

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)
Institutional Biosafety Committee
July 09, 2026
Minutes

Meeting Attendance:

Voting Members

Dr. Catherine Denicourt (Chair)
Dr. Taichi Goto
Dr. Carolyn Grimes
Dr. Nicholas Justice
Dr. Yahuan Lou
Dr. Duc Nguyen
Dr. Eunsu Park
Dr. Scott Patlovich
Dr. Brett Perkison
Dr. Jose Portugal
Mr. Spencer Chichester (SM)
Mr. Petko Ivanov (CM)
Mr. Imad Khalil (CM)
Mrs. Marivonne Rodriguez (CM)

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Joy Harrison
Mr. Colin Harrison
Mr. Zack Becker
Mrs. Rebecca Kairis
Mrs. Allison Lino

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Denicourt at 3:02 PM.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chairperson reminded the committee about the conflict of interest procedure. She also reminded the committee members that all protocols that are discussed at the meeting are to be considered confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the meeting with non-IBC members.

3. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (June 11, 2026)

Approved = 11
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 3

4. IBC Administrative Items

None

Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules Research Applications Review

During the review the committee assessed the containment levels as well as the facilities, procedures, practices and training and expertise of the personnel involved in recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules research. The committee also reviewed agent

characteristics, types of manipulations planned, sources of the inserted nucleic acid sequences, the nature of the inserted nucleic acid sequences and whether an attempt will be made to obtain expression of a foreign gene, and if so, the protein that will be produced. Furthermore, the PI must determine the applicable section(s) of the *NIH Guidelines*.

5. Clinical Protocol Reviews (HGT)

None

6. Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-055 – Dr. Xin Ge – “Therapeutic Monoclonal Antibodies Inhibiting Proteases of Biomedical Importance” AND “Protease Activated Bi-Specific Antibody Prodrugs for Efficient Transportation Across Blood-Brain Barrier”

Containment Level: BSL-2; ABSL-1

NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-D-4-a, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol must complete safety training

Approved = 14

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved, pending completion of safety training requirements.

IBC-26-059 – Dr. Nicholas De Lay – “Regulation of gene expression by small noncoding RNAs in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*”

Containment Level: BSL-2; no animal work associated with this protocol

NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-F-8

Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training

Approved = 14

Opposed = 0

Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations. [Discussion was had for adding in statement declaring intent to stop work and notify Biosafety should virulence increase after manipulations in the experimental strain of *S. pneumoniae*. The experimental strain is already avirulent – lacking a capsule – so there is reasonable evidence to consider the probability of an increase in virulence unlikely to occur. The WT is cultured alongside but will not be manipulated.]

IBC-26-061 – Dr. Abishai Dominic – “Molecular, Genetic, and Imaging Studies of Signaling and Biomarkers in Vascular, Cancer, and Oral Health”

Containment Level: BSL-2; no animal work associated with this protocol
NIH Section: III-D-1-a, III-D-3-a, III-F-8
Training status: Personnel listed on the protocol are current on safety training
Approved = 14
Opposed = 0
Abstained = 0

The protocol was presented and approved with no additional recommendations.

7. Conditionally Exempt Protocol Reviews

IBC-26-046 – Dr. Zhongcong Xie – “Biomarkers and Pathogenesis of Perioperative Neurocognitive Disorders”

IBC-26-049 – Dr. Paul Schulz – “Discovering early markers for Alzheimer’s Disease”

IBC-26-052 – Dr. Savannah Bowman – “A Pragmatic Randomized Pilot Trial of Interleukin-17 Inhibition versus Janus Kinase Inhibition after Tumor Necrosis Factor-alpha Inhibitor Failure in Axial Spondyloarthritis”

IBC-26-053 – Dr. Gabriel Fries – “Evaluation of premature biological aging in mid- to late-life adults with bipolar disorder”

IBC-26-060 – Dr. Gabriel Fries – “Epigenetic Biomarkers of Suicidal Ideation”

8. Protocol Updates

a. Significant updates:

None

b. Administrative updates:

IBC-21-076 – Dr. Ali Azhdarinia – “Molecular Imaging Probe Development”

- **Addition of bioagent:** Human small cell lung cancer cell line (H524), PDX-derived cancer cell lines (NEC-1452, NEC-913), Human pancreatic cancer cell line (GOT1)
- **Update AWC number:** Adding AWC-25-0007, AWC-25-0008, AWC-26-0007, AWC-25-0035

IBC-22-006 – Dr. Chun-Teh Lee – “Use of the bioengineered bacteria to treat periodontitis”

- **PI Transfer:** From Dr. Simon Young to Dr. Chun-Teh Lee
- **Addition of rDNA:** *E. coli* DH10beta harboring the pLITE201 plasmid
- **Addition of bioagent:** *E. coli* DH10beta
- **Update AWC number:** Adding AWC-25-0010

IBC-22-047 – Dr. Mary Farach-Carson – “Mechanosensing in the Bone-Lacunar-

Canalicular System” AND “ISS/Collaborative Research: 3D Bone Marrow Analogs to Determine the Contribution of Mechanical Signals to Aging MSC Function in Microgravity” AND “Assessing the Impact of Resolvins on Osteolasts in a 3D Biomimetic Implant Culture System” AND “Mapping Cellular Interplay of the Osteocyte Connectome in Metastatic Renal Cell Carcinoma”

- **Removal of personnel:** Allan Hu, Katelyn Kennedy, Sara Babban, Max DeLeon
- **Addition of personnel:** Lillie Ballanco

IBC-22-060 – Dr. Chun-Teh Lee – “Bioactive Hydrogel Matrix for Gingiva Regeneration”

- **Removal of personnel:** Sara Babban
- **Addition of personnel:** Jiaqi Huang

IBC-22-069 – Dr. Chun-Teh Lee – “The Impact of Race/Ethnicity on Inflammation Regulation and Microbiome Interactions in Periodontitis”

- **Addition of personnel:** Jiaqi Huang

IBC-23-015 – Dr. Mary Farach-Carson – “Acquisition and Experimental Use of Head and Neck Tissue for Tissue Engineering and Biomarker Discovery” AND “Salivary Tissues for Relief of Xerostomia” AND “Directing Collective Epithelial Morphology in Space and Time Using a Light-Based Carving Tool” AND “Salivary Avatars for Screening Stimulants and Sialagogues” AND “Cell-Based Therapy in Minipig Model of Radiation-Induced Xerostomia” AND “Development of Surgically Implantable Minor Salivary Gland-Based Constructs for Treatment of Xerostomia” AND “SARS-CoV-2 Latency in Oral and Salivary Tissues” AND “Functional Biointegration of Bioengineered Salivary Tissues in Irradiated Animal Models” AND “Epithelial Organization in Thin Bioprinted Hydrogel”

- **Addition of personnel:** Deep Modi

IBC-23-048 – Dr. Eunhee Kim – “Understanding the vascular complication and formation in stroke and brain arteriovenous malformation”

- **Removal of personnel:** Hyejin Park, Bridger Freeman
- **Addition of personnel:** April Zahid, Raha Bagheri

IBC-24-073 – Dr. Long Jon Wu – “Studying microglia functions in health and diseases via viral tools and plasmid containing nanoparticles in mice”

- **Removal of personnel:** Praveen Pallegar
- **Addition of bioagents:** Mouse glioma cells (Dnp53-HRasV12, Dnp53-PDGFB, GSC005)

IBC-24-077 – Dr. Xiaodong Cheng – “Exchange Protein directly Activated by cAMP (EPAC): Structure, Function” AND “Epac1 as a novel therapeutic target for diabetic retinopathy (R01EY033319)” AND “Significance of Epac signaling in renal Na⁺ handling and hypertension (R01DK136462)” AND “**Epac1 Signaling Promotes Retinal Neuronal Injury During Tauopathy (R01AG091781)**”

- **Addition of bolded title**

IBC-25-007 – Dr. Diane Santa Maria – “Assessing the use of MY-RIDE, a just-in-time adaptive intervention, to Improve HIV prevention and Substance Use in Youth

Experiencing Homelessness”

- **Addition of Work:** Addition of PCR for Chlamydia and Neisseria gonorrhoeae to replace the Everlywell kits. Norgen’s Chlamydia/Neisseria gonorrhoeae TaqMan PCR Kit will be used.
- **Removal of personnel:** Traquel Harrison
- **Addition of Personnel:** Zhiyin Yu, Widumini Liyanage

IBC-25-023 – Dr. Juli Bai – “Immune regulation and metabolic diseases”

- **Addition of Work:** use of AAV8 vectors to delete and restore CHDH or BADH activity to rescue liver phenotypes associated with hepatocyte-specific SIRT3 deficiency
- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV8 encoding wild-type, KR- or KQ-mutated CHDH or ALDH7A1 (BADH) or GFP controls
- **Addition of Personnel:** Shuying Wang and Han Dali

IBC-25-093 – Dr. Zhiqiang An – “Cancer drug resistance mechanisms in the HER/ErbB signalling pathways and Proteolytic cleavage of antibodies and its applications in designer cancer therapeutics” AND “ErbB signalling pathways” AND “Discovery and Characterization of Novel Anti-endotrophin Monoclonal Antibodies as Drug Leads for Cancer Therapy” AND “Counteracting Tumor Evasion of Antibody Immunity by a Novel Therapeutic Strategy” AND “New Antibody Therapy for Treating Leukemia” AND “Therapeutic Monoclonal Antibody Lead Optimization and Development Core (CPRIT Core Grant RP150551)” AND “Validation of LILIRB family of receptors and cancer targets and development of LILIRB targeting antibodies for cancer treatment” AND “Development of Hemichannel-Targeting Antibody Therapies for Breast Cancer Bone Metastasis” AND “Advanced Cancer Antibody Drug Modalities Core Facilities” AND “ITIM-receptors for cancer treatment” AND “Antibodies targeting S2 domain of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein” AND “Targeting immunosuppressive myeloid cells in tumor microenvironment” AND “Reprogramming myeloid cells to inhibit cancer development” AND “Study TREM2 iso2 knockin only iPS induced microglia in Alzheimer’s disease.” And “Study long-term effect of TREM2-219 (iso2) in 5xFAD mice via AAV” and “mouse cancer parental and stable cell lines for antibodies evaluation on tumor growth”

- **Addition of Work:** Adding work related to using the added human induced pluripotent stem cell (iPS (IMR90)-4) to test BBB permeability and transcytosis efficiency of transferrin receptor shuttle antibodies.
- **Addition of bioagent:** Human Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS (IMR90)-4)
- **Addition of Personnel:** Jenna Liu, Xiaozhen Kang, Shanila Shakil

IBC-26-006 – Dr. Dongjoo Choi – “Studying astrocyte function in Alzheimer’s disease via viral tools in mice”

- **Addition of rDNA:** AAV2/9-GFAP-R47H Trem2 ORF-AAVs (Phagocytic Receptor) and AAV2/9-GFAP-RUNX1 ORF-AAVs (Transcription Factor)
- **Addition of Mouse Strains:** NLGF/NLGF;Sox9f/f;Aldh111-GFP; Aldh111-creER(AD model with label, creER and Sox9 flox site) and Trem2 f/f (Trem2 deletion) and NLGF/NLGF;Trem2f/f;Aldh111-GFP ; Aldh111-creER(AD model with label, creER and Trem2 flox site) and NFIA f/f (NFIA flox site) and Cas9 (Cas9 insert)
- **Addition of Locations of Work:** SRB 235A and 231A (CLAMC)

IBC-26-009 – Dr. Gloria Heresi – “Biorepository for present and future studies to learn and understand re-emergent and emerging infectious diseases in Pediatrics” AND “BIO FUTURE BIOBANK” AND “Molecular Luminescence for Respiratory Pathogens”

- **Addition of IRB Study:** HSC-MS-26-0537 for the collection and biobank storage of human urine

IBC-26-041 – Dr. Neha Arora – “Investigating Metabolic Regulation in Head and Neck and Oral Cancers”

- **Addition of personnel:** Eliot Gottsegen, Genie Bui

9. BSL-3 Update

Discussion on the proposed BioFire Global Special Pathogens testing.

10. Biological Safety Program Activity Report

The Biological Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review. There was one response in June for a patient blood spill at the Quest lab at UTPB.

11. Environmental Protection Program Activity Report

The Environmental Protection Program Safety Program Activity Report was included in the packet for review.

12. Other Items

None

13. Next Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2026, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, virtually via Microsoft TEAMS.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Denicourt at 3:46 PM.