

Department of Pediatrics

Department of Pediatrics 2024 Faculty Excellence Awards honorees

We are delighted to acknowledge the following individuals for outstanding performance and contributions to our mission over the past year. There were many qualified candidates for the awards and the selection of finalists was exceedingly challenging. Awards were bestowed in each category by rank (Assistant Professor/Instructor; Associate Professor/Associate Clinician; Professor/Distinguished Clinician) and some awards had co-winners this year. Congratulations again!

Excellence in Advocacy

Megan Attridge, MD (Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine) is a dedicated advocate in pediatric healthcare, focusing on addressing health-related social needs and mentoring future pediatric leaders. Dr. Attridge co-directs the advocacy curriculum for Pediatric Emergency Medicine fellows and has pioneered initiatives like food insecurity screening and distribution in the pediatric emergency department. Through her leadership, nearly 1,000 families have been connected with essential resources, and the program has expanded to include diaper and formula distribution. Her advocacy work also extends to caring for immigrant and refugee patients, where she has developed comprehensive care pathways. Dr. Attridge's commitment to advocacy is further demonstrated through her mentorship, guiding residents and fellows in impactful community initiatives that aim to reduce social barriers and improve health equity.



Shawn Smith, MD (Assistant Professor/Distinguished Clinician, Hospital-Based Medicine) is a dedicated educator and leader in health equity and advocacy. Dr. Smith directs the Health Equity and Advocacy curriculum at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, where she facilitates impactful learning experiences for medical students, including lectures, panels, and interactive discussions on bias, health literacy, and structural barriers in healthcare. Her work extends to graduate medical education, where she mentors residents and fellows, fostering an inclusive environment that prioritizes diversity and equity. Dr. Smith also serves as the inaugural Director of Health Equity Learning and Development in the Department of Pediatrics at Lurie Children's Hospital, leading initiatives to address healthcare disparities. Her commitment to education and advocacy is recognized across the institution, making her a valuable mentor and role model.



Sally Reynolds, MD (Associate Professor/Distinguished Clinician, Emergency Medicine) has been a key leader in making sure children's hospitals are ready for emergencies for over 30 years. As the Medical Director of Emergency Preparedness at Lurie Children's Hospital, Dr. Reynolds has led efforts to improve safety and response plans, both at the hospital and throughout Chicago. She has guided the team through major events like the H1N1 outbreak, COVID-19 pandemic, and a recent cybersecurity issue, helping to keep care safe and effective during tough situations. Dr. Reynolds also plays a big role in training staff, running large practice drills, and pushing for child-focused emergency plans with local agencies. Her work has made a lasting difference in keeping children safe and prepared in emergencies.



Excellence in Clinical Care

Natalia Henner, MD (Assistant Professor, Neonatology & Palliative Care) has played a key role in providing compassionate, high-quality care for newborns and their families facing serious health challenges. As a co-founder of the Perinatal Palliative Care Program at Lurie Children's Hospital, Dr. Henner has helped families make important decisions with care and understanding. She also started the NICU Collaborative Care Rounds and the Trisomy Care Collaborative, which have improved teamwork and communication among medical staff and families. In her role as interim head of Pediatric Palliative Care, Dr. Henner has expanded services and created a special training program to teach future specialists in this field. Her dedication has made a lasting difference for patients, families, and her colleagues.



Kendra Ward, MD, MS (Associate Professor, Cardiology) has dedicated her career to creating programs that improve the health and well-being of children with heart conditions. As the Director of the Cardiopulmonary Exercise Lab and the Pediatric Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Lurie Children's Hospital, Dr. Ward has developed exercise programs that help young heart patients build strength and resilience. Her work includes an exercise program for children with POTS and a preventive cardiology program to address issues like high cholesterol and hypertension. Through these programs, Dr. Ward provides children and families with tools to build heart-healthy habits and improve quality of life. She is also a co-founder of Chicagoland Cardiac Connections, a group that supports children and young adults with heart devices. Her dedication has helped countless children in Chicago and beyond.



Alan Nugent, MBBS (Professor, Cardiology) is a leader in pediatric interventional cardiology, dedicated to improving care for children with heart conditions. Since joining Lurie Children's Hospital in 2018, Dr. Nugent has built and led the Interventional Catheterization Program, overseeing significant advancements in equipment, protocols, and procedures. His work has expanded the range of interventional options available to patients, improving outcomes and access to care. Dr. Nugent also contributes to national quality initiatives, is primary investigator in multiple multicenter clinical trials, and mentors young cardiologists, helping shape the future of pediatric heart care at Lurie Children's Hospital.



Excellence in Education

Lucas Bruton, MD, MEd (Instructor, Advanced General Pediatrics and Primary Care) is dedicated to improving medical education, especially in caring for children with medical complexity and children with disabilities. Dr. Bruton developed a unique curriculum to help residents understand both the medical and social aspects of caring for these patients. He also leads workshops, simulations, and board review sessions to enhance resident learning and serves as a co-leader of the primary care rotation for pediatric residents. His work has earned him multiple teaching awards from Northwestern University, recognizing his impact as an educator. Dr. Bruton's dedication to his trainees and innovative approach to teaching make him a respected mentor and educator at Lurie Children's Hospital.



Kavita Hodgkins, MD, MSCI (Assistant Professor, Nephrology) is a dedicated educator and leader in pediatric nephrology. She co-directs the Personal Transition to the Profession course at Feinberg School of Medicine, helping medical students develop professional and personal growth over their four years of training. Dr. Hodgkins also developed the new Feinberg Leadership Identity Formation and Training program, a four-year longitudinal leadership curriculum to empower medical students with a foundation in leadership theory, practical leadership skills, and self-reflection facilitated by students' coaches. She helped develop the Prenatal Curriculum for nephrology fellows to guide families with complex kidney conditions. Her commitment to teaching and mentoring has made a lasting impact, earning her recognition for excellence in education.



Shivani Patel, MBBS, MS (Clinical Assistant Professor/Associate Clinician, Cardiology) is dedicated to enhancing pediatric cardiology education through hands-on training and mentorship. Dr. Patel has developed and led various cardiology curricula, including an echocardiography training program for residents at a hospital in Tanzania, which helps local providers diagnose heart conditions in children. She also leads the Chicago Sonographer Update, an international course that provides valuable training to sonographers and cardiologists. Dr. Patel's efforts have expanded cardiac knowledge and skills both locally and globally, making her a respected educator and mentor in the field. She also serves as a College Mentor at the Feinberg School of Medicine, providing longitudinal coaching to a cohort of medical students through four years of medical school.



Yolanda Holler-Managan, MD (Associate Professor/Distinguished Clinician, Neurology & Epilepsy) is a



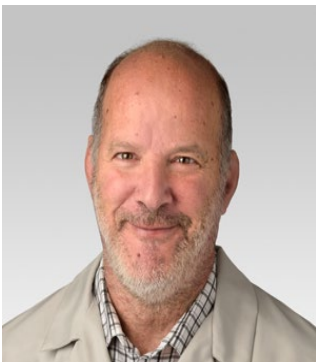
dedicated educator and leader in pediatric neurology. She serves as the Chair of the Child Neurology Society's Maintenance of Certification Committee, where she oversees the creation of self-assessment exams that support neurologists in their ongoing learning. Dr. Holler-Managan also mentors family medicine residents and pediatric neurology fellows, helping them develop skills to care for children with complex neurological conditions. Her teaching contributions include presenting on neurodiversity and autism, as well as authoring a chapter on neurological evaluation in the Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics. Her commitment to education and mentorship has made a meaningful impact on trainees and peers in neurology.

Excellence in Outreach Care

Murad Omery, MD (Clinical Assistant Professor, Neurology & Epilepsy) has been recognized as an innovative and dedicated clinician in the field of pediatric neurology. At Central DuPage Hospital, Dr. Omery developed community - based protocols for managing headaches and strokes in children, and has shown a strong commitment to improving access for patients affected by neurologic conditions. His efforts has led to the creation of the area's first and only post – concussion program, with a focus on treating patients affected by complicated brain injuries. He also serves on the board of a local health center for immigrant and refugee families, helping to ensure quality care for underserved communities. Dr. Omery's commitment to high quality outreach care has made a significant impact on behalf of children and their families that he serves.



Mark Fishbein, MD (Associate Professor, Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition) has dedicated his career



to helping children with complex feeding and swallowing disorders. In 2006, he established a multidisciplinary feeding program at Central DuPage Hospital, providing much-needed support to families across the Chicago area. This program, which includes a team of specialists in gastroenterology, speech therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, and psychology, is the only fully staffed feeding program in the region. Dr. Fishbein's approach offers comprehensive care for children with diverse needs, including those with developmental delays, autism, and other medical complexities. His commitment to innovative care and collaboration has set a high standard in pediatric gastroenterology and outreach.

Sandra Ndiaye, DO (Clinical Assistant Professor/Associate Clinician, Hospital-Based Medicine) is dedicated to expanding pediatric care access and education. As the site lead for Lurie Children's at Franciscan Health Crown Point, Dr. Ndiaye played a key role in opening a new pediatric unit in Northwest Indiana, providing much-needed local care for children and families in the region. She also co-directs the pediatric education program at Rosalind Franklin University, where she developed clinical rotations that offer hands-on experience for medical students. Dr. Ndiaye's commitment to outreach and teaching has brought high-quality care and learning opportunities to underserved communities.



Arie Habis, MD (Clinical Assistant Professor/Distinguished Clinician, Emergency Medicine) has led efforts to enhance emergency care for children through innovative education and training. As the Medical Director for Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Lurie Children's at Central DuPage Hospital, Dr. Habis developed the SHAPE (Simulation for High Acuity Pediatric Events) program, which trains healthcare teams in handling critical pediatric cases. His work has improved the skills and confidence of emergency staff across multiple hospitals and EMS providers, impacting care for thousands of children in the region. Dr. Habis also organizes an annual conference that provides hands-on pediatric emergency training to hundreds of healthcare professionals.



Excellence in Scholarship



Monica Laronda, PhD (Assistant Professor, Endocrinology) is a leader in innovative reproductive science, focusing on fertility preservation and hormone restoration for children and young adults. Dr. Laronda directs the Gonadal Tissue Processing Lab at Lurie Children's Hospital, where she works on pioneering research to create bioprosthetic ovaries and advance fertility options for patients facing medical challenges. She also developed ReproSTEM, an outreach program to equip high school teachers with knowledge in reproductive biology and tissue engineering, aiming to inspire the next generation in science and health. Dr. Laronda's research, mentorship, and outreach efforts are making a lasting impact on reproductive health and education.

Jami Josefson, MD, MS (Associate Professor, Endocrinology) is a physician-scientist who studies metabolic health in pregnancy and the near- and long-term impact on offspring metabolic diseases. Dr. Josefson leads translational research in clinical epigenetics and multi-center clinical studies in the field of maternal-child health. Her research is supported by NIH grants from the diabetes institute and child health institute. She is also the Medical Director of the Lurie Children's Thyroid Program, where she oversees care for children with complex thyroid conditions. Dr. Josefson's work has earned her awards for research and teaching, and she mentors many students and junior faculty, fostering the next generation of physician-scientists in pediatric endocrinology.



L. Nelson Sanchez-Pinto, MD, MBI (Associate Professor, Critical Care) is a physician-scientist dedicated to advancing pediatric critical care through data science and artificial intelligence. Dr. Sanchez-Pinto is known for his work on pediatric sepsis, including the development of the Phoenix Criteria, a groundbreaking approach to diagnosing sepsis severity in children. He has published extensively, with numerous articles in high-impact journals like JAMA and The Lancet. His research efforts are supported by multiple NIH grants, and he leads initiatives such as the PICU Data Collaborative to improve data-driven insights in critical care. Dr. Sanchez-Pinto is also an active mentor and educator, shaping the next generation of researchers and clinicians.



Craig Garfield, MD (Professor, Hospital-Based Medicine) is a pioneer in research focused on fatherhood and family health. As the founder and director of the Family and Child Health Innovation Program (FCHIP) at Lurie Children's Hospital, Dr. Garfield works to improve health outcomes for children by supporting families, particularly through initiatives that include fathers in public health discussions. His innovative "PRAMS for Dads" program, in collaboration with the CDC, is the first of its kind, gathering public health data on fathers from multiple states. Dr. Garfield's work, which has gained attention at national levels including Congress, provides valuable insights into fatherhood's impact on child and family health.

