

Brown to launch Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute

Brown will match Hassenfeld family donation of \$12.5M to target asthma, obesity and autism

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Alan Hassenfeld, former Hasbro, Inc. Chairman and CEO, announced the \$12.5 million donation at the State House this week, along with Brown President Christina Paxson, Gov. Gina Raimondo and Thomas J. Tisch, Brown Chancellor.

PROVIDENCE – **ALAN HASSENFELD**, former Hasbro, Inc. Chairman and CEO and his family have donated \$12.5 million to create the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute, to be launched by Brown University in collaboration with Hasbro Children's Hospital and Women & Infants Hospital. Researchers from other institutions, such as Bradley and Butler hospitals, will also be partnering in what is hoped to be a transformative initiative in the lives and health of Rhode Island's children and families, as well as nationally and globally.

The gift was announced at the State House on Monday, Sept. 28. In opening remarks, Brown's President **CHRISTINA PAXSON** said the university will begin a fundraising effort to match that amount. The Institute will initially target three areas: asthma, obesity and autism, in the pregnancy through young adulthood populations.

"A single act of generosity can have an impact on generations," Paxson said of the Hassenfeld donation.

She recognized **DEAN TERRIE FOX**

WETLE of Brown's School of Public Health and **DEAN JACK ELIAS** of the Warren Alpert Medical School as instrumental in forging hospital and health-care systems partnerships that will contribute to the Institute's success.

Gov. Gina Raimondo pledged the support of the Dept. of Health and the Dept. of Human Services to provide the statewide data needed for research, and cited the launch as a model of a "high level of innovation which will help ignite the economy and contribute to the 21st century jobs we need here," she said.

"Children are our greatest natural resource," said Hassenfeld, a former Brown trustee, in his remarks. "We are all inspired by a common purpose. Our future is something we create, not that we inherit."

In a press statement, he further elaborated on his vision for the Institute. "My greatest hope is that when we look back 10, 20, 30 years, we will have created global solutions to alleviating some of these child health conditions. I know we can't remove them, but at

least we can put the dollars behind research that will develop innovative approaches that help us truly move the needle in significant ways."

The Institute will officially launch in 2016, led by Hasbro's pediatrician-in-chief and newcomer to the state, **DR. PHYLLIS DENNERY**, the Sylvia K. Hassenfeld Professor and Chair of Pediatrics at Brown; **DR. MAUREEN PHIPPS**, the Chace-Joukowsky Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Brown, chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and executive chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Women & Infants Hospital; and **DR. PATRICK VIVIER**, the Royce Family Associate Professor of Teaching Excellence, associate professor of health services, policy and practice and of pediatrics at Brown, and director of general pediatrics and community health at Hasbro.

According to a Brown statement, the team will build a core research and evaluation unit with all the statistical, bioinformatic, genomic, epidemiologic, and medical expertise needed to conduct rigorous and effective studies of childhood health issues.

"The collaboration, partnerships, focus, dedication, and resources brought together to develop this initiative have set the stage for having a lasting, positive impact on the lives of children, families, and communities in Rhode Island," Dr. Phipps said.

"These initiatives are at the heart of pediatric health," Dr. Dennery said. "We have seen epidemics in all three areas and can attribute these in part to environmental factors facing vulnerable children and families. Clearly, the issues we have identified can be better addressed through targeted therapies and interventions. The institute will seamlessly coordinate our collective system-wide efforts to address these challenges." ❖

MICHAEL COHEA/BROWN UNIVERSITY