

Situation

Imagine watching as your child, seemingly overnight, begins to experience profound but unrelated symptoms. They might have suddenly begun to hallucinate or demonstrate obsessive behaviors, develop vision, movement issues and tics, lost language skills and experienced rapid changes in mood and behaviors. You seek out psychiatric and physical health specialists, looking for explanations and a diagnosis so that you can help your child.

Only in recent years has research begun to identify a set of diseases – thought to be triggered by neuro-inflammation and changes in metabolic function in brain cells – that underlie experiences like this for children and adolescents.

Rady Children's is committed to providing a multidisciplinary solution to diagnose and treat children who experience these Pediatric Inflammatory Brain Diseases, and supporting families in navigating the complexities of caring for them.

While the fields of psychiatry and neurology share a common focus on the brain, the division of medical specialties has historically led to difficulties diagnosing and caring for children with complex symptoms caused by inflammation in the brain. Rady Children's – informed by approaches taken at other leading pediatric centers across the country, our unique strengths, and strong patient advocates – started a cross-disciplinary program to help parents find answers quickly and provide comprehensive treatment options when a child is suddenly in crisis.

Looking Forward

In recent years, emerging cross-disciplinary research has led to growing understanding of Pediatric Inflammatory Brain Diseases as a leading cause of new-onset neurologic deficits in children and adolescents. Rady Children's newly-launched program includes not just specialists in neurology and psychiatry, but also infectious diseases and rheumatology. And while this program has launched to provide comprehensive triage, diagnosis and treatment plans centered on each child and their family, we know that there is much more to do.

Rady Children's has made the investment to improve the understanding and recognition of PIBDs across our primary care network so children get referred to the right place, quickly. We are also recruiting a faculty leader who can work across departments and programs to coordinate treatments and build resources for families. However, we know that comprehensive care relies on more than just a physician leader, and that identifying new treatment options means translating advances in research labs into the clinic.

The Opportunity

You can be part of building the next generation of care for PIBDs by supporting a fellowship that will drive programmatic excellence and sustainability, and expand our ability to diagnose and treat children diagnosed with PIBDs including PANS/PANDAS and certain types of encephalopathies.

Fellowship programs provide the time and resources for early-career physician leaders to further their expertise, and launch clinical and research projects that can improve care, not just in our region, but across the field. Because understanding of PIBDs has progressed relatively recently, very few such advanced postdoctoral training programs around the country provide the broad array of clinical experiences needed to develop true expertise in caring for children and adolescents who suffer from the disruption these diseases cause. By creating a fellowship program that bridges the clinical realms of Psychiatry and Neurology and builds in collaboration with all of the medical specialties which wrap around children with PIBDs and their families, Rady Children's can be at the forefront of changing care and treatment.

To leverage the investments Rady Children's has made to start our multidisciplinary program and bring in clinical leadership, **we seek to launch a two-year fellowship program in PIBD beginning in the fall of 2021.** This critical investment will help establish Rady Children's as a leader in the field, unlock the research expertise of our academic partners at UC San Diego to improve treatment options, and help ensure children and adolescents get the bright futures they were meant to live.

We hope you will join us to raise the \$200,000 needed to make this important opportunity a reality.