



## Press release

For immediate release

Contact: Cristy Balcells, Executive Director  
info@mitoaction.org  
1-888-648-6228

## MitoAction hosts 4th Mitochondrial Disease Clinical Conference

In an ongoing effort to improve mitochondrial disease patient care, MitoAction, in collaboration with the organization's Medical Advisory Committee and the University of Virginia, will host the 2015 Mitochondrial Disease Clinical Conference on March 21, 2015 at the Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, in Atlanta, GA.

This course is an effort to increase the knowledge of primary care physicians, pediatricians, nurses and healthcare providers who are not mitochondrial specialists, but who play an active role in coordinating care and managing symptoms for these patients.

Mitochondrial disease is a heterogeneous group of disorders characterized by impaired energy production that affects physical, cognitive, and behavioral functioning. Clinical recognition by community clinicians is critical to timely diagnosis and management of patients with mitochondrial disease.

The conference, "Managing Mitochondrial Disease: Current Trends & Perspectives," is a dynamic one-day CME course focused on the most clinically relevant case studies and practical approaches to managing patients with mitochondrial disorders, led by expert clinicians in mitochondrial medicine. Focus areas include genetics, coordinated care and community health management, gastrointestinal issues, and the dual diagnosis of mitochondrial disease and autism. The conference has been planned and implemented in accordance with the University of Virginia School of Medicine, which is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians and healthcare providers.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of educating and engaging the community of primary care physicians who care for our children and family members who suffer from mitochondrial disease," said Cristy Balcells, RN MSN, Executive Director of MitoAction. "This clinical conference provides a platform for that dialogue, and to help overcome misconceptions about mitochondrial disease. It is our goal to focus on what is most clinically relevant and practical so that healthcare providers are truly better equipped to manage their patients with mitochondrial disorders."

Mitochondrial disease is an inherited chronic illness that can be present at birth or develop later in life. It causes debilitating physical, developmental, and cognitive disabilities with symptoms including poor growth; loss of muscle coordination; muscle weakness and pain; seizures; vision and/or hearing loss; gastrointestinal issues; learning disabilities; and heart, liver, or kidney failure. About 1 in 2,000 people has Mito. The disease is progressive and there is no cure.

Course faculty include: Amel Karaa MD, Massachusetts General Hospital; Fran Kendall MD, VMP Genetics; Richard Frye MD PhD, Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute; Dmitriy Niyazov MD, Oschner Health Center for Children, New Orleans LA; Jose Garza MD, GI Care for Kids, Atlanta GA; David Marcus PhD, pediatric neuropsychologist at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; William Wilson MD, Pediatric Genetics, University of Virginia; Cristy Balcells RN MSN, Executive Director of MitoAction.

To register or for more information, please visit [www.mitoaction.org/clinicalconference](http://www.mitoaction.org/clinicalconference) or email [info@mitoaction.org](mailto:info@mitoaction.org).

*MitoAction is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children, adults, and families living with mitochondrial disease through support, education, outreach, advocacy, and clinical research initiatives.*