On Campus

Columbia Receives $6.5M Gift to Expand Cerebral-Palsy Center

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Columbia clinicians Lisa Yoon and Jason Carmel work with a young patient at the Weinberg Family Cerebral Palsy Center. (Jacqueline Chen)

Columbia University's Weinberg Family Cerebral Palsy Center, which since 2013 has provided multidisciplinary care for people with cerebral palsy and related movement disorders, has received a $6.5 million gift from its original benefactors, Debby and Peter Weinberg. The gift will enable the center to expand its clinical offerings, grow its research programs, and create fellowships for aspiring physicians and scientists interested in studying and treating cerebral palsy.

Affecting about one million people in the US, cerebral palsy is a group of disorders, caused by damage to the developing brain, that result in impaired movement. The

Weinberg Family Center is dedicated to providing lifetime care for individuals with cerebral palsy, with services attending to both their physical and emotional well-being. Researchers at the center, under the direction of Columbia neurologist and neuroscientist Jason Carmel ’03VPS, are also developing new treatments that seek to repair the nervous system. For example, pilot studies at the center and elsewhere suggest that electrical stimulation of the spinal cord could partially restore movement, including walking and manual dexterity.

“We are at an inflection point in the field of electrical stimulation where protocols developed in laboratory models have proven safe and effective,” says Carmel. “I’m really optimistic about the future of treating the nervous system directly in cerebral palsy.”



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