



Making Research  
Relevant & Ready

# Practically Speaking

The Donaghue Foundation Newsletter: Focused on research and knowledge uptake initiatives.

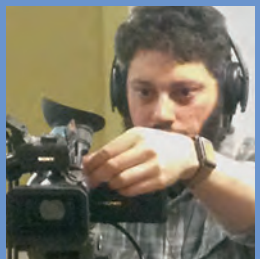
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*Practically Speaking* is published three times a year by the Donaghue Foundation to communicate its grantmaking and knowledge uptake activities. Readers are welcome to contact the Foundation office for more information about the work of the Donaghue Foundation by calling 860.521.9011 or by sending an email.

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# Greater Value Portfolio Awards Announced



**A**t the start of this year, Donaghue announced a new grant program that would support research to demonstrate and test new approaches to increasing value in health care delivery.



**Jeffrey T. Kullgren, MD, MPH and Eve A. Kerr, MD, MPH**  
Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation and the Department of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan



*“Patient, Provider, and Health System Effects of Provider Commitments to Choosing Wisely®”*

The length of the grant will be for three, four or five years depending of what best meets the needs of the particular research project and will support a total cost of up to \$600,000.

Donaghue received 54 letters of intent submitted, which were reviewed by a small group of subject matter experts and Donaghue staff. Because we are expecting to give three grants this year, we wanted the number of requested applications to be relatively small. We therefore had the very difficult task of requesting a full application from only 16 of the LOI submitters.

The topic of improving the value in our health care system is a broad one, and the ideas that were submitted were wide-ranging. In general, we received LOIs on ideas that focused on health care consumers, on changes to specific areas clinical care delivery, and on changes to systems that extend beyond health care.

We were also delighted with the individuals who agreed to participate on the review committee for this program.

The three Greater Value Portfolio award winners selected for 2015 and their research topics are described below.

Information about the 2016 cycle for LOI and application submission to the Greater Value Portfolio will be distributed in February.

*“Clinicians’ decisions to order potentially unnecessary services — such as those targeted in the Choosing Wisely® campaign — are often affected by their high-pressure practice environments, which can make it hard to consistently avoid ordering low-value care.”*

Clinicians’ decisions to order potentially unnecessary services — such as those targeted in the *Choosing Wisely®* campaign — are often affected by their high-pressure practice environments, which can make it hard to consistently avoid ordering low-value care.

— this article continues on page 6

## Letter from the Trustees

Dear Friends,

In December, Lynne attended the fifth Behavioral Economics and Health Conference that was a part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-Donaghue program on “Using Behavioral Economics to Solve Perplexing Problems in Healthcare.” The University of Pennsylvania Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics at the Leonard David Institute has administered this program, including planning and organizing the conferences and conducting the pre- and post-award grant administration.

Donaghue is grateful to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Pennsylvania CHIBE for this five-year partnership. Both the conferences and the two cycles of grants that were awarded during that period have enriched Donaghue’s understanding of the role of behavior in healthcare, introduced us to exciting areas of research, and led to helpful connections with individuals from different academic institutions, businesses, government agencies, and funders. For example, two of the “Perplexing Problems” awardees have also been successful in Donaghue programs — Jeff Kullgren has recently been awarded one of Donaghue’s Greater Value Portfolio grants and Anne Thorndike has used the R3 program to advance her original “Perplexing Problems” research. In addition, Rachel Grob and Mark Schlesinger, also “Perplexing Problem” grantees, are consultants for the Connecticut Choosing Wisely Collaborative. We’ve also been fortunate to be introduced to researchers who have agreed to be reviewers for our grant programs. And a 2010 *Beyond Eureka!* speaker, Dan Ariely, was also a speaker at this most recent conference.

A key feature of the conferences is the short presentations from grantees of the program’s two funding cycles that provide updates on the progress of their research. Some of the topics include comparing different structures of financial incentives to increase exercise, advance care planning, or use of routine mammography; using social media messages to increase flu vaccinations in college students; and reducing decision fatigue among emergency room physicians.

The five behavioral economics conferences have also featured panels of experts who are using behavioral economics in government programs and corporations. This year’s program featured speakers from Vitals SmartShopper, Humana, and PicWell. In past years, speakers included a former CEO from Weight Watchers, Vitality, Blackrock, and the ABIM Foundation — the creators of *Choosing Wisely*®. Speakers from the behavioral insights teams that are part of the U.K. and U.S. governments have also been presenters.

However, these conferences aren’t just sitting for two days listening to people talk; the meetings included activities that involved all attendees to consider new ideas for behavioral economics research. For the first conference, attendees were assigned to one of eight groups — such as health insurance benefit design, provider incentives, medication adherence, and the ethics of nudging behavior — that were tasked with developing ideas for a research agenda. Another conference featured an innovation tournament that gave cash prizes to the teams voted as having developed the best testable ideas that leveraged behavioral economic principles to help make people healthier by working with commercial entities. Another year had an “abstract speed dating” session where researcher described in five minutes a research study planned or underway and received critiques from conference attendee.

Preventing disease, treating illnesses, and promoting better health require more than an expertise in biology and clinical procedures. Many people agree that a better understanding of behavior is the key to achieving our healthcare goals. We need to understand and use behavior reinforcement that comes from psychological insights, the built environment, and our relationships with others. The mix of researchers and representatives from government and business communities that is the hallmark of these behavioral economics conferences is what’s needed to achieving and implementing better health. It’s a method that Donaghue has been using in several of its grant programs, too, and we look forward to working with other partners in this work.



Amy R. Lynch, JD  
U.S. Trust, Bank of America, Trustee



Lynne Garner, PhD  
President and Trustee



Lynne Garner, PhD, President and Trustee  
and Amy R. Lynch, JD, U.S. Trust, Bank of America, Trustee

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“Many people agree that a better understanding of behavior is the key to achieving our healthcare goals.”

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# Linking Evidence and Practice Portfolio

**T**he Linking Evidence and Practice Portfolio is designed to help Donaghue fulfill its mission to fund research that will be of practical benefit in improving health by focusing on supporting opportunities that connect research evidence creators with healthcare policy, health systems and practice leaders.

This fall, Donaghue contributed to the Partnering with Patients for Better Healthcare: Establishing and Sustaining Patient Family Advisory Councils to Help Eliminate Harm summit as one of its LEAP activities.

Nearly 200 hospital staff, patients, advocates and quality and patient safety professionals from more than 50 organizations attended the program held on September 29 at the Connecticut Hospital Association. The program was part of a multi-organization effort to involve more patients and families in increasing safety and reducing harm in hospital settings. Donaghue was one of several sponsors for the program which featured presentations and breakout sessions conducted by patients and safety experts.

All attendees were focused in on how Patient Family Advisory Councils, a mechanism for patients and families to provide input to health systems, can play an active role in eliminating harm in health care settings.

Kim Blanton, Volunteer Patient Advisor at Vidant Health System gave the opening keynote address, describing her experiences over 10 years and dozens of hospital admissions for complex medical conditions before she became a patient health care advocate. Ms. Blanton talked about finding the courage to speak up, being active in her care and asking questions of her health care providers. Remarking that “patients are the most underutilized resource in the health care system” and that “we are the only ones there the whole time,” Ms. Blanton



On October 29, Universal Health Care Foundation of CT and its parent foundation, CHART, hosted a summit on the topic of sparking bold action to transform our state’s health and health care landscape. Donaghue was one of the summit sponsors. The premise of the day was that doing a good job implementing the Affordable Care Act is important, but it’s not enough. States can take the lead on innovative change to deliver on the promise of health care that is people-centered, financially sustainable, effective, and enables good health. The summit highlighted the experience from Maryland, Vermont and Oregon in transforming their health care systems to achieve those goals.

underscored the purpose of the day’s program. Rosemary Gibson, Senior Advisor at the Hastings Center, patient safety expert and award winning author of two books *Wall of Silence* and *Treatment Trap* gave the other keynote presentation on what makes a successful patient and family advisory council and suggested that organizations with these councils mentor others that are just starting out.

A panel with representatives from Stamford, Middlesex and Gaylord hospitals presented examples of patient and family engagement efforts in their institutions. Two interactive breakout sessions led by representatives from Planetree and The Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care gave participants an opportunity to find out how to establish and sustain effective councils and meaningful patient and family engagement. The final session, led by Jean Rexford, founder of the Connecticut Center for Patient Safety, and

Cheryl K. Rogers, Director of Patient Experience and Service Excellence at Middlesex Hospital, invited participants to share what they learned from the day’s program and what they planned to implement in their organizations as a result.

At the close, attendees asked the organizations who hosted the program (Connecticut Hospital Association, Connecticut Partners for Better Health, Connecticut Center for Patient Safety, Qualidigm, Connecticut Partnership for Patient Safety and The Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives) to create an ongoing forum that would enable PFACs to get together on an ongoing basis.

To continue to promote the establishment of PFACs and their role in improving patient safety, the program organizers are planning a PFAC conference for nursing home and long term care staff, patients and family members for spring of 2016.

## New Donaghue Policy Adviser

**D**onaghue has expanded its Policy Advisory Committee to include a member who is currently a medical student at the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University.

Erin White, a third year medical student, completed her Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry at California Institute of Technology and earned a Master of Bioscience in Clinical and Regulatory Affairs at Keck Graduate Institute.



Prior to beginning her graduate degree, Erin worked as a middle and high school math and science teacher. Since returning to academia, she has conducted research

in graduate and medical education, taught courses in biostatistics and clinical trials design, and worked on a number of academic and corporate-sponsored projects in the medical devices and pharmaceutical industries. Erin

aspires to be an innovator for improving healthcare as part of her future career in medicine. In joining the Donaghue Foundation’s Policy Advisory Committee, Erin is looking forward to getting involved and helping to make a difference in philanthropy while she completes her medical training.

Although Policy advisers usually have a four-year term, Erin will have a two-year term.

# Another Look Research Awards

**I**n its third year, the “Another Look — Better Health for Elders in Care Facilities” program has doubled its investment in research from each of the previous two years.



Another Look was established to provide funding for research projects that can improve the quality of care for the elderly population in nursing homes or other care facilities. Researchers must use data that already exists for their study. In addition, researchers applying for this grant must identify a stakeholder in the care delivery or policy arena with whom they will either consult or collaborate and who is willing to work with the researcher to develop a research product that may be readily used to improve care.

Letters of intent were reviewed in a manner that was blinded as to the principal investigator and his or her institution. Twenty full applications were requested from the 35 LOIs that were received and reviewed. Full applications were reviewed by the science review committee, and committee members had access to all information from the application, including the applicant’s name, qualifications and his or her institution.

A fourth cycle of “Another Look” will be held in 2016. Letters of intent will be due on February 29, and invited applications will be due on April 25.

## Another Look: Better Health for Elders in Care Facilities Review Committee

**Mary Jane Koren, MD, MPH**  
The Commonwealth Fund, retired

**Eilon Caspi, PhD**  
Gerontologist & Dementia Behavior Specialist  
Dementia Behavior Consulting, LLC

**John Charde, MD**  
Healthcare Consultant  
John Charde Healthcare Consulting, LLC

**Leslie Curry, PhD, MPH**  
Senior Research Scientist in Public Health  
Co-Director, Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program  
Yale School of Public Health

**James Grady, DrPH**  
Professor, Community Medicine and Health Care  
University of Connecticut Health Center

**Toni Miles, MD, PhD**  
Professor of Epidemiology  
University of Georgia

**Barbara Resnick, PhD, CRNP**  
Professor, School of Nursing  
University of Maryland

**Julie T. Robison, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
University of Connecticut Center on Aging

**Stephen Walsh, ScD**  
Associate Professor, School of Nursing  
University of Connecticut

**Zhu Wang, PhD**  
Senior Biostatistician, Department of Research  
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

### Grantees from the 2015 cycle are:

<b>Marie Boltz, PhD and Jane Flanagan, PhD</b> Boston College	“Post-Acute Outcomes in Nursing Home Residents with Dementia” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs</i>
<b>Susan H. Busch, PhD</b> Yale University	“Reducing Inappropriate Use of Anti-Psychotic Medications in Nursing Homes” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Connecticut State Department on Aging</i>
<b>Andrew B. Cohen, MD, PhD</b> Yale School of Medicine	“End-of-Life Care for Nursing Home Residents with Guardians” <i>Stakeholder Organizations: The Mary Wade House and the Office of Guardianship and Elder Services, Washington State Administrative Office of the Court</i>
<b>Stephen Crystal, PhD</b> Rutgers University	“Data Driven Quality Improvement for Safer Dementia Care in Texas” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services</i>
<b>Lara Dhingra, PhD</b> Metropolitan Jewish Health System	“Institutional Special Needs Plans and Hospice in Nursing Homes: Prevalence and Patterns” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State</i>
<b>Sean Jeffrey, PharmD</b> University of Connecticut	“Preventing Medication-Associated Delirium” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Department of Geriatric Medicine, Hartford Hospital</i>
<b>Mark S. Lachs, MD</b> Cornell College of Medicine	“Annual Prevalence of Resident-to-Resident Mistreatment” <i>Stakeholder Organization: 1199SEIU/League Training and Employment Fund</i>
<b>Pamela Nadash, PhD</b> University of Massachusetts	“Nursing Home Satisfaction Measures: What is their relationship to quality” <i>Stakeholder Organization: National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care</i>
<b>Jennifer Perloff, PhD</b> Brandeis University	“Accountable Care: Impact on Nursing Home Services” <i>Stakeholder Organization: Hebrew Senior Life</i>



# Connecticut Choosing Wisely® Collaborative Works to Achieve Health Equity

By Lauren Vo

**The Connecticut Choosing Wisely® Collaborative is working on a grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation entitled “Enhancing Patient-Clinician Communication: Leveraging Choosing Wisely® as a Tool for Achieving Health Equity.”**

Wisely® concepts.

In order to inform the pilot and further refine the Choosing Wisely® approaches, the Collaborative is conducting a series of focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of patient-provider communication as well as learn how people from culturally, ethnically, racially, and economically diverse populations think about

assistants, and a third with English-speaking consumers who are newly insured. A fourth focus group will be conducted in Spanish to elicit feedback from Spanish-speaking consumers.

Some of the themes that were discussed in the focus groups are:

## Practitioners’ focus group

- Many patients have difficulty asking questions of their practitioners, regardless of their level of education, income, insurance status, or length of their relationship with the practitioner.
- Practitioners are uncertain about costs of tests and treatments, and patients often ask these questions in the office after seeing their practitioner and after receiving a bill.
- Medication reconciliation can become an opportunity for conversations about low value care, especially for new patients, but this potentially presents workflow challenges.

## Assisters’ focus group

- Newly insured consumers still face barriers to access barriers, and they are treated differently at the point-of-care based on what type of insurance they have.
- People of color feel less empowered in the clinical setting and often feel as though they are treated as if they are being difficult when they ask questions.
- There is an opportunity for the entire practice environment to become more “question-friendly,” and these opportunities both start before and extend after the encounter in the exam room.

## Consumers’ focus group

- Consumers wait to seek health care services until they feel it is absolutely necessary.
- Consumers want a provider who will spend time with them to really listening to what they have to say.
- Consumers are willing to look up medications, tests, and treatments, but often do so after leaving the appointment.
- Many of the participants have asked the Choosing Wisely® questions in the past, and are especially concerned about cost.



Lauren Vo presented Choosing Wisely® information at the CT Partners for Health 2015 “Better Health” conference.

Through a collaboration of the American Board of Internal Medicine and Consumer Reports, Choosing Wisely® tools, resources, and interventions have been developed, tested, and are now widely available to promote more effective engagement with patients. As interest and exposure for Choosing Wisely® has grown, at the same time the Affordable Care Act has increased access to health care and highlighted the need for greater support of underserved populations, including those who are newly-insured or have low levels of health literacy.

It is within this context that the Connecticut Choosing Wisely® Collaborative team is working on further adaptation of the Choosing Wisely® materials to use in a pilot project in 2016. The adaptations will attempt to create point-of-care interventions that focus on the empowerment of underserved populations to use Choosing

issues of health and health care. Patient activation and engagement will be assessed using tools developed by Mark Schlesinger, PhD and Rachel Grob, PhD, nationally-recognized experts in researching the patient’s experience. Through these discussions, the Collaborative expects to learn how people speak and think about issues of cost, value, and communication in health care. Choosing Wisely®’s “5 Questions to Ask Your Doctor Before You Get Any Test, Treatment or Procedure” are being used as a starting point to spark discussion on the willingness and comfort of patients to ask questions of this sort, as well as ways clinicians and support staff can help or hinder these efforts.

To date, three focus groups have been conducted: one with healthcare providers, a second with community health workers and



Lauren Vo is the Connecticut Choosing Wisely Collaborative Fellow. She is a student in the University of Connecticut’s Geriatric/ Adult Primary Care Nurse practitioner program.



## Greater Value Portfolio Awards — *continued from page 1*

The field of behavioral economics offers a promising and highly scalable approach to decreasing use of low-value services: asking clinicians to commit to avoid ordering such services and providing them and their patients with resources to support adherence to this commitment. We propose to evaluate the effects of such an intervention, which we call Committing to Choose Wisely, across two large health systems. In each of the study clinics, clinicians will be invited to commit to following a set of targeted *Choosing Wisely*® recommendations. Clinicians, who make such a commitment, and their patients, will receive access to key resources to support adherence to this commitment. To disseminate our findings widely, we will partner with the Michigan State Medical Society, a Statewide Health Learning Collaborative, and a National Steering Committee comprised of key stakeholders, including leaders from *Choosing Wisely*®, the American College of Physicians and Consumers Reports.

greater value of care. Recognizing the impact of non-medical issues on medical outcomes and costs, a small number of innovative provider organizations are actively integrating social, public health, community, and clinical services to comprehensively meet patients' medical and social needs, and deliver overall higher value care at a lower cost.

### Greater Value Portfolio Review Committee

**Haim Y. Bar, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
University of Connecticut, Department of Statistics

**Carrie Colla, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice, Geisel Medical School

**Emil Coman, PhD**  
Research Associate  
Ethel Donaghue TRIPP Center, University of Connecticut

**Marion Danis, MD**  
Head, Section on Ethics and Health Policy  
Department of Bioethics  
Clinical Center, National Institutes of Health

**Michael Gusmano, PhD**  
Research Scholar  
The Hastings Center

**Jack Hoadley, PhD**  
Professor  
Health Policy Institute, Georgetown University

**Veronica Nieva, PhD**  
Vice President  
Westat

**Meredith Rosenthal, PhD**  
Professor of Health Economics and Policy  
Associate Dean for Diversity  
School of Public Health, Harvard University



**Dale Ellen Lupu, PhD MPH**  
George Washington University  
*“Implementing Shared-Decision Making with Chronic Kidney Disease: Testing its impact on improved quality of life and reduced health care costs”*

*“Numerous studies have documented that patients with advanced kidney disease want to engage in shared decision-making and advance care planning with their nephrology care teams.”*

Numerous studies have documented that patients with advanced kidney disease want to engage in shared decision-making and advance care planning with their nephrology care teams. Clinical practice guidelines recommend shared decision-making and advance care planning as essential to quality advanced kidney disease management. Yet, there is a disconnect: only 6% to 38% of dialysis patients had an advance care plan, and most report never engaging in such discussions with their nephrologists. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is poised to explicitly pay for advanced care planning discussions beginning in 2016. However, little is known about how to implement such discussions in a patient-centered way before patients need to decide whether to go on dialysis. This project will develop a multi-faceted intervention to implement advanced care planning in the pre-dialysis clinic setting, test two modes of delivery, and study the impact on patient decisional conflict, alignment of patient goals with care received, documentation of advance care directives, and use of other health services, including dialysis, ICU, and hospice.



**Valerie A. Lewis, PhD**  
The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice  
*“Demonstrating methods to integrate clinical care, public health, and social services with value-based payment models”*

*“The goal of this study is to understand how health care providers under new payment reforms are integrating clinical care, public health, and social services to provide high quality and cost effective care and outcomes to patients.”*

The goal of this study is to understand how health care providers under new payment reforms are integrating clinical care, public health, and social services to provide high quality and cost effective care and outcomes to patients. New payment models in health care are shifting providers away from fee-for-service reimbursement towards value-based reimbursement. The study will conduct an in-depth analysis of four health care delivery organizations engaged in alternate payment models (such as accountable care organizations) that are working to integrate medical care and social services to provide



## Donaghue Videos

Starting a new communication venture, Donaghue has commissioned Karyl Evans Productions to produce two short videos on current grant programs that will feature a different award program.

Starting a new communication venture, Donaghue has commissioned Karyl Evans Productions to produce two short videos on current grant programs that will feature a different award program. The programs to be featured are R3 — Making Research Relevant and Ready and Another Look — Better Health for Elders in Care Facilities. The purpose of the videos is to have a new way to communicate Donaghue’s mission and values through a brief description of research projects to which it has recently provided funding.

The videotaping took place at the Donaghue office and at the Whitney Center in Hamden. As part of Donaghue’s role in assisting Karyl Evans to do the interviews, staff had to provide a brief statement on what they believe the key features of each program were. “We found this to be both challenging and helpful. It was

“With so much to say about these research projects and why a program was constructed the way it was, it’s a challenge to carve out the essential story.”

PRESIDENT LYNNE GARNER

a good discipline to develop these descriptions within the allotted times — in some cases 10 seconds or less,” said President Lynne Garner. “With so much to say about these research projects and why a program was constructed the way it was, it’s a challenge to carve out the essential story.”

In addition to featuring the videos on our website, Donaghue will use them to familiarize prospective applicants to the foundation. With the foundation having a larger geographic footprint, it will be helpful to acquaint people to Donaghue. The video will also be included in the foundation’s request to individuals to join our peer review committee.



Karyl Evans and Scott Amore at the Donaghue office.

## Gift of Ethel Donaghue’s Papers to Dodd Center

The Donaghue Foundation has recently given to the Archives and Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut several dozen of Ethel Donaghue’s papers from her years as a law student at the University of Pennsylvania.



Donaghue President Lynne Garner with Betsy Pittman, University of Connecticut Archivist.

“These papers are nearly all the tangible objects that remain from her life, making it even more important to the Foundation to have them appropriately cared for.”

The papers are largely the notes that she took in classes, as well as examination books, assigned papers, and class syllabi. Some are in her own handwriting, others are typewritten.

Women attending law school was uncommon when Miss Donaghue matriculated into the University of Pennsylvania in 1917. In addition to their relevance as a part of the history of a notable woman of Connecticut, these papers will provide researchers with a window into the curriculum and educational experience of women who were in the first wave who became attorneys.

These papers are nearly all the tangible objects that remain from her life, making it even more important to the Foundation to have them appropriately cared for.

The Archives and Special Collections are open to the public, and access to materials is available in the John P. McDonald Reading Room.



The Patrick and Catherine Weldon Donaghue Medical Research Foundation is a charitable trust created pursuant to the will of Ethel F. Donaghue, late of West Hartford, Connecticut. The Foundation, which began operations in 1991, is governed by Bank of America and Lynne Garner, Trustees. The Foundation is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, is a private foundation within the meaning of Code Section 509(a), and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Probate Court for the District of West Hartford.

Winter 2016 *Practically Speaking* The Patrick and Catherine Weldon Donaghue Medical Research Foundation

# Donaghue's **Linking Evidence and Practice** Supports Student Research Day

**T**he Frank H. Netter School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University hosted its first annual Medical Student Research Symposium (MedStARS 2015) this fall.

*“The students worked alongside experts in a variety of institutions to conduct their research, and more than twenty-five showcased their work in the poster sessions.”*

The goal of the symposium was to help students learn more about the fundamental role played by physicians in bringing new ideas to the bedside and to “get their feet wet” by having them engage in research conducted in an academic setting. Donaghue helped to fund this event as part of its Linking Evidence and Practice portfolio.

The symposium highlighted research conducted this past summer by students just completing their first year of medical school. The students worked alongside experts in a variety of institutions to conduct their research, and more than twenty-five showcased their work in the poster sessions. The topics covered a wide range of clinical conditions and diseases including heart disease, lung and breast cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, and sudden infant death syndrome, with some projects focusing on

biologic or genetic mechanisms while others looked at population-based health improvement interventions.

The event also featured guest speakers from Connecticut Innovations and Protein Sciences, two businesses that play important roles in supporting life sciences research and linking it to innovative technology development in Connecticut. Research partners on the student projects included the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, Hartford Hospital, Qualidigm, and the Weitzman Quality Institute of Community Health Center. One hundred and fifty students and faculty members participated in this inaugural event.