



Dear Einstein Community:

As I have remarked many times, I'm extremely proud of what we've accomplished at Einstein and Montefiore since the COVID-19 pandemic struck our community earlier this year. Everyone has worked hard, under very difficult circumstances, to carry on with our research, educate our students, and otherwise keep Einstein running in a smooth and efficient manner.

With that in mind, I want to congratulate a number of our principal investigators who have been awarded grants from my office to develop research focusing on COVID-19. The funding was made possible by a \$1 million challenge gift from long-time Einstein board member Michael F. Price and the Price Family Foundation, which was matched by other Einstein donors. As many of you know, Mr. Price has been a major supporter of Einstein and Montefiore for decades and made a significant donation to build the Michael F. Price Center for Genetic and Translational Medicine/Harold and Muriel Block Research Pavilion.

Thanks to this generous funding, four \$50,000 grants will support COVID-19 research conducted by the following faculty members:

- **Evrpidis Gavathiotis, Ph.D.**, and co-investigators aim to develop a small-molecule drug against the SARS-COV-2 main protease (an enzyme which breaks down proteins), termed Mpro or 3CL, which is responsible for viral replication and is an important drug target. *Co-Investigators:* **Bogos Agianian, Ph.D.**, **Adolfo Garcia-Sastre, Ph.D.**, and **Kris White, Ph.D.**
- **Betsy Herold, M.D.**, and co-investigator **Marla Keller, M.D.**, will test if there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the immune response to COVID-19 in children and adults that may contribute to different outcomes, and identify which aspects of the immune response are protective and those that drive disease progression.

- **Jonathan Lai, Ph.D.,** and **Kartik Chandran, Ph.D.,** will identify and characterize human monoclonal antibodies from recovered COVID-19 patients that target the viral surface spike protein and then use them as templates to design bispecific antibodies.
- **Michael Lipton, M.D., Ph.D.,** and co-investigators aim to develop an artificial intelligence algorithm for portable chest X-rays to accurately stage severity, predict progression, and assess treatment response, recurrence, and survival, in order to inform risk management and resource allocation. *Co-Investigators:* **Jeffrey Levsky, M.D., Ph.D., Parsa Mirhaji, M.D., Ph.D.,** and **Tim Duong, Ph.D.,** (at Stony Brook University).

Three additional members of the Einstein community have received \$5,000 microgrants to support their COVID-19 work. They are:

- **Jerry Chao, M.D.,** to investigate Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in children.
- **Simone Sidoli, Ph.D.,** to develop and optimize rapid identification of COVID-19 infection via breath screening in mass spectrometry.
- **Nicholas Sibinga, M.D.,** to examine the role of IRF5 variants in COVID-19-associated cytokine storm with cardiovascular injury.

You can read more about these promising projects by visiting the [funded research page](#) of our [Einstein-Montefiore COVID-19 Research Collaboratories website](#).

These projects represent only the beginning of research in this field, which we expect to expand in the months ahead. It is also a testament to how well our researchers work together—both on COVID-19 and in many other biomedical areas—to benefit both our Bronx community and the world at large.

I will have more to say on this and other subjects during my dean’s chat later today at 1:30 p.m. and hope you will join me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

Montefiore Medicine