Letter from the President

Dear PRRF Community,

PRRF continues on a path of steady growth and in this issue of Sightlines we share with you some exciting firsts.

PRRF Board Member Frank Giblin, PhD has been an invaluable collaborator and supporter of the PRRF’s research activities during his tenure as Director of the Oakland University Eye Research Institute. In this issue, Dr. Giblin introduces the incoming ERI Director, Dr. Mohamed Al-Shabrawey. Dr. Al-Shabrawey’s research interests in retinal vascular disease dovetail with some of the PRRF’s research initiatives. His appointment as ERI Director represents an exciting opportunity for synergy and collaboration.

We are also excited to report progress in the evolution of the Family Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC has evolved to provide a forum for individuals impacted by pediatric retinal diseases and their family members to advise the PRRF Board on initiatives of particular interest to our community. We look forward to the leadership and insights which this group will provide.

On May 18 we kicked off our first online “Ask the Doc” ZOOM event. Attendance was robust and the level of interest high, with great questions posed by the online audience. We look forward to continuing this initiative, offering our community a chance to interact with our physicians in an informal informational construct.

We’re looking forward to our 3rd annual Hope for Vision Walk. After a successful virtual walk last year, we will bring the best aspects of both the virtual and in person events to this year’s Walk on Sunday, September 12, 2021.

As always, genuine heartfelt thanks to those of you in our community who make this all possible with your generous gift of time, energy, and financial support.

Sincerely,

Antonio Capone, Jr. MD
President, The Pediatric Retinal Research Foundation (PRRF)
Dr. Mohamed Al-Shabrawey to become the new Director of the Oakland University Eye Research Institute August 1, 2021

The Eye Research Institute (ERI) of Oakland University houses the Pediatric Retinal Research Laboratory (PRRL), which is supported by the Pediatric Retinal Research Foundation (PRRF). On August 1 of this year, the ERI will have a new Director. Professor Mohamed Al-Shabrawey, MD/PhD, from the Culver Vision Discovery Institute of Augusta University in Augusta, Georgia, will become the fifth Director of the ERI in its 53-year history. He will take over for Dr. Frank Giblin who has been the ERI Director since 2004, and who will be retiring after 47 years at the university.

Dr. Al-Shabrawey will also become the first V. Everett Kinsey Endowed Professor of Biomedical Sciences in the ERI. Dr. Kinsey was a co-founder of the ERI in 1968, and the recipient of a prestigious Lasker Award in 1956 for his pioneering studies on the pediatric eye disease of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Dr. Al-Shabrawey has much in common with Dr. Kinsey. His work has focused on studying the molecular and cellular mechanisms of various ischemic retinopathies, including ROP. He has been able to characterize the role of a number of different cell signaling pathways in the development of the pathological neovascularization that occurs in ROP, such as NADPH oxidase-derived oxidative stress and bioactive lipids.

Dr. Al-Shabrawey is an expert on the study of diabetic retinopathy, a major cause of blindness worldwide, and has published more than 65 refereed articles on the disease in the past 20 years. His research funding since 2007 has included major grants from the National Eye Institute and the American Heart Association, and he currently possesses an NIH R01 grant that extends to 2024. Dr. Al-Shabrawey has garnered both national and international recognition for his work, as evidenced by his frequent invitations to speak at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) and the International Society of Eye Research (ISER). His research area is perfect for stimulating future scientific collaboration with ERI basic science and clinical vision researchers. In addition, Dr. Al-Shabrawey has exhibited an impressive record of mentoring graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and medical students in his laboratory.

Read more...
In this issue of *Sightlines*, I am writing to announce the formation of the Family Advisory Committee.

First, I would like to thank all the doctors on the team, the Pediatric Retinal Research Foundation and of course, the families who make this possible. Our families' responses and their interest in being a part of this Committee are overwhelming. These families will bring expertise, knowledge, and resources which gives me a sense of deep optimism about our ability to do transformative work in this critically important space. Their challenges are real, and their experience will bring value to those among them as well as those whose road ahead is yet to be paved.

Together with the families, we look forward to collaborating and building a community of support and resources for those touched by retinal diseases. For more information email me at lrecchia@pediatricrrf.org.

~ Luisa Recchia, Community Outreach Coordinator
Ask the Doc Recap

In case you missed it, we hosted an Ask the Doc event in May featuring Dr. Michael Trese, Mr. Kimberly Drenser and Dr. Tony Capone, Jr. The docs participated in a virtual Q & A with attendees. To watch the recording click here. The docs will also share mini videos in the coming months answering additional questions submitted by the audience. Be sure to follow us on Facebook for updates!

Save the Date for the 3rd Annual Hope for Vision Walk!

Participants, teams and corporate sponsors are invited to join us for the 3rd annual Hope for Vision Walk on Sunday, September 12, 2021. To register or learn more click here. Participants can join us in-person at our southeast Michigan event site or virtually from anywhere throughout the world!
The Foundation staff is currently seeking volunteers to serve on the Hope for Vision Walk Planning Committee, the Family Advisory Committee and the Fall Educational Conference Planning Committee. If you’re interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities, please email Luisa at lrecchia@pediatricrrf.org.

Help sustain the work of the PRRF by signing up to be a monthly donor! A gift of just 65¢ per day ($20 per month) will allow the Foundation to increase community programming and advance further research.

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