



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

Periodically, it is my privilege to share news about new leadership on campus. Recently, our [Rose F. Kennedy Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center \(RFK IDDRC\)](#) added two new associate directors: [Bryen Jordan, Ph.D.](#), and [Melissa Wasserstein, M.D.](#) Their appointments reflect their dedication to advancing the scientific and clinical understanding of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) while also enriching the IDD research and training environments at Einstein.

An associate professor in the Dominick P. Purpura Department of Neuroscience and of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, Bryen's research focuses on aspects of neuronal processes of genes that are relevant to the occurrence of IDDs. These include synaptic plasticity, RNA transport and local translation, synapse-to-nucleus signaling, and proteomic analysis of synaptic junctions. His work explores genetic forms of IDD using a variety of model systems and approaches. Bryen, an expert basic scientist, has recently taken the important step of engaging in research with individuals who've been diagnosed with genetic disorders of interest to his laboratory team. His initial foray into human-based research is described in the [RFK IDDRC's 2021 summer newsletter](#).

A professor of pediatrics and of genetics at Einstein, Melissa wears a variety of other leadership hats at Einstein and Montefiore, including associate director of the IDDRC's Human Clinical Phenotyping Core and chief of the division of pediatric genetic medicine at Einstein and the Children's Hospital at Montefiore. The National Institutes of Health has awarded Melissa major grants supporting her work in newborn screening for several IDDs and genetic screening for IDDs in underrepresented minorities. She also has been influential in obtaining recent approval (in Europe and Japan) of the only current therapy for Niemann-Pick disease type B, a rare disease that causes the build-up of lipids in the spleen, liver,

lungs, bone marrow, and brain, leading to a variety of developmental issues.

The addition of Bryen and Melissa to the leadership team of our RFK IDDRC, joining co-directors [Steven U. Walkley, D.V.M., Ph.D.](#), and [Sophie Molholm, Ph.D.](#), demonstrates the commitment and devotion our institution has shown in addressing IDD. It also reinforces the collaborative spirit at Einstein and Montefiore and our commitment to linking basic science discoveries to clinical care.

Please join me in congratulating Bryen and Melissa on their new roles among our RFK IDDRC leadership.

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