

## Meet our Panellists

### Research Scientists:

#### **Catherine M. Cahill, Ph.D., UCLA | CAN Award Recipient**



Catherine M. Cahill, Ph.D. trained as an opioid neuro-pharmacologist at Dalhousie University receiving her MSc in 1992 and her PhD in 1996. She has more than 30 years experience in research that focuses on understanding mechanisms of chronic pain and opioid analgesia, tolerance, dependence and addiction. She was recruited to the Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Care at University of California Irvine in 2012 from Queen's University in Canada where she held a Canada Research Chair in Chronic Pain for 10 years. She moved to UCLA in 2017 and is now a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences and a member of the Hatos Center for Neuropharmacology at the University of California Los Angeles. A major focus of her research is to identify and characterize the allostatic changes that occur in chronic pain states specifically within reward circuitry and investigate novel treatment strategies. In 2015, she was the first to report how occurrence of chronic pain states disrupts reward circuitry via neuro-immune mechanisms in mesolimbic circuitry. The impact of this research was widely acknowledged in the media including: Pain Research Forum, Health News, Medical News, Science magazine, F-1000, etc. Her research has been cited over 5000 times, she has an *h*-index of 45, and an *i10*-index of 82 and has been widely acknowledged in media generated international attention with >120 media outlets. Notably, her research is currently supported by a NIH P50 Center of Excellence, two NIH R01 research grants, a NIH UG3/UH3 grant, the Department of Defense, and the Shirley and Stefan Hatos foundation.

She holds multiple National and International leadership positions, including the executive committees such as the International Narcotic Research Conference, Scientific planning committee for the World Congress on Pain and on the editorial board for British Journal of Pharmacology and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Research journals. She is a standing member for National Institutes of Health grant review committees including the Somatosensory and Pain Systems (SPS), as well as an *ad hoc* reviewer for number of NIH study sections. At UCLA, she is involved in various administrative committees including the Canadian Studies Executive Council, IACUC, NSIDP graduate admissions and the Department of Psychiatry Advancement and Appointments committees.

#### **Roger Crystal, MD, President, Chief Executive Officer, Opiant Pharmaceuticals, Inc | Guest Speaker**



Dr. Roger Crystal is CEO of Opiant Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the company that developed NARCAN<sup>®</sup> Nasal Spray. Building a franchise of medicines to treat addictions and drug overdose, Opiant leads a fresh wave of therapeutic innovation to combat alarming trends in substance use, including the dramatic rise in overdose deaths linked to synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl.

Dr. Crystal is frequently featured as an opioid crisis expert, including national TV appearances with prominent U.S. news media, and has testified at The White House, advising the President's Opioid Committee. He also sits on BIO's Emerging Companies Governing Board of Directors.

Dr. Crystal previously served as the Chief Business Officer for ImaginAb, a venture capital- backed biotechnology company, leading the company's efforts in immuno-oncology and managing its pharmaceutical company partnerships and licensing deals. He began his business career with roles at Goldman Sachs, A.T. Kearney, and GE Healthcare. He holds a BMedSci in Physiology and an MD from the University of Birmingham, UK and an MBA from the London Business School.

Prior to his business career, Dr. Crystal worked for several years as a surgeon, specializing in ear, nose, and throat, head and neck surgery at leading institutions including Imperial College Healthcare, London and was awarded Membership of The Royal College of Surgeons of England (MRCS). He was also an Honorary Research Fellow at University College London and has authored a number of peer-reviewed scientific articles.

**Kelly E. Dunn, Ph.D.,** Johns Hopkins School of Medicine | CAN Team | CAN Award Recipient  
Associate Professor, Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
<https://marylandopioidresearch.com/>



Kelly E. Dunn, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences in the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Dunn received her M.S. in Applied Biopsychology from the University of New Orleans (2005), her Ph.D. in Human Behavioral Pharmacology from the University of Vermont (2009), and her MBA from the Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business (2019). Dr. Dunn's primary interest is in opioid use disorder and she has been continuously funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse for the past decade. She is the principal investigator on clinical trials ranging from the genetics of opioid misuse risk, opioid and cannabis interactions for pain treatment, examining and identifying methods for treating opioid withdrawal, and treatment of pain in persons with opioid use disorder. She also contributes to numerous other projects examining elements of opioid use disorder, including overdose risk and treatment. Dr. Dunn has served in leadership roles in organizations that support research on substance use disorder. She managed conferences for the College on the Problems of Drug Dependence and the American Psychological Association, was the President of the Division on Psychopharmacology and Substance Abuse for the APA, serves as the Co-Editor of the Journal of Addiction Medicine, and is the incoming editor for the journal "Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology". Finally, she is the editor of the 1st edition of the Oxford Handbook on Opioids and Opioid Use Disorder, available early 2023.

**Chris Evans Ph.D.,** UCLA | CAN Team  
Stefan Hatos Professor



Dr. Evans is a Full Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Psychology at UCLA and holds the Stefan Hatos Chair for Neuropharmacology. He received his Ph.D. in peptide chemistry from the Medical Research Council Institute and Imperial College in the UK working on enkephalin analogues and endogenous opioid precursor processing. Dr. Evans completed his postdoctoral training at Stanford University with Dr. Jack Barchas and then moved to UCLA where he has continued his research on the opioid system. Dr. Evans was director of the UCLA Brain Research Institute from 2014-2017 and is currently director of the Hatos Center for Neuropharmacology. His research has been supported by the Center for Opioid Receptors and Drugs of Abuse (CSORDA), an NIH-center that he directs which has been continuously funded by an NIH P50 Center of Excellence grant for the past 33 years. Dr. Evans' research accomplishments have included the identification and characterization of novel endogenous opioids (endorphins and enkephalins), the cloning of the first opioid receptor and the formative studies demonstrating opioid agonist bias. His recent research focuses on the brain circuits that sustain opioid reward-related behaviors, both in terms of brain adaptations to chronic drug-taking and relief of negative affect using a combination of mouse genetics, cell biology and pharmacology.

**Matthew W. Johnson, Ph.D.,** Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine | Guest Speaker  
Susan Hill Ward Professor in Psychedelics and Consciousness; Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences



Matthew W. Johnson, Ph.D., is The Susan Hill Ward Endowed Professor of Psychedelics and Consciousness Research at Johns Hopkins. Working with psychedelics since 2004, he is one of the world's most widely published experts on psychedelics. He has published research on psychedelics and mystical experience, personality change, tobacco smoking cessation, cancer distress treatment, and depression treatment. In 2021 he received as principal investigator the first grant in 50 years from the US government for a treatment study with a classic psychedelic, specifically psilocybin in treatment of tobacco addiction. He is also known for his expertise in behavioral economics, addiction, sexual risk behavior, and research with a wide variety of drug classes. He's been interviewed by Anderson Cooper on 60 Minutes, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, CNN, NPR, Fox News, Fox Business News, BBC and in Michael Pollan's book *How to Change Your Mind*.

**Adam Kaplin, M.D, Ph.D.,** President Mira1a Pharmaceutical and

Adjunct Faculty Johns Hopkins Medicine | CAN Team

<https://www.mymd.com/team/adam-kaplin-m-d-ph-d>



Dr. Adam Kaplin completed his undergraduate training at Yale University and his MD and PhD training at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. His research training experience includes having trained in the labs of two Nobel Laureates, and completed his PhD and postdoctoral training in the Lab of Solomon Snyder, MD, who was the 2005 recipient of the National Medal of Science (the highest science honor in the United States). Dr. Kaplin, who maintains his Adjunct Faculty appointment at Johns Hopkins, was the Chief Psychiatric Consultant to the Johns Hopkins Multiple Sclerosis and Transverse Myelitis Centers. Dr. Kaplin investigated the biological basis of the effects of the immune system on mood regulation and cognition,

and he provided neuropsychiatric care to patients afflicted with such comorbidities. His research is focused on understanding the biological basis of depression and dementia and discovering new ways to diagnose prognosticate and treat these diseases. Dr. Kaplin has transitioned to working in the pharmaceutical industry as the Chief Scientific Officer of MyMD Pharmaceuticals, which is developing first in class therapeutics for a range of autoimmune diseases and immune mediated neuropsychiatric illnesses, and President of Mira Pharmaceuticals, developing novel Cannabinoid analog therapeutics with psychotropic and anti-inflammatory benefits.

**Paul J. Kenny, Ph.D.,** Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai | CAN Team | CAN Award Recipient

<https://icahn.mssm.edu/profiles/paul-j-kenny>

Ward-Coleman Professor and Chair, Nash Family Department of Neuroscience, Director, Drug Discovery Institute (DDI)



Dr. Kenny is the Ward-Coleman Professor and Chairman of The Nash Department of Neuroscience and Director of the Drug Discovery Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Kenny is also co-founder of Eolas Therapeutics Inc., a company focused on developing novel medications for drug addiction. Dr. Kenny is a member of the the advisory council for the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and has served as a Senior Editor for The Journal of Neuroscience. Dr. Kenny is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, where he earned a degree in Biochemistry. He completed his Ph.D. in neuropharmacology at King's College London. Dr. Kenny completed his postdoctoral training at The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, CA. Prior joining the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Dr. Kenny was on the faculty of The Scripps Research Institute in Jupiter, Florida. Research in Dr. Kenny's laboratory is focused on understanding the molecular neurobiology of drug addiction, obesity and schizophrenia. Dr. Kenny has received numerous awards for his

research, including the Daniel H. Efron Research Award from the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP), the Jacob P. Waletzky Memorial Award from the Society for Neuroscience (SfN), Distinguished Investigator Award from NARSAD, and the Tom Connor Distinguished Investigator Award from Neuroscience Ireland.

**Deborah C Mash Ph.D.,** Nova Southeastern University| CAN Scientific Advisory Board

Prof. Emeritus Neurology Miller School of Medicine; CEO & Founder, DemeRx Inc.



Deborah Mash PhD is a Professor of Population Health at Nova Southeastern University. She is a neuroscientist, inventor and entrepreneur. Her current NIH-funded research portfolio spans genomic research areas targeted to the neurobiology of opioid and cocaine addictions. She joined the faculty in the NSU College of Allopathic Medicine in 2018.

She is Professor Emerita of Neurology and Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She graduated cum Laude from Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL. She received her PhD from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School. Her studies on the aging brain, neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric disorders, and drug and alcohol dependence have been reported in over 300 articles and monographs.

Deborah Mash works with a team of medical doctors, neuroscientists, pharmacologists, forensic toxicologists and clinical researchers to bring basic discoveries from her laboratory bench to the patient's bedside. Her research targets major public health concerns for the millennium: diseases of the aging brain and drug and alcohol dependence.

## **Courtney Miller, Ph.D., UF Scripps Biomedical Research | CAN Team | CAN Award Recipient**

<https://scripps.ufl.edu/profile/miller-courtney-5/>

Professor, Departments of Molecular Medicine and Neuroscience

Director of Academic Affairs, Acting CEO, Myosin Therapeutics



Courtney Miller, PhD, is a Professor in the Departments of Molecular Medicine and Neuroscience and the Director of Academic Affairs at UF Scripps Biomedical Research. The primary focus of Dr. Miller's lab is the discovery and development of therapeutics for diseases and disorders of the brain. Dr. Miller's lab is currently developing medications to prevent substance use relapse and to treat glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. Dr. Miller's efforts have been recognized in a variety of ways, including being selected as a Fellow in the Kauffman Foundation Venture Capital Program, named Scripps Outstanding Mentor of the Year, and awarded the prestigious Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) by President Obama for her work in addiction. Dr. Miller is also co-founder and acting CEO of Myosin Therapeutics, an early-stage life science company focused on developing new medications based on molecular nanomotors. Dr. Miller has a passion for advancing women in science and, in 2007, co-founded the Professional Women's Nexus (PWN), driven by the mission of retaining women and other underrepresented groups in the higher ranks of science. PWN currently has a membership of nearly 1,000 scientists.

## **Kurt Rasmussen, Ph.D., CSO, Delix Therapeutics | CAN Scientific Advisory Board**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kurt-rasmussen-phd/>



Kurt Rasmussen, Ph.D., is the Chief Scientific Officer at Delix Therapeutics, a new company focused on developing neuroplasticity-promoting therapeutics for multiple indications, including substance use disorders. Previous to Delix, he was the Director of the Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), leading their efforts to promote the development of safe and effective pharmacotherapies, behavioral therapies, and devices to treat substance use disorders. Previous to NIDA, he worked as a senior research scientist in the Neuroscience Division of Eli Lilly & Co., leading efforts to discover novel treatments for psychiatric disorders such as depression and schizophrenia.

Dr. Rasmussen's career spans over 30 years of highly innovative scientific research in neuroscience pharmaceutical discovery, from hypothesis generation to clinical candidate evaluation. He received his B.A. with honors and distinction from Cornell University, his Ph.D. in neuroscience and psychology from Princeton University, and was a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine.

## **Panelists who are living with SUD or have experienced loss of a loved one to SUD:**

### **Nancy Davis | CAN Founder and President**



Nancy Davis was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. In 1987 she moved to California and now resides in Los Angeles with her husband and children. She is an extremely dedicated philanthropist, jewelry and clothing designer and author. Most importantly, she is a full-time mother who is devoted to her children. Nancy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 33 in 1991. She was determined to devote her time, relationships and resources to finding a cure and founded Race to Erase MS in 1993 to fund MS research. Nancy's hope, courage and strength continue to inspire her to maintain a vibrant quality of life despite this chronic disease, but most of all, she remains positive, continues to live her life to the fullest, and is tireless in her efforts to finding the cure for MS.

In 2018 Nancy founded Cure Addiction Now with her son Jason Davis who had struggled with substance use disorder. Jason tragically passed away in February of 2020. His brother Brandon Davis and sister's, Isabella and Mariella Rickel, have joined Nancy in the foundation's commitment to fund ground-breaking research to find therapies to help stop the vicious cycle of substance use disorder (SUD) and help people not only detox but stay in permanent recovery. This was Jason's passion and as a family it has become our personal mission.



## Jodi Barber | Mother/Advocate



Jodi Barber lost her 19-year-old son and 3 of his close friends to an accidental prescription drug overdose in 2010. She soon realized her son's death and the many others that year were preventable and became an advocate. She has made several trips to the State Capitol and each year holds an event to honor families and their loved ones lost to an overdose. Jodi and Christine Wood produced a short documentary called *Overtaken* which is used in schools as part of the health curriculum as well as in rehabs, churches, courtrooms and DUI classes.

## Jason Wahler | Recovery Advocate



Jason Wahler is a popular TV personality, Host, Actor, Advocate, and Philanthropist who has appeared on hit TV shows like MTV'S Laguna Beach, The Hills, Celebrity Rap Superstar and The Hills: New Beginnings. After years of publicly battling with addiction, he appeared on Dr. Drew's Celebrity Rehab and began a new life in recovery. Jason has since dedicated his life to raising awareness on substance abuse, and mental health, with the hope of one day changing the public's negative perception. Over the years Jason has formed partnerships with several key advocates including world-renowned MD, Dr. Daniel Headrick, a distinguished fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and, Tim Storey, acclaimed author, speaker,

and life coach. In 2017 the E! Network produced a "[True Hollywood Story](#)" featuring Jason's remarkable transformation, highlighting his dedication to recovery and his mission as a recovery advocate. That same year Jason received the esteemed Faces & Voice's "Voice of Recovery Award" in Washington, D.C., honoring his efforts to make a difference within the recovery community. In 2021 Jason was able to provide over \$1 million in treatment scholarships through his work as marketing director and co-chair on the board of The Red Songbird Foundation.