

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)
Institutional Biosafety Committee
May 14, 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. Duc Nguyen
Dr. Eunsu Park
Dr. Scott Patlovich
Dr. Brett Perkinson
Dr. Jose Portugal
Mr. Petko Ivanov (CM)
Mr. Imad Khalil (CM)

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Kristin King
Dr. Joy Harrison
Dr. Mary Robinson
Mr. Zack Becker
Mr. Colin Harrison
Ms. Rebecca Kairis
Ms. Allison Lino
Ms. Meredith Mills

Guests:

Dr. Taichi Goto

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 (April 09, 2026)

Approved = 11

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 2

4. IBC Administrative Items

Dr. Nancy Crider will be retiring from the IBC committee, and Dr. Taichi Goto will serve as the School of Nursing's representative.

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-26-038 – Dr. Eva Sevick – “Personalized, antigen-directed immunotherapy delivered to lymph nodes”

Containment Level: BSL-1; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-4-a, III-F-1

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

Approved = 13

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-039 – Dr. Nirav Thosani – “Investigating Metabolic Regulation in Head and Neck and Oral Cancers”

IBC-26-041 – Dr. Neha Arora – “Investigating Metabolic Regulation in Head and Neck and Oral Cancers”

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.
- **(Additional references)**

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 = 13

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol update was presented, with the committee agreeing that the inactivation process has been validated and published in a peer-reviewed journal, and that it is the standard procedure for tissue processing of samples for this disease. The amendment was approved under the following conditions.

Approval from the shared space staff for this work. If the staff feel comfortable, the following conditions must be followed. If the staff is not comfortable, the committee recommends purchasing a separate microtome for this use.

- Establish that “fresh” solutions are used for each step, defined as not previously used on samples.
- Recommendation to change the microtome blade after each use.
- Training on the SOP and microtome safety will be provided by EHS for all current and incoming personnel working in MSE R427. EHS Biosafety will maintain training records.
- Job Hazard Analysis on this process, focusing on the hand cutting of tissue.

b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-039 – Dr. Jordan Lake – “Prevalence and Predictors of Hepatic Steatosis in Persons Living with HIV (Steatosis in HIV Study)” AND “Role of Fgf21 in HIV-Associated NAFLD” AND “Explorations into the Mechanism for INSTI-Associated Weight Gain: A Focus On Energy Balance”

- **Removal of personnel:** Marisel Negret Hernandez and Ruda Mohaweche
- **Addition of personnel:** Sarah Galloway

IBC-21-064 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Early Diagnostic and Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Protein misfolding cyclic amplification assay (PMCA) for tau” AND “Highly selective detection of tau oligomers in biological fluids for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Development of a blood test for Alzheimer's disease diagnostic” AND “Isolation, characterization and pathogenic role of self-propagating conformational amyloid-beta strains” AND “PMCA detection of antibody-treated biological samples” AND “Misfolded Protein Aggregates in HIV Infection” AND “Depression as a risk factor for converting mild cognitive impairment into AD” AND “Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/Fronto temporal dementia PMCA” AND “Misfolding and aggregation of p53 and its implications in cancer” AND “Role of circulating Abeta seeds and peripheral tissue damage in Alzheimer's disease pathogenesis” AND “Recombinant APOE as treatment in AD mouse models” AND “Detection and characterization of alpha-synuclein aggregates in patients with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia” AND **“Characterization of the structure of tau aggregates in postmortem brain of DLB and PD patients”**

- **Add bolded title**

- **Add bioagents:** Frozen and fixed brain tissues from 2 DLB and 2 PD cases

IBC-21-076 – Dr. Ali Azhdarinia – “Molecular Imaging Probe Development”

- **Add bioagent:** PANC-1 meso cells

IBC-22-040 – Dr. Wenbo Li – “Elucidating eRNA Biology in Breast Cancer” AND “Beyond Gene Dosage: Understanding Down Syndrome via 4D Genome Organization” AND “Mechanisms underlying Enhancer RNP mediated gene regulation and genome organization” AND “Enhancer RNAs in brain gene regulation and Alzheimer's disease” AND “Novel roles of TAZ/YAP in DNA Damage repair, 3D genome organization and Therapeutic Resistance in Glioblastoma” AND “Elucidating T Cell Ferroptosis in Renal Medullary Carcinoma: 3D Genome Architecture Rewiring and Therapeutic Alleviation”

- **Removal of titles:** “Optogenetic Engineering of 3D Chromatin Architecture” and “Programmable control over histone acetylation at human regulatory elements using precision epigenome editing”
- **Addition of bioagent:** Human cancer cell lines (MoLM13, OCI-AML3, COLO-320DM, COLO-320HSR)
- **Removal of personnel:** Jyoti Kashyap, Sohiti Mukherjee, Chunjie Meng, Ritapa Chaudhuri, Deniz Ugurlu Cimen
- **Addition of personnel:** Joo-hyung Lee, Liangqi Sun, Liling Jiang
- **Removal of location:** MSB 6.516
- **Addition of location:** TMC3 2320

IBC-22-055 – Dr. Holger Eltzschig – “Transcriptional signaling and MicroRNA response to hypoxia for organ protection”

- **Addition of work:** Adding in-vivo work related to using Adeno-associated virus (AAV) for overexpression of BMAL1; microRNA mimics and microRNA locked nucleic acids for overexpression/knock-down of miR-223
- **Addition of rDNA:** microRNA mimics and microRNA Locked nucleic acids (LNA)
- **Addition of bioagent:** Adeno-associated virus vector (AAV9; CS-Mm01275-AV18-01, CS-Mm01296-AV18-01, AA09-NEG-AV18-A00), microRNA mimics and LNAs
- **Removal of personnel:** Pragati Mundhada, Bader Hamoud, and Sai Keerthi Annam

IBC-22-056 – Dr. Jordan Lake – “Prevalence and Predictors of Hepatic Steatosis in Persons Living with HIV (Steatosis in HIV Study, HNC-001)” AND “The burden of sarcopenic obesity in chronic HIV and its implications in hepatic steatosis” AND “Relationships between FGF21 and GDF15 with sarcopenia in people with HIV and MASLD”

- **Addition of personnel:** Sarah Galloway and Brenda Lastra Bojorquez

IBC-23-009 – Dr. Jordan Lake – “Umbrella protocol for the study of clinical, virological and immunological outcomes in HIV/HCV infected individuals.” AND “Understanding the Spectrum of Liver Health in HIV Infection” AND “Understanding the Contributions of HIV Infection and Hormone Therapy to Cardiovascular Disease Risk Among Transgender Women: A Deadly Crossroads?” AND “HIV Replicative Fitness in the setting of Anti-retroviral Drug Resistance” AND “Cardiometabolic Risk in Transgender Women and its Relationship to HIV Infection and Feminizing Hormone Use” AND “HIV Reservoir Characterization before and after Hormone Replacement Therapy” AND “Feminas Study Stored Sample Analysis” AND “A Phase 3b, Multicenter, Open-Label

Study to Evaluate Switching From a Regimen of Two Nucleos(t)ide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTI) plus a Third Agent to a Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) of Bictegravir/Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Alafenamide (B/F/TAF), in Virologically-Suppressed, HIV-1 Infected African American Participants.” AND “The Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Fatty Liver in HIV Infected Individuals Attending Multiethnic Urban HIV Clinics” AND “The Impact of Cannabinoids on Inflammation, HIV Viral Load and Symptoms of Distress among Persons Living with HIV/AIDS.” AND “Explorations into the mechanism for INSTI-associated weight gain: a focus on energy balance” AND “Hepatic effects of simultaneous supra physiologic Estradiol supplementation and androgen deprivation in transgender women initiating gender-affirming hormone therapy” AND “Sarcopenic Obesity and Relationships with Immunometabolic Parameters in People with HIV”

- **Removal of personnel:** Marisel Negret Hernandez
- **Addition of personnel:** Sarah Galloway

IBC-23-015– Dr. Mary Farach-Carson – “Acquisition and Experimental Use of Head and Neck Tissue for Tissue Engineering and Biomarker Discovery” AND “Salivary Tissues for Relief of Xerostomia” AND “Directing Collective Epithelial Morphology in Space and Time Using a Light-Based Carving Tool” AND “Salivary Avatars for Screening Stimulants and Sialagogues” AND “Cell-Based Therapy in Minipig Model of Radiation-Induced Xerostomia” AND “Development of Surgically Implantable Minor Salivary Gland-Based Constructs for Treatment of Xerostomia” AND “SARS-CoV-2 Latency in Oral and Salivary Tissues” AND “Functional Biointegration of Bioengineered Salivary Tissues in Irradiated Animal Models” AND “Epithelial Organization in Thin Bioprinted Hydrogel”

- **Removal of personnel:** Max DeLeon, Kueylee Lee, Caitlynn Barrows, and Victoria Messuri
- **Addition of personnel:** Kylee Stoddard

IBC-24-027– Dr. Kevin Lin – “The role of Protein Arginine Methyltransferases in neurovascular coupling and brain diseases”

- **Addition of work:** Addition of 3 AAV vector to knockdown 1) cystathionine β -synthase (CBS) in mice neurons; 2) CBS in mice brain endothelial cells and 3) PRMT5 in mice brain pericytes. This project is part of the dissertation experiments of the graduate student “Drew Smith”(1 and 2) and Post doctoral experiments of “Peter Rodriguez” (3).
- **Addition of rDNA and bioagents:** Adeno-associated virus (AAV/PHP.eB-hSYN-eGFP-CBS-shRNAmir, AAV/BR1-CDH5-mCherry-CBS-shRNAmir, AAV-PHP.eB-CAG-FLEX-shPrmt5-miR-WPRE-SV40pA, AAV-PHP.eB -CAG-FLEX-Scramble-miR-WPRE-SV40pA)
- **Addition of animal strain:** Mice (Atp13a5-2A-CreERT2-IRES-tdTomato)

IBC-25-008– Dr. Faraz Bishehsari – “The University of Texas Health Gastroenterology Research Center for Chronobiology Research Sample Data and Biorepository” AND “Development of a precision medicine platform for circadian based therapeutics in pancreatic cancer”

- **Removal of personnel:** Doneya Moore and Estela Vann
- **Addition of personnel:** Rutviben Pragneshkumar Shah
- **Removal of location:** MSB 1.600, MSB 1.606

- **Addition of location:** MSB 4.241, 1.020

IBC-25-026– Dr. Zhen Xu – “Adeno-Associated Virus (AAV) as a Tool to Study Cerebrovascular Integrity and Intracranial Aneurysm”

- **Removal of personnel:** Song Gao

IBC-25-034– Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Human Milk Exosomes: Effects on Gut Microbiota in NICU-admitted neonates”

- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

IBC-25-053– Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Neuroinflammation in response to ascending reproductive tract ureaplasma infection”

- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

IBC-25-082– Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Confirmation of Depression Medication Response Biomarkers”

- **Removal of personnel:** Kristen Rebeles
- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

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:** Adding work related to using AAV constructs encoding TREM2-157 and TREM2-219 for in vivo studies in an Alzheimer's disease mouse model to investigate the role of soluble TREM2 (Triggering Receptor Expressed on Myeloid Cells 2) in disease progression
- **Addition of bioagents:** Adeno-associated virus (AAV) vectors (AAV-Flag-TREM2157, AAV-Flag-TREM2219, AAV-Flag control), Human cancer cell lines (Daoy, D341 med, U87, U251), Murine glioblastoma cell line (SMA-560)
- **Addition of animal strains:** Mice (SCID (C.B-17/IcrHsd-Prkdc scid), CD34+ Hu-NSG, CXC3R1-LILRB2, 5xFAD-LILRB2)

IBC-26-007– Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Fetal neuronal extracellular vesicle biomarkers of in-utero effects of maternal cannabinoid use and human fetal brain development and

neurobehavioral outcomes”

- **Removal of personnel:** Kristen Rebeles
- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

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

- **Removal of personnel:** Elina Mosa
- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

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

- **Removal of personnel:** Elina Mosa
- **Addition of personnel:** Carolina Jorgez

9. BSL-3 Update

The BSL-3 (currently used for BSL-2+/ABSL-2+) ceiling and walls were repaired and returned to active use for SARS-CoV-2 on 5/8/2026.

10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

The Biological Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. In April, there were two reports from CLAMC personnel. One was clean bedding in the eye and one was an allergy in response to animals.

11. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review.

12. Other Items

TMC Innovation Factory – Leased space is being reviewed for research for a department of researchers. CLAMC and Biosafety are involved in reviewing plans to ensure compliance with associated regulations for animal care and biological containment.

SPH – RAS to PHERB – In June and July 2026, researchers will be moving into the new SPH building. EHS will be on-site to assist the researchers with verifying the ACL2.

Texas Funeral Services Commission – researcher requested tissue samples from out of state (NIH biobank), which was denied by the TFSC; upon appeal, verbal approval was given at the May 4, 2026 Commissioning meeting, but documentation of approval has not been received.

13. Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2026, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, virtually via Microsoft TEAMS.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 3:59 PM.

APPROVED