



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE



UNMC

MUNROE-MEYER
INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT | 2020



The Munroe-Meyer Institute's mission is to be world leaders in transforming the lives of all individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs, their families and the community through outreach, engagement, premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is an old expression – some say it is actually a curse – that goes, “May you live in interesting times.”

In 2020, we certainly had our share of “interesting,” both at MMI and in the world beyond. Building our new home. Providing services in a pandemic. Mitigating a cybersecurity attack. Dealing with fiscal uncertainties. In addition, national and local events that forced us to examine institutional racism and rethink who we are.

But challenges gave rise to opportunities, as well. After hardships, we emerged stronger. And that is what the Munroe-Meyer Institute is doing as we enter 2021 – taking the difficult lessons of 2020 and applying them, even as we move into a new home that offers wonderful opportunities of its own.

The institute reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic with speed and determination, providing essential in-person services safely – although there were cases of providers becoming sick, they did not infect co-workers or patients. Meanwhile, MMI transitioned 85% of its services to telehealth – in the process discovering new technological and therapeutic techniques that will allow MMI to serve a larger area of the state,

including greatly increasing its rural coverage, in 2021 and beyond.

The cybersecurity attack on the university’s computer network showed our perseverance, as MMI continued services by moving to old-school, paper-and-pencil record keeping. It was time-consuming, certainly, but we learned that MMI is not dependent on a computer network to provide essential services to the families we serve.

As university budget cuts and reduced patient volume in the wake of the pandemic affected the institute, MMI did not compromise on its services. We became a leaner, more streamlined organization, and our amazing philanthropic community stepped in when needed to ensure the families who count on MMI’s programming did not lose out.

In the wake of nationwide calls for racial justice and recognition of institutionalized racism, MMI looked into the mirror and began making changes. Institute-wide discussions and a staff survey provided a blueprint as we move forward, committed to becoming a more inclusive organization. And we can be proud that our inclusion work started well before the national debate, with the Autism Care for Toddlers in Omaha

North (ACTION) Clinic, which is set to open this year.

The new MMI building will open in the first quarter of 2021. The final stages of the renovation created its own challenges, which were unexpected to grapple with. What is the best color for the walls? The carpets? Where should we put the outside benches? The fence? The result will be a unique environment, built to serve people with developmental disabilities and complex health needs across the lifespan. The opportunities created by our new home will be endless and impactful.

This past year was “interesting,” indeed. I am honored to have spent it serving alongside the amazing, dedicated people of MMI. The events of the past year were, and continue to be, hard on them, as they are on us all. Nevertheless, when needed, they continued, and will continue, to deliver. In interesting times, you discover whom you can count on. You see what commitment is. You learn what passion means.

And that, at least, is not a curse. It is a blessing. Thank you all for being amazing!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5 Mission: Diversify MMI**
As the nation fragmented, MMI worked to bring people together.
- 9 Virtually Unstoppable**
MMI moves swiftly to ensure the continuation of services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 13 Dedication to Collaboration**
MMI’s long-term commitment to collaboration paid off in many ways in 2020.
- 17 ‘Dream’ Comes True**
MMI is ready to open the doors of its new home.
- 27 Board Highlights**
Community support continued in 2020.
- 29 Recognizing Excellence**
MMI honors the year’s standout performances.
- 31 MMI by the Numbers**
A look at the facts and figures behind MMI.
- 34 University of Nebraska Foundation**
MMI responds with ingenuity during a year of challenges.

Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD
Director and Hattie B. Munroe Professor
Munroe-Meyer Institute



facebook.com/
MunroeMeyerInstitute



twitter.com/unmc_mmi



instagram.com/unmc_mmi

Munroe-Meyer Institute
Annual Report 2020

Editors: Melonie Welsh, MS,
John Keenan, MA

Writers: John Keenan, MA, Kalani Simpson,
Lisa Spellman, Brian Anderson

Photography: Kent Sievers, Micah Evans,
John Keenan, MA

Design: Tom Waples

A digital version of this publication
can be viewed on our website.

unmc.edu/mmi





Mission: Diversify MMI

As the nation fragmented, MMI worked to bring people together.

The message is a subtle but powerful one.

All of the new brochures for the Munroe-Meyer Institute are written in English on one side and Spanish on the other. They are illustrated with photos of people of different races and ethnicities, better representing the scope of the population MMI serves.

It's a small step, but it conveys the important message that anyone who comes to MMI is welcome.

This commitment – that all are welcome – and expanded, intentional efforts to communicate this message are integral to diversity and inclusion efforts at MMI.

These efforts ramped up in 2020, partially in response to growing awareness of institutional racism and bias throughout the United States, accentuated by the killing of George Floyd by police and other acts of violence against Black people.

But some initiatives, including the creation of the Autism Care for Toddlers in Omaha North (ACTION) Clinic, have been in the works for much longer.

“We have realized for a long time that we have populations that are underserved,” said Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD, director of MMI. “We should not leave communities behind, and we should behave fairly to everyone, regardless of race, color, sexual orientation or gender.”

In addition to the bilingual brochures and the ACTION Clinic, the institute has:

- Worked to increase educational opportunities for under-represented groups;
- Created a Diversity and Inclusion Council, co-chaired by Jacqueline Hankins-Berry, an administrative associate for community engagement, and Graciela Sharif, a cultural diversity coordinator with the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disorders (LEND) program at MMI;
- Held a virtual town hall to begin to identify and address diversity and inclusion issues within the institute;
- Began planning to provide bias-related educational events and training;
- Opened a review by the business office to explore any potential bias-related salary disparities;
- Started a review of promotion and tenure practices;
- Approved 12-15 paid summer internships for underrepresented students;
- Began exploring ways to recruit and retain more diverse faculty and staff, including dissemination strategies to historically black colleges and universities;

- Worked to create a diversity and inclusion statement, to be included on job applications to show potential applicants that diversity and inclusion is a priority at MMI; and

- Created a survey to better understand the climate and culture at MMI.

“Information from the survey was critical to help us understand where we are on these issues, to determine our priorities going forward and to measure our effectiveness,” said Melonie Welsh, MS, director of the MMI Department of Community Engagement. “It provided valuable insight.”

That insight “hopefully will give us a long-term roadmap as to what we have to do,” Dr. Mirnics said. “We will continually have to evaluate what works and what doesn’t, because ultimately, it’s not about the initiatives, but about changing the outcomes. Do you manage to transform yourself? You can have an endless number of initiatives, but if ultimately nothing changes, you haven’t achieved your goal.”

The virtual town hall meeting was held shortly after the killing of Floyd. Afterward, Dr. Mirnics sponsored a sidewalk message project – people were invited to write a message and the name of a person who died at the hands of police in chalk on the sidewalks near MMI. The results stretched the entire length of the east side of the MMI building.

In North Omaha, MMI’s soon-to-be-opened ACTION Clinic was designed to reach an underserved community. Sponsored with an anonymous private donation, the clinic is a tangible effort to reach underrepresented populations and other families in Omaha who may face barriers to accessing autism services.

Among the clinic’s collaborators will be Avenue Scholars, a nonprofit organization committed to providing career opportunities to students through education and supportive relationships. The clinic will provide shadowing experiences and other opportunities for Avenue Scholars’ students, potentially creating a pipeline for future employment opportunities as registered behavior technicians, who assist in delivering applied behavior analysis service, and who could go on to become behavioral health professionals themselves.

“We want to take action, no matter how modest the step. It will promote a change for the better.”

– Jacqueline Hankins-Berry



“As women of color, we feel a need to create a more inclusive environment where everyone’s voice can be heard.”

– Graciela Sharif



MMI’s sidewalk project was held to raise awareness of institutional racism and draw attention to Black, Indigenous and other people of color who had died at the hands of police.



MMI leaders first met with North Omaha community stakeholders in August 2019 about the goals for the clinic. The meeting, held in North Omaha, explored community reaction to the proposed project, including possible locations, and solicited suggestions about services, outreach activities and other topics. Community meetings continued throughout the planning process.

“At the meetings, we started to build relationships with the community,” said Regina Carroll, PhD, director of MMI’s Autism Care for Toddlers Clinics. “We hope to continue that conversation as we go forward with this project, so that the clinic is a trusted part of the community where families receive the same opportunity and level of care available elsewhere.”

Back on campus, Sharif and Hankins-Berry invited the MMI community to take part in the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Council meeting in late July. The council held its first event – a book discussion of Robin DiAngelo’s “White Fragility” – in November. Three subcommittees also were created to address the areas of education, environment, accessibility, recruitment and retention.

“We will not change the world. We will not change this very divided society,” Dr. Mirnics allowed. “But what we can do at MMI is provide opportunities. We can grow. We can make ourselves more representative of the community that we serve and make a concerted, long-term effort to change. That change will be long and incremental, but the journey of 10,000 miles starts with a single step.”

“As women of color, we feel a need to create a more inclusive environment where everyone’s voice can be heard,” Sharif said. “We want as many folks as are interested to be a part of this council, whether they find an interest in serving on a subcommittee or just taking part in the quarterly council meetings, which provide a forum for difficult conversations. We welcome the entire MMI community to take part.”

“We don’t want to become stagnant. We don’t want to just sit around and talk about issues,” Hankins-Berry said. “We want to take action, no matter how modest the step. It will promote a change for the better.”



Amy Beyersdorf, MPT



Omar Rahman, MD

Virtually Unstoppable

The pandemic forced changes in how MMI delivered care. One result: An expanded reach. Another: Stuffed animals.

Amy Beyersdorf, MPT, a physical therapist of more than two decades experience, was balancing a stuffed orange fish on her head.

Sure, it's not the textbook way to provide physical therapy.

But in March of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) clinicians to search for ways to provide effective therapies online, providers across the institute showed their creativity and commitment by establishing effective – and often entertaining – virtual methods to care for MMI's children and families.

"When the pandemic hit, we already had been thinking for a long time about how to expand our services with telehealth and how to provide the best remote care for all Nebraskans," said Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD, director of MMI. "We also had a great number of satellite clinics for behavioral health and clinical genetics telehealth provision across the state. So we had the infrastructure and experience to build on, and that really helped us a lot."

The next move was to scale things up rapidly.

"In the first two weeks in March, we were providing over 95% of the clinical services at MMI face-to-face," said Wayne Stuberg, PhD, associate director of MMI. "By the first two weeks in April, that had flipped – we were providing 95% of our services virtually through telemedicine."

Dr. Stuberg noted that Medicaid and other payers had loosened restrictions on reimbursement for telehealth during the pandemic. "They recognized the need, and that decision came down quickly."

"MMI knows that our population is a particularly vulnerable group," said Cindy Ellis, MD, director of the MMI Department of Developmental Medicine. "We were able to quickly shift, and the patients worked well with us and were very receptive."

Beyersdorf and other members of MMI's physical therapy department used dolls and stuffed animals to demonstrate exercises and help young clients and their parents see the movements they needed to make – and as colorful props to keep children interested during virtual therapy sessions.

"I had used stuffed animals for therapy in treatment probably less than 15 times in 25 years, usually to get a child's attention," Beyersdorf said. "I liked my stuffed orange fish, Nemo, because he was colorful and caught the kids' attention the most. I had Nemo on my head because I wanted the kiddo I was working with to work on balancing. I asked him to balance his own Nemo as he walked or lifted a leg."

Keeping children's attention was just one of many challenges MMI faced as it pivoted to more virtual services during a pandemic – many of which were not reimbursable previously. Luckily, because of robust telehealth capacity in the institute's genetics and psychology departments, MMI administrators were familiar with technological needs and had the electronic security in place to meet HIPAA requirements – hurdles that some organizations across the country never overcame.

"At the directors' level, there were a lot of logistical questions that were coming up, and we offered some systems that we had put in place prior to the pandemic," said Omar Rahman, MD, director of the MMI Department of Genetics. "We shared our experience and assurance that this could be done – because we've been doing it for pretty complex medical evaluations – but each department figured out how to do it for themselves."

The genetics department, for example, had portable telehealth carts on hand – designed for use in rural locations – that were placed in areas such as the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center and the Olson Center for Women's Health, allowing prenatal and cancer-related genetic counseling to continue almost seamlessly.

"It surprised me how ill-equipped a lot of organizations were," said Keith Allen, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Psychology. "I was talking to a colleague who told me their organization never did move to telehealth. They just shut down their operations. They did not have the equipment or expertise – or apparently the motivation. They just stopped providing mental health care."

At MMI, the reverse was true. The psychology department's established statewide telehealth practices, pioneered by Joseph Evans, PhD, more than two decades ago, became a national model, with psychologists from Florida, California and Texas contacting MMI for advice. In addition, the rest of the institute quickly discovered creative ways to provide virtual care and therapy.

The recreational therapy department created and uploaded a playful series of videos – including a rousing version of the popular Camp Munroe "Moose Song" – and held virtual camps and clubs so that bored kiddos would have something to do. Some speech therapists used green-screen effects to create floating fish and other eye-catching objects to keep children engaged in therapy.

Project SEARCH, a job-training program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, was able to continue didactic coursework for transition with Omaha Public School students, which was important because the teenagers were approaching graduation and needed skills to find meaningful work and live independently.

"Surprisingly, there is so much that can be done online," said Sandy Willett, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy. "We switched to almost an entirely coaching-based system, a model our early intervention providers were already using, to train the family on the exercises and movements. We would demonstrate on the doll or stuffed animal, and then the family would do the maneuver."



When the pandemic hit, we already had been thinking for a long time about how to expand our services with telehealth and how to provide the best remote care for all Nebraskans.

– Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD

Of course, there were challenges.

With online services, the ability to feel things such as tension in movement is lost, Dr. Willett said.

“You’d have to ask the family, ‘what do you feel when you move this child’s arm?’ For a lot of things, we rely on our sense of touch, so we had to create a verbal model for that and decide how to assess (the families’) understanding.”

In the speech department, evaluations for alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices were frustrating.



By providing services to people who are in their homes, therapists are better able to see and understand specific, real-world needs and challenges.

– Wayne Stuberg, PhD

“Choosing a device is based on ease of access, complexity of the system, language support, durability and communication effectiveness, as well as preference,” said Amy Nordness, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology and MMI director for clinical affairs. “We couldn’t send four computer devices into a home to decide what the child needs.”

To accommodate clients, the department occasionally had a vendor drop off a device at the patient’s home for a session, had families download trial versions of the software on an iPad they had at home, spread evaluations out over multiple sessions and did use in-person visits at MMI when nothing else worked.

However, there were unexpected advantages, as well.

“By providing services to people who are in their homes, therapists are better able to see and understand specific, real-world needs and challenges,” Dr. Stuberg said. “They can actually show us what the problem is.”

Dr. Nordness called the willingness of insurance companies to support AAC training sessions over the computer “a huge win,” adding that ability to receive services in their home increased client compliance. If insurance companies continue to support distance therapy post-pandemic, it may become a preferred model, she said.

“Additionally, we’ll be able to reach parts of Nebraska that weren’t able to get some of these services before,” Dr. Nordness said. “We had set a goal before the pandemic to expand our reach across Nebraska by providing therapy services to at least one new county. When we set that goal, we had 14 counties that we served. We’re at 26 now.”

Dr. Stuberg cautioned, however, that after the pandemic, payers might restrict telehealth services once again.

“A lot may depend on the nature of the service provided,” he said. “But being one of the units of UNMC, our mission is to serve the 500-mile campus. And this has been shown to be effective – this is a mechanism that needs to continue.”

Because of its telehealth efforts, coupled with a slowly growing number of in-patient services, by November, MMI was providing about 85% of the services it had pre-pandemic.

“I think that this pandemic fundamentally transformed how we will provide services,” Dr. Mirnics said. “We’re already talking to Children’s Hospital & Medical Center to potentially establish a joint telehealth portal of some of our services. The big winners, hopefully, will be the rural communities and people with transportation barriers who, pre-COVID, did not have access to highly specialized services. But I can see many different visions as we move forward.”

“In The Republic, Plato said that ‘our need will be the real creator,’ Dr. Mirnics said. “It was gratifying to see, in a time of true need, the genuine creativity – as well as the passionate commitment – of our MMI family.”



A temperature check as people entered the building was just one of the safety precautions put in place at MMI.

Trust in trying times

Even as MMI pivoted to providing the majority of its services virtually, it was clear from the beginning of the pandemic that some in-person services needed to continue.

In certain areas, such as severe behavior and pediatric feeding, providers knew that halting in-person treatment could set progress back and in some cases be dangerous for MMI families.

“Our families consider us essential,” said MMI Director Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD. “There was never a question that these essential services would be provided – the focus was on how to offer these critical services safely.”

The institute’s COVID-19 safety measures included creating a single entrance for clients with a screening process and temperature check; de-densification of the institute; redesigning patient flow through the building; maintaining a rigid cleaning protocol; and maintaining strong personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines.

The institute based its protocols throughout the pandemic based on the current scientific data, information that was constantly evolving. MMI staff was diligent about following safety protocols outside the institute, as well.

“Our team did stellar work,” said Sandra Willett, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy. “People weren’t traveling, they weren’t going out – a lot of people were even having groceries delivered so they wouldn’t have to be out and about.”

“Our staff is the best staff anyone could ask for,” agreed Nicole Giron, MPH, director of the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy – which successfully held an in-person Camp Munroe during the summer in response to pleas from MMI parents and families. Dr. Mirnics called the effort “a brilliant example” of the success of MMI’s safety protocols.

“I had several parents tell me they felt safe sending their children into our care – and that is an incredibly powerful acknowledgment of the work we do,” Giron said. “We are grateful for the trusted relationship we have with our families, and so happy we were able to serve them during these trying times.”

Dedication to Collaboration

MMI's long-term commitment to collaboration paid off in many ways in 2020.

When Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD, arrived in Omaha in 2016 to become the director of the Munroe-Meyer Institute, one of his first moves was to gather community leaders and other stakeholders and describe his vision for MMI.

Collaboration was a key part of that vision. Dr. Mirnics told the group he wanted to listen and learn from them and expand MMI's presence in a responsive and collaborative fashion.

"This community is amazing," he told them. "We can build something together that is unprecedented."

During Dr. Mirnics tenure, MMI has built upon what he calls the "four pillars" of collaborative efforts – clinical services, community engagement, education and research.

"If you appreciate the goals and interests of the other enterprises, and they do the same to you, it is really a meaningful collaboration," Dr. Mirnics said. "Then around it, you start to gather a halo of patients, families, philanthropists, providers and other institutions – from one collaboration, it spreads out and creates more."

Clinical Services

MMI collaborates with many clinical partners, from larger entities such as Nebraska Medicine and Children's Hospital & Medical Center to small, rural practices where MMI therapists provide behavioral health services.

Successful collaborations, as Dr. Mirnics said, create more opportunities. Two years ago, MMI began working with Children's Respite Care Center (CRCC) to provide physical therapy services on site to the medically fragile children in the CRCC respite care program. The CRCC collaboration with the MMI Department of Physical Therapy has been so successful that in 2020, CRCC began working with the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology, as well.

"This is an exciting opportunity for us," said Amy Nordness, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology and MMI director for clinical affairs. "We're bringing strong speech and swallowing therapies to the children that CRCC serves, and it's gratifying to be able to expand our clinical reach to help in this new area. MMI's physical therapists have worked so well with CRCC that it opened the door for us to collaborate. We are excited to provide evidence-based services at a young age and support their classroom teachers to continue to reinforce speech, language, and swallowing throughout their entire day."

Other clinical collaborations will take place at the new MMI building, where MMI will work with both the UNMC College of Dentistry and the Truhlsen Eye Institute (TEI) to provide dental and vision clinics to individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs of all ages.

As with all of MMI's clinical collaborations, this one addresses an area of need for the people MMI serves.

"Oral health care is important for everyone, regardless of ability," said Jill Wallen, BDS, assistant dean of extramural activities and outreach and chair of the UNMC Department of Growth and Development at the College of Dentistry. "But it's particularly challenging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to find a provider who understands their unique needs and is willing to be flexible and work together toward a common goal."

The UNMC College of Dentistry has a strong history of collaboration with MMI – the college's postgraduate residency in pediatric dentistry was located in the MMI building when Dr. Wallen arrived at UNMC in 2011.

"I see this as closing the loop, coming back full circle and strengthening that really great relationship we have with MMI," she said. "The end result will be a care experience unlike any other."

"The wonderful thing about working with MMI is that they are so committed to taking care of these families," said Richard Legge, MD, assistant professor in the UNMC Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, who was part of the TEI team that helped design the vision clinic. "Whenever you're working with people who are focused on improving health care for the children, it's always good."

"A lot of times, children with intellectual and developmental disabilities either don't get vision care or they get very nominal vision care," Dr. Legge said. "We have ophthalmologists and optometrists who have a passion for taking care of these families."

Community Engagement

MMI has longstanding relationships with many community partners, such as WhyArts, the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, Autism Action Partnership (AAP) and others.

"There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done in providing the services that the population we care for deserves," said Melonie Welsh, MS, director of the MMI Department of Community Engagement. "To have the biggest impact, we must collaborate with other organizations to grow and build on each other's strengths – to deliver better services and move the needle for clients."

At times in 2020, these relationships helped MMI react to the COVID-19 pandemic – as when the AAP enlisted MMI's parent resource coordinators to help distribute activity kits containing COVID-19 information and fun, therapeutic activities for families and children with autism throughout the state.

Justin Dougherty, executive director of the AAP, said the project was effortless.

"We've had a longstanding partnership with MMI, and we have great respect for MMI and what they do," Dougherty said. "One of our founding board members, when we began as the Sunshine Foundation in the early 2000s and until his passing, was (former MMI director) Dr. Bruce Buehler."

Collaborations have proved invaluable as MMI prepares to open the Autism Care for Toddlers in Omaha North (ACTION) Clinic in 2021.

One of its partner organizations is Avenue Scholars, a high school-to-work program whose CEO, Ken Bird, EdD, has a strong relationship with Dr. Mirnics. Jamar Dorsey, EdD, community engagement director for Avenue Scholars, said he was pleased with the two-part collaboration, which includes not only workforce development, but also wellness education for Avenue Scholars employees, so they could safely continue to work with teens and young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"MMI has been easy to work with," Dr. Dorsey said. "They're organized, and they have a vision of what they want the ACTION Clinic to be. They've been very responsive to the community – there is an effort to engage the community on how that clinic can best serve not just the children ages 0-5 who will receive services, but as a workforce development piece as well."

Education

MMI's educational collaborations include working with the UNMC College of Allied Health Professions on the master's of genetic counseling program, which accepted its first cohort of eight students in 2019. The collaboration – which was made possible by an MMI stakeholder who recognized the value of genetic counseling and invested in creating it – allowed MMI to provide the state's first and only accredited genetics program. In 2020, the number of applicants for the program quadrupled from the inaugural year.

"All of the administrative and academic support for the two-year program is provided by the college, while MMI and its clinical partners provide all faculty who teach in the program, both in the classroom and in their clinical rotations," said Omar Rahman, MD, director of the MMI Department of Genetics.

The students' first year is primarily classroom-based and taught by MMI genetic counselors and physicians. The second year is primarily clinical rotation.





The MMI Department of Speech Therapy's strong background in augmentative and alternative communication technology led to a collaboration with the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Rehabilitation and Engineering Research Collaboration.

"They come to all the genetics clinics at MMI and at our partners, such as the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center and Children's Hospital & Medical Center, to do all of their clinical rotations," Dr. Rahman said.

When she arrived in 2018, program director Holly Zimmerman said she was pleased to have MMI's expertise to get the new endeavor up and running, citing the institute's "longstanding excellence" as a key building block of the program.

Education collaborations go beyond the academic, as well. During 2020, MMI teamed with the Autism Society of Nebraska (ASN) on a video collaboration to educate individuals with autism and their families and caregivers on COVID-19 safety.

"Collaboration is vital," said Megan Misegadis, who oversaw the project for ASN. "It makes picking up the phone or sending an email when something like this hits much easier. Because of those relationships, we were able to come together and move everything online for our constituents."

Research

Collaboration has been a hallmark of MMI's research efforts, as well.

In 2020, MMI joined the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Rehabilitation and Engineering Research Collaboration, the primary source of evidence-based research in patient care with AAC across the nation.

"This is where the major research is coming from, and we're excited for MMI to be a part of that," said Amy Nordness, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology and MMI director for clinical affairs. "We'll have a small role, but it's going to grow over the next five years."

MMI is a touchpoint for information on AAC, Dr. Nordness said, so the collaboration will allow the institute to expand its research portfolio while providing partners with decades of established clinical expertise.

Physical therapy has a number of research collaborations, including seven members of the team who are part of the national START-Play Consortium, an early intervention that targets sitting, reaching and motor-based problem-solving to promote development and readiness to learn in infants with motor delays or challenges.

"To be a part of that allows us to run bigger, multi-site clinical trials," said Sandra Willett, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Physical Therapy. "It allows us to recruit larger numbers of children and look more specifically at efficacy of intervention protocols, which are hard to do when you're a single site – you need large numbers to do that."

Such collaborations allow MMI researchers to disseminate results more quickly and go from basic science to bedside more quickly, Dr. Willett said.

With the arrival of an inaugural MMI Director of Research and dedicated research space in the new MMI building, research collaborations will only grow.

Looking ahead

As MMI moves to its new home in 2021, collaborations will make the institute even more robust. Three community rooms will allow MMI's community partners, such as Special Olympics Nebraska or the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, to schedule time in the building – with no charge – to be available for MMI families.

"Not only can they help families, but they can educate our students and providers about their services, as well as learn more about what we do," Welsh said. "Morning and afternoon hours, five days a week – it provides a lot of opportunities to bring the disability community together. That's exciting."

The new building will offer collaboration opportunities that will impact those MMI serves in other ways, as well, adding to MMI's attractiveness as a collaborative partner by increasing the institute's ability to recruit and retain the world's best clinicians and researchers and positioning MMI as a global player in IDD treatment, research and advocacy.

Together, we are stronger – it is MMI's basic philosophy.

"Collaboration is not only additive; it exponentially increases the impact," Dr. Mirnics said. "Anyone who thinks they can do everything alone is wrong. We are not able to do anything alone – we don't live in a vacuum."

Impacting Policy

One of MMI's missions is to advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex health needs.

In this role, and as Nebraska's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), MMI works closely with the state of Nebraska and other entities, such as Disability Rights Nebraska, to protect the rights of its constituents as part of the state's Developmental Disabilities Network. The group meets monthly to explore state laws and their impact on the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) community.

"We are part of a collaborative network," Wayne Stuber, PhD, who attended the meetings when he was director of the UCEDD. "Our role is to inform and help to build systems of support on a state level."

In 2020, Disability Rights Nebraska released a position paper making sure that the rights of people with disabilities were protected in the provision of services for COVID-19. MMI provided input into the position paper.

"We are in constant conversation with these entities, specifically as they raise questions about state issues and policies that impact individuals with IDD," Dr. Stuber said. "We do not lobby. We provide data and information to help in formatting policy."

'DREAM' COMES TRUE

After years of planning and a tough 2020, the new, transformational Munroe-Meyer Institute building is a reality.



The people of the Munroe-Meyer Institute have imagined it many times, for many years – creating a space that does not exist anywhere else.

They have dared to dream this dream for the individuals and families they serve. They have talked to these families, listened to what they needed, what they wanted.

Now, here it is.

As MMI opens its new home at 6902 Pine St., near the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Scott campus, "this is a dream literally come true," said MMI Director Karoly Mirnics, MD, PhD.

"With this new building, MMI is positioned as never before to support the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) community as it strives for awareness, acceptance and opportunity," Dr. Mirnics said. "This building will fuel a palpable change in the IDD community, and in the wider community, as well, as we work together toward those goals."

That is what MMI does, at its best. It travels alongside, an active partner with the families it serves, providing resources across the lifespan through skilled providers, cutting-edge therapies and a passion for its mission. It empowers families to create and reach goals.

MMI's mission is to be world leaders in transforming the lives of all individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs. Not, Dr. Mirnics notes, to simply "improve" or "help."

To transform. This new building allows MMI to transform the way it serves families.

"We created a unique building, the most advanced facility in the nation for those families impacted by IDD," Dr. Mirnics said. "We wanted to create a new standard in IDD care for families, and we turned to these families – experts in their own right – to discover what they wanted that facility to be."

UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, MD, called the new building a doorway into the institute's second century.

"Since its beginnings, Munroe-Meyer Institute has worked to improve the lives of the people and families it serves," Dr. Gold said. "This new home gives it a much larger space and increased versatility and flexibility, but the core of the MMI mission – helping those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to overcome challenges, to live fuller, richer lives – remains the same. We are forever grateful to all of the private philanthropists from our community who have invested in this world-class facility and the MMI mission."

"All of UNMC is excited to see how our colleagues at MMI will continue to grow in their new home to provide even more effective clinical care, education and research, all in the name of enhancing the lives of the people and families they serve."

Alison Topp, facilities planner with the UNMC Department of Facilities Management and Planning, and her team spent countless hours over several years working with MMI leaders, providers and community stakeholders to fine-tune this new home. Through the challenges of 2020, they pressed to keep everything on schedule.

A new home, full of possibilities, built to advance the goals of MMI's families.

"We wanted to build a premier facility, but there was no other entity with MMI's comprehensive collection of programs and services to model it after," said Melonie Welsh, MS, director of the MMI Department of Community Engagement. "Still, we were committed to our mission, and we listened to our community – providers, collaborators and especially the families we serve. They played a critical role in deciding what this building would be."

The building will lead to better outcomes and experiences for families that receive services at MMI, said Ted Friedland, a member of the Community Advisory Committee and the father of a child who receives services at MMI.

"From the onset, they have been very open to our input," Friedland said. "We are extremely excited about this new building."

"We have been really pleased with the services we have received over the years from MMI, and I feel the new building is only going to enhance our experience," he said. "I realize it's only brick and mortar – but it will be brighter and more inviting, with many new amenities, and that is going to be really beneficial not only to our son, but also to all of the children who receive services at MMI."

"The accessibility is going to be monumental," Friedland said. "It will be so much more convenient from an access perspective, even just in terms of parking. Also, the Scott campus location is going to give the institute a lot more visibility in the wider community."



The lobby at the building's main entrance

The physical aspects of the building, which is more than double the size of MMI's former home, are apparent – more room for growth of existing programs and the development of new ones, ample parking, entrances and a floor plan designed to accommodate the needs of the individuals MMI serves. The scale of the two magnificent, moving-art sculptures placed at its front serves to create both a destination and a sense that you have arrived. MMI finally has a "front door."

As one enters, a stylized "tree" to the left reaches to the ceiling, with a green canopy of "leaves" spreading overhead and "birds" flying above. The message is clear: We are here to help you soar.

To the right of the welcome desk, there is a gift shop and a coffee shop; to the left, the family resource center, with its large indoor playground. The area is bright and welcoming – throughout the building designers have paid close attention to colors, textures and lights, creating a sensory-friendly environment.

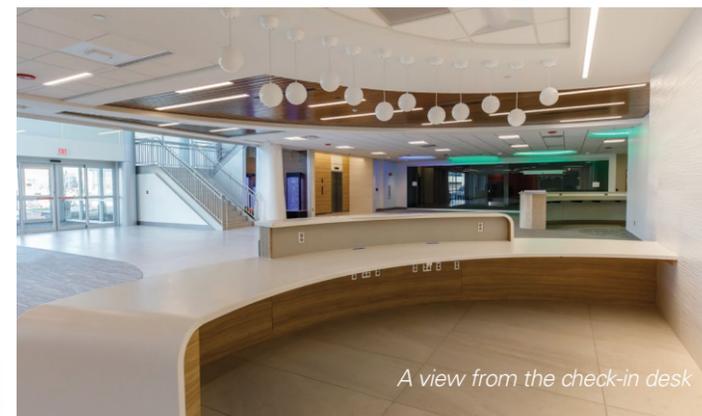
Topp said that she loved working with the MMI staff as they examined how they had been operating with the old building and imagined all that could be possible with the new – how it could change the experiences, and the lives, of MMI families. She challenged designers and contractors to think outside the box, using careful design choices to enhance the MMI experience for families served.

Additionally, designers kept offices and non-clinical spaces top-of-mind to create a more inclusive experience for staff, students and visitors.

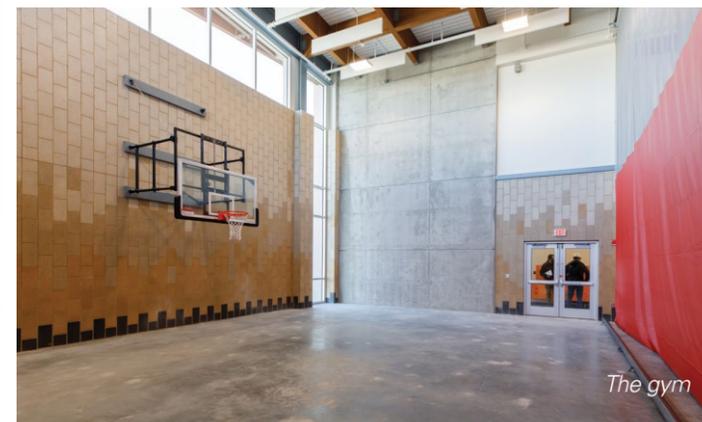
"An environment," Welsh said, "where everybody feels they belong and can be successful!"



The outdoor playground



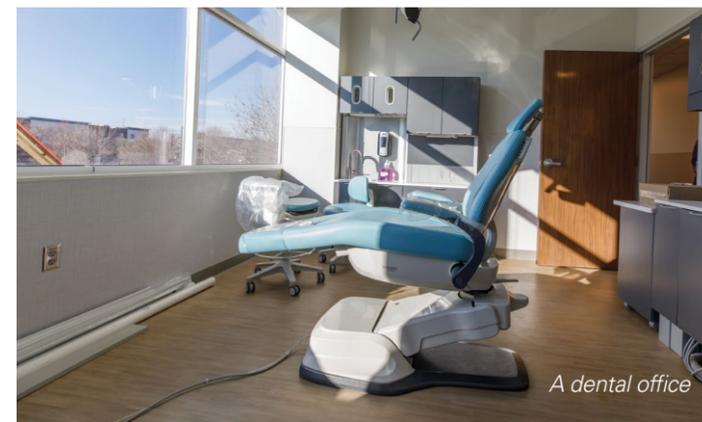
A view from the check-in desk



The gym



The pool area



A dental office

The new features enabling this will include, but are not limited to:

- An environment that both appeals to kids, yet does not feel only child-oriented to clients across the lifespan. This environment accommodates an operational shift to bring the families to one space and have each provider come to them, also enhancing multidisciplinary collaborations and elevating coordinated treatment plans.
- Dental, optical and healthy nutrition and wellness clinics to help patients get needed services from specialists who understand their unique needs, including an optical shop, a panoramic X-ray machine and three negative-pressure dental rooms to ensure airborne isolation during dental procedures.
- An integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (iCASD) that is nearly double its current capacity, moving from three to six early intervention classrooms and doubling the number of severe behavior treatment rooms, as well.
- Adventuresome, accessible play spaces inside and out, all built for making friends while building skills and strengths.
- An indoor splash pad, including several memorial fixtures that MMI kiddos will recognize from the outdoor splash pad at the old building.
- A dedicated maker space that includes a 3D printer, precision cutting and drilling devices, soldering equipment and other tools – enough to create nearly any assistive device, such as orthotics, support devices or other items used to assist in the performance of daily activities, that a determined therapist can imagine.
- The family resource area, which offers seating, Wi-Fi and easily supervised access to the indoor playground for visiting families.
- A kiln for recreational therapy art programs, to create pottery and glass art – some of which will be sold in the gift shop.
- A soundproof audiology booth, staffed by trained audiologists, to allow for on-site hearing checks.
- A pool area that features two pools, allowing for both specialized therapy and fun, with a water slide and even a water volleyball net adding to the excitement.
- A gym and other exercise opportunities to help encourage physical activity, leading to longer, fuller lives.
- A vegetable garden, for classes or relaxation and skill development.
- Clinic areas, including the iCASD, which provide families with carefully considered, sensory-friendly environments and spaces for cooperative, multidisciplinary, family-centric teams to gather.
- Clinical rooms with adjustable colored lighting to enhance a visitor's sense of well-being.
- Observation areas, including a walkway that overlooks both the pool area and the gymnasium, rooms equipped with cameras and additional camera technology even available on smartphones, so parents and caregivers can extend needed independence to their loved one, while still keeping a watchful eye.
- A larger sensory-motor laboratory, to provide cutting-edge services and research.
- A virtual reality lab that will include an omnidirectional treadmill, which lets a person move in any direction, allowing MMI engineers to transport VR users into battles against aliens. In collaboration with physical and occupational therapist, they already developed VR/AR software of , a realistic hair salon and airplane to help prepare children for the real-life experience - or any other therapeutic scenario MMI innovators can dream up.
- An inviting outdoor plaza, featuring the sculptures, benches and picnic tables, that serves as an open and welcoming space for those arriving for a visit.
- Two time capsules, flanking the walkway, so that in the future, members of the MMI community can review artifacts from the year 2020.
- A meditation room to improve relaxation and mental wellness.
- Sheltered "escape coves," some large enough to accommodate wheelchairs, tucked into the side of hallways, offering a haven for when it is all too much and a client, or a parent or a family, needs a moment to gather themselves.
- An "apartment" space, 16x22 feet in size and including a kitchen area, living space, bedroom and accessible bathroom, which allows people to work on independent living skills with physical, occupational and speech therapists, among others.
- Multiple conference rooms designed to host inclusive functions, including a large conference that can seat nearly 100 people.



It's about people. The building exists to serve people, and it is designed to provide both a catalyst and an opportunity for skilled and passionate providers to make a positive impact in the lives of those they serve.

– Melonie Welsh, MS

Community rooms for use by MMI's community partners, set just off the main entrance for visibility and accessibility, to provide MMI visitors with even more support and information about other community resources. Current plans call for the rooms to be available for partners' use five days a week, providing more access for clients and enhancing collaboration. "Our goal is that every person or caregiver that comes through our door will find what they need," Dr. Mirnics said. "This new building will allow us to provide them with the best care and best growth opportunities to meet their goals throughout their life."

It is all located just off the Keystone Trail, allowing for additional recreational or physical therapy possibilities, and right next to the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Peter Kiewit Institute, allowing MMI faculty to collaborate with engineering students and faculty on new technologies that could lead to new treatments.

Still, "it's about people," Welsh said. "The building exists to serve people, and it is designed to provide both a catalyst and an opportunity for skilled and passionate providers to make a positive impact in the lives of those they serve."

"We see the whole human being," Dr. Mirnics said. "And we want MMI to help every person reach their full potential. Our new home gives us many tools and opportunities to do that."

It was designed for that.

Still, the most transformational aspect of the building is not simply in its bricks and mortar.

The design of the new iCASD and outpatient centers is the keystone of a more streamlined care philosophy at the core of all MMI services. Rather than visiting a series of clinic spaces, each dedicated to a single, siloed department, families will remain in a comfortable space for the duration of their visit, while providers – scheduled consecutively or interdisciplinarily to maximize the families' time during each visit – come to them.

The effort will make each visit to the institute as easy and efficient as possible. Further enhancing the care experience for clients, this integrative model allows MMI clinicians to access institute experts from many areas, potentially exploring how to rework interventions for greater impact. Patient care coordinators will assist families during their treatment visits, serving as advisers and integrators of the various services.

The building also allows for more versatility in programming. Talk to Nicole Giron, MPH, director of the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy, and she can barely contain her glee as she rattles off the new programs her department is planning.

Yoga classes. Water aerobics. Sports programs. An improv class. A running club. So many more.



The indoor splash pad



The lobby area

"At its core, this building is about being able to expand opportunities and access to quality services for all of our families and participants," she said. "New, exciting programs and services that we couldn't provide before. Previously, we did not have adequate space to do a lot of these things."

Amy Nordness, PhD, director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology and MMI director for clinical affairs, for example, sees several possibilities in the building's "apartment" space. For Dr. Nordness, the apartment is especially attractive as a testing ground for assistive technology.

"That area will allow us to test out assistive technology equipment that we're building to create more accessible homes," Dr. Nordness said. "People will be able to turn on lights, unlock doors, turn on music and access different things in the apartment with their speech device or their voice."

The simulated home environment, including a residential-style router, will allow the department to test assistive technology from personal devices – something that was much more difficult in a university setting.

"We want to see if this will really work for the patients in an actual apartment environment," Dr. Nordness said. "With this space, we'll be able to simulate what a patient can actually do in their home."

Not all of the assistive technology will be electronic.

"With a centralized space to store high-tech equipment, we'll be able to explore ways to make assistive devices quickly," said Sandra Willett, PhD, director of the

MMI Department of Physical Therapy. "We'll also have a fabrication space so we can do some quick types of assistive technology."

The new audiology suite, besides being staffed with audiologists and providing hearing checks, will allow speech therapists to provide "voice banking," recording messages before a planned procedure or in cases of degenerative diseases, which could not be done effectively in the old building.

The Caring for Champions Program, which incorporates the vision, dental and healthy nutrition and wellness clinics, enables MMI to help their clients address health issues in areas that have traditionally challenged individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dentists, ophthalmologists, healthy nutrition and wellness providers and other clinic staff are experienced in working with individuals with IDD and their families.

Advisers from the Truhlsen Eye Institute worked with MMI to design a vision clinic that not only is larger than normal, in order to provide space for caregivers to participate in the exam, but that features exam chairs that slide back to make room for wheelchairs. The College of Dentistry hosted a design-thinking workshop with campus leaders and stakeholders to envision how to make dental care for individuals with IDD the best in the nation. The result is a program that offers a whole-health experience unlike anything MMI visitors will have experienced before.

In the new virtual reality lab, which includes a multipurpose space for innovation, new virtual reality efforts will include portable virtual reality systems with configurable environments.



"We'll be able to add a physical feel to the simulation," said James Gehringer, PhD, director of the lab. "Visitors using the headset will be able to reach out to touch a countertop, and we'll have a 'countertop' there for them to touch. We can also create simulated street curbs or rocky paths – there are a lot of new possibilities."

And these programs are only a beginning. As the institute staff begins to adapt to the building's possibilities, new and creative programs and services will spring up across all departments. Even departments that have not yet created new services are aware of the building's potential.

"We will continually brainstorm about what the new services we might provide would look like in the new building," said Omar Rahman, MD, director of the MMI Department of Genetics. "We will be exploring new, multidisciplinary clinics that can take place. There is great collaborative space and our proximity to Children's Hospital & Medical Center will allow for new collaborations. We see a lot of opportunity, and we're starting to gather our ideas."

But amid the state-of-the-art equipment, the larger space, the painstakingly reviewed color scheme and building layout, one thing remains the same.

MMI's passionate commitment to its mission and the families it serves.

"Although it's wonderful, the building is, in the end, only a building," Dr. Mirnics said. "What is most important is what the building will allow us to provide – the best, most comprehensive, most integrated family-centric care for IDD in the world. And we will be doing that in MMI's new home for decades to come."

A Note of Thanks

As the building opens, Dr. Mirnics offered thanks to the many supporters who made this dream come true.

"This building has been the dream of many wonderful people," he said. "We are grateful to all of them."

"The families and individuals we serve, who told us what they needed and helped us make this happen – the families who trust us to care for their loved ones."

"The MMI providers, so amazingly dedicated and skilled, who dreamed big with us."

"The advisory and board members, who provided many diverse perspectives and innovative ideas."

"The leadership of the university, and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, who helped make this new home possible, and the University of Nebraska Foundation, who partnered with us on this monumental endeavor."

"The leadership of the city and state, who shared the dream."

"The design and construction teams, who gave such wonderful form to it."

"The visionary leaders, who built this amazing enterprise over the past 100 years."

"And, last but not least, the amazing philanthropic community for the unprecedented support we received. Without them, none of this would have been possible."

Benefactors

The new building, at 6902 Pine St. in Omaha, is set to open in the first quarter of 2021. The acquisition and redevelopment of the building will effectively double the institute's current size to more than 220,000 square feet, in response to the exponential growth in the population served. The University of Nebraska Foundation continues to seek contributions to support the programmatic costs associated with the institute.

Major donors included:

Lead benefactors

- William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation
- Weitz Family Foundation
- Suzanne & Walter Scott Foundation
- Hattie B. Munroe Foundation

Principal benefactors

- Clarkson Regional Health Services
- Holland Foundation
- Robert B. Daugherty Foundation
- The Lozier Foundation





2020 Walk & Roll for Disabilities

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Hattie B. Munroe Foundation

The Hattie B. Munroe Foundation donated 131 \$150 gift cards during the holidays that were delivered to MMI client families in need. The foundation also provided funding for a psychology internship, Camp Munroe and related children's programs, and two professorships – for the MMI director and the MMI director of research – totaling more than \$800,000.

Meyer Foundation for Disabilities

Meyer Foundation for Disabilities held the Walk & Roll for Disabilities on March 7, drawing approximately 450 people. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Owl Ride was not held in 2020. The foundation worked with the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy to create a yoga program that will be offered in 2021. Additionally, the foundation provided funding for the new MMI building's kitchen, which will be the home of MMI's popular Cooking Club, one of the many adult recreational programs sponsored by the foundation.

Munroe-Meyer Institute Board of Directors

The board works closely with MMI leadership to inform the public of the breadth and quality of MMI's programs. The board annually awards the Rhoda Davis Blatt and Hattie B. Munroe Foundation scholarships. The board oversees the distribution of holiday gift cards to selected MMI families in need, as well as reviews and approves the MMI Department of Recreational Therapy budget before it receives final approval by the Hattie B. Munroe Foundation board.

Munroe-Meyer Guild

The guild was unable to hold its 52nd Garden Walk in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 walk will be held on June 13. Grants still will be awarded to MMI staff who submit proposals for innovative projects and highly impactful training endeavors, due to a generous grant from the Bill and Ruth Scott Foundation. The guild commissioned Omaha artist Lisa Worrall to design artwork that depicts the children's activities at MMI. The artwork will be displayed near the recreational therapy entrance in the new building in 2021.



RiteCare Classic at Pacific Springs Golf Course

Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska

On June 27, RiteCare clinicians hosted DriveRite Thru for RiteCare at Lake Zorinsky, a virtual event that raised about \$2,500. On Sept. 30, Scottish Rite hosted the RiteCare Classic at Pacific Springs Golf Course, drawing 18 teams and raising \$19,100 for speech language therapy for Nebraska children. In place of the Friends of RiteCare dinner, an appeal letter was sent asking past guests to support RiteCare services. In total, Nebraska Scottish Rite Freemasons will donate about \$660,000 for speech therapy through the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute and an additional \$80,000 for speech services through the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2020.

Community Advisory Committee

In 2020, the MMI Community Advisory Committee continued to provide critical input on MMI initiatives such as the building project, programmatic planning and organization in preparation for MMI's transition to the new building. The committee serves as a valuable working partner in guiding the institute's activities by representing the voice of the community and its local participants. It has provided a critical sounding board in shaping both the current and future path of MMI.



Recognizing Excellence

Celebration of Excellence

The MMI Standouts recognized at the January 2020 Celebration of Excellence included:



Community Service Standout: Kim Bainbridge

Bainbridge is recognized as a go-to resource for MMI staff, families and agencies for insight on disability services, as well as for her instrumental partnerships with numerous organizations in the community. In 2019, Bainbridge presented to more than 400 parents, teachers, and students.



Spirit Standout: Annie Woodruff-Jamison, DPT

Woodruff-Jamison is recognized by colleagues for her relentless efforts to identify and support programs in the intellectual and developmental disability community. She is a frequent volunteer at MMI community engagement initiatives. Colleagues also appreciate her ability to mediate during difficult conversations.



Educator Standout: Kevin Luczynski, PhD

Since the inception of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) doctoral program, Luczynski has made significant commitments to teaching and advising its students. He has received national and international invitations for tutorials.



Researcher Standout: Nicole Rodriguez, PhD

Rodriguez's signature research methodology incorporates clients and their families in the determination of socially valid outcomes. This approach is highly respected among her colleagues.



Support Staff Standout: Sue Steiner

Steiner is recognized for building an online portal that markedly improved the delivery and management of the community program, called "Rooted in Relationships." She is a master of listening and incorporating stakeholders' feedback into projects. She is noted for her ability to provide a sense of comfort to colleagues in the face of challenges.



Staff Clinical Provider Standout: Amy Beyersdorf, MPT

Beyersdorf's clinical expertise in schools has receive effusive praise and subsequently resulted in renewal of critical school contracts. Her mentorship consistently serves as a catalyst for collaboration. Beyersdorf's efforts have yielded a tripling of outpatient referrals.



Faculty Clinical Provider Standout: Mindy Chadwell, PhD

Chadwell is recognized for her outstanding ability to build rapport and inspire new collaborative efforts in schools. Her clinical expertise in school-based mental health has been recognized by leadership across multiple districts. She has received multimillion-dollar funding from the Department of Education.

2020 Gold U Awardees



Jacqueline Hankins-Berry

Hankins-Berry is the consummate team player, willing to collaborate and execute as a member of a team while providing leadership and mentoring to others and soliciting and valuing their opinions. She provides both personal and professional support throughout the MMI community.



Amy Beyersdorf, MPT

Beyersdorf has been a leader and innovator since arriving at MMI. As the leader of MMI's outpatient services, Beyersdorf and her team work during the pandemic to execute telehealth, navigate a changing landscape of reimbursement and compliance, and above all, offer quality care.

2020 Silver U Awardees

Nicole Hackendahl, MMI Department of Community Service: Hackendahl shows confidence and creativity in optimizing the delivery of messages about people, accomplishments and initiatives to the community.

Christina Edelbrock, MA, MMI Department of Occupational Therapy: Edelbrock was critical in guiding the department during the pandemic by transitioning services with Omaha Public School students to virtual and distance learning.

Caitlin Fulton, MS, MMI integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders: In addition to volunteering for nearly every MMI event, Fulton functions in many roles, including clinical supervisor, scheduler, therapist and peer mentor. She consistently explores new collaborations and service initiatives.

Allison Grennan, PhD, MMI Department of Psychology: Grennan ran the department's internship program, shepherding nearly 20 students, as well as becoming assistant director for training at the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska.

Jessica McMordie, MS, MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology: McMordie was the inaugural lead inpatient speech-language pathologist and is an outstanding clinician, teacher and co-worker.

Maggie Neujahr, MMI Department of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics: Neujahr is committed to ensuring equitable access to health care and has proven a valuable resource to MMI's at-risk families, often helping to identify and access important resources, such as housing and utilities.

Hannah Stanzel, MMI integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders: Stanzel, a frequent volunteer at MMI events, also is committed to implement innovative ways to monitor and modify plans for client spaces, client and staff scheduling, billing and budgets.

2019 MMI Standouts

MMI Standout awardees are honored for going above and beyond in service of the Munroe-Meyer Institute or its clients.

Hanna Beck; Hannah Bergwell; Chad Bertagni; Shaela Bruce; Lynne Capoun, MS; Katy Cervantes; Tanner Clark; Yuka Collison; Jessi Cox; Luana Taquette Dalvi; Emily Drew, MPT; Aimee Eckstein; Kellie Ellerbush; Catrina Filkin; Sam

Fitch; Barb Glover; Denae Golden; Ali Group, Nikki Hackendahl, Rhonda Haitz, Jacqueline Hankins-Berry (twice), Rachel Harris, Beth Hughes, Susan Keen; Storm Keffer; Christi King; Candi Koenig; Kaelynn Loseke; Samantha Montemarano, MOT;

Maggie Neujahr; Tracy Ohpriel; Amber Paden; Renee Payton; Claire Philson (twice); Diane Pickering; Tinisha Poitier; April Robinson; Sarah Simmons; Hannah Stanzel; Sara Stodola; Renea Troutd; Enoch Ulmer; Jessie Weber; Michele Wiggins; and Becky Zessin, MS.

MMI by the Numbers

14 Departments

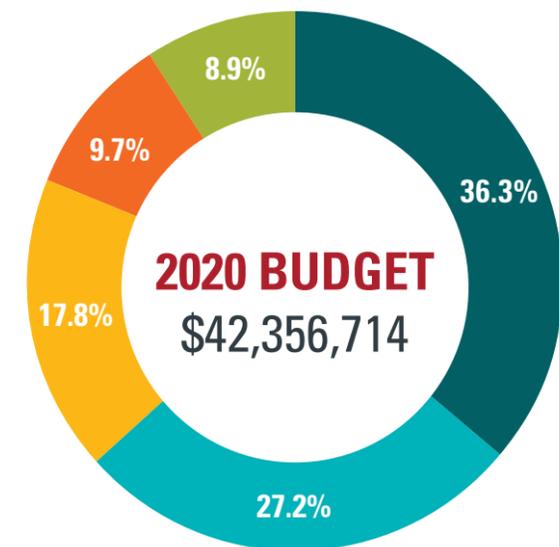
5 supporting philanthropic boards

One of 67 federally designated University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD).

One of 52 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) programs.



Approximately **550** Employees

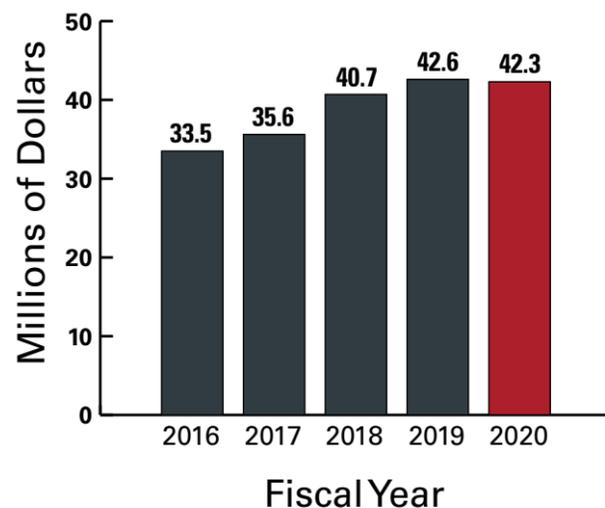


Revenue Sources

- Clinical service reimbursement
- State/local/school grants & contracts
- Federal grants & contracts
- State appropriation
- Philanthropic/other funds

Annually, more than **\$42 million** budget, with more than **\$19 million** in federal, state and local grants and contracts and **\$3.7 million** in philanthropy.

MMI Budget 2016 – 2020



CLINICAL SERVICES

More than

80,000 Yearly Services



serving clients across the lifespan with 75% taking place in the community.



MMI has more than **40 provider locations** with 30 outside of Omaha with more than 50 types of services provided.

24 Recreational Therapy programs and clubs

Serving approximately **450 families** annually.

More than **26,000 hours** of service provided to families.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



More than **75** community training activities provided to **4,633 participants**.



Approximately

2,186 Hours

of technical assistance.

LABORATORY TESTS

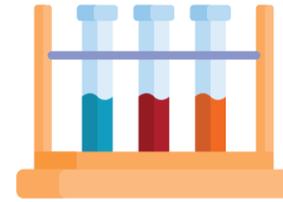


Approximately

65,389 Genetic Tests

Performed in 2020 on

15,656 Individual Cases



More than **130 types** of genetic tests provided to over **45 states**, as well as international locations.

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

More than

10,000 Participants

in workshops, conferences, teleconferences, and other community education activities in domestic and international forums.



Over

130

courses and seminars taught by faculty and staff.

Interdisciplinary training in 2020: 147 students, interns, residents and post-doctoral fellows. Of those, 123 were long term and received more than 300 hours of training.

More than

\$7.5 MILLION *in research funding annually.*

In the last

15 Years

More than **3,500** long-term students received training at MMI.

Over **140** clinical and research fellows trained at MMI.



It has been said that necessity is the mother of all invention. The proverb rang true this year more than any other.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused remarkable ingenuity at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. Our practitioners used their vast knowledge to produce new practices to ensure the health and safety of all persons. Some creative changes were small, like transparent face coverings for speech therapy. Others were much larger, like equipping clinics for virtual therapy, learning and treatment.

Many of these changes were more expensive than typical supports, but that did not stand in the way of MMI's goal of transforming the lives of all individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs.

This creativity could not have happened without your support. Thank you to all those who donated this year. Your support allowed MMI to reinvent the way things are done, without sacrificing its level of excellence. Your generosity paired with the inventiveness of MMI will reverberate for years to come.

In 2021, we will emerge stronger and ready to meet the needs of our patients in a beautiful new location. We look forward to sharing our progress with you.

To learn more about how to make a gift to MMI, please go to nufoundation.org/mmi, or contact Brian Anderson at brian.anderson@nufoundation.org or 402-502-4113.

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Medical Center



**UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute
for Genetics and Rehabilitation**

985450 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-5450

unmc.edu/mmi

