



UI HEALTH PEDIATRICS

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2021 CELEBRATION NEWSLETTER

UI Health / Cook County Health Announce Partnership for Pediatric Care



UI Health and Cook County Health (CCH) launched the Partnership for Pediatric Care in October 2021. The first phase will help expand access to care for rheumatology, nephrology, gastroenterology, hematology, and genetics, as well as for other specialties and intensive care needs. (*)

Displaying the sign are Dr. Mope Akintorin, chair of pediatrics at CCH; and **Dr. Benjamin Van Voorhees**, head of pediatrics at UI Health – who will oversee the new clinical affiliation for shared services. (*) Also celebrating the collaboration on specialty pediatric services are *(front)* CCH CEO Israel Rocha, UIC



Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs **Dr. Heather Prendergast**, CCH Chief Medical Officer Dr. Claudia Fegan, and UIC Professor of Emergency Medicine **Dr. Janet Lin**; and *(back)* UIC Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research and Executive Vice Head of Pediatrics **Dr. Jonathan Klein**, University of Illinois Hospital and Clinics CEO **Michael Zenn**, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, UIC Chancellor **Dr. Michael Amiridis**, UIC College of Medicine Executive Dean **Dr. Mark Rosenblatt**, and UIC Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs **Dr. Robert Barish**. (*) The UI Health pediatrics team visited Stroger Hospital on 12.8.21 to proceed further with plans to expand access to care and improve health outcomes for children across Chicago and Cook County. *Other photos* show some of the 165 specialty physicians who will care for children at both UI Health and Cook County Health locations.



News from Children’s Hospital University of Illinois

Halloween Costume Winners Receive Prizes



As COVID-19 precautions are still being taken, a “reverse parade” was held for Halloween. Staff from all over the Children’s Hospital University of Illinois visited patients at bedside with toys and healthy treats. Many children were also cleverly disguised in costumes, including NICU babies who competed on Facebook for prizes. The top three winners were Leo the Turtle, John the Octopus, and Logan the Patrick Starfish.



PICU Birthday Party Features Shrek Cake



One of our PICU patients recently celebrated his 18th birthday with the help of several generous donors. [Team Nicholas](#) and [Old St. Patrick's Catholic Church](#) were among those who funded the party for Jeremiah. His dream cake featuring Shrek was baked and delivered by [Icing Smiles](#). A good time was had by all!



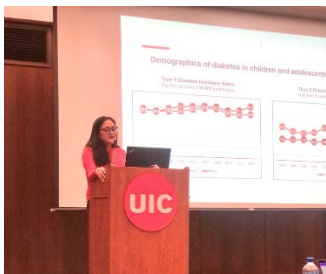
AJ Is Recent NICU Grad

Although he weighed only 1 pound / 6 ounces at birth, AJ gained over 4 pounds while in the NICU and was able to go home well before his due date. His mom visited daily, doing kangaroo care for countless hours.

News from Department of Pediatrics

On-Campus Diabetes Conference Held

On 11.5.21, more than 100 school nurses and health aides came to campus to attend an annual "Care of Students with Diabetes Conference" run by the UI Health Pediatric Endocrinology Team. Team members on the program included **Marla Solomon, RD, LDN, CDCES**; **Jessica Garcia, RN, BSN**; **Ruth Melgoza-Walker, RN, CDCES**; and **Deb Preston, APRN, PNP, CDCES**. Other speakers included Cynthia E. Munoz, PhD, MPH, the American Diabetes Association's President of Health Care and Education; and Michelle Adams, MS, CPT, from UIC's Kinesiology and Nutrition Department.



Demographics of diabetes in children and adolescents

10-14 Children (10-14 years)

15-19 Adolescents (15-19 years)

20-24 Young Adults (20-24 years)

25-29 Adults (25-29 years)

30-34 Adults (30-34 years)

35-39 Adults (35-39 years)

40-44 Adults (40-44 years)

45-49 Adults (45-49 years)

50-54 Adults (50-54 years)

55-59 Adults (55-59 years)

60-64 Adults (60-64 years)

65-69 Adults (65-69 years)

70-74 Adults (70-74 years)

75-79 Adults (75-79 years)

80-84 Adults (80-84 years)

85-89 Adults (85-89 years)

90-94 Adults (90-94 years)

95-99 Adults (95-99 years)



Honors and Awards

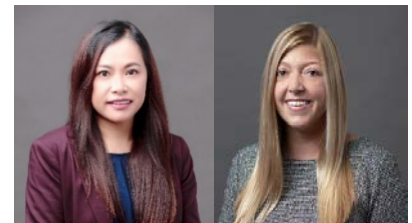


1) **Dr. Lewis Hsu** and **Dr. Reshma Shah** were honored on 11.11.21 by the College of Medicine at the 2021 Faculty Recognition Ceremony. For Pediatrics, Dr. Hsu (*pictured on right with Department Head Dr. Benjamin Van Voorhees*) received the Faculty of the Year Award. Dr. Shah (*pictured on left with her son*) received the Rising Star Award. Congratulations to Professor Hsu, who is the Director of the Pediatric Sickle Cell Center; and to Associate Professor Shah, who is the Chief of the Section of Behavioral / Developmental Pediatrics.



2) This year 11 UI Health pediatric providers were named among the region's top doctors by Castle Connolly: **Dr. Saba Ahmad**, Pediatric Neurology; **Dr. Karen Bernstein**, Adolescent Medicine; **Dr. Claudia Boucher-Berry**, Pediatric Endocrinology; **Dr. Rachel Caskey**, General Pediatrics; **Dr. Karen Hayani**, Pediatric Infectious Disease; **Dr. Lewis Hsu**, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology; **Dr. Amanda D. Osta**, General Pediatrics; **Dr. C. Lucy Park**, Pediatric Allergy & Immunology; **Dr. De-Ann M. Pillers**, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine; **Dr. Reshma Shah**, Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics; and **Dr. Mary Lou Schmidt**, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology.

3) Among recipients of the 2021 UIC Award of Merit were **Shirley Belocura** (Director of Patient Care Services in the NICU, *left*) and **Dana Thornquist** (Child Life Specialist in Pediatrics Nursing, *right*). They were honored at the annual Employee Recognition Award Ceremony on 11.16.21 for demonstrating a commitment to excellence and exemplifying the highest values of the UIC community.



Philanthropy Updates and Plans



1) Thanks in large part to generous donations from the Service Club of Chicago and the Friends of UI Pediatrics, a POCUS ultrasound system has now been delivered to our NICU. We also appreciate those who participated in Giving Tuesday. Please consider making an End of Year donation at <https://collegeofmedicine.webhost.uic.edu/GIVING/StartGivingMedicine2.html>.

- 2) The Friends of UI Pediatrics wrapped up their 12th year as a group of dedicated and empowered volunteers by holding their December meeting at the Starbucks Roastery on North Michigan Avenue. They toured the roastery, chose from a long list of special beverages, sampled delicious food, and held other holiday festivities. More plans are being developed to support key educational, clinical, and research efforts at the Department of Pediatrics.

Pediatric Hematology / Oncology Team Continues Thanksgiving Tradition

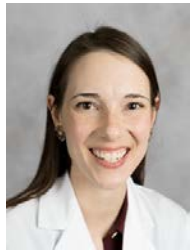


The UIC Forum was the site of the 20th Annual Thanksgiving Festival held on 11.20.21 by the Pediatric Hematology / Oncology Team. Among those attending the concert were patients struggling with blood and cancer disorders, with more than 30 families going home with goody bags filled with toys and other treats that were provided through donations. Attendees danced to the music, and messages of thanks were shared between performances. The event was dedicated to the memory of Patrick Kiely – husband of Nurse Practitioner Cathleen Kiely – in gratitude for his support for pediatric programs.



News from Pediatrics Faculty

Media Mentions



- 1) **Dr. Jalene Shoener**, Medical Director of UI Health’s Child & Youth Center, was interviewed by Amanda Vinicky on a Health News segment aired by *wttw* on 11.8.21 entitled “Local Providers Begin Administering COVID-19 Vaccines to Kids.” Dr. Shoener noted that her own child was getting the shot, and strongly encouraged others to be vaccinated. She went on to say that there were children in our Hospital with the infection, and that it was hard to know which children would be severely affected by complications. [Local Providers Begin Administering COVID-19 Vaccines to Kids | Chicago News | WTTW.](#)

- 2) Details on how Illinois pediatricians, including those at UI Health, have been committed to making the COVID-19 vaccine available safely and quickly were shared on 10.25.21 by **Dr. Michelle Barnes** at a press conference held by Governor Pritzker. Dr. Barnes is Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Secretary of the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP). She also mentioned ways that the ICAPP is working with the IDPH and other partners to support the free vaccine administration. https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/10/25/22744818/pritzker-vaccinating-children-ages-5-to-11-coronavirus-covid-19-ezike-illinois?fbclid=IwAR1a_rEi2t_y5Mn9BO-1EPH-AO4eTGQf7X8Q6RC1etGq-YQ6FT01b5F8gnI.


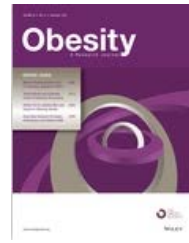
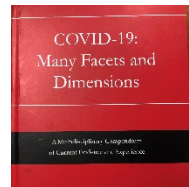


Faculty Updates

- 1) The following transitions in the Pediatrics Residency Program leadership have been announced: **Dr. Meghan Harding** (Assistant Program Director) will expand her roles within the Pediatrics Residency Program, particularly as they relate to the residents’ work in the inpatient setting. Dr. Harding is also now directing the resident simulation activities. The responsibilities of **Dr. Stacy Laurent** (Associate Program Director) have been expanded, in addition to continuing the many projects she already leads. Many thanks to Drs. Harding and Laurent, as well as to **Dr. Michelle Barnes** (Program Director).
- 2) **Sekhar P. Reddy**, PhD, has joined the Editorial Board of the peer-reviewed journal, *Antioxidants*, which is published monthly by MDPI. Dr. Reddy is Chief of the Division of Developmental Biology & Basic Research.
- 3) **Dr. Jonathan Klein** was co-chair for the scientific program for the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) 12th Global Congress on November 18-21, 2021.
- 4) **Dr. Usha Raj**, the Anjuli S. Nayak Professor, recently participated in a panel sponsored by the Women in Neonatology (WiN) group of the American Academy of Pediatrics (<https://www.aap.org/en/community/aap-sections/sonpm/win/>). Approximately 150 participants explored goals and opportunities at the session entitled “On Becoming a Leader: Reflections on Our Careers.”



Publications

- 1) A discussion of COVID-19 vaccine confidence written by **Dr. Cristiana Hentea, Alia MN Welsh, and Dr. Lewis Hsu** was published in the Fall 2021 edition of the *AAP Section on Hematology/Oncology Newsletter*. It was entitled “COVID-19 Vaccination of Children with PHO Conditions and Working with Families regarding Vaccine Hesitancy.” A list was also provided of resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics to use when talking with families.

- 2) **Dr. Jordan Hupert** is on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Pediatrics* and edited the “Current Best Evidence” section of the November 2021 edition. The column included “EMB Pearls” entitled “Interquartile Range” and “Maximizing Sensitivity.” <https://www.jpeds.com/content/societyCollectionCBE>.
- 3) **Dr. Molly Martin** is among the authors of a publication based on an obesity research study at Rush University Medical Center that included UI Health patients. The article entitled “Attenuated Efficacy of Pediatric Obesity Treatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic” in *Obesity (Silver Spring)* 2021;00:1-5 concluded: “Many families that have struggled with managing their child’s weight during this period may need encouragement to continue engaging in structured weight management as society renormalizes.” <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/oby.23313>.

- 4) Among the authors of a book entitled *COVID-19: Many Facets and Dimensions* are **Dr. Peter Varga, Dr. Lewis Hsu, Dr. Danielle Peterson, Dr. Jenny Wang, and Dr. Astrid Leon-Silva**. Their chapter is entitled “Clinical Presentations of COVID-19 in Paediatric Population.” Published in April 2021, the book is a collaboration of the UIC Center for Global Health with the Ramaiah Group of Institutions and others.


Among Recent Grants To Support Research and Projects

Title: The Child and Adolescent Health and COVID-19 Project

Expected Timeline: September 2021 – June 2022

Amount: \$4,550

Pediatrics Faculty Contact: Dr. Jonathan Klein

Description: This International Pediatric Association Award supports a partnership between IPA (International Publishers Association), UNICEF (UN Children’s Fund), and WHO (World Health Organization) that is addressing child and adolescent health and healthcare during COVID-19.



Title: UIC Rush Stroger COG Clinical Trials Program 2021 Infrastructure Grant

Expected Timeline: December 2021 – November 2022

Amount: \$50,000

Pediatrics Faculty Contact: Dr. Mary Lou Schmidt

Description: This grant from the St. Baldrick’s Foundation will support the goal of the UIC / Rush / Stroger COG (Children’s Oncology Group) Clinical Trials Program to meet the needs of patients from birth to 30 years of age (and sometimes beyond) who are struggling with cancer or who have survived this disease but are at risk for long-term health problems. Most participants have limited resources, medical knowledge, and language skills; and also have no or public insurance. By offering optimal care and follow-up, the entire COG research program is enhanced. The COG database better represents a diverse population with more unique tumor and blood specimens for lab research, and patients on these trials determine which new treatment is best for current and future patients worldwide.



~~

