

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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La Jolla Institute Board of Directors elects healthcare executive and entrepreneur

Researcher and business leader Vanessa V. Wertheim, Ph.D. joins Institute Board

LA JOLLA, CA – The La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology is pleased to announce Vanessa V. Wertheim, Ph.D., R.N., a healthcare executive and entrepreneur, has been elected to its Board of Directors.

Dr. Wertheim has one of the most varied professional backgrounds among Institute board members, having enjoyed success as a healthcare researcher, an entrepreneur who has created several companies, a neonatal intensive care unit nurse at Rady Children’s Hospital - San Diego and an executive at Rady Children’s Institute for Genomic Medicine. Currently, Dr. Wertheim is a consultant specializing in healthcare engagement solutions.



Dr. Wertheim

“We’re delighted to welcome Dr. Wertheim to our board,” said Mitchell Kronenberg, Ph.D., La Jolla Institute president and chief scientific officer. “Vanessa is a true Renaissance woman with two decades of experience in clinical settings, medical research, healthcare administration and business. The breadth of her talents will be invaluable to La Jolla Institute.”

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Dr. Wertheim's career path was shaped in part by the medical challenges she faced as a 29-week preemie born at just two pounds, 10 ounces. She was also inspired by the lifelong support of her two remarkable parents Nicole and Herbert A. Wertheim, O.D., D.Sc., M.D. (h.c.).

Her father, who Dr. Wertheim is succeeding on the Institute board, is a noted scientist, clinician, entrepreneur, philanthropist and founder and CEO of Brain Power, Inc., the world's largest manufacturer of ophthalmic instruments and chemicals.

Born and raised in the Miami, Fla., area, Dr. Wertheim's research career began after college at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine where she collected patient safety data in the operating room. Recognizing the importance of high functioning teams, she earned an MBA from the University of Miami with a specialization in leadership in teams, and subsequently received a master's certificate in healthcare leadership from Cornell University.

After a number of years building and managing startups, Dr. Wertheim turned her sights to the clinical arena as a nightshift nurse in Rady Children's neonatal intensive care unit. She later returned to school at the University of San Diego, where she received her Ph.D. in nursing with a focus on healthcare engagement.

In 2015, Dr. Wertheim was asked to become an advisor to the hospital and, as its first employee, to help create the new Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine as Director of Engagement and Education.

Earlier this year, Dr. Wertheim started PRISM Engagement LLC, a healthcare solutions consulting firm specializing in bridging the gaps in knowledge for healthcare facilities, medical practitioners and the general public.

Dr. Wertheim currently serves as a Director of the Dr. Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Family Foundation and is a member of the Board of Advisors for UC San Diego Health Sciences.

Dr. Wertheim says she is looking forward to serving on the Institute board. "There are many reasons I wanted to become involved with La Jolla Institute: as a mom with a son and a daughter who both face incurable autoimmune diseases and as a researcher, I'm particularly attuned to the need for research in this area," Dr. Wertheim says. "I'm honored to be given this opportunity to be involved a remarkable research institute that I believe is on the path to developing cures for some of our most serious immune-based diseases."

About La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology

The La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology is dedicated to understanding the intricacies and power of the immune system so that we may apply that knowledge to promote human health and prevent a wide range of diseases. Since its founding in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit research organization, the Institute has made numerous advances leading toward its goal: *life without disease*.

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