

## Dr. Wael Asaad awarded \$486,000 to study neural transitions in PD

PROVIDENCE – **Wael Asaad, MD, PhD**, has received a three-year Clinical Scientist Development Award of \$486,000 from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation for his project, “Breaking Beta: Decoding and Manipulating Critical Neural State Transitions in Parkinson’s Disease.”

According to the Foundation, the grants provide funding to young clinician investigators, enabling them to secure 75 percent of their professional time for clinical research as they establish their own labs and research teams.

Dr. Asaad, an assistant professor of neurosurgery at the Alpert Medical School, received his undergraduate degree from Amherst College in 1993, then earned a PhD in systems neuroscience from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2001, and his MD from Yale University in 2003. In 2011, he joined the department of neurosurgery at the Alpert Medical School.

His basic science interests focus on the ways in which neuronal circuits in the frontal cortex and basal ganglia underlie visual-motor learning, memory and decision-making, and how a better understanding of these might lead to strategies to alleviate the cognitive aspects of psychiatric



RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL

Wael Asaad, MD, PhD

and neurological diseases, including traumatic brain injury and stroke.

“I am honored to receive this generous grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, supporting our research into normal and abnormal brain rhythms in Parkinson’s Disease,” said Dr. Asaad, who is affiliated with Rhode Island Hospital. “We aim to understand how such rhythms arise with various forms of movement,

and how we can apply deep brain stimulation at just the right moments and in just the right amounts to transform bad rhythms into good ones. We hope that our work will result in tangible improvements to this effective but still imperfect therapy, in order to improve the lives of those suffering from this neurological disease.” ❖

## Butler, Kent Hospitals providing Narcan to overdose patients

PROVIDENCE – Care New England Health System announced recently that two of its hospitals, Butler and Kent, are distributing naloxone, more commonly referred to as Narcan, to patients who have been treated for a drug overdose or who are at risk for an overdose.

The distribution of Narcan kits at Kent began August 1. The clinical staff in the emergency department follow normal protocol for an overdose patient. After consent, patients will receive the kit before discharge. In addition, through an affiliation with The Providence Center and funding from the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), Kent Hospital provides weekend access to on-call recovery coaches for patients who are in need of support and counseling. Additionally, trained staff from The Providence Center are available during the week for patient education and outpatient treatment referral.

Butler has been providing kits to patients in its Alcohol and Drug Partial Hospital Program since October 2013

and upon discharge from the Alcohol and Drug Inpatient Unit since April 2014. Since that time, 164 kits have been provided to patients who consented to receive them and also receive education about its use.

At Butler, patients are assessed by a doctor who prescribes Narcan if it is indicated, after informed consent. The patient is shown a brief educational video and receives education on opiate overdose prevention and Narcan use from the physician and from a pharmacist. The patient receives a naloxone kit (syringe and nasal atomizer) when they leave the hospital. Partial hospital patients receive the kits the day it is ordered by the doctor.

“Given the dramatic increase in overdose deaths here in Rhode Island it is critical that the health care community and those facilities that are on the front lines in treating this crisis confront the problem head on,” said **JAMES SULLIVAN, MD**, senior vice president and chief medical officer at Butler Hospital. “This is an important opportunity to help save lives

and provide treatment and education that will hopefully help reverse this alarming trend.”

“This is a collaborative project that has come together through the effort of staff and clinicians across Care New England, including those in our emergency departments, pharmacies and drug and alcohol programs. We see the horrible impact that drugs have on people almost on a daily basis. It ruins lives and it ends lives. We can help change this,” said **PETER GRAVES, MD**, chief, Department of Emergency Medicine at Kent Hospital.

Butler’s Patient Assessment Services Department (emergency department for those needing urgent psychological evaluation and treatment) is coordinating a distribution program but currently provides information about the availability of kits to patients and families through Walgreens (no prescription needed).

Currently, Memorial Hospital, also a Care New England facility, is developing its program. ❖