



FY26 RESEARCH REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
BY THE NUMBERS	2
SPONSORED AWARD HIGHLIGHTS	3
RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS	5
PUBLICATIONS	7
RESEARCH TRAINING	8
HONORS & RECOGNITIONS EXTERNAL	9
HONORS & RECOGNITIONS INTERNAL	10
RESEARCH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	11
INNOVATION & COMMERCIALIZATION	12
LIBRARY RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES	13
PHILANTHROPY	13
FACILITIES UPDATES	14
OUR TEAM	15
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	15

INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

We are excited to share this snapshot of [Rutgers Health](#) research activities for fiscal year 2026 (FY26). Rutgers Health maintains a **strong and diversified research portfolio** (\$563 million) representing 61% of all [Rutgers University](#) research and sponsored programs awards. This year continues to be marked by impressive growth with NIH awards increasing by \$50 million over FY25. We have continued to expand opportunities for our patients to participate in **promising clinical trials**. Rutgers Cancer Institute, in collaboration with the [RWJBarnabas Health System](#), obtained a \$6 million award over 6 years from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to contribute as an [NCI National Clinical Trials Network](#) lead academic participating site.

In FY26, Rutgers Health continued to be on the forefront of nationally and globally relevant health issues:

- The Public Health Research Institute of New Jersey Medical School received a 5-year, \$13 million competitive NIH renewal award bringing together a consortium of experienced investigators and a global network of clinical research sites to support **novel diagnostic evaluations for tuberculosis**.
- Researchers at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute are leading major investigations into the physical, chemical, and toxicological **human health impacts of wildfire smoke** highlighted by recent public health and air quality alerts during widespread wildfire events in the U.S., and across Canada and Europe.
- Rutgers Cancer Institute researchers developed a cell therapy single infusion method that demonstrated for the first time that **new T-cell therapies** can achieve long-lasting tumor regression in advanced epithelial cancers.
- The Center for Biomedical Informatics and Health Artificial Intelligence selected three interdisciplinary research teams as recipients of pilot awards to support innovative projects harnessing **biomedical and health informatics and artificial intelligence**.

Our researchers continue to shine a light on Rutgers with **national and international honors and recognition**. Five professors from the medical schools were elected as Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one was selected to join the Association of American Physicians, and an assistant professor won a prestigious Pew Biomedical Scholar award. Two nursing professors were inducted, respectively, as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. We were also delighted to have a Rutgers Health faculty member receive the Rutgers University Daniel Gorenstein Memorial Award. Finally, a pharmacy doctoral student was selected as a Rhodes Scholar to study at Oxford University, the first recipient from Rutgers since 1993 and the university's ninth overall.

As we enter the fifth year of the [5-year Rutgers Health strategic plan](#) implementation, our commitment to advancing research and innovation remains at the forefront of our academic mission. We are honored to highlight this important work together and look forward to supporting our collective efforts to advance health through research, innovation, and discovery in the coming years. Together, Rutgers Health continues to build toward our aspirational goal to be among the nation's top academic health centers.



*Kathleen W. Scotto, PhD
Vice Chancellor for Research and
Research Training*



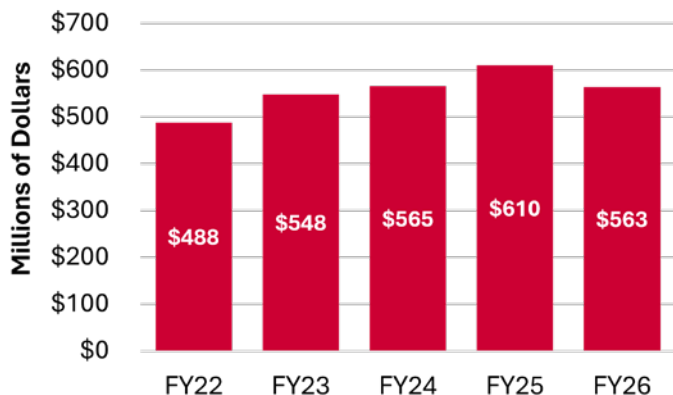
*M. Bishr Omary, MD, PhD
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
and Research*



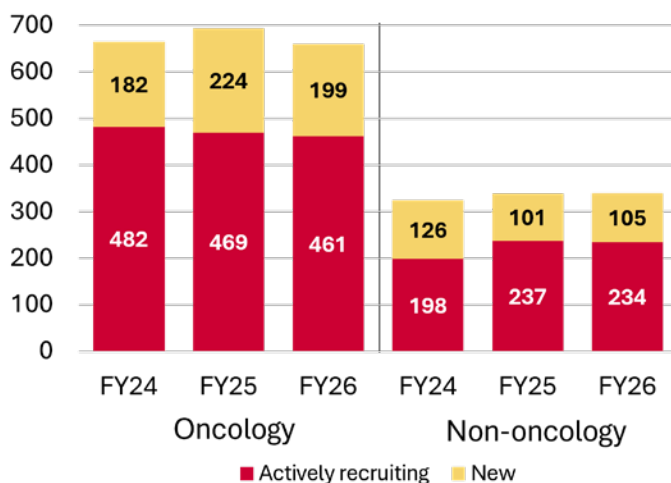
*Robert L. Johnson, MD, FAAP
Interim Chancellor and Dean,
New Jersey Medical School*

BY THE NUMBERS

**Total Sponsored Awards
FY22-FY26**



**Number of Clinical Trials
FY24-FY26***



See [Appendix, Table 1](#), for the underlying data.

*In a given FY, some 'new' trials may turn to 'actively recruiting'
See [Appendix, Table 2](#), for the underlying data.

**FY
26**

**Total
Federal
\$363M
(\$280M)**

**NIH Only
\$259M
(\$209M)**

**State
\$71M
(\$131M)**

**Corporate
\$101M
(\$179M)**

**Other
\$28M
(\$21M)**

**Publications
3,843
(3,531)**

New Training Awards[†]

**NIH
\$10.2M
(\$9M)**

**Non-NIH
\$4.3M
(\$1.2M)**

**Disclosures
82
(90)**

**Patents
Issued
45
(83)**

**MS students
685
(571)**

**PhD students
411
(361)**

**Post-docs
235
(238)**

**License
& Option
Agreements
26
(13)**

**Licensing
Revenue
\$5.4M
(\$5M)**

SPONSORED AWARD HIGHLIGHTS*

Research Projects

New Jersey Medical School

Jerrold Ellner, David Alland, and Susan Dorman (Medical University of South Carolina) received \$13 million over 5 years from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate emerging tuberculosis diagnostic tests, including point-of-care assays, through a global clinical research network to accelerate development and guide diagnostic strategy.



Padmini Salgame received \$5.2 million over 5 years from NIH to study why tuberculosis transmission varies between households, examining bacterial and immune differences to identify mechanisms of resistance that could inform new prevention vaccines.



David Alland received \$4 million over 5 years from NIH to study how gene mutations cause drug-tolerant tuberculosis bacteria to persist, using mutant strains to identify pathways and potential drug candidates targeting tolerant bacilli.



David Alland received \$4 million over 5 years from NIH to characterize bacterial enzymes that activate tuberculosis drugs, using this knowledge to design new prodrugs effective against both pyrazinamide-susceptible and drug-resistant *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* strains.



John Chan and Adrie Steyn (University of Alabama at Birmingham) received \$3.9 million over 5 years from NIH to study how B cells drive lung inflammation and tissue damage in chronic tuberculosis, using mouse models and human tissue analysis.



Mark Siracusa and **William Gause** received \$3.8 million over 5 years from NIH to study how immune cells train lung macrophages during helminth infections, aiming to inform therapies for parasitic disease and related lung pathology.



Chaoyang Xue and **Amariliz Rivera** received \$3.8 million over 5 years from NIH to study immune mechanisms behind a vaccine candidate protecting against cryptococcus, a fungal infection linked to AIDS-related deaths, to guide future vaccine development.



Jason Weinstein and **Aimee Beaulieu** received \$3.1 million over 5 years from NIH to study how natural killer cells regulate immune responses in lupus, aiming to identify new therapeutic targets to reduce autoantibody-driven tissue damage.



Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Gregory Peck received \$3.9 million over 5 years from NIH to study how gut bacteria that convert bile acids contribute to gallstone disease, using multi-omics and pharmacoepidemiology methods to identify potential non-surgical prevention strategies.



Lea Ann Chen received \$3.7 million over 5 years from NIH to study how gut microbiome manipulation can improve the effectiveness and durability of anti-TNF therapies for inflammatory bowel disease, using mouse models and multi-omic analysis to guide future treatment strategies.



Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies

Michelle Jeong received \$3.5 million over 5 years from NIH to develop and test evidence-based messages aimed at preventing youth e-cigarette users from escalating use frequency, using surveys, message testing, and a randomized controlled trial.



Melissa Mercincavage received \$3.3 million over 5 years from NIH to study how charcoal-filtered cigarettes affect smoking behavior, product perceptions, and toxicant exposure compared to traditional filters.

Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research

Soko Setoguchi Iwata received \$3.1 million over 4 years from NIH to study how extreme heat, air pollution, and medications affect health outcomes in low-income pregnant women and informing climate adaptation policies for vulnerable populations.



Joel Cantor received \$3.1 million for 1 year from the New Jersey (NJ) Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services to serve as independent evaluator for the NJ Family Care Comprehensive Demonstration, assessing the Medicaid waiver's impact on access to care, quality, and cost



Clinical Trials

Rutgers Cancer Institute

Mansi Shah received \$9.4 million over 3 years from AbbVie, Inc. to evaluate a new investigational therapy for patients with advanced blood cancers.



Xiaoyi Chen received \$7.8 million over 5 years from Kura Oncology, Inc. to study a new investigational drug in patients with certain genetic subtypes of leukemia.



Howard Hochster received \$6.9 million over 5 years from Takeda (through the Academic GI Cancer Consortium) to evaluate a new therapy combination in patients with gastrointestinal cancer.



Missak Haigentz received \$6 million over 6 years from NIH to support Rutgers Cancer Institute's role, in collaboration with RWJBarnabas Health, as a network lead academic participating site for the NIH National Clinical Trials Network, expanding patient access to national cancer clinical trials.



Sanjay Goel received \$4.2 million over 5 years from Eikon Therapeutics, Inc. to study the safety and effectiveness of a new investigational therapy in patients with advanced solid tumors.



Sanjay Goel received \$3.4 million over 5 years from Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC to evaluate a new investigational therapy in patients with advanced solid tumors carrying a specific genetic mutation.



New Jersey Medical School

Shobha Swaminathan received \$4.7 million over 5 years from Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of a once-monthly oral pill for HIV prevention.



Equipment

New Jersey Medical School

Hong Li received \$1.96 million from NIH to purchase a Thermo Orbitrap Astral mass spectrometer for the Center for Advanced Proteomics Research.



Punima Bhanot received \$565,727 from NIH to purchase an IVIS Spectrum 2 optical imaging system for the Rutgers Molecular Imaging Core.



*Awards greater than \$3 million total value (except Equipment); contact principal investigator is pictured [↩](#)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Understanding the Emerging Environmental Health Threat of Wildfire Smoke

Researchers at Rutgers Health are working to [understand how wildfire smoke affects human health](#) and to identify strategies to reduce its impact on communities worldwide. **Philip Demokritou**, Professor, and **José Cedeño-Laurent**, Assistant Professor, both at the Rutgers School of Public Health and members of the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute, are demonstrating how wildfire smoke has become one of the most pressing environmental health challenges today. Once seen as a regional issue, wildfire smoke now affects millions of people far from the fires themselves, disrupting daily life and exposing new populations to harmful air pollution. Wildfire smoke is a complex and constantly changing mixture of gases and particulates containing ultrafine particles small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs and potentially enter the bloodstream. Emerging research links wildfire smoke exposure to cardiovascular issues, nervous system impacts, mental health challenges, and potential reproductive risks, extending beyond its established effects on asthma and respiratory health. Rutgers researchers are conducting multidisciplinary research on wildfire smoke exposure and health impacts and, in May 2026, hosted a national symposium to bring experts together and identify solutions for protecting vulnerable populations.

Launching the Rutgers Women's Brain Health Initiative

The Brain Health Institute (BHI) has launched the [Rutgers Women's Brain Health Initiative](#), a new program dedicated to advancing targeted research and public education for women's brain health. The initiative is led by **Ioana Carcea**, Associate Professor at New Jersey Medical School and core BHI faculty member, to integrate basic cellular and animal research with clinical studies of human patients living with female-specific brain health challenges. Women experience distinct biological transitions throughout life, including puberty, pregnancy, motherhood, menopause, and aging, that profoundly shape brain health. For generations, medical research and clinical trials have systematically excluded females, creating widespread gaps in scientific understanding of women's brain function, disease vulnerability, and neurological resilience. Women face higher prevalence rates for Alzheimer's disease, depression, migraines, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, eating disorders, and chronic pain conditions. According to the Alzheimer's Association, women account for nearly two-thirds of all Americans living with Alzheimer's disease. Notably, females also demonstrate greater resilience against certain neurological conditions, including stroke, traumatic brain injury, and Parkinson's disease. According to **Gary Aston-Jones**, BHI Director, this focus on women's specific issues promises to discover new insights into brain mechanisms that benefit all brain health.

Promising T Cell Therapies for HPV-Related Cancers

Rutgers Cancer Institute researchers, led by **Christian Hinrichs**, Professor at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, have developed a breakthrough single cell-therapy infusion demonstrating that [new T-cell therapies](#) can achieve long-lasting complete tumor regression in advanced epithelial cancers which historically have been more resistant to these treatments than blood cancers. In one study, patients with advanced metastatic HPV-associated cancers were treated with genetically engineered T cells designed to target the HPV16 E7 oncoprotein. The treatment was generally well tolerated and six of 10 patients achieved substantial tumor shrinkage, including two patients, who previously received immunotherapy and other standard therapeutic options, who experienced complete tumor regression. In a second study, investigators reported the extraordinary finding that two patients with metastatic cervical cancer remain in complete remission 10 years after receiving a single infusion of tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte therapy. This study represents the strongest evidence to date that cellular therapy can produce long-term, potentially curative responses in epithelial cancers, the most common type of malignancy. These findings highlight the importance of conducting clinical research at an NIH-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center such as Rutgers Cancer Institute in collaboration with RWJBarnabas Health and the NIH National Cancer Institute.





Advancing Precision Medicine with Biomedical Informatics and Artificial Intelligence

The convergence of biomedical and health informatics, big data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) is fundamentally transforming how we approach drug development, disease diagnosis, and patient treatment. Rutgers Health is at the forefront of this revolution through its [Center for Biomedical Informatics and Health Artificial Intelligence](#) (BMIHAI) in the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research. The Center is directed by **Leslie Lenert**, Professor at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and deputy director **Antonina Mitrofanova**, Professor and Associate Dean for Research at the School of Health Professions. The center's mission is to build Rutgers-wide collaborations that capitalize on the University's strengths in data science, computational methods, and AI to address critical challenges in translational medicine and public health. To accelerate innovation in this emerging field, BMIHAI established a competitive Pilot Grant Program designed to foster new interdisciplinary collaborations with potential for future extramural funding and intellectual property development. This year's award cycle selected three innovative research teams whose work exemplifies how AI and informatics can move discoveries from the laboratory into clinical practice.

1) Precision Drug Response and Toxicity Prediction

Adverse drug reactions and treatment failures represent significant challenges in patient care, often resulting from the trial-and-error approach that has long dominated clinical practice. A team led by **Luigi Brunetti**, Associate Professor, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, alongside Srinivas Denduluri, a principal clinical informatics analyst in the Rutgers University Office of Information Technology, **Erin Roberts-McCarthy**, doctoral candidate at the School of Health Professions, and **Rahul Mittal**, Assistant Professor, School of Health Professions, is developing an [AI-driven precision model](#) titled "AI-Derived Multi-Dimensional Therapeutic Sequencing for Precision Drug Response and Toxicity Prediction." This innovative approach leverages machine learning to predict individual patient responses to medications before treatment begins, enabling clinicians to select the most effective drugs while minimizing harmful side effects. By modernizing pharmacotherapy from reactive management to proactive, AI-informed precision models, this work promises to improve treatment outcomes and reduce healthcare costs.

2) Understanding Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

Triple-negative breast cancer remains one of the most aggressive and challenging malignancies to treat, with early-onset cases presenting unique biological features that are poorly understood. Research led by investigators from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute, including **Tengteng Wang**, Assistant Professor, **Elisa Bandera**, Professor, **Coral Omene**, Associate Professor, and **Maria Kowzun**, Associate Professor, will generate the [first comprehensive characterization of the intratumoral microbiome in early-onset triple-negative breast cancer](#). By combining cutting-edge genomic sequencing with advanced AI analytics, the team will identify microbial signatures linked to cancer age of onset and develop novel biomarkers for risk stratification. This work opens new avenues for understanding cancer development and may enable earlier detection and more targeted interventions.

3) AI-Guided Stroke Rehabilitation

Stroke remains a leading cause of disability, with survivors often facing prolonged and incomplete recovery of motor function. A multidisciplinary team led by **Qinyin Qiu**, Associate Professor, School of Health Professions, is developing "AI-Guided Close-Loop transcranial alternating current stimulation for Stroke Rehabilitation." Working with co-investigators **Soha Saleh** (Assistant Professor, School of Health Professions), Sergei Adamovich (New Jersey Institute of Technology), Waheed Bajwa (Rutgers–New Brunswick), and **Fares Yahya**, Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Health Professions, this project combines neuromodulation with [real-time AI algorithms to deliver personalized electrical stimulation to the nervous system](#). By continuously adapting stimulation parameters based on individual patient responses, the approach aims to enhance neuroplasticity and help patients more effectively relearn motor movements. This innovation could transform post-stroke rehabilitation and restore independence for thousands of patients annually.

PUBLICATIONS

Eli Diamond, Jean-Francois Emile, Takeshi Fujino, Julien Haroche, Maxim Maron, ..., Timo Hautala, Laure Farnault De Lassus, Neal Rosen, Omar Abdel-Wahab, Benjamin Durham. RAF-independent MEK mutations drive refractory histiocytic neoplasms but respond to ERK inhibition. **Cancer Cell** 2026

Bassel Ghaddar, Martin Blaser, Subhajyoti De. Reliable detection of Host-Microbe Signatures in cancer using PRISM. **Cancer Cell** 2026

Mohammed Ayyad, Maram Albandak, Joseph Allencheril. Reclassifying myocardial infarction: from ST elevation to coronary occlusion. **Eur Heart J** 2026

Jessica Fields, Emily Rosenfeld, Rachel Lee, Justin Brandt, Hillary Graham, Todd Rosen, Cande Ananth. Eclampsia and early readmission for cardiovascular disease. **Eur Heart J** 2026

Partho Sengupta, Naveena Yanamala, Phillipe Pibarot. Diastolic dysfunction is linked to the initiation and progression of aortic stenosis: a hypothesis. **Eur Heart J** 2026

Yujiao Han, Hirak Sarkar, Zhan Xu, Sereno Lopez-Darwin, Yong Wei, ..., Christina DeCoste, Dylan Blohm, Robert Satcher, Xiang Zhang, Yibin Kang. Tumors hijack macrophages for iron supply to promote bone metastasis and anemia. **Cell** 2025

Sarah Rutherford, Hongli Li, Alex Herrera, Michael LeBlanc, Sairah Ahmed, ..., Brad Kahl, John Leonard, Sonali Smith, Jonathan Friedberg, Andrew Evens. Nivolumab-AVD Versus Brentuximab Vedotin-AVD in Older Patients with Advanced-Stage Classic Hodgkin Lymphoma Enrolled on S1826. **J Clin Oncol** 2025

Saum Ghodoussipour, Trinity Bivalacqua, Richard Bryan, Roger Li, Carmen Mir, ..., Joan Palou, Sarah Psutka, Debasish Sundi, Mark Tyson, Brant Inman. A Systematic Review of Novel Intravesical Approaches for the Treatment of Patients with Non-muscle-invasive Bladder **Cancer. Eur Urol** 2025

Le Wang, Rohan H Savani, Yi Lu, Matteo Bernabucci, Jorge Luis-Islas, ..., Abdelfattah El Ouaamari, Michael B Wheeler, Harvey J Grill, Mark A Rossi, Zhiping P Pang. State-dependent central synaptic regulation by GLP-1 is essential for energy homeostasis. **Nat Metab** 2025

Scott Donaldson, Alex Russell, Kathryn La Capria, Amanda DeJesus, Emily Wang, Jamil Fayad, Jon-Patrick Allem. Association between exposure to digital alcohol marketing and alcohol use: a systematic review and meta-analysis. **Lancet Public Health** 2025

Alexander Ille, Christopher Markosian, Renata Pasqualini, Wadih Arap. Decoding and deciphering a subcellular ZIP code system. **Trends Cell Biol** 2026

Lu Chen, Pei Li, Min-Jung Park, Zhihang Chen, Bishr Omary. CPS1: a multipurpose mitochondrial enzyme, bile protein, acute liver injury biomarker, and cytokine. **Gut** 2026

Mackenzie Henderson, Daniel Horton, Vikram Bhise, Greta Bushnell, Chintan Dave. Out-of-Pocket and Total Health Care Costs Among Commercially Insured Adults and Children with Multiple Sclerosis. **JAMA Neurol** 2026

**Includes original research articles, reviews, and clinical guidelines from the top 144 journals listed by 2025 Journal Citation Reports with first and/or last author(s) affiliated with RBHS/Rutgers Health [Journal Impact Factor of 23.6 or more]*



RESEARCH TRAINING

Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD) at Rutgers

Loren Runnels (Robert Wood Johnson Medical School), **James Millionig** (Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and School of Graduate Studies), **Tracy Scott** (School of Graduate Studies), and **Brian Daniels** (Rutgers–New Brunswick) received \$2.5 million over 5 years from NIH to support the [T32 Initiative for Maximizing Student Development \(IMSD\) Program at Rutgers](#). The program broadens and sustains participation in the biomedical sciences by promoting the academic, research, and professional success of predoctoral students from a variety of backgrounds in ten partner PhD programs. The IMSD Program provides a supportive environment that enables students to excel, offering mentorship and supplemental workshops to PhD training on topics such as grant writing, science communication, program management, and professional development. This T32 award was a competitive renewal of the IMSD Program that has been broadening participation in the biomedical workforce through rigorous scientific training since 1996 and is now in its 28th year of continuous funding from NIH.



Training in Etiology and Consequences of Alcohol Use Across the Lifespan

Kristina Jackson (Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Brain Health Institute) received \$1.6 million over 5 years from NIH to support the [T32 Training in Etiology and Consequences of Alcohol Use Across the Lifespan Program](#). The program supports postdoctoral scientists at the Rutgers Addiction Research Center (RARC), the largest comprehensive addiction research center in the U.S., providing training in state-of-the-art methods to understand the biological and psychosocial mechanisms underlying alcohol use and related problems. Trainees will be able to customize advanced methodological training specific to their research training goals across the areas of genomic analyses, longitudinal and intensive longitudinal analysis, digital health, community-based research, treatment implementation, and intervention design. Faculty mentors contribute interdisciplinary expertise in the underlying biological (e.g., stress hormones, genetics, neurobiological) and psychosocial (e.g., psychological, interpersonal, environmental) mechanisms and the ensuing consequences of alcohol use across the lifespan.



Addressing Societal Challenges by Engaging New Technologies (ASCENT)



[ASCENT \(Addressing Societal Challenges by Engaging New Technologies\)](#) has successfully completed its first year, marking an exciting milestone for this innovative T32 Predoctoral Training Program led by **Kathleen Scott** (School of Graduate Studies and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School), **Antonina Mitrofanova** (School of Health Professions), and **Daniel Notterman** (Princeton University). The overarching goal is to prepare future generations of translational researchers to leverage the principles of translational science to identify and implement new approaches to address current health challenges. Building on the rich history of collaboration among our alliance universities (Rutgers, Princeton, and NJIT), ASCENT provides personalized “precision” training that gives early career biomedical researchers the skills to translate discoveries from the laboratory, clinic, and community into real-world advances that improve health. The program welcomed its inaugural cohort

of seven outstanding doctoral students from Rutgers and Princeton, representing diverse scientific disciplines, and launched a new online learning platform and interdisciplinary curriculum designed to complement—not replace—their traditional PhD training. Through ASCENT, fellows are gaining the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to move discoveries toward real-world impact, with training spanning the translational science continuum and emphasizing team science, implementation and dissemination, emerging technologies, communication, leadership, and professional development. Most importantly, the first year has demonstrated the promise of the ASCENT model: bringing talented young scientists together across disciplines and institutions, broadening how they think about their research, and preparing them to become the next generation of collaborative and innovative translational scientists.

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS | EXTERNAL

2026 Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

Cheryl Dreyfus – Distinguished Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

– For distinguished contribution to the field of neuroscience and glial biology (the study of support cells in the brain and nervous system) and for academic administration as well as service to the public.

Maria Laura Gennaro – Professor, New Jersey Medical School

– For outstanding contributions in understanding host/pathogen interactions, including, among others, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and SARS-CoV-2.

Reynold Panettieri, Jr. – Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; Director, Rutgers Institute for Translational Medicine and Science; and Vice Chancellor for Translational Medicine and Science

– For distinguished contributions to the basic science of pulmonary disease and inflammation and for outstanding leadership of the Rutgers Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program.

Junichi Sadoshima – Professor and Chair, Department of Cell Biology and Molecular Medicine, New Jersey Medical School

– For distinguished contributions to cardiovascular research and for his leadership as department chair.

Andrew Thomas – Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Pharmacology, Physiology & Neuroscience, New Jersey Medical School; Senior Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies

– For distinguished contributions to the field regarding the role of calcium in cell signaling and for outstanding administration.



2026 Fellow of the Association of American Physicians

Junichi Sadoshima – Professor and Chair, Department of Cell Biology and Molecular Medicine, New Jersey Medical School

– For outstanding credentials in basic or translational biomedical research in the pursuit of medical knowledge and its advancement through experimentation, discovery and translation.



2026 Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing

Robyn Schafer – Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

– For demonstrating exceptional leadership in nurse-midwifery education and advancing evidence-based practice in reproductive and perinatal care.



2026 Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners

Margaret Quinn – Clinical Professor, School of Nursing

– For advancing pediatric health outcomes through exceptional leadership in nurse practitioner education and workforce development.



2026 Pew Biomedical Scholar

Ian Oldenburg – Assistant Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Center for Advanced Biotechnology and Medicine

– For developing methods to monitor and control how brain cells direct movement, with potential applications for prosthetics and treating neurological disorders.



2026 Rhodes Scholar

Omar Abuattieh – PharmD student, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

– For demonstrating exceptional commitment to public service with particular focus on health care policy and expanding access to affordable medications.



HONORS & RECOGNITIONS | INTERNAL

2025 Daniel Gorenstein Memorial Award

Reynold Panettieri, Jr. – Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; Director, Rutgers Institute for Translational Medicine and Science; and Vice Chancellor for Translational Medicine and Science



2025-2026 Rutgers University Faculty Year-End Excellence Awards for Research*

Presidential Outstanding Faculty Scholar Award

Katie Devine Recuay – Associate Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute



Olivia Wackowski – Associate Professor, School of Public Health and Institute of Nicotine and Tobacco Studies



Board of Trustees Award for Excellence in Research

Michael Anestis – Professor, School of Public Health

Stephen Crystal – Distinguished Research Professor, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research and Board of Governors Professor, School of Social Work, Rutgers–New Brunswick



Christian Hinrichs – Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute



*For a full listing of the Rutgers University Faculty Year-End Excellence Awards, see:

<https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/2025-2026-faculty-year-end-excellence-award-recipients> ↩

2026 Rutgers Health Chancellor Awards: Research Recognitions†

Excellence in Basic Sciences Research Award

Early Career Investigator

Ian Oldenburg – Assistant Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Center for Advanced Biotechnology & Medicine



Mid-Career Investigator

Shuo Xiao – Associate Professor, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute



Established Investigator

Steven Zheng – Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute



Excellence in Clinical or Health Sciences Research Award

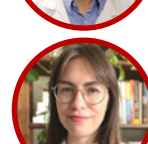
Early Career Investigator

Elizabeth Ann Suarez – Assistant Professor, School of Public Health and Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research



Mid-Career Investigator

Shristi Rawal - Associate Professor, School of Health Professions



Distinguished Innovator Award

Hong Li – Associate Professor, New Jersey Medical School



† For a full listing of the Chancellor Awards, see:

<https://rutgershealth.org/chancellor/chancellor-awards> ↩



RESEARCH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Research business development plays a central role in advancing Rutgers Health's research mission by identifying, cultivating, and executing strategic partnerships that accelerate scientific discovery and innovation, translational research, commercialization, workforce development, and international visibility. In partnership with state organizations, such as the [New Jersey Economic Development Authority](#), [Choose New Jersey](#), [BioNJ](#), and Somerset and Middlesex Counties, we showcase New Jersey's life sciences ecosystem creating new opportunities for research and collaboration. During FY2026, we expanded beyond facilitating individual collaborations to building institutional partnerships that position Rutgers Health as a preferred global partner in biomedical innovation, artificial intelligence, precision medicine, and translational science.

Republic of Korea

FY2026 marked a transformational year in Rutgers Health's engagement with the Republic of Korea (South Korea) through the [Korea Bio Research Association \(KOBRA\)](#)–New York New Jersey Innovation Hub Program. We established an integrated framework for collaboration connecting Rutgers Health with leading Korean universities, healthcare organizations, and biotechnology companies to create opportunities for collaborative research, faculty exchange and workforce development. We secured a competitive award and organized two joint Rutgers-KOBRA scientific sessions at the 2026 KOBRA Conference in Seoul showcasing Rutgers Health leadership in biomedical informatics and health artificial intelligence. In June 2026, we welcomed over 200 Korean biomedical leaders to New Jersey for a Research Showcase and Global Job Fair that showcased the breadth of our research enterprise and highlighted our capacity to build mutually beneficial research and educational collaborations.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

We established a strategic partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the [Riyadh Global Medical Biotechnology Summit](#), where Rutgers Health was invited to lead a comprehensive scientific program highlighting institutional expertise in artificial intelligence (AI), biomedical informatics, precision medicine, translational science, and clinical AI implementation. Signature initiatives included the King Abdullah International Medical Research Center Academy AI Bootcamp in Precision Medicine and a clinical AI implementation workshop, creating practical educational models that translate cutting-edge artificial intelligence into clinical practice. These initiatives also laid the foundation for a strategic Memorandum of Understanding focused on long-term collaboration in research, faculty exchange, innovation, workforce development, and commercialization.



INNOVATION & COMMERCIALIZATION

Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® Success Stories

As part of the Rutgers Optimizes Innovation initiative, the [HealthAdvance Fund®](#) provides commercialization funding to assist the development of early-stage life sciences technologies and make them more attractive for continued follow-on investments from industry partners and external investors. Some notable examples of Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® program impact include:

Luciano D'Adamio, Professor, New Jersey Medical School, received Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® support to generate antibodies and conduct preclinical testing, and was paired with industry experts to provide technical guidance.

Nima Toosizadeh, Associate Professor, New Jersey Medical School, received Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® support to optimize software and an app for interventional ankle rehabilitation, working with an industry advisor on clinical study design to generate venture capital-ready data.

Hussam Shwaib, a surgical resident and researcher at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, received Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® support to develop a software and stent combination technology for peri-abdominal surgeries, with additional support from the Rutgers University Office for Research New Ventures team to secure funding from Johnson & Johnson MedTech and the New Jersey Health Foundation.

Ying-Xian Pan, Professor, New Jersey Medical School, leveraged Rutgers HealthAdvance Fund® industry expert reviewer feedback to strengthen a non-funded NIH R01 application and successfully resubmit it to NIH, thereby demonstrating how initial commercialization support can serve as a critical bridge to larger federal research investments.

Rutgers' approach to building the effective and sustainable technology commercialization fund was highlighted in:

Sharma P, Smeraglia VA, Zwick ME, **Panettieri Jr RA**. Sustainability of gap funding programs aimed at commercializing academic innovation. *Nat Biotechnol* 2026; 44: 155–159. [doi: 10.1038/s41587-025-02972-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41587-025-02972-7)

New Ventures

Benjamin Belinka and **Scott Kachlany** of Rutgers School of Dental Medicine co-founded [Larada Therapeutics Inc.](#) to identify novel therapeutic targets in periodontal and oral disease. With support from Rutgers University Office for Research New Ventures team, they advanced their oral biology discoveries toward clinical application of new therapeutic candidates to improve patient outcomes.



The Estate of **Joseph Bertino**, **Siang-Yo Lin**, and **Gulam Rather** of Rutgers Cancer Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Zoltan Szekely, Research Specialist, Rutgers University Office for Research, co-launched [Antigenix Therapeutics](#) to develop novel immunotherapies for cancer treatment.



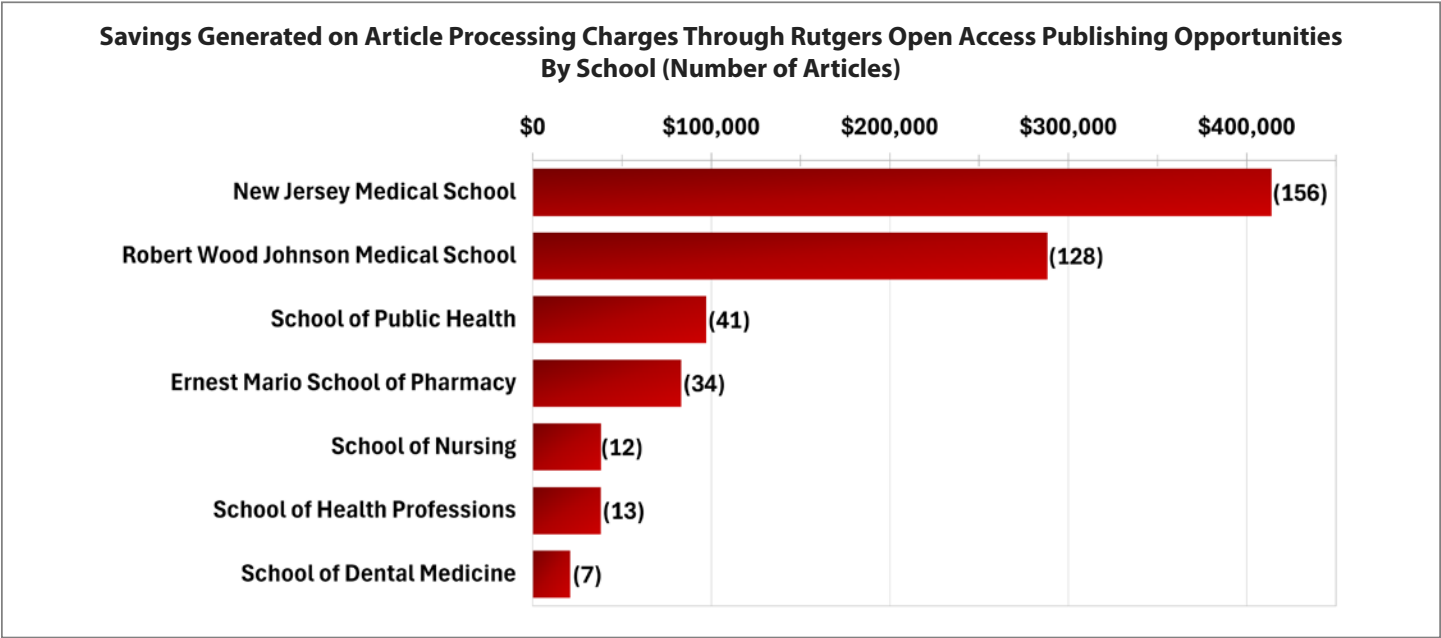
Eileen Carry (Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy '21) and Ariane Vasilatis (School of Environmental and Biological Sciences '21) cofounded [Zena Therapeutics](#) which has received funding from the NJ Health Foundation, the [Rutgers I-Corps program](#), \$1 million from Foundation Venture Capital Group, LLC, and a Phase I NIH STTR (Small Business Technology Transfer) grant to develop anxiolytic compounds with more favorable safety characteristics to prevent overdoses and fatal drug-drug interactions.



Rutgers Health researchers can submit Innovation Disclosures at: <https://research.rutgers.edu/faculty-staff/inventions-commercialization/submitting-invention-disclosures>. For questions, email innovate@research.rutgers.edu.

LIBRARY RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

Rutgers University Libraries has [centralized research support services](#) to serve researchers across the university. The Health Sciences librarians provide timely, high-quality [research support services](#), including but not limited to artificial intelligence, data management, evidence synthesis, research identity and impact, and scholarly publishing/open access/copyright. The Libraries’ Research Data Team is ready to assist in every stage of the research data life cycle and offers an extensive series of workshops on software, skills, and methods for making effective use of data. To support Rutgers researchers and enable [Open Access publishing opportunities](#), the university libraries have agreements with 26 publishers and journals to cover article processing charges (APCs); see recently added [Open Journal Finder](#).



See [Appendix, Table 3](#), for the underlying data.

PHILANTHROPY

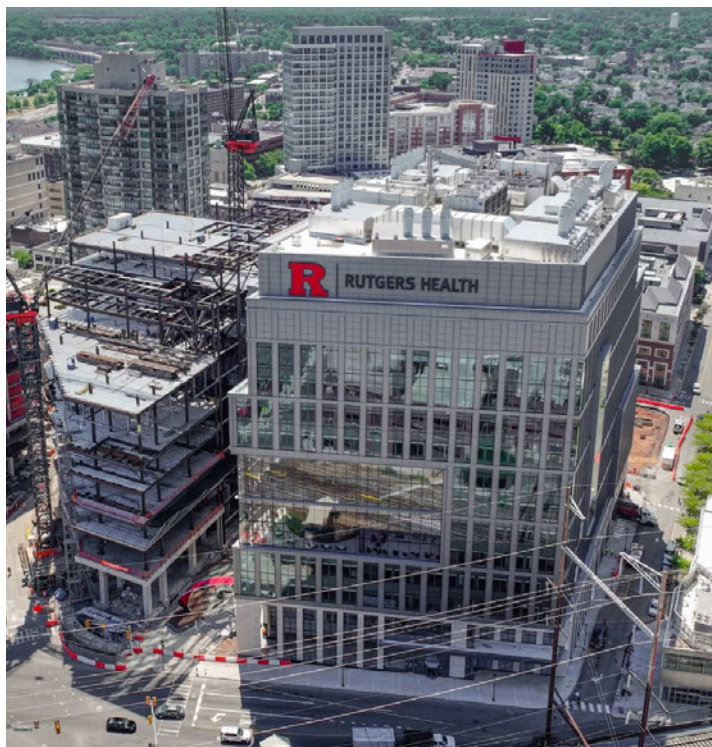
Philanthropic support for Rutgers Health research priorities totaled more than \$27 million in FY26, representing a 30% increase over the previous year. Part of this increase was driven by five gifts of over \$1 million from foundations and individual donors, which advanced research at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research, New Jersey Medical School, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, and Rutgers Cancer Institute. In addition, the inaugural Knight Run for Research, a 5K run and 2K walk sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, raised more than \$196,000 to support research at Rutgers Cancer Institute. These funds will have a direct and transformative impact by advancing groundbreaking research and clinical trials, accelerating scientific discovery, and expanding knowledge that will improve patient care and health outcomes. We are very grateful to all the generous internal and external donors to Rutgers Health who have provided important philanthropic support for our research efforts and helped established several new endowed professorships. If you are interested in learning more about the many ways to support research projects or facilities at Rutgers Health, please email: rutgershealthadvancement@rutgersfoundation.org.



FACILITIES UPDATES

Rutgers Health Building

In July 2026, the first tower of the [Health + Life Science Exchange \(HELIX\)](#) — the Rutgers Health Building — officially opened as the new home for the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in downtown New Brunswick. The HELIX is envisioned to be an “innovation district” representing a transformative public-private partnership and the largest investment in the life sciences in New Jersey’s history. It features a three-building complex with 1.5 million square feet of laboratory, office, commercial, and residential space. The Rutgers Health Building houses the medical school’s educational spaces, including simulation laboratories, collaborative learning areas, and seminar rooms designed for interdisciplinary engagement. A translational research facility equipped with advanced laboratories will support up to 80 research teams conducting groundbreaking scientific investigations. Planning for a phased occupancy with relocation of research programs underway, the initial moves are anticipated to begin in October and substantial completion is expected by December of this year.



Translational research and educational facilities include a modern gross anatomy laboratory with dedicated workspaces (top left), a simulation center featuring clinical skills suites (top right), collaborative learning and gathering spaces (bottom left), and modern laboratory workspaces designed to support research activities (bottom right).

OUR TEAM

Rutgers Health Office of Research



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APPENDIX: DATA FOR FIGURES

The following tables provide the underlying data for figures presented in the report.

Table 1. Total Sponsored Awards, Fiscal Years 2022–2026

Fiscal year	Total sponsored awards
2022	\$488 million
2023	\$548 million
2024	\$565 million
2025	\$610 million
2026	\$563 million

[Return to Clinical Trials section](#)

Table 2. Clinical Trials, Fiscal Years 2024–2026

Fiscal year	Oncology actively recruiting	Oncology new	Non-oncology actively recruiting	Non-oncology new
2024	482	182	198	126
2025	469	224	237	101
2026	461	199	234	105

In a given fiscal year, some “new” trials may turn to actively recruiting.

[Return to FY26 Overview section](#)

Table 3. Open-Access Publishing Savings by School

School	Savings	Number of articles
New Jersey Medical School	\$413,832	156
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School	\$288,296	128
School of Public Health	\$97,188	41
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy	\$83,188	34
School of Nursing	\$38,152	12
School of Health Professions	\$38,094	13
School of Dental Medicine	\$20,884	7

[Return to Philanthropy section](#)