Open Session Part 1: Committee on Strategies to Enhance Pediatric Health Research Funded by NIH

MARCH 13, 2025 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM EST

Speaker Bios

Gayathri J. Dowling, PhD, is the Director of the Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development (ABCD) Project at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The ABCD Study®, the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States, has enrolled nearly 12,000 children ages 9-10 and is following them through their teens and into early adulthood to explore how diverse experiences during adolescence shape brain, cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development. As a result of the ABCD Study's open science model, there have been more than 1,300 scientific papers published using ABCD data. These publications span a wide array of topics including, but not limited to, psychiatric conditions, screen time, neighborhood disadvantage, substance use, obesity/weight gain, genetics, and their interactions with brain structure and function.

Walter J. Koroshetz, MD, serves as Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. He joined NINDS in 2007 as Deputy Director and has held leadership roles in multiple programs including co-leading the NIH's BRAIN Initiative, the NIH RECOVER Initiative on Post Acute Sequelae of COVID-19, pain research in the Helping to End Addiction Long Term (HEAL) Initiative, the Accelerated Medicine Partnerships for Parkinsons and the Public Private Partnership in ALS. Before joining NINDS, Dr. Koroshetz served as Vice Chair of Neurology, Director of stroke and neurointensive care services at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) neurologist at Mass General Brigham and in the MGH Huntington's Disease Clinic. He was a professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and led neurology resident training at MGH between 1990 and 2007.

Sara Van Driest, MD, PhD, is the Director of Pediatrics for the NIH All of Us Research Program. She completed her MD and PhD at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine followed by Pediatric residency and Clinical Pharmacology fellowship at Vanderbilt. Prior to joining the NIH, Dr. Van Driest was an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) in the Division of General Pediatrics. Her laboratory at VUMC was focused on pediatric precision medicine, specifically using electronic health records and other clinical data to fill knowledge gaps in pharmacogenetics. As Director of Pediatrics for All of Us, she leads all efforts to enroll pediatric participants who reflect the population of the United States.

Matthew Gillman, MD, joined the National Institutes of Health in 2016 as the inaugural director of the Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Program in the Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH). He joined NIH from Harvard Medical School where he was a professor of population medicine; he was also professor of nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Gillman has a background in the fields of epidemiology, pediatrics, and internal medicine. He came to NIH with experience in leading or collaborating on cohort studies and clinical trials. Dr. Gillman received a bachelor's degree from Harvard College, earned a medical degree from Duke University, completed a med/peds residency at North Carolina Memorial Hospital, and received a master's degree in epidemiology from Harvard School of Public Health.

Tiina K. Urv, PhD, currently serves as the director of the Extramural Research Program in the Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR). She leads the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN), a multidisciplinary national program. As the lead of RDCRN program, Tiina collaborates with 10 NIH Institutes to manage 22 consortia and a central Data Management Coordinating Center (link is external). The RDCRN has more than 200 participating sites in 17 countries and more than 100 Patient Advocacy Groups as research

partners and conducts research on about 200 rare diseases. Before joining the ORDR, Urv was a program director in the Division of Clinical Innovation where she provided stewardship for multiple Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program hubs and worked with the Trial Innovation Network as well as NCATS' ORDR. Tiina came to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in October 2006, working as a program director at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Branch. Prior to joining NIH, she was an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center and a research scientist at the New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities. At NICHD, Tiina coordinated the Hunter Kelly Newborn Screening Research Program, chaired the trans-NIH Fragile X research program, and managed a diverse portfolio of basic, behavioral and bio-behavioral research related to developmental disabilities and rare diseases. Tiina is a developmental disabilities specialist with a Ph.D. from Columbia University. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington.

David C. Goff, Jr., MD, PhD, is the Deputy Director for Precision Medicine and Data Science, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Health. In this role, Dr. Goff is responsible for advancing the Institute's mission and vision for harnessing cutting-edge data science approaches to drive precision prevention, detection, and treatment of heart, lung, blood, and sleep conditions to improve community health and patient care outcomes. In this role, he serves as NHLBI's executive sponsor for the TransOmics for Precision Medicine (TOPMed) program and the BioData Catalyst program, NHLBI's cloud-based data science ecosystem. He also serves as a Senior Scientific Program Director for RECOVER, NIH's Long COVID program. Prior to joining the NHLBI, he served as Dean and Professor of Epidemiology in the Colorado School of Public Health and as Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention at the Wake Forest School of Medicine. He received an MD from the University of North Carolina and a PhD in epidemiology from the University of Texas-Houston School of Public Health. He trained in internal medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Gail D. Pearson, MD, ScD, FAHA, FACC, is a pediatric cardiologist, and currently a Senior Pediatric Science Advisor at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), NIH. Prior to transitioning to this role in April 2024, she served as Associate Director of the Division of Cardiovascular Sciences, and the Director of the Office of Clinical Research at NHLBI. During her tenure of more than 27 years at NHLBI, her major accomplishments include spearheading the creation of the Bench to Bassinet Program, a comprehensive translational research program in pediatric cardiovascular diseases that includes the Pediatric Heart Network and the Pediatric Cardiac Genomics Consortium. During the COVID pandemic, Dr. Pearson helped lead development and implementation of the federal research efforts to understand and combat Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C). She is also a senior pediatric lead for the NIH RECOVER program, focused on long COVID across the pediatric lifespan. Dr. Pearson earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan, a Master of Public Administration degree from American University and Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Science degrees from Johns Hopkins University. She completed her pediatric residency and fellowship in pediatric cardiology at Children's National Hospital. In addition to her work at NHLBI, Dr. Pearson spent more than two decades caring for children with heart disease and mentoring fellows and junior faculty at Children's National Hospital, where, until August 2020, she was an Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics and is now Professor Emerita. Dr. Pearson has received numerous awards including the American Heart Association's Cardiovascular Disease in the Young Meritorious Achievement Award, the NHLBI Excellence in Mentorship Award, and several NHLBI, NICHD, and NIH Director's Awards. She is the author of more than 100 articles, book chapters and abstracts.