

Strategies to Enhance Pediatric Health Research Funded by NIH

Committee

Phyllis A. Dennery

Co-Chair

Phyllis A. Dennery (Co-Chair), MD, FAAP, is the Sylvia Kay Hassenfeld Professor and Chair of Pediatrics at Warren Alpert Medical School, Pediatrician-in-Chief at Rhode Island Hospital, and Medical Director of Hasbro Children's Hospital. She is also a Professor of Molecular Biology, Cell Biology, and Biochemistry at Brown University. Previously, she served as Division Chief in Neonatology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia/UPenn before joining Brown in 2015. Dr. Dennery is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the Association of American Physicians. Her NIH-funded research focuses on neonatal lung injury, particularly the effects of oxidative stress on lung development. Clinically, she specializes in long-term outcomes of prematurity. She has led multiple multi-center research initiatives and serves on several national boards. Dr. Dennery earned her BS from McGill University, her MD from Howard University, and completed her pediatrics residency at Children's Hospital National Medical Center, followed by a neonatology fellowship at Case Western Reserve University. She served on the NAM Committee on the "CTSA Program at the NIH: opportunities for advancing clinical and translational research" which culminated in a NAM (formerly IOM) report in 2013.

Frederick P. Rivara

Co-Chair

Frederick P. Rivara (Co-Chair) MD, MPH, is the holder of the Seattle Children's Guild Association Endowed Chair in Pediatric Research, Vice chair and Professor of Pediatrics and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Washington. He was founding editor-in-chief of JAMA Network Open 2018-2024 following 17 years as Editor in Chief of JAMA Pediatrics. He served as founding director of the Harborview Injury and Research Center in Seattle and has devoted his career to studying injury and injury prevention. He has contributed to landmark studies and global initiatives aimed at reducing injury-related deaths, especially among children and adolescents. He also served as a founding board member of the Washington State Academy of Science. He has received numerous honors including the Charles C. Shepard Science Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association, Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section Distinguished Career Award, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, Section on Injury and Poison Prevention, Physician Achievement Award, the UW School of Public Health Distinguished Alumni Award, the UW Medicine Minority faculty Mentoring Award and delivered the William T Fitts, Jr Lecture in Trauma in 2009. Rivara was elected to the Institute of Medicine (now National Academy of Medicine) in 2005. He was awarded the Joseph St. Geme, Jr Leadership award from the Federation of Pediatric Organizations in 2021. Dr Rivara was a member of the Advisory Council for NICHD 2015-2018 and most recently chaired the Committee on Pediatric Subspecialty Workforce, National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, May 2022-July 2023.

Alexander G. Bassuk

Member

Alexander G. Bassuk, MD, PhD, is currently the Chair and Departmental Executive Officer of the University of Iowa Stead Family Department of Pediatrics and the Physician-in-Chief of UI Stead Family Children's Hospital. Previously, he served in various roles related to pediatric neurology and clinical leadership at the University of Iowa's Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine. Dr. Bassuk's primary expertise lies in pediatric neurology, focusing on childhood neurological disorders, education, and the development of future clinician-scientists. He has been instrumental in training medical students, residents, and postdoctoral fellows, and he leads the Child Health Research Career Development Award (CHRCDA) program as Principal Investigator. Additionally, he co-directs the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) K12 program, aimed at advancing clinical and translational research in pediatric health. Dr. Bassuk is a member of several prominent organizations, including the American Academy of Neurology, the Child Neurology Society, and the American Pediatric Society. He earned his MD and PhD from the University of Chicago.

Glenn Flores

Member

Dr. Glenn Flores, M.D., FAAP, is Professor and Chair of Pediatrics, Senior Associate Dean of Child Health, and the George E. Batchelor Endowed Chair in Child Health at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He is also Physician-in-Chief at Holtz Children's Hospital in the Jackson Health System. Dr. Flores previously served on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and held leadership roles in several national committees related to pediatric health policy. Dr. Flores's research and clinical expertise focus on pediatric health equity, addressing racial/ethnic disparities in children's health, and health services research. He has contributed significantly to policy efforts on insuring the uninsured, social determinants of health, and childhood obesity. He has received numerous prestigious awards, including the 2006 AAP Outstanding Achievement Award, the 2019 APHA David P. Rall Award for Advocacy, and the 2024 Reinhardt Distinguished Career Award from AcademyHealth. He is also a member of several professional societies, including the American Pediatric Society and the Academic Pediatric Association, and a member of the Board of First Focus on Children. He earned his MD from the UCSF School of Medicine and has published over 260 research articles.

Christopher B. Forrest

Member

Christopher Forrest, MD, PhD, is a pediatrician and health services and outcomes researcher. He is the Director of PEDSnet (pedsnet.org), a national pediatric learning health system that includes 11 of the nation's premier pediatric health systems. PEDSnet has created a longitudinal electronic health record database for >15 million children, and the network conducts observational research and pediatric clinical trials across all pediatric subspecialty areas. Dr. Forrest serves as the Director of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) Applied Clinical Research Center, which is the institutional home for PEDSnet, and the Program Director for PEDSnet Scholars, an AHRQ/PCORI funded faculty development program. His research group has developed numerous pediatric patient-reported outcome measures, both child self-report and parent-proxy versions. He co-edited the new Handbook of Life Course Health Development, which has been downloaded over 1 million times from the Springer web site. He is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and serves on the Board of Regents for the National Library of Medicine from September 2023-2027. Forrest received his BA and MD degrees from Boston University and his PhD (Health Policy and Management) from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Forrest previously served as a member of the "Committee on the Pediatric Subspecialty Workforce and its Impact on Child Health and Well-Being" (2022-2023). Dr. Forrest receives grant support from the NIH, AHRQ, PCORI, CDC, FDA, and Industry sponsors (e.g., UCB Pharmaceuticals, Sanofi Aventis, Moderna, and Otsuka).

Vittorio Gallo

Member

Vittorio Gallo, PhD, is the Chief Scientific Officer and Senior Vice President at Seattle Children's Hospital, leading the Seattle Children's Research Institute and serving as Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington. He previously held leadership roles at Children's National Hospital, including Director of the Center for Neuroscience Research and Interim Chief Academic Officer, as well as Associate Dean for Child Health Research at George Washington University. Dr. Gallo's research focuses on brain development and developmental disabilities, particularly the impact of neonatal brain injuries and neurodevelopmental disorders. He has directed numerous National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded pediatric research training programs and has mentored many faculty and trainees. His honors include being named an EMBO, Fogarty, and NATO Fellow, and he received the prestigious NINDS Javits Award for his contributions to neuroscience. He has been an editor for The Journal of Neuroscience. He was elected to the American Pediatric Society and has served on several NIH review panels, including chairing two study sections. Dr. Gallo earned his PhD in Biochemistry and Neurobiology from the University of Rome, with postdoctoral training at the MRC Developmental Neurobiology Unit and the NIH.

Rosemary D. Higgins

Member

Rosemary Higgins, MD, is the Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs at Florida Gulf Coast University, joining in 2022. Previously, she was Senior Associate Dean for Research at George Mason University's College of Health and Human Services and spent over 16 years at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a Medical Officer and Program Officer. At the NIH, she served as the Program Scientist for the NICHD Neonatal Research Network, overseeing landmark studies that advanced care for premature and sick infants. Before her NIH tenure, Dr. Higgins had over 12 years of academic medicine experience at New York University and Georgetown University, where she led a basic science lab investigating retinopathy of prematurity using cell culture and animal models. She served as the neonatal-perinatal medicine fellowship program director at Georgetown. Dr. Higgins also served as the Neonatology Editor in Chief of the American Journal of Perinatology and as a member of the Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group (PEDIG), Data and Safety Monitoring Committee of the National Eye Institute at NIH. Her expertise spans neonatal-perinatal medicine, prematurity, substance use, and public health, with a strong background in clinical trials and longitudinal studies. Dr. Higgins has received multiple NIH Director Awards, Awards of Merit, and teaching honors. Her current work focuses on public health issues across the lifespan. She received her MD from Georgetown University School of Medicine, completed her Pediatrics training at the University of Virginia and Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine fellowship at the University of Rochester.

Pamela S. Hinds

Member

Pamela Hinds, PhD, MSN, is the Director of the Department of Nursing Science, Professional Practice, and Quality, the William and Joanne Conway Endowed Chair in Nursing Research, the Research Integrity Officer at Children's National Health System and Professor of Pediatrics at the George Washington University, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Previously, she served as the Director of Nursing Research at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Dr. Hinds' research focus has been on the pediatric cancer experience, patient treatment tolerability, and patient reported outcomes. Dr. Hinds is an Oncology Nursing Society Distinguished Nurse Researcher and the Association of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology Distinguished Nurse Researcher, the 2020 recipient of the HPNA Distinguished Nurse Researcher Award in Palliative Care, the 2020 Nightingale Award from the American Nurses Association and the Washington Post, and the 2024 recipient of the Larry M. Rosen Research Award. Dr. Hinds received her PhD and MSN from the University of Arizona. She served on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee on End-of-Life and Palliative Care for Children in America, the IOM committee on Dying in America, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Roundtable on Quality Care for People with Serious Illness, and the NCI Moonshot Tolerability Steering Committee.

Shafali S. Jeste

Member

Shafali Spurling Jeste, MD, is a behavioral child neurologist specializing in autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). She is a professor and the Mattel Executive Endowed Chair in the Department of Pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dr. Jeste is also the executive medical director of pediatrics in the UCLA health system and the executive director of the UCLA Children's Discovery & Innovation Center. She was a professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the USC Keck School of Medicine, the Las Madrinas Chair, Chief of Neurology, and the Co-Director of the Neurological Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA). Her research focuses on improving precision in the diagnosis and treatment of NDDs through studies on early detection, early intervention, and clinical trial readiness, particularly in genetic NDDs, with focus on electrophysiological biomarkers and clinical endpoints. Her work is funded by the NIH, the Department of Defense, the Dup15q Alliance, and the Simons Foundation. She holds leadership positions on the Board of Directors for the National Organization for Rare Disorders and the TSC Alliance, and she serves on the steering committee for the ARIA Initiative to accelerate autism research. She sits on a Data Safety and Monitoring Board for Ionis Pharmaceuticals' Angelman Syndrome trial. Dr. Jeste consulted for Roche Pharmaceuticals on clinical trial design for a genetic neurodevelopmental disorder called Dup15q syndrome. Dr. Jeste was awarded the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers in 2019 and the 2024 Child Neurology Society Martha Bridge Denckla Award. She earned a BA in Philosophy from Yale University in 1997 and an MD from Harvard Medical School in 2002, followed by residency and fellowship training at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Jeste previously served as a member of the "Committee on the Pediatric Subspecialty Workforce and its Impact on Child Health and Well-Being" (2022-2023).

Leah C. Kottyan

Member

Leah Kottyan, PhD, is a Professor at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the University of Cincinnati, where she leads a National Institutes of Health-funded research laboratory focused on the genetic etiology of immune system diseases. Dr. Kottyan also serves as the leader of the Cincinnati Children's Basic Science Research Committee, which represents hundreds of faculty members conducting foundational research to discover new biological insights. Her research includes the discovery of genotype-dependent disease risk mechanisms and studies on the clinical return of individualized polygenic disease risk. Dr. Kottyan earned her PhD in Immunology from the University of Cincinnati in 2010.

Brendan Lee

Member

Brendan Lee, MD, PhD, is a pediatrician and geneticist who specializes in structural birth defects and inborn errors of metabolism. He has published over 320 peer-reviewed papers and more than 85 invited reviews, chapters, and books. Dr. Lee has secured continuous NIH funding over his 25-year career as an independent investigator. He currently leads several NIH-funded initiatives, including the BCM Undiagnosed Diseases Network Clinical Site, the RE-JOIN Consortium site, the Brittle Bone Disorders Consortium, and the All of Us Evenings with Genetics Scholars Program. Dr. Lee has served on numerous nonprofit boards and advisory panels, including the Advisory Committee to the Director of the NIH. He was previously an Investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and is currently the Chair of the Department of Molecular and Human Genetics at Baylor College of Medicine, a leading global program integrating research, clinical services, and molecular pathology. His work extends into drug discovery and gene therapy, with multiple patents and licensed technologies currently in industry-sponsored clinical trials for osteoarthritis, osteogenesis imperfecta, and maple syrup urine disease, and he receives royalties from companies such as Pacira and Sanofi for gene therapies. He also earns royalties through licensing of discoveries from Baylor College of Medicine for Osteogenesis imperfecta clinical trials. Additionally, Dr. Lee sits on Data Safety and Monitoring Boards and consults for pharmaceutical companies such as Kyowa Kirin. Dr. Lee has also served as the President of the American Society for Human Genetics and the Society for Pediatric Research.

Mary B. Leonard

Member

Mary B. Leonard, MD, MSCE, is the Arline and Pete Harman Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Stanford University, Physician-in-Chief of Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, and Director of the Stanford Maternal and Child Health Research Institute (MCHRI). She has led a distinguished career in clinical and translational research, with a primary focus on the impact of chronic pediatric diseases on growth, skeletal development, nutrition, and physical function. Dr. Leonard has served as principal investigator for numerous NIH grants, including multiple R01s, and has mentored junior investigators across various pediatric specialties. She has authored over 220 peer-reviewed research papers and has been recognized with numerous awards, including the 2024 Maureen Andrew Mentor Award from the Society of Pediatric Research and the National Kidney Foundation's Donald W. Seldin Award. Dr. Leonard received her MD from Stanford University in 1989 and completed her pediatrics residency and nephrology fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She also holds a master's degree in clinical epidemiology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Keila N. Lopez

Member

Keila N. Lopez, MD, MPH, is an associate professor of pediatrics and the Director for faculty development in the Heart Institute at Colorado Children's Hospital. Dr. Lopez is also a Child Health Policy Fellow at the Farley Center for Health Policy. She was formerly an associate professor of pediatrics in the Section of Pediatric Cardiology at Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine, where she also served as the creator and Medical Director of the first in-person pediatric cardiology Transition Program, designed to improve the transfer of care from pediatric to adult services. Additionally, Dr. Lopez remains an adjunct assistant professor in Sociology at Rice University and a co-investigator for the Texas Children's Policy and Advocacy Center. Dr. Lopez's research focuses on health disparities, public health initiatives, and healthcare access, using large databases and GIS mapping to explore how sociodemographic factors influence health outcomes. Her NIH-funded work has included developing a mobile application to reduce health disparities during the transition process for patients with congenital heart disease, and her more recent NIH R01 grant explores novel care models for underserved young adults with congenital heart disease. She has received several accolades, including the 2024 American Academy of Pediatrics DEI Excellence Award and the 2024 Texas Children's Research Mentor Award. Currently, Dr. Lopez is the immediate past chair of the American Heart Association's Young Hearts Congenital Cardiac Defects Committee and serves on the medical advisory board of the Children's Heart Foundation and Make-A-Wish Foundation. She earned her medical degree from Rush Medical College and completed her pediatric residency at the University of Chicago, completed her pediatric cardiology training at Texas Children's Hospital, and obtained her Master of Public Health in Minority Health Policy at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Kristy Murray

Member

Kristy Murray, DVM, PhD, is the Chief Research Officer at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Professor and Executive Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Pediatrics at Emory University. Prior to her current role, she served as Vice Chair for Research and Professor of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital, where she also held leadership positions at the National School of Tropical Medicine. Dr. Murray is an expert in the epidemiology and pathogenesis of emerging infectious diseases, with a focus on pediatric populations. Her NIH- and CDC-supported research has addressed diseases like West Nile virus, dengue, Zika virus, and COVID-19, with field studies conducted in global health settings in Nicaragua, Belize, and the Philippines. She is a Fellow of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and has received numerous awards, including the Bailey Ashford Medal from the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award. Dr. Murray earned her DVM from Texas A&M University and her PhD in Preventive Medicine from the University of Texas Medical Branch. She has authored over 170 scientific papers and serves as an Associate Editor for Emerging Infectious Diseases and PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases. She serves on the vaccine clinical trial Data Safety and Monitoring Board for Valneva Corp.

Abby R. Rosenberg

Member

Abby Rosenberg, MD, MS, MA, is the Chief of Pediatric Palliative Care at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Director of Palliative Care at Boston Children's Hospital, and an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. She holds advanced degrees in epidemiology and biomedical ethics, in addition to clinical training in pediatric palliative care and pediatric hematology-oncology. Dr. Rosenberg's research focuses on developing and implementing programs to enhance resilience and improve the mental health and quality of life for children with serious illnesses and their families. She has been continuously funded by the NIH throughout her career and has published over 250 peer-reviewed manuscripts on pediatric and adolescent/young adult (AYA) psychosocial and supportive care. She is the Chair for the Lifestyle and Health Behaviors Standing Study Section at NIH, and reviews population level research focused on health and disease outcomes in this role. Dr. Rosenberg has received numerous honors, including the 2021 University of Washington Faculty Mentoring Award, the 2022 American Cancer Society Lifetime Achievement Award, the 2023 Pathfinder in Palliative Care Award, and the 2024 Palliative Care Visionary Award from the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Dr. Rosenberg began her professional career as a social worker for children with HIV. Dr. Rosenberg earned her medical degree from Stanford University School of Medicine and completed her two master's degrees the University of Washington. She completed her pediatric residency and fellowship training at Seattle Children's Hospital. In 2024, Dr. Rosenberg was elected as a volunteer pediatrician to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Board of Directors (2024-2027), an organization that advocates for cancer-related funding and programs worldwide.

David C. Schwebel

Member

David C. Schwebel, PhD, MA, is the Vice President of Research at the University of Iowa. Dr. Schwebel was formerly University Professor of Psychology and Associate Vice President for Research Facilities and Infrastructure at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he led the UAB Youth Safety Lab. He has extensive expertise in child safety, with a particular focus on understanding and preventing unintentional injuries in children. Dr. Schwebel has authored over 400 peer-reviewed manuscripts and secured more than \$12 million in research grants, primarily from the NIH. Dr. Schwebel served on a strategic planning working group for NICHD in 2018, which led to the current NICHD strategic plan that was released in 2020. He has received significant recognition for his work, including the 2019 Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Applied Research from the American Psychological Association. Dr. Schwebel is also a Woodrow Wilson Scholar, a Fulbright Award recipient, and a Fellow of the American Psychological Association. He was a consultant for Proctor & Gamble on topics related to child safety and injury. In the past five years he has also done paid consulting work on cases related to child safety and injury for Slocumb Law Firm, LLC; Cohen, Placitella & Roth; Gray, Rust, St. Amand, Moffett & Brieske, LLP; Allison & Ward Attorneys at Law; and Arthur Chapman Kettering Smetak & Pikala, P.A. Dr. Schwebel also served on the Board of Scientific Advisors for the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. He earned his B.A. in psychology from Yale University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Iowa, followed by a clinical internship at the University of Washington School of Medicine. In addition to his research, he published the popular book *Raising Kids Who Choose Safety* in 2022.

Seema K. Shah

Member

Seema K. Shah, JD, HEC-C, is a Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Medical School and the Founder's Board Professor of Medical Ethics at Lurie Children's Hospital. She is also the Director of Research Ethics and leads the Pediatric Research Ethics and Policy Program at Lurie Children's Hospital. Shah's research focuses on pediatric and global health research ethics, with particular attention to ethical and regulatory issues in pediatric pandemic preparedness and controlled human infection studies. Professor Shah has been retained as a research ethics expert in cases related to human subjects of research. She has previously served as Chair of an NIH panel on the ethical considerations of Zika virus human challenge trials, currently sits on the National Advisory Allergy and Infectious Disease Council for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at NIH and serves as an expert advisor for the World Health Organization. She is an elected fellow of the Hastings Center and a recognized leader in the field of bioethics. Shah earned her law degree from Stanford Law School.