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MEI Welcomes New Director of Research and Development and Two New Board Members

Madison, Wisconsin—The non-profit [Medical Education Institute \(MEI\)](http://mei.org) recently hired a new key staff member and added two new Board of Directors members. *“We are thrilled about these additions to our team of staff and advisors—their strong, diverse backgrounds and commitment to helping people with chronic diseases will help ensure that MEI continues to innovate and advance our mission!”* noted MEI Executive Director, Dori Schatell, MS.

MEI is delighted to announce that Renata Sledge, MSW, LCSW, is our new Director of Research and Development. Renata’s research and clinical interests focus on collaboration with people impacted by chronic illness to improve quality of life, promote positive family adjustment, and support shared decision-making. She has published and presented on a variety of topics, including music therapy in cancer care, depression and distress management with end-stage renal disease and cancer, ethics, and technology in social work practice. Renata is a doctoral candidate in the Medical Family Therapy Program in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, focusing on family decision-making.



“For 27 years, MEI, Inc. have been leaders in centering the patient voice in chronic and end-stage kidney disease education, research, and policy,” said Sledge. *“I am looking forward to joining the staff, Board of Directors, and vibrant on-line community of MEI and developing a research agenda that continues to help people affected by chronic disease to meaningfully and efficiently manage and improve their health.”*

MEI is pleased to announce two terrific additions to its Board of Directors: Fred Peter, MBA, and Eric Weinhandl, PhD, MS. Fred has applied his extensive global business and marketing experience to the renal community for years, starting as an engineering manager in the Renal Division at Baxter Healthcare in 1979. In 2007, he co-founded Medical Device Experts to support successful design, manufacturing, and marketing of new medical devices. Fred was member of the Board of Directors and Treasurer for the International Society for Hemodialysis (ISHD) from 2002-2008.



“When MEI approached me to join the board, I was both honored and elated,” said Peter. “MEI is one of those rare organizations that truly lives their mission. They help people who happen to have renal disease to understand and live with their situation. My career has primarily been in the dialysis world, and my hope is that I can provide support and guidance to their mission.”

Dr. Weinhandl is a senior epidemiologist at the Chronic Disease Research Group (CDRG), a division of the Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute (HHRI) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has conducted chronic kidney disease research since 2004. Dr. Weinhandl worked at CDRG from 2004 to 2015 and again since May 2020, at NxStage Medical from 2015 to 2019, and at Fresenius Medical Care North America from 2019 to 2020. He is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Care and Health Systems in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota.



“Roughly 10 years ago, I became acquainted with MEI through Home Dialysis Central,” said Dr. Weinhandl. “As a passionate advocate for home hemodialysis, I greatly appreciate the camaraderie that Home Dialysis Central encourages and the support it offers to patients and their families. As we enter a new era in which home dialysis is explicitly encouraged by Medicare, I’m honored and excited to help guide MEI forward.”

In addition to Fred Peter and Eric Weinhandl, other dedicated MEI Board members are John Sadler, MD, Keith Johnson, MD, Betty Chewning, MD, and Debbie Brouwer-Maier, RN, CNN.

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