

**The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)**  
**Institutional Biosafety Committee**  
**February 12, 2026**  
**Minutes**

**Meeting Attendance:**

Voting Members

**Dr. Catherine Denicourt (Chair)**  
**Dr. Eric Brown**  
**Dr. Nancy Crider**  
**Dr. Nicholas Justice**  
**Dr. Ashish Kapoor**  
**Dr. Yang Liu**  
**Dr. Yahuan Lou**  
**Dr. Duc Nguyen**  
**Dr. Scott Patlovich**  
**Dr. Brett Perkison**  
**Dr. Jose Portugal**  
**Mr. Spencer Chichester (SM)**  
**Mr. Petko Ivanov (CM)**  
**Mr. Imad Khalil (CM)**  
**Mr. Jesus Duran Ramirez (SM)**  
**Mrs. Marivonne Rodriguez (CM)**

Non-Voting Members

**Dr. Kristin King**  
**Dr. Mary Robinson**  
**Mr. Zack Becker**  
**Mr. Colin Harrison**  
**Ms. Rebecca Kairis**  
**Ms. Allison Lino**  
**Ms. Meredith Mills**

**Guests:**

Erika Figueroa, intern  
Dr. Rachel Wilson, CLAMC

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Denicourt at 3:00 PM.

**2. Conflicts of Interest**

The Chairperson reminded the committee about the conflict of interest procedure. She also reminded the committee members that all protocols that are discussed at the meeting are to be considered confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the meeting with non-IBC members.

**3. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (December 11, 2025 & January 8, 2026)**

Approved = 14  
Opposed = 0  
Abstained = 2

**4. IBC Administrative Items**

None

**Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules Research Applications Review**

During the review the committee assessed the containment levels as well as the facilities, procedures, practices and training and expertise of the personnel involved in recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules research. The committee also reviewed agent

characteristics, types of manipulations planned, sources of the inserted nucleic acid sequences, the nature of the inserted nucleic acid sequences and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene, and if so, the protein that will be produced. Furthermore, the PI must determine the applicable section(s) of the *NIH Guidelines*.

## 5. Clinical Protocol Reviews (HGT)

IBC-26-030 – Dr. Paul Schulz - “A Phase 1b Open-Label, Multicenter, Dose-Escalation Study to Assess the Safety, Tolerability, and Pharmacodynamic Effects of a Single Dose of PBFT02 Delivered into the Cisterna Magna (ICM) of Adult Participants with Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD) and Mutations in the Granulin Precursor (GRN) or Chromosome 9 Open Reading Frame 72 (C9ORF72) Genes (Protocol PBFT02-001)”

Containment Level: BSL-2

NIH Section: III-C-1

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol must complete safety training requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, pending completion of safety training requirements.

## 6. Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-020 – Dr. Yan Chen – “Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Retina and Retinal Pigment Epithelium Degeneration in Aging and Disease”

Containment Level: BSL-1; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-D-2-a, III-E-3-a, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

IBC-26-025 – Dr. Seungwoo Kang – “Astrocyte-neuron mechanisms of glutamatergic modulation in social novelty recognition”

Containment Level: BSL-1; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-4-a, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, pending confirmation of basic controls to secure the toxin (confirmed after the meeting).

IBC-26-027 – Dr. Andrea Stavoe - “Understanding how aging affects neuronal autophagy”

Containment Level: BSL-1; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-4-a, III-D-4-c-2, III-F-1, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

IBC-26-028 – Dr. Xiaochao Tan - “Study the roles of ER and Golgi proteins in lung cancer”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-D-2-a, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

IBC-26-031 – Dr. Gabriel Fries – “Postmortem induced neurons as a novel tool to investigate the neurobiological basis of bipolar disorder and suicide”

Containment Level: BSL-2; protocol does not involve animals

NIH Section: III-D-1-a

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training requirements

Approved = 16

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, pending submission and review of SOP for lentiviral vector generation.

## 7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-026 – Dr. Tina Findley - “Placental Dysfunction and Fetal Congenital Heart Disease”

IBC-26-029 – Dr. Vahid Serpooshan – “In vitro modeling of human heart development and congenital heart disease”

## 8. Protocol Updates

### a. Significant updates:

None

### b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-064 – Dr. Claudio Soto – “Early Diagnostic and Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Protein misfolding cyclic amplification assay (PMCA) for tau” AND “Highly selective detection of tau oligomers in biological fluids for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease” AND “Development of a blood test for Alzheimer's disease diagnostic” AND “Isolation, characterization and pathogenic role of self-propagating conformational amyloid-beta strains” AND “PMCA detection of antibody-treated biological samples” AND “Misfolded Protein Aggregates in HIV Infection” AND “Depression as a risk factor for converting mild cognitive impairment into AD” AND “Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis/Fronto temporal dementia PMCA” AND “Misfolding and aggregation of p53 and its implications in cancer” AND “Role of circulating Abeta seeds and peripheral tissue damage in Alzheimer's disease pathogenesis” AND “Recombinant APOE as treatment in AD mouse models” AND “Detection and characterization of alpha-synuclein aggregates in patients with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia”

- **Removal of personnel:** Kane Spicker, Vijay Kumar, Elham Abbasloo

- **Addition of personnel:** Velmarini Vasquez Sanchez

IBC-21-071 – Dr. Jun Li – “Mechanisms and Treatment for Ischemic Stroke”

- **Addition of rDNA:** lentiviral vectors (gfa2-sgNT-miR124T/CMV-Cas9 and gfa2-gRNA-miR124T/CMV-Cas9)

- **Removal of personnel:** Yashasvee Munshi and Md Abdur Razzaque

- **Addition of personnel:** Yuxing Zhang

IBC-22-018 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “CNS-Derived Fetal Extracellular Vesicles for the Non-Invasive Diagnosis of Fetal CNS CMV Infection”

- **Removal of personnel:** Brigid Roth

IBC-22-020 – Dr. Rodrigo Machado Vieira – “A Randomized Controlled Trial of the Fatty Acid Amide Hydrolase Inhibitor Palmitoylethanolamide in Bipolar Depression”

- **Removal of location:** Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences Building 5102A, 5108B

- **Addition of location:** Harris County Psychiatric Hospital 3-D05

IBC-23-009 – Dr. Jordan Lake – “Umbrella protocol for the study of clinical, virological and immunological outcomes in HIV/HCV infected individuals.” AND “Understanding the Spectrum of Liver Health in HIV Infection” AND “Understanding the Contributions of HIV Infection and Hormone Therapy to Cardiovascular Disease Risk Among Transgender Women: A Deadly Crossroads?” AND “HIV Replicative Fitness in the setting of Anti-retroviral Drug Resistance” AND “Cardiometabolic Risk in Transgender Women and its Relationship to HIV Infection and Feminizing Hormone Use” AND “HIV Reservoir Characterization before and after Hormone Replacement Therapy” AND “Feminas Study Stored Sample Analysis” AND “A Phase 3b, Multicenter, Open-Label Study to Evaluate Switching From a Regimen of Two Nucleos(t)ide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTI) plus a Third Agent to a Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) of Bictegravir/Emtricitabine/Tenofovir Alafenamide (B/F/TAF), in Virologically-Suppressed, HIV-1 Infected African American Participants.” AND “The Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Fatty Liver in HIV Infected Individuals Attending Multiethnic Urban HIV Clinics” AND “The Impact of Cannabinoids on Inflammation, HIV Viral Load and Symptoms of Distress among Persons Living with HIV/AIDS.” AND “Explorations into the mechanism for INSTI-associated weight gain: a focus on energy balance” AND “Hepatic effects of simultaneous supra physiologic Estradiol supplementation and androgen deprivation in transgender women initiating gender-affirming hormone therapy” AND “Sarcopenic Obesity and Relationships with Immunometabolic Parameters in People with HIV”

- **Removal of IRB study:** HSC-MS-25-0376 now exempt
- **Removal of title:** “A Pilot Trial of Semaglutide Microdosing for Weight Maintenance in People With HIV”

IBC-23-042 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Biomarkers of Fetal Hypoxic Neuronal Injury”

- **Removal of personnel:** Brigid Roth

IBC-23-050 – Dr. Eva Sevick – “**Assessing CSF flow dynamics in pediatric hemorrhagic hydrocephalus**” AND “**Phase 0 Study Assessing Cervical Lymphatic Drainage in Patients with Subarachnoid Hemorrhage**”

- **Update of bolded title**
- **IRB Update:** Change in study population, biological manipulation remains the same

IBC-23-058 – Dr. Rodrigo Machado Vieira – “A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial of the Rapid Antisuicidal Effects of Intranasal Ketamine in Comorbid Depression and Alcohol Abuse, Evaluation of Biochemical and Epigenetic Biosignature of Tears Exosomes in Depression and Sadness AND Epigenetic Biomarkers of Suicidal ideation Protocol.”

- **Removal of location:** Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences Building 5108B
- **Addition of location:** John Dunn Behavioral Sciences Center 1N35A

IBC-23-064 – Dr. Xiaotian Zhang – “Use of lenti and retrovirus for the transduction of hematopoietic cells” AND “The dissection of non-canonical cis-regulatory elements downstream of beta-globin locus in the fetal hemoglobin gene regulation” AND “Dissect the novel function of mutant NPM1 on transcriptional hijacking”

- **Addition of bioagent:** human cancer cell line CCHMC-16 (leukemia)
- **Addition of animal strain:** immune-deficient mice (NOD.Cg-Prkdcscid Il2rgtm1 Wjl

Tg(CMV-IL3,CSF2,KITLG)1Eav/MloySz and NOD.Cg-Prkdcscid Il2rgtm1Sug  
Tg(SV40/HTLV-IL3,CSF2)10-7Jic/JicTac)

IBC-24-001 – Dr. Scott Olson – “Mesenchymal Stem Cells (MSC) for the treatment of traumatic brain injury and other neurological and inflammatory conditions” AND “Reshaping MSC surface expression profiles to target inflammation following CNS trauma” AND “Myeloid Derived Suppressor Cells in Traumatic Brain Injury” AND “Trauma induced coagulopathy and the blood brain barrier: Impact of resuscitation” AND “Human Umbilical Cord Blood Derived T Regulatory Cells” AND “Freeze dried mechotransduced MSC derived exosomes for neurological injury” AND “An Assessment of Green Plasma: The Prevalence of, Quantification of “Green-ness,” and Potential Hemostatic Superiority of a Currently Discarded Blood Product” AND “Cellular Impact of Cerebrospinal Fluid on Human-Derived Umbilical Cord” AND “**Engineering MSCs to Treat Traumatic Brain Injury**”

- **Add bolded title**
- **Add bioagent:** Human brain endothelial cells (HBMEC)
- **Add personnel:** Samantha Fleury, Andrew J. Walters
- **Add AWC protocols:** AWC-25-0025; AWC-23-0092

IBC-24-025 – Dr. Catherine Denicourt – “Mechanisms of aberrant ribosomal RNA (rRNA) methylation and altered mRNA translation in cancer” AND “Investigating how RNA modifications regulate adaptive mRNA translation”

- **Addition of personnel:** Julia Nichols, Marcus Sandoval, Arya Vindu

IBC-24-027 – Dr. Kevin Lin – “The role of Protein Arginine Methyltransferases in neurovascular coupling and brain diseases”

- **Addition of work with rDNA Bioagent:** pAAV1.Syn.GCaMP6f.WPRE.SV40 for injection into mice

IBC-24-073 – Dr. Long Jun Wu – “Studying microglia functions in health and diseases via viral tools and plasmid containing nanoparticles in mice.”

- **Removal of personnel:** Yi Liu, Jincheng Zhang, Abhijeet Barath, Qixiu Hou
- **Addition of personnel:** Rongzhuo Hua

IBC-25-023 – Dr. Juli Bai – “Immune regulation and metabolic diseases”

- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV8-TBG-Cre
- **Addition of work:** creation of transgenic knockout mice via AAV8-TBG-Cre (packaged with sgRNA targeting to either CHDH, ALDH7A1, or control) via tail vein injection
- **Addition of personnel:** Dongqing Yin and Qixiu Hou
- **Addition of location:** MSE R559 (CLAMC)

IBC-25-042 – Dr. Guangwei Du – “Lipid Signaling” AND “Lysosomal NADPH metabolism regulates proteostasis, aging and tauopathy.”

- **Addition of personnel:** Shike Wang

IBC-25-050 – Dr. Xiangdong Lyu – “Stress Responses in Tumor Progression and Therapy Resistance.”

- **Addition of bioagent:** Mouse cancer cells (T7, T11)

- **Addition of personnel:** Yanhuan Zhang, Yujie Zhang

IBC-25-053 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Neuroinflammation in response to ascending reproductive tract ureaplasma infection”

- **Removal of personnel:** Brigid Roth

IBC-25-082 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Confirmation of Depression Medication Response Biomarkers”

- **Removal of personnel:** Brigid Roth
- **Addition of personnel:** Kristen Rebeles

IBC-25-093 – Dr. Zhiqiang An - "Cancer drug resistance mechanisms in the HER/ErbB signalling pathways and Proteolytic cleavage of antibodies and its applications in designer cancer therapeutics" AND "ErbB signalling pathways" AND "Discovery and Characterization of Novel Anti-endotrophin Monoclonal Antibodies as Drug Leads for Cancer Therapy" AND "Counteracting Tumor Evasion of Antibody Immunity by a Novel Therapeutic Strategy" AND "New Antibody Therapy for Treating Leukemia" AND "Therapeutic Monoclonal Antibody Lead Optimization and Development Core (CPRIT Core Grant RP150551)" AND "Validation of LILIRB family of receptors and cancer targets and development of LILIRB targeting antibodies for cancer treatment" AND "Development of Hemichannel-Targeting Antibody Therapies for Breast Cancer Bone Metastasis" AND "Advanced Cancer Antibody Drug Modalities Core Facilities" AND "ITIM-receptors for cancer treatment" AND "Antibodies targeting S2 domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein" AND "Targeting immunosuppressive myeloid cells in tumor microenvironment" AND "Reprogramming myeloid cells to inhibit cancer development" AND "Study TREM2 iso2 knockin only iPS induced microglia in Alzheimer's disease." And "Study long-term effect of TREM2-219 (iso2) in 5xFAD mice via AAV" and "mouse cancer parental and stable cell lines for antibodies evaluation on tumor growth"

- **Addition of work:** Transfer of mouse and human cancer cell lines in vitro and in vivo from IBC-21-004 (Chi311, FolR1, and Anti-Lair-1, anti-ALPPL2, anti-Lair-2 and anti-DDR1 studies)

IBC-26-007 – Dr. Laura Goetzl – “Fetal neuronal extracellular vesicle biomarkers of in-utero effects of maternal cannabinoid use and human fetal brain development and neurobehavioral outcomes”

- **Addition of personnel:** Kristen Rebeles

## 9. BSL-3 Update

The BSL-3 (currently utilized for BSL-2+/ABSL-2+) was commissioned and was observed to have water damage on the ceiling. Investigation led to the source, and mitigation and repair are underway. The cameras will be replaced in the BSL-3 laboratory, previously used as an FSAP-registered space (not active).

## 10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

The Biological Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. Incident reports were reviewed from December; no incidents were reported in January.

## **11. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report**

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review.

## **12. Other Items**

NIH Request for Clarification for “Dangerous Gain-of-Function” research

NIH requested clarification on an IBC approved study. The request sought confirmation of the IBC approval, safety protocols, assurance that the work did not include “Dangerous Gain-of-Function” research as defined in the May 5, 2025 Executive Order. NIH accepted our response.

Texas Statute 173:Donation of Human Fetal Tissue

Review of the rules regarding permissible donations of fetal tissue under Texas law.

NIH Modernizing and Strengthening Oversight of Biosafety update

Five out of six listening sessions are complete. The draft policy is expected by the end of summer, and the finalized policy by the end of the calendar year.

## **13. Next Meeting**

The meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026, via Microsoft Teams from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

## **14. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 4:01 PM.