

Independent Analysis of Department of Defense's Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration Program

Committee

George W. Rutherford

Chair

George W. Rutherford (Chair, he/him) is a professor of epidemiology, preventive medicine, pediatrics and history at the University of California, San Francisco. He heads the Division of Infectious Disease and Global Epidemiology in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine and is interim director of the Institute for Global Health Sciences. His work focuses on the epidemiology and control of communicable diseases. He has served as state health officer and state epidemiologist for California. His current academic interest is HIV and other epidemic-prone diseases in low- and middle-income countries. He is an advisor to the World Health Organization and has also served on numerous National Academy of Medicine boards and committees, focusing on HIV and military and veteran populations. He was the first chair of the Department of Veterans Affairs Research Advisory Council. He has recently completed a year as an honorary professor in the Department of Public Health, Environments and Society at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is board certified in pediatrics and in public health and general preventive medicine. Rutherford received an A.B. in classics, a B.S. in chemistry, and an M.A. in history from Stanford University and a M.D. from Duke University.

Brian A. Boyd

Member

Brian A. Boyd (he/him) is the William C. Friday distinguished professor in the School of Education and interim director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Boyd was previously director of the Juniper Gardens Children's Project at the University of Kansas and is past vice president of the International Society for Autism Research. Boyd's research has focused on children on the autism spectrum, testing and implementation of effective interventions and supports, outcome measurement, and advancing understanding of intersectional identities within autism research. As a special educator by training, much of his research has involved the development and evaluation of evidence-based practices that could be implemented in home, school, and community contexts. Boyd was a co-author of a recent Lancet Commission report on the future of care and clinical research in autism. Boyd received a B.S. in psychology from the College of William and Mary, a M.Ed. in special education from the University of Virginia, and a Ph.D. from the University of Florida.

Wendy K. Chung

Member

Wendy K. Chung (she/her) is a clinical and molecular geneticist and the chief of the Department of Pediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Chung directs research programs in human genetics of autism, pulmonary hypertension, breast cancer, obesity, diabetes, and birth defects including congenital diaphragmatic hernia and congenital heart disease. She is the principal investigator of SPARK, the largest study of autism. Chung was the recipient of the Rare Impact Award from the National Organization of Rare Disorders and is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Physicians. She previously served on the National Academies committee on genetic testing. Chung received a B.A. in biochemistry from Cornell University, a M.D. from Cornell University Medical College, and a Ph.D. in genetics from The Rockefeller University. Chung has stated publicly that genetic testing should be offered to individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities/developmental delays.

Lauren Erickson

Member

Lauren Erickson (she/her) is the director of policy and programs at the Institute for Exceptional Care. She was previously a senior managing consultant at Berkley Research Group where she advised clients on healthcare mergers and acquisitions, reimbursement policy, and health plan operations. Prior to this, Erickson worked at Anthem, Inc. where she managed Accountable Care Organization payment programs and developed and implemented a partnership strategy to support independent physicians in providing high-value care. Erickson led the implementation of the Quality Payment Program at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Innovation Center, based on significant legislative changes to Medicare physician payment policy. She has the lived experience of supporting a brother with an intellectual development disability. Erickson received a B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa and an M.P.H. from the University of Iowa.

Eric M. Flake

Member

Eric M. Flake (he/him) is the clinic director for the Uniformed Services Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder program and is a developmental-behavioral pediatrician at the Children's Village in Yakima, WA. Now a retired Colonel from the U.S. Air Force, he is adjunct faculty at the Department of Defense (DoD) Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Fellowship located at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Tacoma Washington, and an associate professor at the Uniform Services University and the University of Washington. Previously, he served as the pediatric consultant to the Air Force Surgeon General and created the Developmental-Behavioral Family Readiness Center for the DoD. He also previously founded the DoD Autism Center - JBLM Center for Autism Resource, Education, and Services. He has served in various leadership positions for the American Academy of Pediatrics and is an executive board member for the Military Child Education Coalition. Col Flake received a B.S. in zoology from Brigham Young University and a M.D. from the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine at Uniform Services University. Col Flake recently co-authored two relevant articles ("Impact of Respite Care Services Availability on Stress, Anxiety and Depression in Military Parents who have a Child on the Autism Spectrum" in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders and "Enhancing Resident Education in Autism Diagnosis: Training on the Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers" in the Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics").

Patrick J. Heagerty

Member

Patrick J. Heagerty (he/him) is a professor and former chair of the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Washington. Heagerty has developed fundamental methods for longitudinal studies with a focus on prognostic model evaluation and structural longitudinal models, and he has detailed rigorous methods for the design, analysis, and interpretation of cluster-randomized trials conducted within healthcare delivery systems. Heagerty has co-authored two leading texts Analysis of Longitudinal Data and Biostatistics: A Methodology for the Health Sciences. Heagerty is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and a fellow of the American Statistical Association. Heagerty is the statistical editor for the Journal of the American Medical Association and directs the Center for Biomedical Statistics, a core entity with responsibility for coordination of biostatistical collaboration in Seattle and the greater Northwest region (Wyoming, Alaska, Idaho, Montana). Heagerty is the director of the Biostatistics and Research Design Core for the NIH Health Care Systems Research Collaboratory and a member of the executive committee for the FDA Sentinel Innovation Center. Heagerty received a B.S. in biology from Cornell University, a M.S. in statistics from the University of New York (Albany), and a Ph.D. in biostatistics from Johns Hopkins University.

A. Pablo Juarez

Member

A. Pablo Juárez (he/him) is a senior associate in pediatrics and psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), as well as special education at Vanderbilt University. He is co-director of Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's (VKC) autism institute - TRIAD, VKC's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and director of Behavior Analysis for VKC and Division of Developmental Medicine at VUMC. His expertise is in the development of service and education programs focused on disabilities and/or behavioral health needs within existing systems of care, including state-level departments. Further, the development of these service and education programs are informed by the communities of people impacted by those programs, including people with disabilities, and lived experience. Honors and awards include a Catalyst Award for educator of the year presented by The Arc of the United States and election to Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Academy of Excellence in Education. His education and training have been heavily focused on applied behavior analysis and special education. Juárez received a B.S. in applied behavior analysis from the University of North Texas and an M.Ed. in special education and applied behavior analysis from Vanderbilt University.

Samuel L. Odom

Member

Samuel L. Odom (he/him) is a senior research scientist with, and former director of, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research has focused on intervention programs for autistic children and young adults, evidence-based practices, and implementation science. He has held endowed chairs at the University of North Carolina and Indiana University and received an honoraria doctoral degree from Stockholm University. In 2013, he received the Arnold Lucius Gesell Prize awarded for career achievement in research on social inclusion and child development by the Theodor Hellbrugge Foundation, Munich, Germany. Also, in 2023, he received the career research scientist award from the Division for Research, Council for Exceptional Children. Odom was a member of the National Academies committees on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism and on Supporting Parents of Young Children. Odom received a Ph.D. in special education from the University of Washington and subsequently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Western Psychiatric Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. Three years ago, Odom received compensation for advisory service in regard to the Department of Defense Autism Applied Behavioral Analysis Clinical Study Award.

Jennifer E. Penhale

Member

Jennifer E. Penhale (she/her) is an active-duty Air Force spouse and mother to three teenagers with autism. Penhale is a host home/family caregiver to both of her daughters who have severe/profound autism. Penhale currently serves on the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council as the legislative and public policy committee chair and is also a parent stakeholder on the Colorado Early Childhood Special Education Advisory Committee representing the Pikes Peak Region and Military Families. Penhale has been a longtime advocate for military families in the Exceptional Family Members Program and has been active in the grassroots advocacy and legislative efforts for those with autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Penhale holds a B.A. in political science and a M.P.A. from American Military University.

Jose E. Rodriguez

Member

José E. Rodríguez (he/him) is the associate vice president for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Utah Health and a tenured professor in the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine. He is an associate editor for Annals of Family Medicine in the areas of racism and health disparities research. He is also the current president of the Family Physicians Inquiries Network. Throughout his career, he has provided primary care for underserved communities. His work focuses on equity, diversity, and inclusion, specifically underrepresented minority faculty in academic medicine. He founded and co-directed the Center for Underrepresented Minorities in Academic Medicine at Florida State University and produced scholarship highlighting disparities for minority faculty (minority tax), elucidating systemic barriers to recruitment of under-represented minority faculty and identifying essential components of faculty development. Rodriguez is a contributing author on the Culture of Health publication, for the National Academy of Medicine. Rodriguez is a board-certified family physician who completed his residency at the Residency Program in Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center. Rodriguez received a B.A. in Latin American studies and chemistry from Brigham Young University and an M.D. from Cornell University.

Andy Shih

Member

Andy Shih (he/him) is the chief science officer at Autism Speaks, where he is responsible for the science portfolio, including grantmaking, the MSSNG genomic research project, and the Autism Care Network. Shih has led important advancements toward the organization's mission, including the development of several large international research consortia that delivered high-impact scientific outcomes for the community. He was central to the passage of the World Autism Awareness Day resolution at the United Nations and subsequently led the development of the Global Autism Public Health initiative that provides technical support to country governments to enhance autism awareness, advocacy, research, and services worldwide. Autism Speaks supports ministries, government agencies, and leading nongovernmental organizations in more than 70 countries to deliver better outcomes and quality of life for tens of millions of individuals and families. Shih's research background includes published studies in gene identification and characterization, virus-cell interaction, and cell-cycle regulation. Shih holds a B.S. in biochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in molecular cell biology from New York University School of Medicine. Shih has made public statements on barriers to care and proposed changes to TRICARE coverage affecting military families with autistic children.

Kristin Sohl

Member

Kristin Sohl (she/her) is a professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri, Founder, and executive director of ECHO Autism Communities. Sohl is a pediatrician with extensive experience in medical diagnosis, evaluation, and longitudinal support of people on the autism spectrum and with other developmental/behavioral disorders. ECHO Autism Communities is viewed as the leading model in expanding equitable access to best practice screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and longitudinal support for autistic people, particularly in underserved and rural populations. ECHO Autism Communities partners with children's hospitals and autism centers in more than 50 locations in the United States and 30 international locations. Sohl is the immediate past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Missouri Chapter and the chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Autism Subcommittee within the Council on Children with Disabilities. Sohl also serves as the medical director for Missouri Telehealth Network and the Office of Continuing Education for Health Professions at the University of Missouri. Sohl received her M.D. from the University of Missouri. Sohl is a consultant for Autism Navigator at Florida State University, which is an online educational tool to help parents and clinicians identify characteristics of autism early and support social communication skills in young children. Sohl has made public comments about the role of evidence-based supports and services related to autism which includes applied behavior analysis.

Aubyn C. Stahmer

Member

Aubyn C. Stahmer (she/her) is a professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and the director of the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the MIND Institute. She is a clinical psychologist and a board certified behavior analyst with expertise in autism intervention and translation of evidence-based autism research to community-based practice and delivery. The main goals of her research include developing ways to help community providers, such as teachers and therapists, help autistic children and their families by providing high quality care. She is an internationally respected expert in the use of naturalistic developmental behavioral interventions, which are validated treatments for autism. Stahmer has conducted extensive research in the areas of parent coaching, early intervention, inclusive education, and services research in autism. She is an editor of *Autism: International Journal of Research and Practice*. In addition, she participates on the California Best Practice Guidelines Committee and the National Standards projects, developing guidelines for autism treatment. Stahmer received a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California, San Diego. Stahmer recently co-authored relevant articles ("Can the early start Denver model be considered ABA practice?" in *Behavior Analysis in Practice* and "How meaningful is more? Considerations regarding intensity in early intensive behavioral intervention." in *Autism: International Journal of Research and Practice*.)

Ruth E. Stein

Member

Ruth E. Stein (she/her) is a professor of pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and former vice chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Children's Hospital at Montefiore. Her research on children's health and children with chronic conditions has been supported by several federal agencies and private foundations. For more than a decade she was director and principal investigator of the National Institute of Mental Health-supported Preventive Intervention Research Center for Child Health at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center. She has published extensively on children with chronic conditions, the measurement of outcomes for child health, and mental health issues in primary care. She was a charter member of the board of directors and executive committee of the Center for Child Health of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She was a member of the National Academies Board on Children, Youth, and Families and co-chaired the Committee on the Evaluation of Child Health. She also served on the scientific advisory board of the National Institutes of Health's Patient-Reported Outcome Measurement Information System Network and the Board of Scientific Counselors of the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Stein holds a B.A. from Barnard College and an M.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Allysa N. Ware

Member

Allysa N. Ware (she/her) is the executive director of Family Voices. She is a family leader and researcher with extensive experience in strategic planning, family engagement, grant writing, human relations, and systems change. Ware's research is focused on the lived experience of individuals and families with an autism diagnosis. Her commitment to advocacy for individuals on the autism spectrum began with her personal experience as a parent and expanded through her practice as a social worker. She has collaborated with notable researchers to conduct in-depth research on kinship care, transition to adult care, and early childhood systems. She was recognized with the researcher award for Milestones Autism Resources, an Ohio-based nonprofit organization that provides lifelong strategies and support for individuals on the autism spectrum. Ware is the principal investigator on several initiatives at Family Voices, including building capacity for autism research in the African American community; the Center for Transition to Adult Care for Youth with Disabilities; and Pediatrics Supporting Parents, an early childhood social-emotional development initiative. Ware holds a B.S. in psychology from the University of Maryland Global Campus and an M.S. and Ph.D. in social work from The Catholic University of America.

Zachary J. Williams

Member

Zachary J. ("Zack") Williams (he/him) is an autistic self-advocate, autism researcher, and trainee psychiatrist at Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at the University of California, Los Angeles. Williams also serves as an advisory board member and fellow of Vanderbilt University's Frist Center for Autism and Innovation. His research broadly focuses on the intersection of autism and health and disability across the lifespan, including how autism-associated (mental and physical) health issues can be better measured, assessed, and supported or treated by current health care systems. He is a co-founder of Autism PROMnet, a special interest group to promote measure development and validation projects in the area of autism research and is considered a respected authority in the area of psychometrics and test development/validation. Williams received a B.S. in psychology (neuroscience track) from Yale University and a M.D. and Ph.D. in neuroscience from Vanderbilt School of Medicine. Williams is a consultant for Roche on outcome measures for drug trials.