

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)
Institutional Biosafety Committee
April 9, 2026
Minutes

Meeting Attendance:

Voting Members

Dr. Catherine Denicourt (Chair)
Dr. Nancy Crider
Dr. Carolyn Grimes
Dr. Nicholas Justice
Dr. Ashish Kapoor
Dr. Yang Liu
Dr. Yahuan Lou
Dr. Duc Nguyen
Dr. Eunsu Park
Dr. Scott Patlovich
Mr. Petko Ivanov (CM)
Mrs. Marivonne Rodriguez (CM)

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Kristin King
Dr. Joy Harrison
Mr. Zack Becker
Mr. Colin Harrison
Ms. Rebecca Kairis
Ms. Meredith Mills

Guests:

Ermina Ali, intern

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Denicourt at 3:00 PM.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chairperson reminded the committee about the conflict of interest procedure. She also reminded the committee members that all protocols that are discussed at the meeting are to be considered confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the meeting with non-IBC members.

3. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (March 12, 2026)

Approved = 10
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 2

4. IBC Administrative Items

None

Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules Research Applications Review

During the review the committee assessed the containment levels as well as the facilities, procedures, practices and training and expertise of the personnel involved in recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules research. The committee also reviewed agent characteristics, types of manipulations planned, sources of the inserted nucleic acid

sequences, the nature of the inserted nucleic acid sequences and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene, and if so, the protein that will be produced. Furthermore, the PI must determine the applicable section(s) of the *NIH Guidelines*.

5. Clinical Protocol Reviews (HGT)

None

6. Protocol Reviews

IBC-25-096 – Dr. Roberto Arduino – “Umbrella Protocol for PBMC Collection/Plasma Bank from HIV/HCV Patients - Multiple Titles:” - HSC-MS-07-0586: “IQA PBMC. Quality Assessment Program for Freezing Viable PBMCs” AND HSC-MS-13-0281: A5321 “Decay of HIV-1 Reservoirs in Participants on Long-Term Antiretroviral Therapy: The ACTG HIV Reservoirs Cohort (AHRC) Study.” AND HSC-MS-18-0673: A5359 “The LATITUDE Study: Long-Acting Therapy to Improve Treatment Success in Daily Life - A Phase III Study to Evaluate Long-Acting Antiretroviral Therapy in Non-adherent HIV-Infected Individuals.” AND HSC-MS-23-0457: “A5374 A Phase I/IIa Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Trial of Conserved-Mosaic T-cell Vaccine in a Regimen with Vesatolimod and Broadly Neutralizing Antibodies in Adults Initiated on Suppressive Antiretroviral Therapy during Acute HIV-1.” AND HSC-MS-24-0424: “A5385 An Observational Post-Intervention Control (PIC) Destination Cohort.” AND HSC-MS-24-0211: “A5388 A Double-Blind, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial of Combination HIV-Specific Broadly Neutralizing Monoclonal Antibodies Combined with ART Initiation during Acute HIV Infection to Induce HIV Remission.” AND HSC-MS-24-1261: “A5389 A Phase I Study to Evaluate the Safety and Antiviral Activity of Two Human Monoclonal Antibodies (VRC07-523LS and PGT121.414.LS) During Analytic Treatment Interruption in Participants Living with HIV Who Initiated ART During Acute HIV-1 Infection.” AND HSC-MS-24-1050: “A5402 An Open-Label, Randomized Controlled Trial of Pramipexole versus Escitalopram to Treat Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and Comorbid MDD with Mild Neurocognitive Disorder (MND) in Persons with HIV.” AND HSC-MS-24-0982: “A5422 Safety and Immunogenicity of Stabilized CH505 TF chTrimer Vaccination in Adults Living with HIV-1 on Suppressive Antiretroviral Therapy.” AND HSC-MS-25-0211: “A5424 Hormone Therapy for Peri- and Postmenopausal Women Living with HIV (HoT).” AND HSC-MS-25-0734: “A5426 Improving Physical Ability and Cellular Senescence Elimination in HIV (IPACE-HIV).” AND HSC-MS-23-0767: “HPTN 103 A Phase 2, Open-Label, Multicenter, Randomized Study to Evaluate the Pharmacokinetics and Safety of Twice Yearly Long-Acting Subcutaneous Lenacapavir for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis in People Who Inject Drugs.” AND HSC-MS-26-0122: “HVTN 141/HPTN 105 A phase 1 clinical trial to evaluate the safety, pharmacokinetics, and in vitro neutralization of ePGT121v1-LS, PGDM1400LS, and VRC07-523LS administered in multiple doses and routes to adult participants without HIV-1.”

Containment Level: BSL-2; protocol does not involve animals

NIH Section: None

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are due for required safety training

Approved = 12

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, pending completion of required safety training.

IBC-26-037 – Dr. Jose Perez – “Fungal regulatory systems directing mammalian host colonization”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-2

NIH Section: III-D-1-a; III-D-2-a

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements

Approved = 12

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, with clarification that the work does not meet the definition of “dangerous gain-of-function research” as defined in the May 5, 2025 Executive Order.

7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

None

8. Protocol Updates

a. Significant updates:

IBC-25-010 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Studies of Infectious Prions” AND “Cross-seeding of Protein Misfolding as a Disease Mechanism” AND “Pathogenesis, Transmission and Detection of Zoonotic Prion Diseases” AND “Design and development of anti-prions as a novel therapeutic strategy for prion disease” AND “Shedding, retention and spreading of chronic wasting disease prions in the environment: AND “Systematic evaluation of the zoonotic potential of CWD isolates” AND “Structural studies of prions by Electron Microscopy” AND “Testing for Potential Prion Contamination in cells from RINRI Therapeutics”

- **Addition of work and change of work location:** Histology of brain tissue (mouse and human) infected with human and BSE prions in MSE R427 after inactivation.

Containment Level: BSL-2 enhanced; ABSL-2 enhanced

NIH Section: None

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

requirements

Approved = 0

Opposed = 12

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and not approved. The committee is requesting validation of inactivity, required safety training on histology equipment, and separate histology equipment for the work. Location will be dependent on validation results. Updates should be presented at the next IBC meeting.

b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-071 – Dr. Jun Li – “Mechanisms and Treatment for Ischemic Stroke”

- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV vectors (AAV AAV5-GFAP-mKir4.1-T2A-EGFP-WPRE for Astrocyte-specific overexpression of Kir4.1 plus EGFP and control AAV5-GFAP-EGFP-WPRE)
- **Update AWC Number:** AWC-24-0126

IBC-22-005 – Dr. Tingting Mills – “Macrophage NUDT21-mediated alternative polyadenylation in lung injury” AND “The role of CRY1/2 in emphysema” AND “The role of MNPM1 mediated transcriptional condensate in acute myeloid leukemia”

- **Addition of bioagent:** house dust mite extract
- **Addition of AWC protocol:** AWC-26-0005
- **Addition of work:** use of house dust mite extract in animal models
- **Removal of personnel:** Ning-Yuan Chen

IBC-22-017 – Dr. Yang Liu – “The role of TLR9 in regulating energy metabolism during exercise and in other pathophysiological conditions” AND “**Regulation of ER-phagy during cellular stresses**”

- **Addition of bolded title**

IBC-22-051 – Dr. Simon Young – “Hydrogel encapsulated and responsive micro-cytokine factories to treat oral cancer”

- **Addition of bioagents:** mEER cell line (Mouse HPV16 E6/E7/hRas oropharynx epithelial cell line), mEERL, mEERL95
- **Addition of personnel:** Victoria Messuri, Riya Pagilla, Arman Hassan
- **Removal personnel:** Nourhan Hussein

IBC-22-057 – Dr. Blanca Restrepo – “Diabetes and Tuberculosis Research Program in South Texas (Umbrella 2)” AND “Role of metabolic Me-macrophages in the pathogenesis of tuberculosis during diabetes” AND “Interdisciplinary NexGen TB Research Advancement Center (IN-TRAC)” AND “Identification of biomarkers of audiologic outcomes in congenital cytomegalovirus infection” AND “LAM ELISA for TB diagnosis: Proof-of-concept testing” AND “Clinical Concordance evaluation of the T-SPOT®.TB test performance to support raw material change (OI-8)” AND “Immune and metabolic dysfunction during aging in human cohorts” AND “Improving rapid phenotypic drug susceptibility testing for drug resistant tuberculosis in high-burden areas” AND “A retrospective follow-up study of the durability of antiviral therapy on

long-term hearing and neurodevelopmental outcomes among patients treated for congenital cytomegalovirus infection as infants or toddlers”

- **Addition of work:** Additional analysis of sputum samples (Step 6)
- **Change of IRB protocol:** The original umbrella protocol for the IRB was: HSC-SPH-12-0037, will be replaced by HSC-SPH-26-0200

IBC-23-042 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Biomarkers of Fetal Hypoxic Neuronal Injury”

- **Addition of personnel:** Elina Mosa

IBC-23-048 – Dr. Eunhee Kim – “Understanding the vascular complication and formation in stroke and brain arteriovenous malformation”

- **Addition of Location of Work:** MSB 7.002 and MSB 7.004
- **Removal of Personnel:** Adrian Bafor
- **Addition of Personnel:** Khin The Nu Aye

IBC-24-001 – Dr. Scott Olson – “Mesenchymal Stem Cells (MSC) for the treatment of traumatic brain injury and other neurological and inflammatory conditions” AND “Reshaping MSC surface expression profiles to target inflammation following CNS trauma” AND “Myeloid Derived Suppressor Cells in Traumatic Brain Injury” AND “Trauma induced coagulopathy and the blood brain barrier: Impact of resuscitation” AND “Human Umbilical Cord Blood Derived T Regulatory Cells” AND “Freeze dried mechotransduced MSC derived exosomes for neurological injury” AND “An Assessment of Green Plasma: The Prevalence of, Quantification of “Green-ness,” and Potential Hemostatic Superiority of a Currently Discarded Blood Product” AND “Cellular Impact of Cerebrospinal Fluid on Human-Derived Umbilical Cord” AND “Engineering MSCs to Treat Traumatic Brain Injury”

- **Addition of work:** Addition of work related to gene insertion into the piggy bac plasmid prior to induction into mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs)
- **Addition of rDNA:** plasmid (piggy bac plasmid: pAJWmspiggycagpuros40d1cmvegfrbbg)
- **Addition of bioagents:** Plasmid (piggy bac plasmid expressing PSGL-1, ESL-1, CD44, CD24, L selectin, FUT4, FUT5, FUT7, ST3GAL4, TPST1/2, integrin pairs α L β 2, α M β 2, α X β 2, α D β 2, α 4 β 1, α 4 β 7, CCR2, CCR4, CCR6, CCR7, CXCR2, CX3CR1, CXCR4, CD47, CD300a, HLA-G, NQO1, IL-4, IL-10, IL-13, IL-35, TGF- β , IL-1R, TNFR1, BDNF, NGF, GDNF, IDO-1, TSG-6, and reelin)

IBC-24-037 – Dr. Tae Jin Lee – “MicroRNA therapy for cancers”

- **Addition of work:** Development of quality-customized production process for multi-specific antibody to enter the global market.
- **Addition of bioagents:** Murine cell line (MOC1)
- **Removal of personnel:** Grace Nguyen
- **Addition of personnel:** Lily Nguyen

IBC-24-073 – Dr. Long Jun Wu – “Studying microglia functions in health and diseases via viral tools and plasmid containing nanoparticles in mice”

- **Addition of rDNA:** Adeno-associated virus (exogenous promoter to co-express EGFP and TREM2)

IBC-25-010 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Studies of Infectious Prions” AND “Cross-seeding of Protein Misfolding as a Disease Mechanism” AND “Pathogenesis, Transmission and

Detection of Zoonotic Prion Diseases” AND “Design and development of anti-prions as a novel therapeutic strategy for prion disease” AND “Shedding, retention and spreading of chronic wasting disease prions in the environment: AND “Systematic evaluation of the zoonotic potential of CWD isolates” AND “Structural studies of prions by Electron Microscopy” AND “Testing for Potential Prion Contamination in cells from RINRI Therapeutics”

- **Addition of bioagents:** iPSC-derived neural progenitor cells (human and deer), healthy brain homogenates (human, deer, and mouse)

IBC-25-029 – Dr. Yi-Ping Li – “Skeletal Muscle Remodeling” AND “Intramuscular Mechanism of Cancer Cachexia”

- **Addition of bioagents:** pCDNA3.1 vectors expressing p38alpha MAPK, p38beta, and eIF3f

IBC-25-037 – Dr. Jennifer Walker – “Investigation of interactions that facilitate chronic infections” AND “Influence of Pocket Irrigants on Breast Implant Infections”

- **Addition of personnel:** Carlos Amaya Vargas & Manuel Ramirez

IBC-25-093 – Dr. Zhiqiang An – “Cancer drug resistance mechanisms in the HER/ErbB signalling pathways and Proteolytic cleavage of antibodies and its applications in designer cancer therapeutics” AND “ErbB signalling pathways” AND “Discovery and Characterization of Novel Anti-endotrophin Monoclonal Antibodies as Drug Leads for Cancer Therapy” AND “Counteracting Tumor Evasion of Antibody Immunity by a Novel Therapeutic Strategy” AND “New Antibody Therapy for Treating Leukemia” AND “Therapeutic Monoclonal Antibody Lead Optimization and Development Core (CPRIT Core Grant RP150551)” AND “Validation of LILIRB family of receptors and cancer targets and development of LILIRB targeting antibodies for cancer treatment” AND “Development of Hemichannel-Targeting Antibody Therapies for Breast Cancer Bone Metastasis” AND “Advanced Cancer Antibody Drug Modalities Core Facilities” AND “ITIM-receptors for cancer treatment” AND “Antibodies targeting S2 domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein” AND “Targeting immunosuppressive myeloid cells in tumor microenvironment” AND “Reprogramming myeloid cells to inhibit cancer development” AND “Study TREM2 iso2 knockin only iPS induced microglia in Alzheimer's disease.” AND “Study long-term effect of TREM2-219 (iso2) in 5xFAD mice via AAV” and “mouse cancer parental and stable cell lines for antibodies evaluation on tumor growth”

- **Addition of work:** TREM2 studies in glioblastoma and ALPPL2 functional and therapeutic studies in pancreatic cancer (both conducted in mice)
- **Addition of bioagents:** human pancreatic cancer cell lines (AsPc-1, Panc03.27, Panc10.05); murine glioblastoma cell lines (GL261, SB28); Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS-control, iPS-TREM2-219)
- **Addition of animal strains:** Mice (CXC3R1-TREM2, TREM2 flox/flox, TREM2-ko C57BL/6J, NOD/SCID)

IBC-25-097 – Dr. Holger Eltzschig – “Hypoxia-Inducible Factors and MicroRNAs in Viral Pneumonia-Associated ARDS and A Phase 2-3 Trial of Vadadustat for Treating Hospitalized Patients with Pathogen-Associated ARDS”

- **Addition of personnel:** Sophia Phan, Ross Meade, Thu Tran

IBC-26-006 – Dr. Dongjoo Choi – “Studying astrocyte function in Alzheimer's disease via viral tools in mice”

- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV Cre recombinant AAV2/9-GFAP-Cre Cre expressed-AAVs; APP AAV2/9-Synapsin-APP-NL-F APP-NL-F expressed-AAVs
- **Addition of mouse strains:** NLGF/NLGF; Sox9f/f; Aldh1l1-GFP (AD model with label and Sox9 flox site); SWELL1 f/f; tdTomato; CX3CR1-creER
- **Addition of personnel:** Seung Han and Eunjoo Kang

IBC-26-034 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Biomarkers of the effect of Metformin on the Adult and Fetal Brain”

- **Addition of personnel:** Elina Mosa

IBC-26-035 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Metformin and Fetal Brain Biomarkers”

- **Addition of personnel:** Elina Mosa

9. BSL-3 Update

The BSL-3 (currently used for BSL-2+/ABSL-2+) is still under commissioning. We are waiting for repairs to occur to the source of the water damage on the ceiling.

10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

The Biological Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. In March, there was 1 burn-related injury during maintenance of the cage washer in CLAMC.

11. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. Members recommended an autoclave training video.

12. Other Items

University-Wide Statement of Responsibility for NAC

As a follow-up to the last IBC meeting, additional notifications were sent to PIs with active IBC protocols to complete their “Biological Agent, Biological Toxin, and Potential Infectious Material Acknowledgment Form.” The completion rate increased to 70%, with no indications of potentially infectious materials defined by the US NAC. Dr. Patlovich and Dr. Denicourt agreed that the University-Wide Statement of Responsibility for NAC could be completed, and all documents have been submitted.

13. Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2026, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, virtually via Microsoft TEAMS.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 3:55 PM.

APPROVED