I am very proud to introduce this year’s DCRI annual report and honored to have assumed the role as the Institute’s new executive director this year. I have called the DCRI my research home for nearly 20 years. During this time, so much has changed in health care and research—and this year has been no exception. Leading the largest academic clinical research organization in the world through a global pandemic puts progress into perspective.

Like so many of us, this past spring, the DCRI pivoted to address quickly the challenges presented by SARS-CoV-2. From transitioning nearly 1,000 employees to remote working virtually overnight to keeping our trials and studies progressing without interruption, our faculty and operational teams stepped up and jumped in to contribute to the health and safety for all—here at home and around the world.

Our DCRI faculty have been directly involved in helping to establish COVID-19 guidelines for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In April we launched a platform that creates a community of health care workers to address their needs through a registry and clinical trials, and we are proudly serving as the coordinating center for a multi-million dollar NIH program that will expand COVID-19 testing among underserved and vulnerable populations in the U.S.

Defining how research should be done and leading the way in doing it has been the bedrock of the DCRI, starting with our founding days of ushering in novel, data-driven approaches that advanced cardiovascular care for patients worldwide. Not surprisingly, therefore, The Way Forward is the theme for this year’s annual report.

Inside you will find stories that demonstrate six fundamental qualities that form the foundation of how research will be conducted in the future—even after the coronavirus pandemic has subsided. Today and tomorrow, the DCRI is leading clinical research that is rapid, embedded, efficient, impactful, disruptive, and inclusive.

We also have evolved our mission statement to reflect our focus and impact on everyone, everywhere. Our updated mission statement reflects how our people come together to develop, share, and implement knowledge that improves health around the world through innovative clinical research. We are reimagining how we creatively conduct high-quality research that offers trusted answers for our sponsors, partners, and the patients we serve. We are committed to disseminating knowledge widely in order to move health forward. And we remain steadfast in developing the next generation of clinical researchers through our DCRI Fellowship Program.

The way forward is to use the best methods and learnings of the past while infusing them with innovative methods that enable research to be frictionless, flexible, and even fun. The way forward is through an Institute that remains an industry leader and delivers on its mission by finding new ways to do clinical research for high impact. The way forward is how we are doing research at the DCRI.

I am immensely proud of our people—thank you. I am deeply honored to serve alongside colleagues and collaborators to continually advance clinical research methods. And I am looking forward to our work together in leading the way forward for a better, healthier world.

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