

2026

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE

MARCH 11-13

Callaway Resort and Gardens
Pine Mountain, GA

Wednesday, March 11

Time	Agenda Item/Topic	Speaker/Presenter
12:00 pm	Registration Opens <i>Boxed lunches available in Longleaf Pre-function Area</i>	
General Session I		
Moderator: W. Robert Taylor, MD, PhD, Contact PI, Georgia CTSA Longleaf Ballroom ABCD		
1:00 pm	Welcome & Overview of Conference	
1:15 pm	Featured Talk: Collective Innovation for Maternal Health Access in West Alabama	Holly Horan, PhD Assistant Professor Anthropology University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
1:45 pm	Featured Talk: Understanding Depression Recovery with Deep Brain Stimulation Using Explainable AI	Christopher Rozell, PhD Julian T. Hightower Chaired Professor Electrical & Computer Engineering Executive Director, Institute for Neuroscience, Neurotechnology & Society Georgia Institute of Technology
2:15 pm	Chronic Diabetes Induces Endothelial Stress and Proteotranscriptomic Remodeling in the Diabetic Lung	Mohamed S. Selim, BPharm PhD Scholar Department of Pharmacy University of Georgia
2:30 pm	Keynote: NCATS Updates: Maximizing the Success of Translational Research	Joni L. Rutter, PhD Deputy Director National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences National Institutes of Health
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Break	

General Session II

Moderator: Elizabeth Ofili, MD, MPH, PI, Georgia CTSA

Longleaf Ballroom ABCD

3:30 pm	Are Families Discharged from the Pediatric Emergency Department Aware of Quick Response (QR) Codes?	Sara Cortes, MD Assistant Professor Department of Pediatrics University of Miami
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3:45 pm	A Bioinspired Upper Body Assistive Exoskeleton for Supporting Stroke Patients with Daily Activities	Connor Talley, BS PhD Student College of Engineering and Engineering Technology Kennesaw State University
4:00 pm	Development and Initial Results of an Intervention to Reduce Conflicts in Faculty-Graduate Student Mentoring Relationships in the Biomedical Sciences	Trevor Tuma, PhD Post Doctoral Research Associate Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology University of Georgia
4:15 pm	Featured Talk: Noise-Induced Hearing Loss as a Driver of Alzheimer's Disease Pathogenesis	Suhrud M Rajguru, PhD Professor Biomedical Engineering and Otolaryngology Assistant Vice Provost, Research Workforce Development Director, University of Miami CTSI Workforce Development University of Miami
4:45- 5:15 pm	Break	
5:15- 6:15 PM	Poster Viewing & Judging I <i>Longleaf E</i>	
6:00 – 6:30 pm	Networking Reception <i>Longleaf and Loblolly Pre-Functions Areas</i>	
6:30 – 8:00 pm	Dinner Buffet <i>Loblolly Ballroom and Cypress Conference Room A & B</i>	
7:30 – 8:30 pm	Trainee Career Development: Effective Communication in Mentoring Relationships <i>Sourwood Room 4+5</i> Erin Dolan, PhD Professor Georgia Athletic Association Professor of Innovative Science Education Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology University of Georgia	

Thursday, March 12

Time	Agenda Item/Topic	Speaker/Presenter
7:30 – 8:30 am	Breakfast and Networking <i>Longleaf Pre-function Area</i>	
8:30 – 10:00 am	Concurrent Breakout Sessions <i>See below for specific information.</i>	

Concurrent Session I: Rural Health

Moderator: Joni Nelson, PhD, MUSC

Longleaf Ballroom AB

8:30 am	Featured Talk: Expanding Clinical Research into the Rural Community	Patrick A. Flume, MD Powers-Huggins Endowed Chair for Cystic Fibrosis Department of Medicine Co-PI for the South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute Medical University of South Carolina
9:00 am	From Training to Impact: Multilevel Interventions to Strengthen the Rural Health Workforce	Somilez A. Francis, MS Grants Program Manager Office of Physician Assistant Studies Morehouse School of Medicine
9:15 am	How Does Place of Residence Affect Stroke Risk Factors and Outcomes? A Single Site Retrospective Analysis	James Gaither Medical Student Medical College of Georgia University of Georgia
9:30 am	School-Based Oral Health Institute for the Carolinas: An Accidental Practice-Based Research Network	Amy Martin, DrPH, MSPH Senior Associate Dean Professor & Chair, Department of Biomedical & Community Health Sciences James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine Medical University of South Carolina
9:45 am	Community Perspectives on Facilitators and Barriers to Healthy Lifestyle: Insights from the Fight for Life Study in Rural Georgia	Asia Rivers, MPH, MCES Program Director Prevention Research Center Morehouse School of Medicine

Concurrent Session II: Nutrition and Lifestyle

Moderator: Jessica Alvarez, PhD, RD, Emory

Longleaf Ballroom CD

8:30 am	Featured Talk: The Institute for Connecting Nutrition and Health (ICON-Health) - Opportunities for Impact in the Current Nutrition Landscape	Patrick Stover, PhD Professor Biomedical Sciences Director, Institute for Connecting Nutrition and Health Florida State University
9:00 am	Developmental Effects of Semaglutide in an Adolescent Rodent Model of Diet-induced Obesity	Austin Mills, BA Graduate Student Department of Nutritional Sciences University of Georgia

9:15 am	Nutrition Education Camp Intervention Reduces Dietary Variation and Improves Metabolic Control in a Large Cohort of Females with PKU	Jessica Strosahl, PhD, RDN, LDN Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Genetic Metabolic Dietitian Department of Human Genetics Emory University
9:30 am	Evaluating Program Alignment and Implementation Feasibility of Childhood Obesity Treatment Lifestyle Interventions with Cooperative Extension	Megan Appelbaum, BS PhD Candidate and Dietetic Intern College of Family and Consumer Sciences, Department of Nutritional Science University of Georgia
9:45 am	Dietary Impacts on Cardiometabolic and Cognitive Risks for Dementia in Older Adults	Julia L. Sheffler, PhD, ABPP Assistant Professor Center for Translational Behavioral Science Florida State University College of Medicine

Concurrent Session III: Cancer

Moderator: Adam Marcus, PhD, Emory
Cypress Conference Room A & B

8:30 am	Featured Talk: Omics-guided Prediction meets Experimental Therapeutics in Preclinical Cancer Drug Development	Amit Kumar Mitra, PhD Associate Professor Harrison College of Pharmacy Auburn University
9:00 am	Patients with Recurrent Head and Neck Cancer Have Increased Levels of Circulating CD57+ T Cells	Chulwoo Kim Medical Student Department of Otolaryngology Emory University
9:15 am	Crocin II Attenuates MPA-Driven Progesterone Receptor Signaling in T47D Breast Cancer Cells	Priyanka Kundu Medical Student (OMS-II) Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine Raheem Memon Medical Student (OMS-II) Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine
9:30 am	Variability of Outpatient Antimicrobial Prescribing Across Solid Tumor Cancer Types	Lauren Dempsey, MSPH PhD Student Department of Clinical and Administrative Pharmacy University of Georgia
9:45 am	Localized Radiation Primes the Tumor Microenvironment to Enhance CAR T Cell Efficacy in Combination with Immune Checkpoint Inhibition	Dejah Blake, MS PhD Candidate Cancer Biology PhD Graduate Program Emory University

10:00 – 10:15 am	Break
10:15 – 11:15 am	Poster Viewing & Judging II Longleaf E
11:30 – 12:30 pm	Networking Lunch Longleaf Pre-function Area

12:30 – 2:00 pm

Concurrent Breakout Sessions
See below for specific information.

Concurrent Session IV: Community Engagement and Participation

Moderator: Sylvie Naar, PhD, PI, UF CTSI

Longleaf Ballroom AB

12:30 pm	<p>Featured Talk: Georgia Health Landscape</p>	<p>Allisen Penn, EdD Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach College of Family and Consumer Sciences University of Georgia</p> <p>Alison C. Berg, PhD, RDN, LD Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist Department of Nutritional Sciences College of Family and Consumer Sciences University of Georgia</p> <p>Dee Warmath, PhD Associate Professor Department of Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics University of Georgia</p>
1:00 pm	<p>Asymmetric Telepresence for Clinical Communication: Enhancing Privacy and Presence in Remote Care</p>	<p>Sungchul Jung, PhD Assistant Professor Game Design and Development Department of Software Engineering and Game Development College of Computing and Software Engineering Kennesaw State University</p>
1:15 pm	<p>From Punishment to Partnership: Community-Engaged Systems Approaches to Policy De-Implementation</p>	<p>Lauren Caton, PhD Post Doctoral Student Department of Health Policy and Management Rollins School of Public Health Emory University</p>
1:30 pm	<p>Implementing Community Resiliency Model (CRM®) Training to Promote Mental Well-Being in Youth at Risk for Violence</p>	<p>Ingrid Hopkins Duva, PhD, MN, RN Clinical Assistant Professor Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing Emory University</p>
1:45 pm	<p>Zooming Into Wellness: Remote Hatha Yoga Improves Balance, Reaction Time, and Emotional Health</p>	<p>Kristina A. Neely, PhD Associate Professor School of Kinesiology Auburn University</p>

Concurrent Session V : Artificial Intelligence

Moderator: Suhrud M Rajguru, PhD, UM

Longleaf Ballroom CD

12:30 pm	Featured Talk: From Prototype to Practice: Bridging the Medical AI Implementation Gap	Judy Wawira Gichoya, MD, MS, FSIIM Associate Professor – Interventional Radiology & Informatics Department of Radiology & Imaging Sciences Emory University
1:00 pm	Uncovering Neurodevelopmental Impact of Prenatal Cannabis Exposure via Cognition-Guided Structure–Function Coupling	Dong Hye Ye, PhD Assistant Professor Computer Sciences Georgia State University
1:15 pm	Fine-Tuned Large Language Model for Oculoplastics Referral Triage: Accuracy, Generalizability, and Comparison with Clinical Staff	Jocelyn Lee, BA Research Assistant Department of Ophthalmology Emory University School of Medicine
1:30 pm	Impact of Automated Feature Engineering on the Accuracy and Reliability of Machine Learning Prediction of Heart Failure Readmissions	Mustapha Oloko-Oba, PhD Post Doctoral Fellow Morehouse School of Medicine
1:45 pm	Machine Learning Models for Quantifying Lateral Flow Assay Using Smartphone Images	Asahi Tomitaka, PhD Assistant Professor Department of Computer Science Kennesaw State University

Concurrent Session VI : Cardiovascular Health

Moderator: Jennifer S. Pollock, PhD, UAB

Cypress Conference Room A & B

12:30 pm	Featured Talk: The Heart of the Matter: Promoting Optimal Cardiovascular Health	Laurie Abbott, PhD, RN, CNE, DipACLM, PHNA-BC, FAAN Associate Professor College of Nursing Florida State University
1:00 pm	From Biopsy to Bench: Engineering Human Lymphatic Tissues for Precision Medicine in Pediatric Vascular Anomalies	Yarelis Gonzalez-Vargas, PhD Postdoctoral Fellow CTSA TL1 Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering Georgia Institute of Technology
1:15 pm	Poldip2 Deficiency Protects Against Lung Injury Following <i>Pseudomonas Aeruginosa</i> Infection	Xiaowen Cheng, PhD Post Doctoral Fellow Department of Medicine Emory University
1:30 pm	Exploring Factors Affecting Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (NIRS) Perfusion Metrics in Peripheral Arterial Disease: A Focus on Skin Tone and Calibration	Afnan Abu Sarar, BS Medical Student Department of Internal Medicine Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership
1:45 pm	Prognostic Value of the Homeostatic Model Assessment for Cardiovascular Events in Coronary Artery Disease: Insights from the Emory Biobank	Shaimaa Sakr, MD Research fellow Department of Cardiology Emory University School of Medicine

1:45 – 2:00 pm

Break

2:00 – 3:00 pm	Poster Viewing & Judging III Longleaf E
3:00 – 4:00 pm	Special Interest Sessions <i>See below for specific information.</i>
Special Interest Session I: Pivoting your Research	
Longleaf Ballroom AB	
<p>Patricia Probert, PhD, LMHC Dean of Students Associate Professor, Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science College of Dentistry University of Florida</p>	
<p>Sierra Carter, PhD Associate Professor Associate Director, Center for Family Research Director, Health Equity, Agency, Racism, & Trauma Lab Department of Psychology University of Georgia</p>	
<p>Sylvie Naar, PhD, LP Distinguished and Endowed Professor Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences Founding Director, Center for Translational Behavioral Science MPI, UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute Florida State University</p>	
Special Interest Session II: Working with the Cooperative Extension	
Longleaf Ballroom CD	
<p>Rachel Snoddy County Extension Director Chambers County Alabama Cooperative Extension System</p>	
<p>Alison C. Berg, PhD, RDN, LD Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist Department of Nutritional Sciences College of Family and Consumer Sciences University of Georgia</p>	
<p>Karla Shelnutt, PhD Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Science University of Florida</p>	

Special Interest Session III: Communicating Your Impact

Cypress Conference Room A & B

Amy Stehlik

Associate Director, Communications
Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance
Emory University

Jennifer S. Pollock, PhD

Endowed Professor of Nephrology
Section of Cardio-Renal Physiology and Medicine
Department of Medicine
Division of Nephrology
University of Alabama at Birmingham

Jennifer Moses, PhD

Associate Director of Communications, Recruitment Specialist
Clinical and Translational Science Institute
University of Florida

Networking time	
4:00 - 5:30 pm	<p>Did you know your overnight stay includes complimentary admissions to the Gardens? From golfing, biking, hiking, to relaxing at the spa, Callaway has something for everyone! Check out what's happening at Callaway to plan your trip*.</p> <p><small>*Excursions, rentals, etc. not covered by CTSA Sponsors</small></p>
5:30 – 6:30 pm	<p>Poster Viewing & Judging IV Longleaf E</p>
5:30 – 6:30 pm	<p>Tools and Technology Showcase Bayberry Room ABCD</p> <p>Georgia Health Landscape Dee Warmath, PhD Associate Professor Department of Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics University of Georgia</p> <p>PLOT Initiative Razvan Cristian Voicu (Chris), PhD Assistant Professor of Robotics and Mechatronics Engineering Department of Mechatronics Engineering Faculty Research Fellow, Prototype Living of Tomorrow (PLOT) Lead Kennesaw State University</p> <p>SPARCRequest Leila Forney, DNP SPARC Operational Team Lead Associate Director, Office of Clinical Research Prospective Reimbursement Analysis Medical University of South Carolina</p>

Immersive Technologies to Translate Critical Scientific Information: Experiencing Risks and Learning Mitigation in VR

Sophie Kim
PhD student
CACHE Center
University of Georgia

Nayoung Song
PhD student
CACHE Center
University of Georgia

Annate Bitherapeutics

Eric DeJesus, PhD
Adjunct Professor
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
University of Georgia

Fabla: Turn “How Was Your Day?” Into High-Resolution Evidence to Support Your Study Outcomes

Presented by the Georgia CTSA AppHatchery team.

Trial Connection: Don’t Lose Eligible Patients at the Point of Care

Presented by the Georgia CTSA AppHatchery team.

Vocalis Care: Communicate with Every Patient Effortlessly, Using Your Voice, Across Any Language

Presented by the Georgia CTSA AppHatchery team.

Just-in-Time Clinical Tools

Presented by the Georgia CTSA AppHatchery team.

6:30 pm

Networking Banquet and Awards Ceremony

Loblolly Ballroom

Friday, March 13

Time	Agenda Item/Topic	Speaker/Presenter
General Session III		
Moderator: Bradley G. Phillips, PharmD, BCPS, FCCP, PI, Georgia CTSA Longleaf Ballroom ABCD		
7:30 - 8:30 am	Breakfast and Networking <i>Longleaf Pre-function Area</i>	
8:30 am	Featured Talk: mRNA Therapeutics for Cancer	Duane A. Mitchell, MD, PhD Phyllis Kottler Friedman Professor Lillian S. Wells Department of Neurosurgery Director, UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute Co-Director, Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy University of Florida
9:00 am	Featured Talk: Use of Community Real World Data to Inform Patient Care	Francisco J. Leyva, MD, PhD, ScM Program Director, Initiatives & Consortium-Wide Activities Section Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program Branch Division of Clinical Innovation National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences
9:30 am	Featured Talk: We Need Data to Make Data...Building an Evidence Base for Research Recruitment	Neal Dickert, MD, PhD Thomas R. Williams Professor of Medicine Emory University School of Medicine, Co-Director, Emory Health Services Research Center Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology Emory Center for Ethics
10:00 am	Break	

General Session IV

Moderator: Andrés Garcia, PhD, PI, Georgia CTSA

Longleaf Ballroom ABCD

10:15 am	Featured Talk: Human Organs and Organoids on Chips	Ashutosh Agarwal, PhD Associate Professor Department of Biomedical Engineering University of Miami Director of Engineering and Applied Physics Desai Sethi Urology Institute
10:45 am	Panel: Alternatives to Animal Models for Biomedical Research	Zane Zeier PhD Associate Professor Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine

		<p>Chrystian Junqueira Alves, PhD Assistant Professor of Neurology Department of Pediatrics Emory University School of Medicine Emory Children's Center</p> <p>Duane A. Mitchell, MD, PhD Phyllis Kottler Friedman Professor Lillian S. Wells Department of Neurosurgery Director, UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute Co-Director, Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy University of Florida</p> <p>Jake Y. Chen, Ph.D., FACMI, FAIMBE, FAMIA Founding Director, Systems Pharmacology AI Research Center (SPARC) Triton Endowed Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Data Science Director, NIH Common Fund Data Ecosystems (CFDE) Integration and Coordination Center The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Heersink School of Medicine</p>
11:45 am	Closing	

Subject to change 01/30/2026

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