as winter fades to spring, we're turning our thoughts to the importance of home and family in relation to psychiatric health.

Aging in place — the ability to live and age comfortably and independently in one's own home and community — has been shown to have a dramatic effect on mental and physical health. But, for many, a lack of quality home health care makes it difficult to age in place. Our cover story this month highlights Care for America's Aging — a new four-year study funded by philanthropy and led by the Psychiatry Department's Olivia Okereke, MD, and Anthony Weiner, MD, to determine how improved training for home health aides can transform the mental health and wellbeing of countless elders.

Elsewhere, we take time to recognize two pioneering Mass General clinicians whose careers and contributions have made a difference for an untold number of patients and families:

Dr. Joseph Biederman, who passed away in January, spent 40 years as a child psychiatrist and educator at Mass General specializing in ADHD and is widely considered the father of

pediatric psychopharmacology; and Dr. Paula Rauch, founding director of the Marjorie E. Korff Parenting At a Challenging Time (PACT) program. Now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, the PACT Program continues to help guide patients and families through the challenge of cancer diagnosis and treatment and its aftermath.

Finally, we share the powerful story of the Fuss family's extraordinary new gift to support Jordan Smoller, MD, ScD, and his team at the Center for Precision Psychiatry (CPP) and their efforts focused on predicting and preventing suicide.

When it comes to mental health, "no family goes untouched," but we also believe no family should feel alone in their struggle. The Department of Psychiatry at Mass General remains committed to being that home, to leading the way to a brighter future for patients of all ages.

Thank you, as always, for your continued dedication and support.

MAURIZIO FAVA, MD  
*Psychiatrist-in-Chief*

Please save the date for

## MGH Leadership Council for Psychiatry's Twelfth Annual Visiting Day June 5, 2023

We are pleased to host Visiting Day in a new location!  
Mandarin Oriental, Boston

Visiting Day is a signature educational event of the Leadership Council and features distinguished faculty of the Department of Psychiatry sharing the latest advances in clinical care and research. The mission of the Leadership Council is to advance knowledge and treatment of mental illness, reduce its stigma and promote understanding and compassion for those who suffer. To learn more about Visiting Day or the work of the Leadership Council, please visit [giving.massgeneral.org/psychiatryleadershipcouncil](http://giving.massgeneral.org/psychiatryleadershipcouncil).

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enormous burden of her care falling on her adult daughter, who also cares for her own children. A well-trained, well-supported home health aide joined the patient's care team, and things improved dramatically. She is now taking her medicine accurately, hasn't fallen and is flourishing at home. And for her family, the relief of that caregiving strain has been tremendous.

### What are the challenges to making this the standard of care?

**Dr. Okereke:** This is not an ivory tower approach or a magic pill; instead, this intervention is about training people. The homecare workforce has historically had a fair amount of turnover and difficulty with long-term retention. This plan is an example of a nudge intervention, a term that we use in research to describe a small, targeted step or innovation that helps move things toward a big improvement in quality and efficacy.

We also believe that investing in the project will have a long-term payout in terms of cost savings. When individuals leave home for an institutional setting, there are dramatic costs involved, placing tremendous strain on patients and families. There are also costs to the health care system when things like falls and emergency room visits occur. With this study, we can measure whether this extra bit of training and support for home health aides will make a difference in key patient outcomes, support retention of home health aides in the homecare field and hopefully translate to cost savings.

**Dr. Weiner:** And the money saved can be put back into the system to make this a financially sustainable, replicable and scalable model.

### What innovations are part of the plan?

**Dr. Weiner:** Home health aides are paid low wages to do demanding work at multiple sites in a day or week, and they face an industry standard expectation of providing their own transportation, often to far-flung patient homes. We are

forming partnerships with companies like Uber Health to rethink that. Technology is also part of the plan. We look to grow our nascent partnership with MGB Home Hospital to help adapt their already successful model of care to provide home health aides with access to secure software to transmit vital information from the home to medical teams at the hospitals, who can then relay information back. This communication loop can support optimal care for the patient while avoiding unnecessary trips to the hospital or other suboptimal outcomes. We are also planning to test a model where home health aides are compensated to report such data.

**Dr. Okereke:** We've also partnered with experts in workforce development and use a community-engaged study design, engaging with local colleges and other institutions. Being at Mass General gives us a national voice and there are so many extraordinarily smart and caring colleagues who collaborate in deep and meaningful ways.

### What do you need to prove this is exactly the model our elder care system needs?

**Dr. Weiner:** Care for America's Aging is fully funded by philanthropy, and sustained financial support is essential to our ability to realize our vision and create this innovative model.

**Dr. Okereke:** This is the perfect example of a philanthropic opportunity with high intrinsic value; something that would do as much good for as many as possible and that has a sustainable, sustained payoff; a real long-term lift for many. We think that's the kind of thing any donor would want to invest in — and we hope they will.

*For more information about Care for America's Aging or to make a gift, please contact Lorraine Fanton at 617-724-6439 or [lfanton@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:lfanton@mgh.harvard.edu). Additionally, you can watch a video about the impact of Care for America's Aging by scanning the QR code at right.*



“When I learned about Care for America's Aging, it presented a unique opportunity to support something with twin goals to improve health outcomes at a lower cost while also creating employment opportunities that address the wage equity issues for first-line caregivers in the community, as well as new career paths or growth over time. I am hopeful that my support of this project will advance this thoughtful and more holistic approach to support caregivers and how they connect with home-based patients.

I think this pilot could easily prove out the premise, and I would like to see it then expand to a partnership with other regional health systems to create a Massachusetts model for the nation — and eventually improvements in both health equity and wage equity. I feel that this is an excellent opportunity for donors to make an impact; the project is backed by a dedicated team of caregivers and carefully planned so that all results are bulletproof and ready to drive change.

- **Melissa Hastings Cruz**  
Care for America's  
Aging donor

## Palm Beach 2023: 17th Annual MGH Psychiatry Leadership Council Seminar

On Thursday, February 9, 2023, the Mass General Psychiatry community gathered in Palm Beach, Florida, for the MGH Psychiatry Leadership Council's 17th Annual Seminar, "Getting it Right the First Time: Enhanced Precision in Diagnosis and Treatment of Psychiatric Illness." The event included talks from esteemed faculty on topics including innovation in pediatric ADHD and OCD treatment, mood disorder diagnosis and treatment and advances in clinical care.



Dale Sinesi, Lesley Nicholson, Karen Morgan



Llowell Door, Amanda Sinesi, Ashley Meyer, Winston Carney



John Nicholson, Kitty de Chazal, Donna Emma, Patty Ribakoff, Tanglely Lloyd, James Carney



Heidi Cox, James Secor, Trina Secor



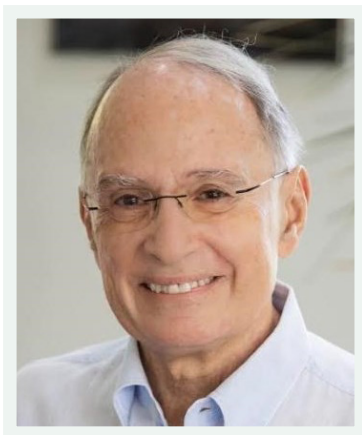
Lee Cohen, MD, Kitty Sprague



Lee Cohen, MD, Jordan Smoller, MD, ScD, Erica Greenberg, MD, Ana-Maria Vranceanu, PhD, Joan Camprodon, MD, MPH, PhD, Maurizio Fava, MD, John Herman, MD

# In Memoriam

The Mass General community mourns the loss of Joseph Biederman, MD, who passed on January 5, 2023, due to complications of mantle cell lymphoma. Born in Prague, Czech Republic, and the son of Holocaust survivors saved by Oskar Schindler, Dr. Biederman dedicated his life to mitigating suffering associated with pediatric psychiatric illnesses and to improving the state of pediatric psychiatric care. His unrivaled body of work, spanning 40 years, has permanently altered the state of care for patients with ADHD, autism, OCD and numerous other psychiatric conditions.



Globally regarded as the “father of pediatric psychopharmacology,” Dr. Biederman was the most cited psychiatrist and child psychiatrist in all of medicine, authoring and co-authoring more than 800 scientific articles, 650 scientific abstracts and 70 book chapters. He was the recipient of numerous awards and honors and was listed in 2014 by Thompson Reuters as one of “The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds” for ranking in the top 1% by citations for the field of psychiatry.

A member of the Mass General Department of Psychiatry since 1980, was the Chief of the Clinical and Research Programs in Pediatric Psychopharmacology and Adult ADHD at Mass General and founding director of the Alan and Lorraine Bressler Clinical and Research Program for Autism Spectrum Disorder. Dr. Biederman was also a physician-investigator in Psychiatry at the Mass General Research Institute and Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, where he was one of the university’s most productive researchers. He was a mentor to several generations of researchers and physicians, working closely with junior clinical investigators who now, themselves, mentor the next generation of clinician scientists. The success of the Mass General Division of Child Psychiatry is a testament to his decades-long inspirational leadership during which, at every turn, he empowered his colleagues and mentees and guided them in their immensely impactful collective work.

Dr. Biederman was a fierce advocate for his patients and their families and saw clinical work as the essential means of uncovering the most important research questions which, when answered, provided the needed precise treatment for children suffering with

**Globally regarded as the “father of pediatric psychopharmacology,” Dr. Biederman was the most cited psychiatrist and child psychiatrist in all of medicine.**

psychiatric disorders. He reminded his colleagues daily of the need to support families — not blame them — for the psychiatric illness affecting their children. He continually taught his mentees to listen to their patients, to observe, to generate solutions and to innovate — all to better the lives of those sitting across from them.

We hope you will save the date for a memorial service to be held at Mass General on April 27, 2023 at 10:00 am to celebrate Dr. Biederman’s life and legacy, and the Mass General psychiatry community is engaging in ongoing fundraising efforts to establish an endowed grand rounds lecture in his honor. Please stay tuned for information about the memorial service. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Biederman’s beloved family as well as his colleagues, community and patients.



*If you would like to make a gift in memory of Dr. Biederman to support the Joseph Biederman, MD, Endowed Grand Rounds fundraising effort, please contact Deborah Farr at 781-752-8223 or [dfarr@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:dfarr@mgh.harvard.edu).*

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# Forty Years of Compassionate Care

After 40 years of service, founding director of Mass General's Marjorie E. Korff PACT Program, Paula Rauch, MD, is retiring this summer

**P**aula Rauch, MD, the Timothy Christopher Davidson Endowed Chair of Psychiatry, has served as the Director of the Marjorie E. Korff PACT (Parenting At a Challenging Time) Program since she founded it in 1997. PACT provides expert guidance to parents facing cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship — and has trained many providers to help families face their most difficult moments. Dr. Rauch, who will retire this summer, reflects on her life's work and the future of PACT.

## What first brought you to Mass General?

When I did my pediatrics rotation, I realized how short the interactions were. I wanted more time with children and parents, and I saw I could have that opportunity through child psychiatry. I was lucky enough to walk into the hospital to begin my psychiatry training at age 26 and I've never left. Mass General played a role in the history of consultation-liaison psychiatry, which focuses on caring for patients with comorbid psychiatric and general medical conditions. My many wonderful mentors in the field shaped my interest in supporting resilience for a child or adult who is ill and each of their family members.

## What motivated you to create the PACT Program?

One of my good friends had breast cancer when her children were 5 and 7 years old. She asked me if I could refer her to a clinician who specialized in making sure children remained emotionally healthy through a parent's cancer treatment and beyond. I thought there had to be someone in our community, but there wasn't. Her experience helped me recognize the need for expert parenting support. Part of our mission at PACT is to educate more clinicians and to advocate for expert, accessible parent guidance at every medical center where parents are being treated



*Paula Rauch, MD, Founding Director of the Marjorie E. Korff PACT Program*

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**“It’s such a personal experience to be there for someone at a challenging time, and I am incredibly grateful for the past 40 years.”**

— PAULA RAUCH, MD

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for serious illnesses. I have learned how fortunate we are at Mass General to have leadership in psychiatry, the Cancer Center and at the hospital who support our mission.

## What were your goals for the program?

At the beginning, I wanted to both educate adult medical staff and help parents understand child development, so they could understand the intersection of challenges when a parent was ill and often facing untimely death. Over time, I came to recognize the enormous power of allaying

the psychic suffering of parents that comes from worrying about their children without nuanced support. Our PACT team has gotten wiser with time because of the amazing parents we've had the privilege of collaborating with.

We have a wonderful team of experienced child mental health clinicians who respond to parents the same or next day. This is essential, because parenting questions can't wait for weeks as an illness unfolds. We also have deep respect for the expertise of parents, so we provide tools and education to help them face the special challenges that accompany cancer care and that you wouldn't expect a parent to know. Our care is free to all patients. This would not be possible without incredible philanthropy.

## When you look back at your career, what do you hope to leave here?

I am proud that I identified a need and, with many key supporters and collaborators, was able to create and sustain a remarkable program. I want the PACT Program to thrive and grow as a center of excellence, and under the wonderful leadership of Cindy Moore, PhD, and with our incredible team, I am confident it will. I'm also proud of 40 years of training clinicians who have gone on to have meaningful careers. I like to say our trainees are like rocket ships, and I get to put bagged lunches on those rocket ships. I hope that there are many children and parents who are better off because of care from me or someone I helped train.

In the end, there are so many life-affirming aspects of this work. I've had the privilege of seeing how much people care about their children, how resilient children can be, how creative parents are and how fun and funny their children can be.

*To learn more about or make a gift to support the Marjorie E. Korff PACT Program, please contact Molly McCarthy at 480-559-4934 or [mmccarthy50@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:mmccarthy50@mgh.harvard.edu).*

# A Mental Health Effort 17 Years in the Making

Along with The Tommy Fuss Fund, established in memory of their son who died by suicide, RoseMary and Dan Fuss are strengthening the future of Mass General's Center for Precision Psychiatry.

A lot changes in 17 years. That period spans the lifetime of Tommy Fuss, who his parents describe as an outgoing, outstanding student with a wide network of friends. But 17 years also covers the time that RoseMary and Dan Fuss have now spent without their son, who died by suicide in 2006. They've devoted those years to preventing this tragedy for others, partnering with Jordan Smoller, MD, ScD, director of the Center for Precision Psychiatry (CPP) at Massachusetts General Hospital, for more than a decade to address major unmet needs in mental health care by integrating cutting-edge research and clinical practice.

"The state of mental health today is much different than it was 17 years ago," RoseMary says. "It wasn't foremost on the minds of parents, educators and other people who care for our children. With the increase in youth suicides, gun violence and the pandemic, it is now front and center. And it's about time."

Now, with a generous grant from The Tommy Fuss Fund, which they established in Tommy's memory to drive research and better outcomes in the area of mental health, RoseMary and Dan are launching the Center to the next level. Their hope is that genetics research happening at the Center, paired with imaging and other tools, will reveal answers about the causes of mental illness, identifying biomarkers early and leading to better outcomes.

## Driving the Future of Precision Psychiatry

The Center's work to date has included developing algorithms to identify individuals at risk for suicide; building an app integrated into electronic health records at the point of care; leveraging artificial intelligence to predict which antidepressant will benefit a particular patient; and using genetic analyses to



RoseMary and Dan Fuss's late son, Tommy, who died by suicide in 2006.

identify a new precision drug target for schizophrenia and factors that can prevent depression. The new funding from The Tommy Fuss Fund will help the Center expand its computational resources, attract the best scientists and support and train a new generation of researchers who can drive the future of precision psychiatry.

"We want to create a broad-scale effort to look at factors that you would normally look at as indicators," Dan says. "If someone had a family history of a particular type of cancer, doctors would be on guard if someone showed a minute symptom of that disease. That's what we're driving at for mental health. There have been benefits in treatment, but my prayer here is that we know where to look when it comes to suicide and mental illness."

For RoseMary, the shift toward genetic research is personal. "When we talk about Tommy, we have to talk about Tommy in the year 2006. It was a very different time," she says. "The one thing I wish we had done was place more emphasis on the genetic factor, because it turns out there is likely mental illness on both sides of our families."

## Building a Scalable Approach

This funding will establish the Tommy Fuss Endowed Chair in Precision Psychiatry, allowing the Center to recruit a leader in precision psychiatry to become Associate Director of the Center, and to create an endowment to fund annual Tommy Fuss Scholars awards in Precision Psychiatry. The funding will also support the Center's Annual Conference in Precision Psychiatry, which has become a leading venue to showcase advances in the field.

"We are profoundly grateful for and honored by the Fuss family's partnership," Dr. Smoller says. "We truly believe that with this support, the CPP will be a world leader in establishing the paradigm of precision psychiatry — enabling transformative discovery, addressing crucial unmet needs, cultivating the next generation of top scientists and achieving our vision of driving innovation to implementation."

For RoseMary and Dan, this partnership goes beyond the walls of Mass General. Their vision is that the Center's approach becomes scalable and implemented nationally — and even internationally. As they know, mental health struggles can happen to anyone, anywhere.

"The work that Jordan is undertaking in genetics and psychiatry is incredible," RoseMary says. "I hope there will be ongoing collaborations as this center is up and running, bringing more people in to create a snowball effect with this research. We can move the needle in this area," RoseMary says. "Who knows what the future brings, but we feel confident that Jordan and his team can lead us into that future."

To learn more about the Center for Precision Psychiatry, visit [www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/research/precision-psychiatry](http://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/research/precision-psychiatry).

If you do not wish to receive certain or all fundraising communications from Mass General, please call 877-644-7733, or visit [giving.massgeneral.org/com-pref](http://giving.massgeneral.org/com-pref).

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## WAYS TO GIVE

For information about how to support the clinical care, research, teaching and community health activities of the Mass General Department of Psychiatry, please contact Senior Director of Development Alex Dippold, at 617-726-7504 or [adippold@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:adippold@mgh.harvard.edu).

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To learn how we seek to transform the mental health landscape with bold approaches, visit [giving.massgeneral.org/psychiatry](http://giving.massgeneral.org/psychiatry).