

Children's Mercy Kansas City

SHARE @ Children's Mercy

[Our Story Continues](#)

[Our history](#)

2-1-2016

Tom Curran, PhD, FRS, Named Executive Director of Children's Research Institute

Children's Mercy Hospital

Let us know how access to this publication benefits you

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlyexchange.childrensmercy.org/recent_history



Part of the [Bioinformatics Commons](#), [Genetics and Genomics Commons](#), [Health and Medical Administration Commons](#), [Health Services Research Commons](#), [Laboratory and Basic Science Research Commons](#), [Pediatrics Commons](#), and the [Pharmacology, Toxicology and Environmental Health Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Children's Mercy Hospital, "Tom Curran, PhD, FRS, Named Executive Director of Children's Research Institute" (2016). *Our Story Continues*. 3.

https://scholarlyexchange.childrensmercy.org/recent_history/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Our history at SHARE @ Children's Mercy. It has been accepted for inclusion in Our Story Continues by an authorized administrator of SHARE @ Children's Mercy. For more information, please contact hlsteel@cmh.edu.

Tom Curran, PhD, FRS, named Executive Director of Children's Research Institute

Tom Curran, PhD, FRS, has been named Chief Scientific Officer and Executive Director of the Children's Mercy Children's Research Institute (CRI), effective Feb. 1 [2016]

Dr. Curran comes to Children's Mercy from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), where he has served as Deputy Scientific Director since 2006 and Director of Basic Scientific Research in the Center for Childhood Cancer Research since 2007. He also served as Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

The Children's Research Institute at Children's Mercy Kansas City was established last year to build on the hospital's century-long history in pediatric research and to focus the hospital's future research efforts in four key areas:



Tom Curran, PhD, FRS, Chief Scientific Officer and Executive Director of the Children's Research Institute.

- **Pediatric Genomic Medicine:** Children's Mercy has the first genome center fully integrated inside a children's hospital. Its Center for Pediatric Genomic Medicine develops testing that rapidly accelerates the diagnosis and treatment of childhood genetic diseases, including the world's fastest whole-genome DNA sequencing test.
- **Clinical Pharmacology:** Children's Mercy, home to the largest pediatric clinical pharmacology program in North America, is leading the development and reformulation of drugs to treat children more effectively and safely. Children are not simply "little adults" who respond to drugs according to size. Rather, children's developing organs and changes in metabolism throughout infancy and childhood affect how drugs are processed by immature or maturing bodies. Children's Mercy is leading the way to formulate medicines and personalize their use – known as precision medicine – for this unique and vulnerable population.
- **Health Services and Outcomes:** Children's Mercy is focused on discovering new methods for enhancing the patient-centered experience and promoting the best possible treatment outcomes. The knowledge gained from this research supports the hospital's commitment to maintaining the highest standard of care for all patients, regardless of racial, ethnic or economic background.
- **Health Care Delivery:** From the time of the hospital's founding in 1897, one of its driving missions has been to ensure all children throughout the region have equal access to the outstanding care provided at Children's Mercy. Researchers in this area are focused on innovative methods for achieving this goal through telemedicine, advanced technology, educational programs and enhanced communications tools.

Prior to formally establishing the Children's Research Institute last year, Children's Mercy brought together a panel of national experts, the External Scientific Advisory Board. After a top-to-bottom analysis of the hospital's current research capabilities, the ESAB concluded, "The unique culture,

financial strength and alignment of community and hospital vision do not exist in many other regions of the country. Collectively, these assets set the stage for the development of a research program with extraordinary potential.”

Following the ESAB’s report, Children’s Mercy conducted an exhaustive national search for the right leader of its new Children’s Research Institute. “Children’s Mercy – and all of Kansas City – are fortunate to have one of the top scientific researchers, educators and medical leaders joining us to accelerate Children’s Mercy’s efforts to bring translational research and precision medicine to all children in our region,” said Michael Artman, MD, Chairman, Department of Pediatrics.

Originally from Scotland, Dr. Curran received his PhD from London’s Imperial Cancer Research Fund Laboratories and University College before going on to a postdoctoral fellowship at the Salk Institute in San Diego, Calif. After working in industry and rising to the position of Associate Director at the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology in Nutley, N.J., he founded the Department of Developmental Neurobiology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Memphis Tenn., serving as Chairman from 1995 to 2006.

Dr. Curran has been elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Microbiology, the Royal Society, London, the Academy of the American Association for Cancer Research, and as a Member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, USA, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He served on the National Cancer Institute Board of Scientific Advisors from 2000-2005 and is a Past President of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Dr. Curran’s research interests have spanned the areas of molecular biology, cancer research and neurobiology. Currently, his laboratory is focused on

pediatric brain tumors, brain development and genomics, concentrating on the goal of finding new treatments for childhood brain tumors. He has published more than 290 research articles that have been cited more than 50,000 times.

During his tenure as Deputy Scientific Director of CHOP, Dr. Curran helped establish a premier pediatric research program, working closely with Dr. Phil Johnson, CSO, to manage resources and build infrastructure supporting scientific innovation that translates discoveries into improved therapies for children. Dr. Curran also conceived and established the Children's Brain Tumor Tissue Consortium, supported by the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation that provided a national forum for sharing of patient biospecimens and data to accelerate progress in pediatric brain tumor research.

"I am thrilled by the opportunity to come to Children's Mercy Kansas City and build the Children's Research Institute," said Dr. Curran. "Children's Mercy puts children first and our goal is to build a Research Institute, seamlessly integrated with the Hospital that ensures our patients can take advantage of the latest scientific advances. Science and Medicine should not be viewed as distinct entities but rather as close partners, working in concert, to improve the health and well-being of all children."