UNLV and the Grant-a-Gift Foundation have dedicated efforts toward establishing a center of excellence in the care of children with autism, and the new Ackerman Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Solutions has now opened to serve the public of Nevada in this much-needed health care field.

Clinic services began on July 11, 2016. A total of 30 new patient visits thus far (each taking a minimum of one hour of encounter time) have been conducted by Dr. Michael Nasiak, a medical geneticist and faculty member of NIPM, during the two-and-a-half-day clinic allotment weekly.

The impact of medical genetics services within the community has already been felt. Such services have not only successfully evaluated cases which may not have been medically addressed otherwise, but have also recognized cases that reflect previously undiagnosed genetic disorders. So far, at least one-fifth of these cases have demonstrated the need for much more complete genomic evaluations that look at heritable (or de novo) syndromic conditions. Additionally, a large majority of all these cases have not had the minimum diagnostic objective testing performed that is standard for autism cases nationally; and none have undergone a complete evaluation in regard to oligo-SNP microarray and whole-exome sequencing, which is routinely done in major academic institutions nationally.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts already developing among the medical providers at this center, each of which has unique expertise and is a regional leader in their discipline, a new era of therapeutics for children afflicted with autism in Nevada has begun.
NIPM Research Advances
Drs. Wu, Chen, and Schiller published several new papers on personalized medicine this quarter. The Schiller Lab internally reported two new invention disclosures for commercialization.

NIPM Research Funding
NIPM’s $11.3 million COBRE application to the National Institutes of Health received a good score from NIH. While the grant may be funded, in the event that it is not, NIPM will still be in a good position to resubmit in the coming year.

Other awards include a seed grant to Dr. Jingchun Chen to investigate the role of neuroinflammation in schizophrenia as well as a Big Data Spoke on precision neuromedicine to Justin Zhan from the National Science Foundation.

NIPM Hires New Staff
We welcome our new program coordinator, Erin Azua, and business development officer, James Timmins. Azua has extensive experience at UNLV. Timmins previously played a role in the development of the Gene Gun and has worked at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories.

NIPM 2017 Annual Retreat
Please save the date for our 2017 retreat on February 10, 2017. You can watch videos from last year’s retreat on NIPM’s YouTube channel, NIPMatUNLV.

NIPM’s Fall Seminar Series
Upcoming seminars in the next few months include Dr. Rob Rowley, who has experience in using genomics in health care and will be opening our NIPM Seminar Series on Sep. 16, 2016, with a talk titled “Diagnosis & Prognosis of ID Clinical Phenotypes Using Gene Expression Serum Biomarkers.”

Other seminars will be held on Oct. 14 and Nov. 18; Dr. Rong Chen (director of clinical genome informatics at the Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai Medical Center) will speak during one of these slots. We invite local physicians to learn how personalized medicine can be integrated into their practices while receiving CME credit at the same time.