



CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S
DEPARTMENTS OF PEDIATRICS
& SURGICAL SUBSPECIALTIES

ANNUAL ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS REPORT 2020

We are honored to present highlights from the seventh combined *University of Connecticut and Connecticut Children's Departments of Pediatrics and Pediatric Surgical Subspecialties Annual Academic Report 2020*. The report reflects the alliance between Surgery and Pediatrics and the continued multidisciplinary growth of combined surgical and pediatric programs at Connecticut Children's, as well as the impact made by the many contributions of our faculty members. Their expertise, leadership, and genuine dedication to our mission shine through on the pages that follow.



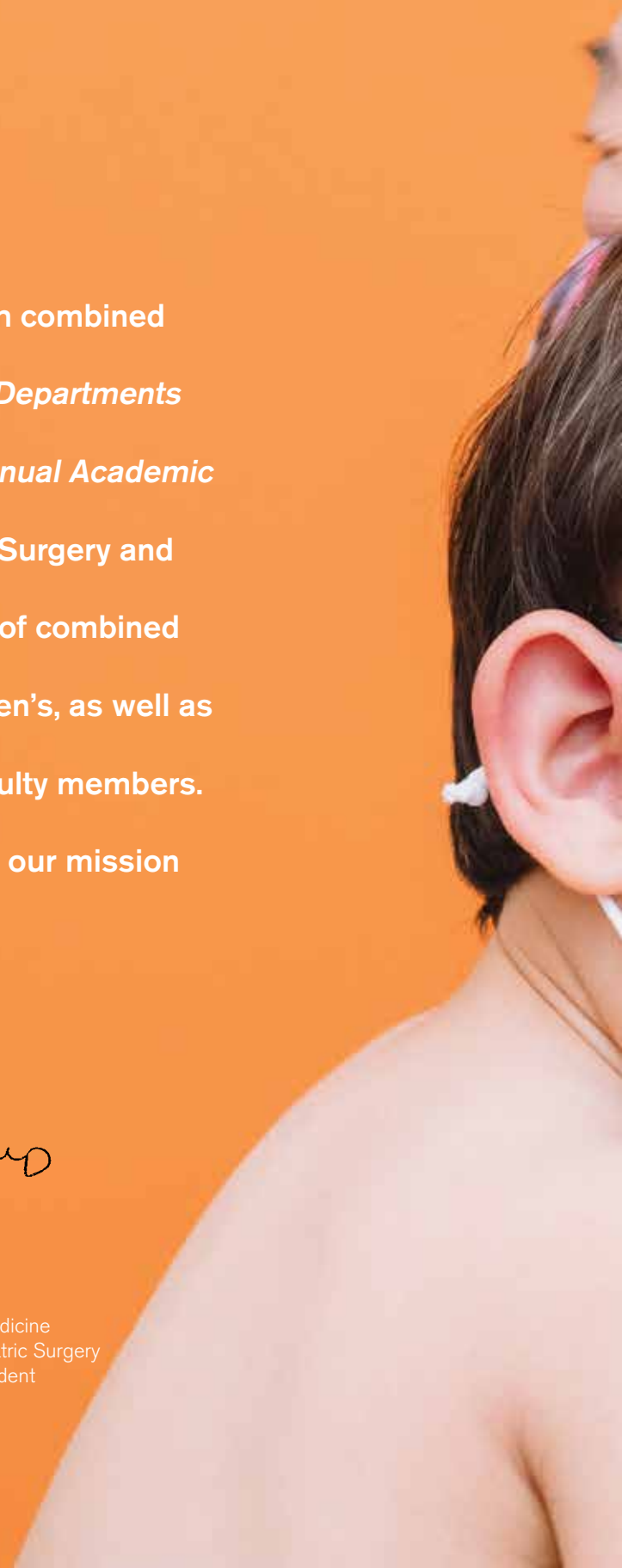
Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH, FAAP

Professor and Chair, Department of Pediatrics
University of Connecticut School of Medicine
Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs
Physician-in-Chief
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Professor of Pediatrics and Surgery
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The year 2020 was the most challenging anyone in the health care community can remember. As the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic swept the globe, our faculty and staff members responded with courage, determination, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to doing whatever was necessary to provide expert health care to our pediatric patients and their families. We confronted the virus with a comprehensive, multipronged approach that was quick to adapt to emerging clinical data, recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), state and federal government sources, and the recommendations of our own internal Covid-19 Preparedness Task Force and Operations Resumption teams. The year was difficult to be sure and at times frightening, but it brought out the best in us. Here are some of the highlights.

Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, Surgeon-in-Chief **Christine Finck, MD, FACS**, and **Lori Pelletier, PhD, MBA**, head of the Division of Excellence in Patient Safety and Clinical Quality, led and continue to lead the Connecticut Children's response to the pandemic along with key leaders including **Michelle McKee, MD**, division head of Emergency Medicine; **Anand Sekaran, MD**, division head of Hospital Medicine; **John Schreiber, MD, MPH**, interim division head of Infectious Diseases; **Ilana Waynik, MD**, and **Beth Natt, MD, MPH**, both of the Division of Hospital Medicine; **MacDara Tynan, MD, MBA**, interim division head of Pulmonology; **James Moore, MD, PhD**, division head of Neonatology; **David Sink, MD**, physician quality and safety officer in Neonatology; **Annmarie Golioto, MD**, medical director of Neonatology; **Brendan Campbell, MD, MPH**, pediatric surgical quality and safety officer; **Heather Schlott, MD**, medical director of the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) program; **Nicole Murray, MD**, head of the Center for Airway, Voice & Swallowing; and **Edwin Zalneraitis, MD**, program director of Pediatric Residency. Dr. Pelletier and members of her division helped lead the efforts of initial modifications and response to the Covid pandemic, followed by the safe resumption of operations and the planning and operations of the second-wave response. Part of the fundamental framework of this response was the development of clinical pathways for the multiple phases and aspects of caring for our patients, keeping our team members safe, and providing essential resources and guidance for our community partners. This effort was led by Dr. Waynik and **Grace Hong, APRN**, both of whom are physician quality and patient safety officers in the Division of Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety.

President of the Connecticut Children's Specialty Group **Glenn Focht, MD**, worked with tireless dedication and compassion to provide support and leadership through a period of unequalled demand and sacrifice for our physicians.

Aimee Monroy Smith, senior vice president of Government Relations and External Affairs, and her team leveraged and facilitated outreach

for available Covid-related funding to state and federal agencies including response and recovery support funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

We are also indebted to the members of the Connecticut Children's Executive Management Team, who continue to provide firm and steady support throughout the pandemic while guiding the institution on a path to achieve its clinical, medical education, and long-term strategic goals. The members are: Connecticut Children's President and Chief Executive Officer **James E. Shmerling, DHA, FACHE**; President and Chief Operating Officer **Gil Peri, MBA, MPH**; Executive Vice President of the Office for Community Child Health and Founding Director of the Help Me Grow® National Center **Paul Dworkin, MD**; Vice President of Regional Partnerships and Operations **Trisha**

A. Farmer, MSN, RN, CPHRM; Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Bridgett Feagin, MBA**; Executive Vice President and Surgeon-in-Chief **Christine Finck, MD**; President of the Connecticut Children's Specialty Group **Glenn Focht, MD**; President of the Connecticut Children's Foundation **David Kinahan**; Interim Senior Vice President and Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer **Sarah Matney, MSOL, BSN, RN,**

CPON, CENP; Senior Vice President of Human Resources **Larry Milan**; Division Head of Neonatology, Vice President of Clinical Network Development, and Chief Clinical Network Development Officer **James Moore, MD, PhD**; Vice President and Chief Marketing & Communications Officer **Deb Pappas, MBA**; Interim Chief Information Officer **Jung Park**; Chief Quality and Patient Safety Officer **Lori Pelletier, PhD, MBA**; Executive Vice President and Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**; Senior Vice President of Government Relations and External Affairs **Aimee Monroy Smith**; and Vice President and General Counsel **Moses Vargas, Esq.** We are particularly grateful for a very talented team of executive assistants, who worked tirelessly during the pandemic in support of our emergency operations and all Covid-19 related tasks.



Medical Education

Our medical education leaders adjusted our programs to the shifting circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic while prioritizing the safety and well-being of our medical learners and keeping their educations on track. They include the University of Connecticut Health Center's Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education (GME) **Jacqueline "Kiki" Nissen, MD**; Assistant Dean for GME and Vice Chair of Education for Medicine **Steven Angus, MD**; and Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs **Melissa Held, MD**; and Connecticut Children's Program Director of Pediatric Residency **Edwin Zalneraitis, MD**; Director of Pediatric Undergraduate Education **Joanne Crowley, MD**; Assistant Dean of Medical Education **Christine Rader, MD**; and Associate Chair of Education **Andrea Orsey, MD**.

Our pediatric residents and fellows and their mentors were heroic in their efforts to continue learning and teaching while bolstering the ranks of providers at all of our care centers. For many young learners, the experience of Covid-19 was a trial by fire, and they proved unflinching and inspiring in their dedication to caring for patients and to making the necessary sacrifices to keep everyone safe.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In the earliest days of the pandemic, Connecticut Children's was, like other medical institutions, challenged to procure enough **personal protective equipment (PPE)** to keep our staff and patients safe. Surgeon-in-Chief **Christine Finck, MD, FACS**, and **Nicole Murray, MD**, head of the Center for Airway, Voice & Swallowing, co-chaired Connecticut Children's PPE Task Force. In addition to sourcing and procuring PPE for our staff, they developed protocols for the use and reprocessing of N95 masks and other PPE. In an example of the kind of innovation that was on display all year, the bioprinter that is essential for tissue engineering in the laboratory of Dr. Finck was repurposed to create face shields. Drs. Murray and Finck worked closely with **William Lee, Jr.**, director of the Supply Chain, and his team, and also with **Mike Tortora**, Connecticut Children's director of Safety & Security.

New Processes, Staff Education & Training

The Simulation Team, under the direction of **Carla Pruden, MD, MPH**, played a critical role in the design and testing of Covid-related processes, as well as the adaptation for safe conduct of ongoing educational and training curriculum for routine simulation sessions, via virtual and hybrid models. **Mariann Kelley, MD**, who also supports





the Simulation Program, helped to develop and test protocols related to resuscitation and care of critically ill patients with known or concern for Covid-19, in conjunction with the Emergency Response Committee.

Telemedicine

Telehealth, or remote video conference medical appointments between doctors and their patients, quickly became an essential tool for providing ongoing, safe care for our patients and their families. Connecticut Children's rapidly pivoted to telemedicine, led by Chief Medical Information Officer **Richelle DeMayo, MD, CM**, and a team that included **Trisha Farmer, MSN, RN, CPHRM**, vice president, regional partnerships and operations, and **Jeffrey Sargent**, director of virtual health services. As of March 1, 2020, Connecticut Children's had conducted one video visit. By June, we were providing 600 video visits per day across 30 subspecialties. The speedy adoption of telemedicine by our pediatric experts propelled them, in some cases, into positions of national leadership. **Christopher Grindle, MD**, who helped build, train and roll out telehealth technology to all clinicians at Connecticut Children's, performed a grand rounds on telehealth and participated in television interviews and advocacy at the Connecticut state legislature and with federal elected officials. Our Neurosurgery division not only quickly adopted telehealth, it developed innovative tools for craniometric assessment and standardized approaches to the evaluation of patients. Division head **Jonathan Martin, MD**, served in April 2020 as moderator for the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Neurological Surgery webinar 'Pediatric Neurosurgery Telehealth in the Time of Covid-19.' **Christopher Carroll, MD**, of the Critical Care division, served as a leader on the Covid Task Force for CHEST (the American College of Chest Physicians).

In our communities, the Division of General Pediatrics led by **Catherine Wiley, MD**, oversaw the launch of a highly successful telehealth program across all primary care sites. Faculty members incorporated residents and medical students into this clinical experience. **Andrew Carlson, MD**, was appointed as a core faculty lead by the pediatric residency program to develop a formal primary care telehealth curriculum.

The Importance of Communication: Nationally, Locally & In-House

Communication with our staff, patient families and community members was and remains a critical component of our successful response to

Covid-19. Throughout the year, our staff utilized or created new ways to share expert, up-to-date information in the dynamic, fast-moving circumstances required by Covid-19.

The pressing need for expert medical advice put our providers in the spotlight. Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, was interviewed on *Good Morning America* among dozens of other appearances. **Nicole Murray, MD**, made appearances on local news outlets and filmed educational videos for families as they considered how to keep their children safe as schools and society reopened. Many other staff members including **John Brancato, MD**, **Christopher Carroll, MD**, **Patricia Garcia, MD, MPH**, **Annmarie Golioto, MD**, **Robert Keder, MD**, **Steven Rogers, MD**, and **John Schreiber, MD, MPH**, were featured in or on news outlets including *Forbes*, *Health*, *Parade*, and *Prevention* magazines, Yahoo News, and msn.com.

To best provide current, easily accessible medical information for regional providers, the Continuing Medical Education program at Connecticut Children's on April 3, 2020 launched and continues to



offer the **weekly webinar series *Ask the Experts*** in which regional and national experts from different specialties and backgrounds provide updates and answer questions related to Covid-19. **John Schreiber, MD, MPH**, division head of Infectious Diseases, kicks off each *Ask the Experts* session with the most pertinent facts and updates related to Covid-19, its impact on children in Connecticut and across the nation. The series was registered with the Continuing Medical Education governing body, the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), as a Comprehensive Clinician's Resource on Covid-19. Connecticut Children's is the only children's hospital providing such education not only to our staff and partners in the community but to pediatricians across the U.S. In addition, it is offered as a state-mandated series for Infectious Diseases. Connecticut Children's also created and launched several other resources including a **hotline for community providers** and parents, enabling them to instantly access pediatric experts 24/7 with questions related to Covid-19; **weekly Covid-19 emails** to providers; and provider-focused materials that were added to the website.



For parents and caregivers, Connecticut Children's experts authored more than 40 **pandemic-related articles for the blog** on topics including school closure and back-to-school tool kits, building resilience in children, and tips for keeping keep children engaged in distance learning.

In-house, to keep our staff up-to-date on the pandemic and our responses to it, Connecticut Children's leadership instituted **daily emails from CEO Jim Shmerling** and **weekly virtual Town Hall meetings**, which featured the participation of key leaders including Chief Operating Officer Gil Peri, Drs. Finck and Salazar, Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer Larry Milan, and other members of the Executive Management Team.

Supporting Our Faculty

Academic support for our medical and surgical faculty never wavered during 2020. Led by **Annamarie Beaulieu, MPH**, senior director of Academic Affairs, Research Operations, and Sponsored Programs, leaders and staff across the Academic Affairs, Research, Clinical Trials, Sponsored Programs, Graduate Medical Education Pediatric Fellowship Programs, and Office of Continuing Medical Education departments quickly adapted to providing support virtually to all faculty. Support for grant submissions, guidance for faculty appointment and promotion submissions, ongoing research projects and clinical trials, virtual CME activities, and recruitment of fellow applicants via Zoom using pre-taped tours of our facility were just a few of the ways our academic teams ensured that the non-clinical needs of our faculty and staff were not interrupted.

Led by **Todd Jensen, MHS**, research associate and lab manager, and **Julie Vigil, MS, CHC, CHRC**, administrative manager, Department of Pediatrics, all operational, faculty, and laboratory needs at UConn Health were supported with exceptional care and attention to the always changing institutional Covid guidelines and requirements.

Advocating for Children With Our Government Leaders

In April, Connecticut Children's Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, participated in a Facebook Live Q&A with Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy to discuss Covid-19 and children.

In May, Connecticut Children's Surgeon-in-Chief **Christine Finck, MD, FACS**, and Division Head of Otolaryngology **Scott Schoem, MD**, participated in a Covid-19 virtual town hall meeting with Connecticut Congressman John Larson.



In June, Connecticut Children's hosted a telemedicine virtual town hall in collaboration with U.S. Congressman Joe Courtney and the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to discuss the important role telemedicine is playing in children's health.

Drive-Thru Covid-19 Testing

To ensure a safe and sound experience for team members and patients receiving in-person medical or surgical care, Connecticut Children's launched **drive-thru Covid-19 testing for team members and patients**. The effort was led by **Sarah Matney**, interim chief nursing officer, with support from these directors: **Kristy Dixon-Stinger**, director for the ED, PICU, and Education & Development, **Joseph Phillips**, director for Clinical & Diagnostic Services, **Karri May**, director of Facilities, and **Connie Grant**, practice manager. Medical Staff Services donated funds for the purchase of one rapid-testing Covid-19 machine known as LIAT (Lab in a Tube), which remains crucial to the safety of our operations.

Covid-Related Research

In the area of research, our staff members were inspired by the virus and its divergent effects on patients to quickly initiate **a range of Covid-19 studies**, which resulted in a variety of publications. Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, in collaboration with researchers at UConn Storrs, Jackson Laboratory (JAX) in Farmington, CT, and the Wadsworth Center in Albany, NY, received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare syndrome affecting a small number of children who contract Covid-19. Connecticut Children's is one of only eight institutions nationwide to receive this award.

Jeffrey Hyams, MD, division head of Digestive Diseases, Hepatology & Nutrition and holder of the Mandell Braunstein Family Endowed Chair in Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease, worked in collaboration with pre-eminent IBD investigators throughout North America to submit a potentially groundbreaking new initiative to the NIH investigating the variability in response to biologic therapy for Crohn's disease. Partnering with the division of Infectious Diseases at Connecticut Children's and with the Jackson Laboratory (JAX) in Farmington, CT, Dr. Hyams and his research staff began examining the immune response of patients with IBD to SARS-CoV-2 infection. The initial research is being funded by a generous grant from the David and Geri Epstein Foundation.

With generous help from more donors who responded rapidly to the need, other studies include: the safe handling of expressed breast milk; the impact of Covid-19 on pediatric gastroenterology fellow training (**Melissa Fernandes, MD**); domestic violence and the safe storage of firearms (**Brendan Campbell, MD**); critical care in the time of Covid-19 (**Christopher Carroll, MD**); the impact of Covid-19 on global disparities in surgical training in pediatric otolaryngology (**Katherine Kavanagh, MD**); the effect of two distinct interventions (cognitive strategies and gratitude journaling) on coping in health care professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic (**Kimberly Roche, MSN, APRN, Siddika Mulchan, PsyD, Lauren Ayr-Volta, PhD, and Katherine Hinderer, PhD, RN, CNE**), as well as other publications.

Taking Care of Our Community

To help engage and inspire children and families throughout the region during the pandemic, Connecticut Children's launched the **#Chalk4Childrens Campaign**, which continues to be a call to action, one designed to spread hope and gratitude at a time when the world needs it most.

Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (OCCH), led by **Paul Dworkin, MD**, was quick to respond to the direct impact of the pandemic on some of our community's most vulnerable populations. Educating Practices, a signature innovation of the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) that is supported by the OCCH, shifted its presentations and training sessions to an online format so pediatric practices could remain up-to-date on important child health issues as well as the availability of resources in their communities to support families during the pandemic. The online offerings include 21 **virtual training modules** available to pediatric practices, a presentation for pediatric providers addressing family

stress during the pandemic, and a webinar for pediatric providers covering behavioral health resources for families.

With funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Connecticut Children's Practice Quality Improvement Program donated 130 My Family Is Strong! **Community Care Bags** to Hartford residents.

Taking Care of Our Faculty & Staff

To support our faculty and staff throughout this most challenging year, Connecticut Children's created a series of programs including **Family Sundays via Facebook**, a series of live-streamed events designed to inspire, teach, and motivate individuals to get their children and families on a healthy track; a **School Closure Kit** that included helpful information on how to structure a child's day, engage a child in learning, and answer their Covid-19 questions; and the creation of a **Medical Student Crisis Fund**, which is provided by the University of Connecticut School of Medicine in honor of Mark Greenstein, MD, who retired in 2020 after 36 years with the department of Pediatrics.

Our Community Takes Care of Us

Throughout 2020 and the pandemic, we were humbled and gratified that members of our community rallied behind Connecticut Children's. The initial shortage of PPE was met with generous donations from a wide variety of sources with donors including individual patients, the Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Hartford, Whiting-Turner Contracting

Co. of Rocky Hill, Danaher Lagnese, PC, law firm of Hartford, and the Wallingford Public Schools science departments, among others. Allied Printing Service, LLC, of Manchester, and Ardent Displays and Fixtures of East Hartford, both found a way to manufacture face shields, which they donated to local hospitals including Connecticut Children's to aid in Covid-19 relief. The National Guard generously donated a tent to Connecticut Children's, which was set up outside our Washington Street entrance to assist in Covid-19 specimen collection.

In June, Connecticut Children's received generous gifts from the Walden W. & Jean Young Shaw Foundation (\$50,000) and the Johnson Family Foundation (\$30,000) toward our telemedicine program.

In November, the first-ever **Connecticut Children's Virtual Gala** raised almost \$1 million. More than 1,000 guests tuned in from around the country. The proceeds included more than \$265,000 from the Bid for Kids appeal to support the behavioral health needs of our community.

The First Vaccines

On Dec. 15, 2020, at 7:17 a.m., Connecticut Children's received its first shipment of the Covid-19 vaccine. Our pharmacy team safely secured the Pfizer vaccine in an ultra-low temperature freezer. On Dec. 16, Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, was among the first five staff members to receive the vaccine. Our first vaccine clinic for staff opened on Friday, Dec. 18.



OUR SUPPORT FOR BLACK LIVES MATTER

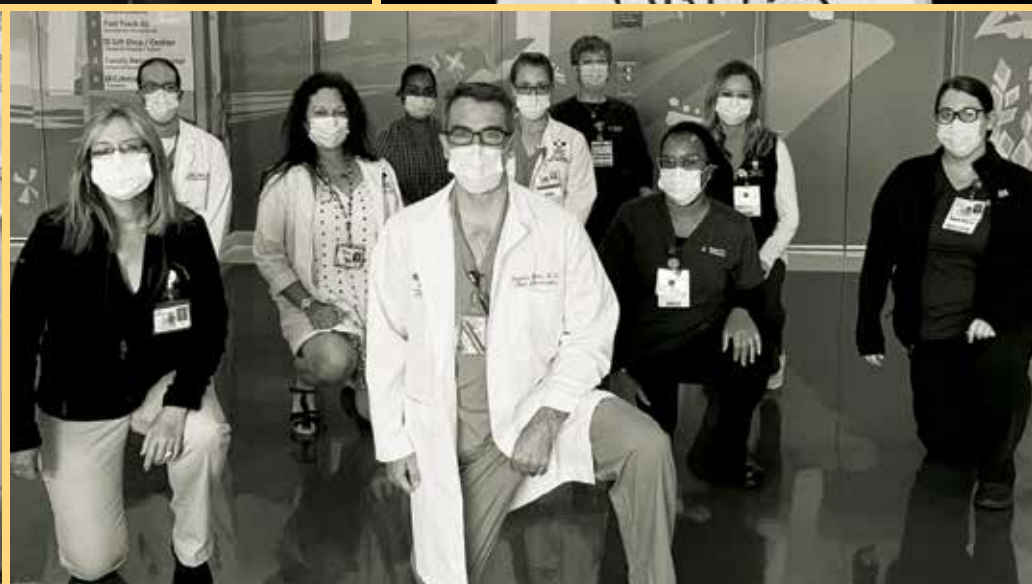
The Covid-19 pandemic was not the only big story of the year in 2020. As protestors took to the streets to demand **racial justice**, members of the Connecticut Children's staff were proud to reinforce our pledge to do everything within our power to see that all people and all patients are treated equally.

At 1 p.m. on June 5, Connecticut Children's employees joined in a moment of silence to honor the life of George Floyd, and to kneel for our patients, colleagues, family, friends, and all communities in honor of black lives.

Our physicians joined the **White Coats for Black Lives** movement, kneeling in solidarity

with health care professionals across the country to publicly recognize racism as a national health crisis.

Connecticut Children's renewed its commitment to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure a welcoming and inclusive culture in all areas of our organization.





THE YEAR'S OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Apart from the two major challenges that came to define 2020, our remarkable faculty and staff managed to excel and achieve milestones in many other areas. We are pleased to highlight some of these accomplishments here. You will find many more in the full report.



CLINICAL & RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

The 2020-21 **U.S. News & World Report** “Best Children’s Hospitals” once again ranked Connecticut Children’s among the top pediatric hospitals in the nation in four specialties: Diabetes & Endocrinology, Gastroenterology & GI Surgery, Neonatology, and Urology.

The research laboratory of Surgeon-in-Chief **Christine Finck, MD**, focuses on innovation and tissue engineering of organs including the lungs and the esophagus. The NIH awarded this project \$1.2 million to continue research in collaboration with a small company, Biostage, based out of Boston. Dr. Finck’s research laboratory and Biostage received approval from the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to start clinical trials using the esophageal scaffold in adults. This is a first step toward translating Dr. Finck’s tissue-engineered technology for pediatric diseases.

In addition, the Finck laboratory received a Department of Defense Grant in collaboration with the University of Vermont to evaluate an alginate sealant for tracheobronchial injuries.

Connecticut Children’s was named a **Sedation Center of Excellence** by the Society for Pediatric Sedation (SPS). The designation is a highly competitive award given annually to centers of pediatric sedation that create an “ideal environment for the delivery of safe, effective, efficient, timely and equitable patient-centered pediatric procedural sedation.” The Sedation division is led by **Jesse Sturm, MD**. The designation was awarded for a four-year period from 2020-24.

Connecticut Children’s received **Magnet Recognition® for Nursing Excellence** in 2019, which continues through 2023. Bestowed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), it is the highest and most prestigious credential a health care organization can achieve for nursing excellence and quality patient care. Connecticut Children’s joined just 7 percent to 8 percent of hospitals across the country with this award.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the growing need for social distancing, **Nursing Grand Rounds** transitioned to a virtual format. This increased accessibility improved the reach of continuing education to nurses and other health care providers both within and beyond Connecticut Children’s. Nursing Grand Rounds is free and available to health care professionals across the region.

Also continuing is national accreditation of our **Bariatric Surgery Program** by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), the combined accreditation program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). Connecticut Children’s is the first and only pediatric program in the state to receive this honor. The highly prestigious recognition designates Connecticut Children’s as an MBSAQIP Adolescent Center, making its bariatric surgeons and clinical staff the most qualified and up-to-date in surgically treating children with metabolic disorders.

In May, we initiated an expansion of our partnership with **Nuvance Health™**, and our Neonatology providers began delivering services at Nuvance sites in eastern New York including Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, Northern Dutchess Hospital in Rhinebeck, and Putnam Hospital in Carmel Hamlet.

In October, Connecticut Children's and **Hartford HealthCare** announced the formation of a **Pediatric Care Alliance** that will positively impact the lives of our patients, and all children across the region. The alliance ensures that proper care is available to children and families when and where they need it, giving them greater access to pediatric expertise spanning from birth to the transition to adult care. The care alliance will weave Connecticut Children's pediatric expertise throughout Hartford HealthCare's comprehensive network, including with more newborn nurseries and NICUs staffed by our neonatologists.

In late March, Connecticut Children's became the first medical center in the state to open a dedicated pediatric dialysis center. The Connecticut Children's **Robert R. Rosenheim Foundation Dialysis Center** was made possible by a \$1.5 million donation by the Robert R. Rosenheim Foundation. The center is located on the fourth floor of Connecticut Children's main campus at 282 Washington Street in Hartford. The facility allows our highly skilled team members to provide lifesaving treatments to patients at a location that is close to home. In addition to dialysis, the center provides services including tailored treatment plans and specialized care teams comprised of nursing, nutrition, social services and child life experts.

Despite having to shut down elective surgery for almost three months, the **Department of Surgery** was able to perform 9,133 procedures.

In February, after more than a year of planning and research by a team of nurses, lactation experts and nutritionists, Connecticut Children's launched the innovative technology known as **Keriton**, a human milk and formula management system that improves the safety and quality of human milk and formula feeding for our patients.

In February, we unveiled a **new playroom** on MS-6. The renovation was made possible by a \$49,500 grant from the Joy in Childhood Foundation (powered by Dunkin' brands) in partnership with the Starlight Children's Foundation.

On March 4, we christened **two renovated teen lounges**, one each on floors 5 and 8 at the main campus of Connecticut Children's. Both were designed by adolescent and young adult patients who have cancer or blood disorders. The renovations were made possible, in part, thanks to donations by Teen Cancer America and Lyman Orchards of Middlefield, CT. Among the decorative donations is a guitar from rock stars Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of the Who.

Barbara Edelheit, MD, division Head of Rheumatology, and **Sherene Mason, MD, FAAP, MBA**, of Nephrology, successfully completed the first year of their combined **Lupus Clinic** to provide continued state-of-the-art care for children and young adults with systemic lupus erythematosus in a multidisciplinary setting. This clinic provides the patients and families care in a collaborative fashion between the divisions of Rheumatology, Nephrology, Psychology, and Adolescent Medicine.

On April 30, 2020, we celebrated the first anniversary of the **Farmington Infusion Center**, which has performed more than 4,500 total infusions, seen more than 850 unique patients from 188 Connecticut towns and across state lines, and ranks in the 99th percentile for overall patient satisfaction scores.

In June, Connecticut Children's opened a same-day, walk-in **orthopedic and sports medicine care center** in Glastonbury, offering a full range of pediatric-specific orthopedic services.

Also in June, our **Adolescent Medicine and Primary Care Centers** moved to 599 Farmington Avenue in Farmington, CT. The new location offers outpatient consultative care to adolescents and young adults and complete health care services for infants to adolescents.

On July 6, 2020, Connecticut Children's welcomed two new faculty members, **Mark Rieger, MD**, and **Anna Katsman, MD**, as Fairfield County-based orthopedic surgeons. Drs. Rieger and Katsman provide expanded pediatric urgent orthopedic and sports medicine expertise and care to the children and families of Fairfield County and New York. They will see patients at the Connecticut Children's location in Danbury.

On Sept. 8, 2020, we opened our first **Connecticut Children's Urgent Care** location at 599 Farmington Avenue in Farmington, CT. The care center provides full-service after-hours and weekend care for infants, children and young adults up to age 26.





HONORS & AWARDS

Connecticut Children's received **2020 eHealthcare Leadership Awards for Best Native Mobile App and Best Covid-19 Pandemic-Related Communications**. eHealthcare is a leading awards program that recognizes the very best websites and digital communications of health care organizations (both large and small), online health companies, pharmaceutical/medical equipment firms, agencies/suppliers, and business improvement initiatives.

Connecticut Children's was recognized by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) as a **Digital Health Most Wired hospital**. In addition, our specialty clinics received the Ambulatory Digital Health Most Wired Award for the second year. Hospitals and health systems that receive these recognitions have showcased exemplary performance in using their technology to improve patient care, communication, and patient-provider relationships. Connecticut Children's was named both a 2020 Best Children's

Hospital and a 2020 Best Children's Hospital for Emergency Care by the **Women's Choice Award®**, a nationally recognized, trusted referral source aimed at providing women one voice regarding the products and services they choose for themselves and their families, including pediatric health care. This is the fourth consecutive year Connecticut Children's has been named to the Best Children's Hospitals list and the third consecutive year we have been recognized for our expert emergency services.

Connecticut Children's **Office for Community Child Health's Care Coordination Collaborative Model** received national recognition in a report published by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO™). The report focuses on best practices that health care and community-based organizations are engaging in to work together in addressing the social determinants of health and behavioral health needs of the populations they serve.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Basia Adams, DNP, APRN, lead advanced practice provider (APP) in the Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine and instructor in Pediatrics at the UConn School of Medicine, and **Garry Lapidus, PA-C, MPH**, pediatric emergency medicine APP and associate professor of Pediatrics and Public Health at UConn School of Medicine, were chosen as directors of Advanced Practice Providers. They took up the roles in May 2020.

Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, was elected to serve on the governing council of the American Public Health Association.

Brendan Campbell, MD, MPH, FACS, was awarded a \$1 million grant from the National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research (NCGVR) as a member of a multi-institutional effort exploring individual and community-based factors associated with non-lethal firearm injury.

Andrew Carlson, MD was presented with the Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Douglas H. MacGilpin Community Physician Award for recognition of outstanding role model.

Chris Carroll, MD, received two significant academic honors. The first is a Presidential Citation from the Society of Critical Care Medicine, which reflects his outstanding work at a national level on behalf of children and young adults who benefit from his research and advocacy in critical care medicine. The second is a top academic incentive score for his research and outstanding publications in 2019. This is the sixth year he has earned the top score amongst all faculty who participate.

Richelle deMayo, MD, CM, served as a reviewer of the American Board of Pediatrics Entrustable Professional Activity in Telemedicine. Her investigation on the importance of information systems in combating vaccination hesitancy across sectors was presented at the American Public Health Association's annual conference.

The Connecticut Lions Club presented **Cem Demirci, MD**, with the Knight of the Blind Award at the Connecticut Lions Club convention. The award was established in 1999 to honor outstanding Lions, non-Lions, organizations or businesses that exhibit the highest examples of good character, ideals, and purpose of service.

Leonard Eisenfeld, MD, was awarded the Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) resident teaching award on June 12, 2020.

Daniel Fisher, MD, was appointed to serve as interim division head for the Division of Critical Care effective July 1, 2020.

Patricia Garcia, MD, was presented with the Milton Markowitz/Edwin L. Zalneraitis Award for Outstanding Contributions to House Staff Education and Career Development.

Christopher Grindle, MD, received the R. Timothy Brown Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching in an Affiliated Pediatric Field.

In his first year at Connecticut Children's, **David Hersh, MD**, of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery, was awarded the prestigious Thrasher Research Fund Early Career Award, and his publications were recognized with an editor's choice award from the *Journal of Neurosurgery* and a faculty invitation to the International Pediatric Neurosurgery Journal Club.

Grace Hong, APRN, a member of the Clinical Pathways Team, and **Ilana Waynik, MD**, were co-recipients of the Quality Cup Award from the Medical Staff Office in recognition of their critical work on clinical pathways pertaining to Covid-19.

Michael Isakoff, MD, was presented with the Heart of Gold Award at the Feb. 26, 2020, National Pediatric Cancer Foundation Summit in Tampa, FL. He also was elected president of Connecticut Children's Medical Staff Office.

Noah Jablow, MD, and **Robert Parker, DO**, received the Timothy W. Kelly Award for Excellence in Teaching in Acute Care.

Sarah Kollar, DO, one of our chief residents, was awarded the prestigious Resident Research Grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics for her work with cardiologist **Olga Toro-Salazar, MD**, on cardiac MRI.

Garry Lapidus, PA-C, MPH, co-director of Advanced Practice Providers, received the Distinguished Career Award from the Injury Control and Emergency Health Services section of American

Public Health. In November, he was appointed director of Research Operations & Development.

In a first for the Residency program, medical resident **Nancy Presnick, DO**, was accepted into the American Academy of Pediatrics Federal Advocacy Internship. As part of the internship, she will learn about child health policy, the legislative process, federal advocacy, and public affairs.

Christine Rader, MD, FACS, was appointed associate dean for Medical Education at Connecticut Children's and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine effective June 1, 2020. She joined Connecticut Children's in 2011 and is a fellowship-trained pediatric general and thoracic surgeon.

In May 2020, **Karen Rubin, MD**, was appointed as interim division head for the Division of Medical Genetics. Dr. Rubin has been working closely with the division since 2018, when her leadership efforts resulted in an award to Connecticut Children's by the state of Connecticut to transform the newborn screening program.

Melissa Santos, PhD, was appointed as interim division head of Psychology, effective June 1, 2020. She succeeded Barbara Rzepski, PhD, who remains in the division providing clinical care and mentorship.

Sarah Schlegel, MD, was appointed division head of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, effective July 1, 2020. Dr. Schlegel succeeded Dr. Ann Milanese, who was division head from 2009 to 2020, and who remains in the division providing clinical care and mentorship.

Jim E. Shmerling, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO of Connecticut Children's, was named a Power 25 Health Care leader by the *Hartford Business Journal*. The Power 25 Health Care list identifies leaders in the Greater Hartford area who are significantly impacting the health care industry and public health.

Jody Terranova, DO, was invited to serve on Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont's Covid-19 vaccine advisory group. She also was invited to serve on the Student Evaluation and Appeals Review Committee (SEARC) for the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

MacDara Tynan, MD, was appointed interim division head of Pulmonary Medicine, effective June 17, 2020. He provides administrative support for day-to-day operations.

Edwin Zalneraitis, MD, received the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). This prestigious award recognizes educators who have made an outstanding contribution to medical education.

William Zempsky, MD, MPH, FAAP, division head of Pain and Palliative Medicine, was appointed associate chair of Research, effective June 1, 2020.

Three of our nurses were honored with Nightingale Awards. **Aimee Bareiss, Molly Ray**, and **Cynthia Whetten** were chosen for continually demonstrating excellence in clinical practice, exhibiting a commitment to mentoring and collaboration, and having a significant impact on patient care.

This year's recipients of Dr. Juan Salazar's four Chair's Awards are: **Lisa Marella** and **Rebecca Moles, MD**, the Chair's Award for Well-Being; **Emily Germain-Lee, MD**, the Chair's Award for Innovation; **Richelle deMayo, MD, CM**, the Chair's Award for Teaching; and, **John Schreiber, MD, MPH**, the Chair's Award for Citizenship.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Craig Schramm, MD, was awarded emeritus status as associate emeritus professor; **Ilana Waynik, MD**, was promoted to associate professor of pediatrics; **James Moore, MD, PhD**, was promoted to professor of pediatrics; **Michael Brimacombe, PhD, Michelle McKee, MD**, and **Lori Pelletier, PhD**, were granted appointments as associate professors of Pediatrics. **Abraham Khorasani, MD**, was promoted to assistant professor.

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

New Faculty Members:

Hassan El Chebib, MD, Infectious Diseases and Immunology; Caitlin Heyden, DO, Cardiology; Raina Sinha, MD, Cardiothoracic Surgery; Lila Worden, MD, Neurology; Ana Garnecho, MD, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics; Abraham Khorasani, MD, and Esther Oziel, MD, Primary Care Center; Laura McKay, MD, Hematology-Oncology; Michelle McKee, MD, Emergency Medicine; Nancy Louis, MD,

NICU; Jonah Mandell, DO, Urgent Care; Elliot Melendez, MD, PICU; Lori Pelletier, PhD, Quality and Patient Safety; Lila Worden, MD, Neurology; Barbara Adams, DNP, James Gerace, DHSc, Petronella Stoltz, PNP-BC, Advanced Practice Providers; Mark Rieger, MD, and Ana Katsman, MD, Orthopedic Surgery; Leah Gregorio, MD, Middlesex Hospital; Kirin Suri, MD, the Hospital for Special Care; Julieta Bonvin-Sallago, MD, Research; and Lisa Backus, PhD, Amy Signore, PhD, Child and Adolescent Psychology. Our 2020-21 chief residents, Jessica Takores, MD, Amy Miller, MD, and Sarah Mackey, DO, were granted faculty appointments in the Department of Pediatrics.

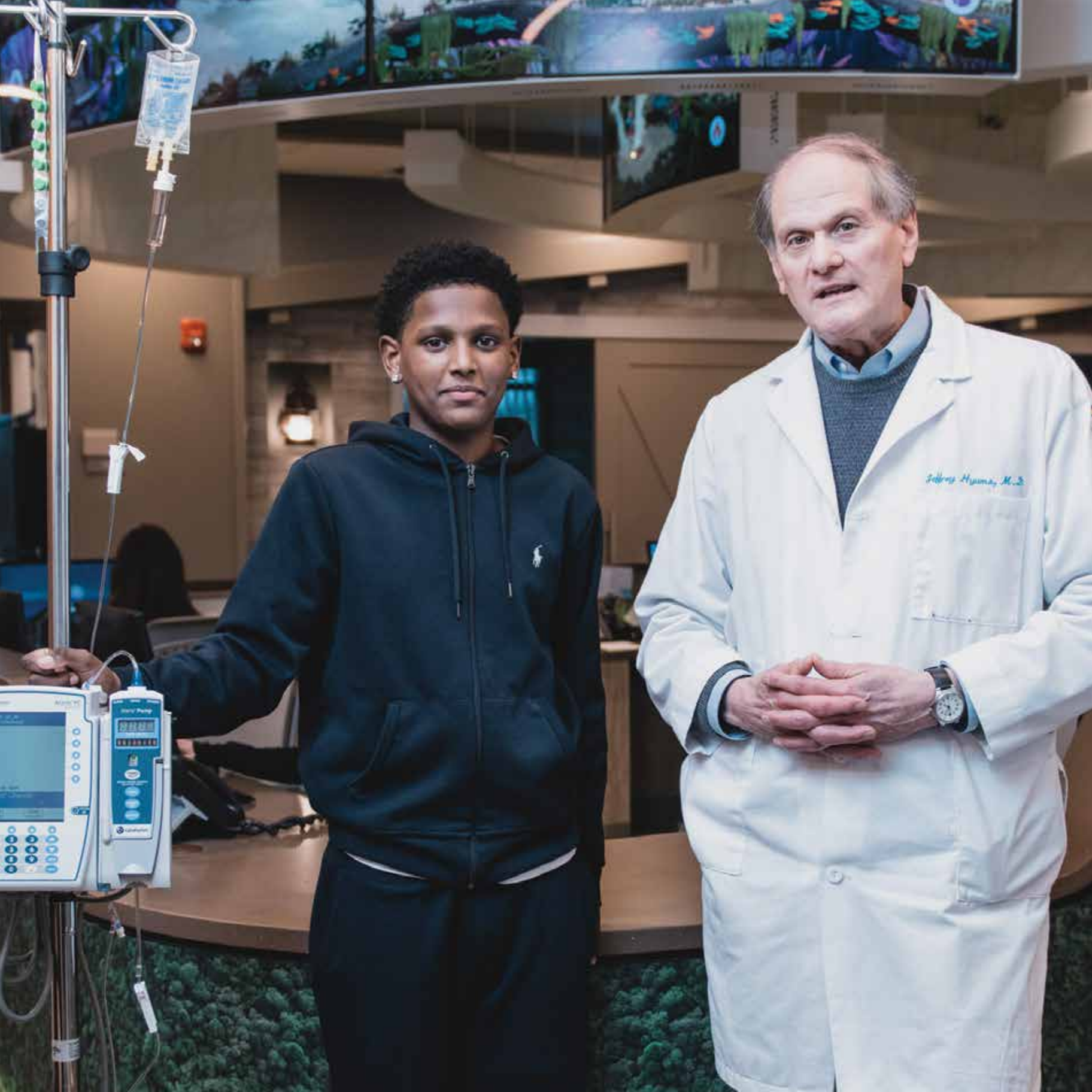
Joint Appointments:

Ashley Groshong, PhD, Amy Hunter, PhD, Department of Medicine; Jennifer Downs, MD, Saili Kalaskar, MBBS, Lovejit Kaur, MBBS, Lynn Mangini, MD, Kashmeer Zablan, MD, Jennifer Zajac, DO, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry; David Hersh, MD, and Raina Sinha, MD, Surgery.

Community-Based Faculty:

Damian D. Dos Santos, MD, Alicia Dodson, MD, Yesu Kumar Matta, MD, Mary A. Simon, MD, Martha Sternberg, MD, Clinical Longitudinal Immersion in the Community (CLIC).





RECRUITMENTS & STAFF CHANGES

Following an extensive national search, **Michele R. McKee, MD, MS, FAAP**, was appointed the new division head of Emergency Medicine at Connecticut Children's and the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. She previously was medical director of the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Department at Comer Children's Hospital in Chicago and associate professor of Pediatrics at the University of Chicago.

Also following an extensive national search, **Dr. Elliot Melendez, MD**, joined Connecticut Children's as the new medical director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and division head of Pediatric Critical Care in the Department of Pediatrics at UConn Health. Dr. Melendez is board certified in pediatrics, pediatric critical care, and pediatric emergency medicine. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Melendez joined us from John's Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, FL.

Lori Pelletier, PhD, joined Connecticut Children's as senior vice president, chief quality patient safety officer, and head of the Division of Excellence in Patient Safety & Clinical Quality. Dr. Pelletier worked for nine years at UMass Memorial Health Care building an organizational capability of improvement and operational excellence through systems design and staff development.

On February 1, 2020, the Cardiothoracic Surgery division welcomed **Raina Sinha, MC, MPH, FACS**. She is Connecticut Children's first female pediatric cardiovascular surgeon and one of only 19 female pediatric cardiovascular surgeons practicing in the United States.

Connecticut Children's **Glycogen Storage Disease (GSD) Program** is under new leadership. David Weinstein, MD, left Connecticut Children's for an exciting new role at Passage Bio gene therapy in Philadelphia. Under his leadership, he and his team helped to build an internationally recognized program, and Connecticut Children's has now cared for more than 650 children and adults with GSD from 49 states and 51 different countries around the world. He and his team also launched the world's first gene therapy trial for GSD, showing promising early results in the

search for a cure. **Emily Germain-Lee, MD**, division head of the Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes, and **Rebecca Riba-Wolman, MD**, have assumed leadership of the GSD Program and will continue to build on its legacy and to provide a source of hope, innovation, and care for the GSD community.

Patricia Joyce, MD, retired on July 1, 2020, after 34 years of service as medical director of the St. Francis/University of Connecticut Primary Care Services Pediatric Clinic.

Lisa Namerow, MD, retired in 2020, but she continues to work and collaborate with trainees and colleagues in the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Connecticut Children's served and continues to serve as one of the hubs for the ACCESS-Mental Health CT program, and under Dr. Namerow's leadership, we consistently obtained excellent ratings on all hub activities from our primary care providers. Throughout Dr. Namerow's career, she has been on the leading edge of efforts to integrate Psychiatry and Pediatrics, using collaboration, clinical expertise, and creativity to anticipate and fulfill the needs of behavioral health care patients, and to educate and support the providers of all levels who care for them.

Barbara Rzepski, PhD, retired in June. Her efforts were crucial to the formation and development of the Division of Pediatric Psychology. She built the foundation that we continue to use and expand on in servicing the many needs of Connecticut's children.

Craig Schramm, MD, division head of Pediatrics Pulmonary Medicine since 1999, retired on July 1, 2020, but he continues to provide medical directorship to the Connecticut Children's Sleep Medicine Program and will serve as a source of clinical information and history until recruitment efforts for the role of division chief are completed.

Aaron Zucker, MD, FCCM, retired on July 1, 2020, following 23 years of service as head of the Division of Critical Care. In the words of his successor Elliot Melendez, MD, "Dr. Zucker leaves a legacy of critical care growth and excellence."

GRANTS

Physician-in-Chief **Juan C. Salazar, MD, MPH**, was awarded a \$1,685,063 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH/NIAID) for the study of the Covid-19-related multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). He and his team will work to identify biomarker signatures of prognostic value.

In November 2020, Dr. Salazar and his HIV Team received a three-year \$850,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help advance and expand comprehensive medical care for HIV-infected women, children, youth, and HIV-exposed infants living in Connecticut.

Steven C. Rogers, MD, MS-CTR, and **Ryan O'Donnell, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**, were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) of Connecticut, Inc. This grant allows the Emergency Department team to initiate an assessment of patient care for emergency behavioral health patients, with the goal of more efficiently triaging and tracking the acuity of youth with behavioral health concerns who come to our Emergency Department.

Jennifer Madan Cohen, MD, and the entire Epilepsy Center Team were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the We Bear This Together Foundation. This grant establishes the We Bear This Together Fund, which provides financial assistance to families who are receiving care at Connecticut Children's Epilepsy Center.

Sylvia Öunpuu, MSc, and **Gyula Acsadi, MD, PhD**, were awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Harold & Rebecca H. Gross Foundation to support research at Connecticut Children's Center for Motion Analysis (CMA). The grant provides funding for their continued research into Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) disease, which causes foot/ankle deformity and associated gait challenges.

Markus Bookland, MD, FAANS, **Eileen Gillan, MD**, and **Elizabeth Lachat, LCSW**, were notified of a \$25,000 grant from the Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance, Inc. to support research and patient assistance at Connecticut Children's.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

The University of Connecticut's annual **HuskyTHON** raised a record \$1.5 million for Connecticut Children's. The 2020 event was an 18-hour dance marathon held Feb. 22-23.

Quinnipiac University's **QTHON 2020: Virtual Edition** was held March 21 via Zoom and other social media platforms. The 12-hour event raised more than \$200,000 for Connecticut Children's.

25th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

On April 2, 2021, Connecticut Children's will mark its 25th anniversary. In addition to a day of celebration, we will be saluting this milestone with monthly activities. Throughout, we also eagerly anticipate another year of clinical achievement, innovation, expansion, advances in research, and the opportunity to educate and train the next generation of pediatric providers. Whether buffeted by the pandemic crisis of 2020 or buoyed by the upcoming anniversary celebrations of 2021, we remain committed to providing the highest quality pediatric care for our patients and families. They are the inspiration for everything we do.



25th
ANNIVERSARY

**Creating the
Future**

