



CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S  
DEPARTMENTS OF PEDIATRICS  
& PEDIATRIC SURGICAL  
SUBSPECIALTIES

# ANNUAL ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS REPORT 2022

The year 2022 saw many remarkable highlights from the physicians at Connecticut Children's and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. From the opening of new locations in Westport and a new Primary Care site in Hartford, to the first steps towards our new tower and Fetal Care Center, numerous teaching and grant awards, promotions, and special events, 2022 was an important year in the history of our academic and clinical care organization.

These important milestones would not be possible without the dedicated and passionate work of our physicians, medical staff, and countless others who turned these dreams into realities. We are honored to share some of the amazing accomplishments of our colleagues and friends. As always, we are extraordinarily grateful for the rich and dynamic contributions of our faculty. Please join us in congratulating our faculty, trainees, and staff on their continued successes and for another precedent setting year.



**Christine Finck, MD, FACS**

Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics  
Associate Vice Chair of Surgery  
University of Connecticut School of Medicine  
Peter Deckers Endowed Chair of Pediatric Surgery  
Surgeon-in-Chief, Executive Vice President  
Connecticut Children's



**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  
Connecticut Children's











## CLINICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

### BEAR® Implant, First in Connecticut

Connecticut Children's recently became the first health system in Connecticut to use the **BEAR® Implant** to treat a torn pediatric anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), one of the most common sports injuries in the U.S. The surgery, performed by Dr. Allison Crepeau, represents a huge shift from the standard treatment for ACL tears. Prior to this advancement, a patient's best option usually involved major surgery and borrowing healthy tissue from another spot in their knee. The BEAR implant acts as a bridge to help the torn ends of the ACL heal together, speeding healing and improving long-term outcomes.

### Westport Specialty Care Center Now Open

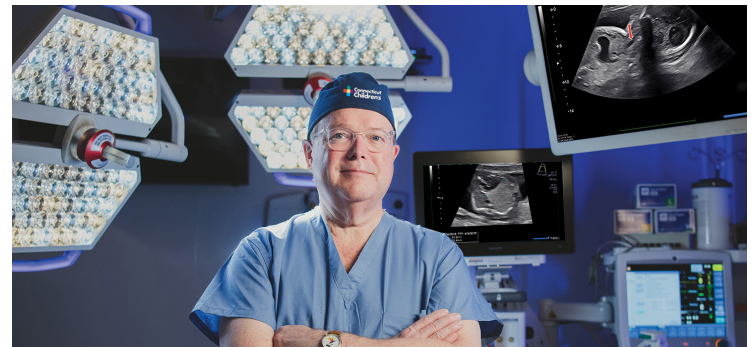
Connecticut Children's officially opened the Westport Specialty Care Center with a [ribbon cutting ceremony](#) on December 15, 2022. The Connecticut Children's Westport Special Care Center is located at 191 Post Road, offering 30,000 square feet of space to provide care for an additional 20,000 children. In the years to come, around 40,000 children are expected to be seen each year at the new Westport location. It features 23 exam rooms and more than 20 of the health system's specialties – including cardiology, oncology and orthopedics – under one roof. It includes exam and procedure rooms; an outpatient infusion center; imaging services; speech, occupational and physical therapies; EEG and echocardiogram services; and a casting room.

The Westport Specialty Care Center follows up on Connecticut Children's tremendous successes with our satellite clinics in Glastonbury and Farmington, as well as other locations throughout Connecticut. By providing care close to home, patients and families can turn to locally trusted resources rather than requiring a trip to the hospital for care. This model has been proven to be effective for our organization and reliable for families in our community.

### Primary Care South Now Open

Connecticut Children's was proud to open its new Primary Care South clinic at 100 Retreat Avenue in Hartford, Connecticut in July 2022. This new location was the product of many years of preparation and planning, building on our multi-year partnership with Community Health Centers, Inc. (CHC). In 2022, our contractual relationship with CHC ended and our Primary Care physicians undertook the work of opening our new clinic location a short distance from Connecticut Children's main campus.

**Jennifer Haile, MD**, serves as medical director for Primary Care South and patients are seen both in-person and in telehealth settings. OR patients are seen both in-person and via telehealth. The location is open Monday through Saturday in 3,500 square feet of space, including 11 exam rooms, one consult room, one behavioral health space, and two multi-user precepting offices. New staff, including MAs, MRs, RNs, LPNs, care coordinators, social workers, psychologists, and a practice coordinator have been hired to join more than 12 physicians and 2 APRNs to increase the services and care provided to children and families at this new location.



### Timothy Crombleholme, MD, New Director of the Fetal Care Center

Connecticut Children's recruited a world-renowned fetal care surgeon, Timothy Crombleholme, MD, as the new Director of Connecticut Children's Fetal Care Center, on July 1, 2022. The Fetal Care Center plays an integral part in the future of pediatric care at Connecticut Children's and is part of our planning for our new tower, which will begin construction in 2023. Dr. Crombleholme comes to us from the Medical City Children's Hospital in Dallas, Texas where he was the director of their Fetal Care Center. He is a fetal and neonatal surgeon recognized worldwide for his experience in fetoscopic surgery, open fetal surgery, image-guided fetal intervention and EXIT procedures. He co-authored the book *Fetology: Diagnosis and Management of the Fetal Patient*, first and second editions, widely considered the gold standard textbook in the field. Dr. Crombleholme has authored or co-authored more than 300 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and reviews, and has an active basic research laboratory developing innovative fetal interventions such as placental gene therapy for the treatment of severe intrauterine fetal growth restriction. He is also actively involved in clinical research advancing fetal surgery for the treatment of conditions such as twin-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS), myelomeningocele (MMC), congenital diaphragmatic hernia (CDH) and bladder outlet obstruction (BOO).





Connecticut  
Children's





### **Division of Pediatric Mental Health**

Connecticut Children has launched its own Division of Pediatric Mental Health to supplement the services we previously offered through the Institute of Living, a division of Hartford Hospital. A new Division Head, Cristin McDermott, MD, was recruited to help lead the next generation of Psychiatric services at Connecticut Children's, in partnership with Melissa Santos, PhD, Division Head of Pediatric Psychology and Connie Grant, Senior Director of Mental Health Services.

### **New Tower Receives Approval**

Planning for Connecticut Children's new tower continued in 2022 and culminated in approvals from our local, city, and state partners for construction. We are already under construction for the tower. The new LAZ parking garage, to be located across the street from our existing campus, is scheduled to begin construction in xxxx. Construction on the new tower, anticipated to be eight stories and 195,000 square feet, will proceed in the years ahead and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2025. The new space will include fetal care and expanded surgical areas, a NICU, expanded PICU space, and a new location for our pharmacy services. It will also include updates and renovations to our existing hospital space at 282 Washington Street.

### **Extending Our Expertise Through Partnerships**

Through our Care Alliance partnerships, we have established the largest newborn delivery services network in the State of Connecticut based on the number of hospitals offering neonatology and well-baby care provided by Connecticut Children's. In 2022 alone, we cared for more than half of all NICU babies in the state, and were selected by the Connecticut Department of Public Health to develop and oversee the Connecticut Newborn Diagnosis and Treatment Network, ensuring all babies have the opportunity to thrive.

In March, we were thrilled to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new **pediatric inpatient unit at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, NY**. Hospital leadership and Dr. Beth Natt have been working with our partners at NuVance Health and Vassar Brothers to make the dream of this pediatric unit a reality. Congratulations to everyone on the team who made this possible.

## **WELCOME TO CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S**

**Stewart Mackie, MD** was recruited as Program Director for the University of Connecticut School of Medicine's Pediatric Residency Program based at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Mackie takes on this role after a year of outstanding leadership from Dr. Christine Skurkis, who served as interim program director since 2021. Dr. Mackie has served as the program director for the Pediatric Residency Program at the UMass Chan – Baystate and Baystate Children's Hospital since 2020. He has been a powerful advocate for resident education in his role at Baystate, and will be a tremendous asset to our medical education program as Program Director. Additionally, Dr. Mackie will be providing clinical care in the Division of Pediatric Cardiology.

**Ian Michelow, MD** was hired as Division Head of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Michelow takes on this leadership role from John Schreiber, MD, who served as Division Head over the last three years. Dr. Michelow is a national leader in infectious disease research and a remarkable clinician.



**Haviva Veler, MD**, was recruited as Division Head of Pulmonary Medicine. Dr. Veler takes on this work after several years of interim leadership, first from Dr. MacDara Tynan (recently retired) and currently from Dr. Melanie Sue Collins, a leader in the Pulmonary Division and a great asset to our team.

**Carolyn Macica, PhD, MS** was hired as Senior Program Manager for Research Operations and Development at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Macica began her new role on May 2, 2022. Dr. Macica served as Associate Professor of Pharmacology at the Yale University School of Medicine and Associate Professor at the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University. She also serves as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for the XLH Network and has published significant work on patients with XLH (X-linked hypophosphatemia) and other rare metabolic bone disorders. During her time at Quinnipiac, Dr. Macica led the Netter Rare Disease Day Symposium for many years and chaired the Advisory Committee for the school's Rare Disease Day.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

### DEI Work at Connecticut Children's: Launching a Mentorship Program

As part of our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Connecticut Children's piloted a new mentoring program to ensure team members who reside in Hartford have the support they need to succeed in their positions and advance their careers within our institution. Luis Rivera, Connecticut Children's Community Relations Manager, partnered with the United Way of Central and

Northeastern Connecticut to create the program, which receives funding through a grant from Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH).

The inaugural cohort consists of three mentors and three mentees from Connecticut Children's food services, environmental services, and security department. The kickoff meeting took place on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, where participants learned about the importance of mentoring from the program's organizers and funders.

### Help Students STRIVE! Connecticut Children's Job Shadow Program

During the STRIVE program's inaugural experience on May 6, 2022, six high school students engaged in an interactive professional development experience with volunteers from Connecticut Children's. Beyond shadowing a professional, STRIVE participants explored how allied fields cooperate in the treatment and healing of our patients, including social work, nursing, marketing and communications, continual improvement, administrative, and patient access. STRIVE truly seeks to be a full spectrum introduction to Connecticut's only dedicated children's health system.

STRIVE has also established a new and exciting partnership with Hartford Promise to promote future career opportunities for students in our community. The mission of Hartford Promise is to transform the lives of thousands of Hartford students through an integrated college success model that provides them with financial resources, support services, and key relationships that lead to college success and economic mobility.





## HONORS & AWARDS

We are proud to say that Connecticut Children's **Neonatal Intensive Care Network once again was recognized for delivering best care in state in 2022-2023** *U.S. News & World Report* Best Children's Hospital rankings, and in the Top 40 nationwide among more than 1,500 NICUs across the country. Connecticut Children's has established the largest newborn delivery services network in the state of Connecticut based on the number of hospitals for whom it provides neonatology care. In addition to Connecticut Children's two NICUs located in Hartford and Farmington, Connecticut, the health system also provides newborn delivery services at 13 hospitals, across 2 states, including 9 total NICUs. Connecticut Children's Care Alliance partnerships with adult health systems allow the system to deliver the best neonatal care in the region.

In addition to its Top 40 neonatology ranking, Connecticut Children's was also ranked in the Top 50 programs nationally by *U.S. News & World Report* in **Gastroenterology and GI surgery**, as well as in **Urology**.

**The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)** earned full accreditation for another 5 years from the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP), a testament to Connecticut Children's commitment to conducting ethical research and protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. Earning reaccreditation of our human research protection program offers assurances that the highest quality research is being conducted at our organization, to research participants, researchers, sponsors, government regulators, external organizations relying on our IRB, and the general public.

Connecticut Children's received the **2022 American Heart Association for its continued success in using the Get With the Guidelines®-Resuscitation Award (Gold)**. Hospitals awarded this achievement commit to applying the most up-to-date, evidence-based treatment guidelines to improve patient care and outcomes in the communities they serve.

For the sixth consecutive year, the College of Healthcare Management Executive (CHIME) named Connecticut Children's to the **Digital Health Most Wired list of hospitals**. Connecticut Children's is one of only five percent of hospitals nationwide to receive this designation.



Connecticut Children's has been named a Best Children's Hospital for the sixth consecutive year by the **Women's Choice Award®**, a true testament to the dedication and expertise of our team members, our high quality care, and our strategic focus on operational excellence. The Women's Choice Award® is America's trusted referral source for the best in healthcare and identifies children's hospitals that parents and guardians can take their children to with the expectation that they will receive excellent comprehensive care. The Best Children's Hospital designation is based on a point system and self-reported data from almost 60 children's hospitals in the nation. Additionally, Connecticut Children's earned the **Best Children's Emergency Care Award** for receiving a perfect score for the level of care and expertise offered in our Emergency Department, an especially meaningful recognition as we continue to experience unusually high numbers of children fighting RSV, influenza, and COVID.

Connecticut Children's has been named the **2022 eHealthcare Leadership Awards Winner** in the Category of Best COVID-19 Pandemic Related Communications.

Connecticut Children's and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine's Pediatric Residency Program were reaccredited by the ACGME with no citations, a tremendous accomplishment and a continuation of the record of excellence in our GME programs.













## INDIVIDUAL HONORS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Dean Bruce T. Liang, MD appointed **Anton Alerte, MD** to serve as interim Associate Dean of Primary Care, succeeding Dr. Bruce Gould who retired after more than 20 years of leadership and dedication to the role. He is a professor of pediatrics and proud alum of the School of Medicine. He has served as chair of the Medical School Admissions Committee, co-director of clinical foundation courses and medical director of the Clinical Longitudinal in the community curriculum, as well as president of the School of Medicine Alumni Board. He has been a powerful advocate for patients and students at Connecticut Children's, the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, and the Burgdorf Clinic.

**Annamarie Beaulieu, MPH**, Senior Director, Academic Affairs, Research, and Sponsored Programs at Connecticut Children's and the Connecticut Children's Research Institute (CCRI), has been promoted to vice president of Academic Affairs and the Connecticut Children's Research Institute. In her new role as vice president, Annamarie will enhance our leadership team and continue to build strategy in support of the growth and development of our academic and research operations. Annamarie was also elected to a two-year term as Communications Director for the Association of Administrators in Academic Pediatrics (AAP).

**John Brancato, MD** was appointed to the role of Division Head of Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Connecticut Children's. He has many years of strong leadership and clinical experience, serving as Interim Division Head from April 2019 through February 2020 and as Associate Division Head and Medical Director of the Emergency Department.

**Laura Caneira, APRN** was recently honored as a healthcare hero for her incredible service to the Division of Child Abuse Pediatrics/SCAN. Laura is a team player with a compassionate spirit and the soul of an educator – as Dr. Nina Livingston stated, she is the “heart and soul” of her team.

**Andrew Carlson, MD** assumed the role of Medical Director of Primary Care at Connecticut Children's in May 2022.

Dean Bruce T. Liang, MD invited **Christopher Carroll, MD** to the School of Medicine Senior Appointments and Promotions Committee (SAPC) as a secondary member for a three-year term, through August 2025.

**Melanie Sue Collins, MD** assumed the role of Interim Head, Division of Pediatric Pulmonology at Connecticut Children's, succeeding Dr. MacDara Tynan who served to the Division of Pediatric Pulmonology as Interim Division Head during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Marianne Custer, BS, C-TAGME** was promoted to Administrative Director, Medical Education. Marianne oversees all administrative aspects of current medical education programs for our medical students, residents/fellows, and continuing medical education, and supports strategic growth for new programs and experiences.

**Brooke Davey, MD**, was the elected president of NECCA and chaired the 2022 NECCA meeting in 2022.

**Jennifer Haile, MD**, was appointed to the Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention and Treatment Legislative Workgroup. She continues to serve as medical director of the Connecticut Children's Lead Poisoning Prevention Treatment Center.

**Eric Hoppa, MD** was appointed as Medical Director for the Emergency Department. Dr. Hoppa has long been a leader and expert in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety and resident education, developing pathways to improve treatment and serving our residents as Associate Program Director in the Pediatric Residency Program.

**Louisa Kalsner, MD** was appointed as Division Head of Genetics at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Kalsner assumes the leadership of the division from Dr. Karen Rubin, who served as interim division head for the past three years and has been an incredible steward of the division.

**Robert Keder, MD**, from the Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics was invited to present at the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health 2022 National Conference. Dr. Keder will be leading a 90-minute panel and Q&A discussion on successful behavioral health care collaboration between schools and primary care providers during this prestigious conference.

**Sherene Mason, MD, MBA**, took on a new leadership role as Division Head and the Robert R. Rosenheim Endowed Chair for Nephrology at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Mason follows our great colleague, Cynthia Silva, MD, who has moved on to explore other opportunities in her career. Dr. Silva established a nationally renowned reputation in Pediatric Nephrology and was an instrumental leader in the creation of the Robert R. Rosenheim Foundation Dialysis Center. Dr. Mason has been a great advocate for our patients and is an asset to our organization as Division Head and Rosenheim Chair.

**Amira Mohamed-Ahmed, MD**, completed the Harvard Medical School Safety, Quality, Informatics and Leadership Program in 2022.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) nominated **Kristan Pierz, MD** to the Commission on Motion Lab Accreditation Board of Directors.

**Melissa Santos, PhD** was appointed Associate Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Department of Pediatrics and Pediatric Surgical Specialties at Connecticut Children's and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. She will play an important role in expanding the footprint of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts by working collaboratively with physicians, hospital leadership, and the Office of Faculty Development to center DEI as a core pillar of our current and future growth.

**John Schreiber, MD** transitioned from his role as Division Head for Infectious Diseases and Immunology to serve as medical director of Infection Control. John Schreiber has been a remarkable institutional leader throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and has made our organization a national leader in forward-thinking responses to the pandemic.

**Jennifer Schwab, MD**, appointed as Division Head for the Division of Community Pediatrics. Dr. Schwab takes over the leadership of the Division from our great friend and colleague, Dr. Doug MacGilpin, who was an outstanding leader and remains a valued member of our team. Dr. Schwab is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and served as a resident at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

**Anand Sekaran, MD**, accepted a new role as System Chair of Pediatrics for Nuvance Health. In this role, Dr. Sekaran will oversee all pediatric divisions across the seven-hospital Nuvance system and will provide his leadership and expertise to enhance and grow pediatrics at Nuvance Health. He will also work to strengthen the partnership and Care Alliance between Connecticut Children's and Nuvance Health. This alliance works to improve access to Connecticut Children's pediatric expertise for all inpatient; NICU and nursery care for children and families in western Connecticut and eastern New York. In addition, Dr. Sekaran has also been named as the **Bridgett and Dominick Colabella Endowed Chair of Pediatrics at Nuvance Health**.



Dr. Sekaran will remain Division Head of PHM and director of Inpatient Services at Connecticut Children's while serving in his new role.

**Catherine Sullivan, MD** was appointed new Co-director of Inpatient Medical/Psychiatric Services at Connecticut Children's. She has recently gained expertise and wide recognition in the care of patients with Somatic Symptoms and Related Disorders (SSRD). This work has led to the development of a novel Clinical Pathway as well as multiple regional and national presentations. Her efforts have helped shape the national guidelines on the care of SSRD patients.

**Jody Terranova, DO** was elected President of the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

**William Zempsky, MD** was appointed the Vice Chair for Academic Affairs and Research. He has played an integral role in the development of the Connecticut Children's Research Institute. He will expand his responsibilities in this new role by assisting the chair in oversight and development of all academic activities in the Department of Pediatrics. He will work with our division heads to optimize the mentorship and success of junior faculty in support of our organization's academic mission. He will also assist the chair in implementing the strategic vision of the department.

As it has been our wonderful tradition, teaching awards were presented by our residents as follows:

The **Resident Didactic Teaching** award presented to Cem Demirci, MD; Felice Heller, MD, Victoria Grossi, MD, Keri Wallace, MD; Robyn Matlof, MD; Heather Tory, MD; Jeffrey Thomson, MD; Jennifer Downs, MD.

Presentation of monthly **McNeill Teaching Award** to Eliot Melendez, MD; Keri Wallace, MD; Jane Im, MD; Andrew Carlson, MD; Melanie Rudnick, MD; Hayley Wolfgruber, MD; Hareem Park, MD; Allyson McDermott, MD; Sharon Smith, MD.

**Excellence in Teaching in an affiliated Pediatric Field Award** presented to Douglas Moote, MD.

**Douglas MacGilpin Community Physician Award** for recognition of outstanding role model presented to Keri Wallace, MD.

**Excellence in Teaching in Acute Care Award** presented to Elliot Melendez, MD.

**Excellence in Teaching in a Subspecialty Award** presented to Hassan El Chebib, MD and Cem Demirci, MD.

**Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award** went to Melanie Rudnick, MD. The Outstanding Contributions to Education and Career Development Award presented to Sharon Smith, MD.

**The Leon Chameides Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to Douglas MacGilpin, MD in recognition of his 43 years of teaching and mentoring.

Physician-in-Chief Juan Salazar, MD, presented the **2022 Chair's Awards** to:

- **Melissa Santos, PhD**, Chair's Award for Wellbeing
- **Ching Lau, MD, PhD**, Chair's Award for Innovation
- **Christine Skurkis, MD**, Chair's Award for Teaching
- **Nina Livingston, MD**, Chair's Award for Citizenship
- **John Brancato, MD**, Chair Award for Citizenship







## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Connecticut Children's and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine were proud to honor the lifetime contributions of our former Pediatric Residency Director and current Senior Advisor to the Chair of Pediatrics, Dr. Edwin Zalneraitis. Dr. Zalneraitis, known lovingly as Dr. Z, has been a foundational leader in our organization and helped lead our residency program since the founding of our organization in 1996.

On September 15, 2022, medical education and physician leaders from throughout the UConn School of Medicine gathered to celebrate Dr. Z's many accomplishments and contributions to pediatric education. We were honored to be joined by Dean Bruce Liang, Dr. Paul Dworkin, Dr. Leon Chameides, Dr. John Raye, Dr. Jeffrey Hyams, and former residents Dr. Arvin Garg and Dr. Priti Bhansali on this special day. Connecticut Children's was pleased to announce the founding of a new **Teaching Academy** named in Dr. Z's honor, which will carry on his legacy of educational excellence in the years ahead.

## RESEARCH

The Connecticut Children's Research Institute (CCRI) was proud to host its 2nd Annual Research Symposium on November 30, 2022.

This event, which took place in-person and virtually at the Hartford Healthcare Bone and Joint Institute, was a resounding success and featured presentations from Connecticut Children's researchers including Drs. Courtney Rowe, Carolyn Macica, Candice Jersey, Emily Wakefield, Jeffrey Hyams, and Katie Hinderer, as well as Vaishali Belamkar and Nathan Leclair. Invited keynote presentations were shared by Dr. Lon Cardon, President and CEO of The Jackson Laboratory; Dr. Akhgar Ghassabian of New York University; and Dr. Timothy Crombleholme, Director of the Connecticut Children's Fetal Care Center.

## GRANTS

**Travelers made a \$1 Million commitment to Connecticut Children's Foundation** in support of pediatric mental health programs, announced on September 6, 2022. The generous commitment from Travelers supports our expansion of mental health program to enable more families to seek care on an outpatient basis, as well as in the proposed inpatient medical-psychiatric unit.

In addition, Travelers has invited representatives from Connecticut Children's to provide an ongoing series of virtual events for their employees to provide greater engagement between Connecticut Children's and Travelers.







**Connecticut Children's Connection** Is a community of members committed to supporting Connecticut Children's mission and providing the care children and families deserve. In conjunction with Medical Center leadership, six promising research scientists were invited to submit a request for proposal (RFP) for a \$50,000 grant. The RFPs were reviewed by a committee of Connecticut Children's Connection members and three finalists were invited to present their proposals at Connecticut Children's Connection Funding Selection Event on March 22, 2022:

- David Hersh, MD, Neurosurgery: Bone Flap Resorption Following Autologous Cranioplasty
- Courtney Rowe, MD, Urology: A Novel Stent to Transform Urethral Healing
- Melissa Santos, PhD, Behavioral Health: Creating PAW Online

**Courtney Rowe, MD**, was selected as the recipient of Connecticut Children's Connection's inaugural \$50,000 research grant. Dr. Rowe and Dr. Kelly Burke from the University of Connecticut have designed and preliminarily patented a urethral stent made of a biocompatible thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) elastomer combined with silk microspheres to provide slow-release of Growth factors (GFs) in an effort to stimulate wound healing and produce a therapeutic approach to improve urethral healing. The \$50,000 research grant will provide the opportunity to perform testing of their stent material to deliver preliminary data to apply for a larger NIH Career Award.

**Kelly Hawley, PhD** Research Scientist received a Good Ventures award to fund her project *Formulation and Assessment of a de nova Designed, Multivalent Syphilis Vaccine*. Dr. Hawley's leadership in pursuit of a syphilis vaccine is a powerful demonstration of Connecticut Children's research excellence.

The **Office of Community Health** and the **Injury Prevention Center (IPC)** received three year, \$2 million grant from the City of Hartford to break the cycle of gun violence and other crimes in our communities. The IPC is working with two other hospitals and three community-based organizations to engage victims of firearm violence as they recover from injuries in the hospital to deter retaliation and improve outcomes. Congratulations to Kevin Borrup, Dr. Paul Dworkin, and their colleagues on securing this vital investment!

**Healthy Homes** received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop and implement the Neighborhood Environmental Assessment and Restoration (NEAR) program, which will utilize a block-by-block approach to build sustainable capacity for healthy homes in multiple neighborhoods in Hartford, with a focus on the North Hartford Promise Zone

**William Zempsky, MD** received two new grants as a co-investigator – an R33/61 Grant for pain in sickle cell disease and a TOW Foundation grant to develop a portal for resources for LGTBQ+ youth.

## MEDIA

**Mental Health Matters: Kids in the Digital Age.** On February 24, Melissa Santos, PhD, Division Head, Pediatric Psychology at Connecticut Children's, and Jennifer Schwab, MD of our Care Network joined lawmakers and parents on WTNH Channel 3 to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on children's mental health.

In Connecticut, hundreds of children living in older homes suffer from lead poisoning, despite a ban on lead-based paint enacted in 1989. **Jennifer Haile, MD**, Medical Director of the regional Lead Treatment Program, told NBC news "Essentially once you've been exposed to lead, it gets absorbed into your muscles, in your bones and your tissue. It could takes months to years before it gets out of your system."

A surge of patients with common respiratory viruses, particularly RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) caused an unusually high number of cases and hospitalizations among kids prompting a flurry of local press coverage. "We saw a little bit of RSV last year, but this dramatic increase in cases of RSV in September and October is not something we have seen before historically," **Dr. Juan Salazar**, Executive Vice President and Physician-in-Chief at Connecticut Children's, told NBC TODAY.

Connecticut hospitals join National Gun safety movement to address guns as leading cause of death in kids. "As a parent, you can't always control the risks faced by your child. But, when it comes to firearms, you can control whether unlocked guns are present in the place your child lives," said **Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, MPA**, Executive Director of Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center.





## OTHER

Appendix A of the SOM Bylaws was updated to state that all members of the Pediatric Department at Connecticut Children's will NOT be held to the FTE requirement that differentiates an affiliated faculty from a community faculty title. While faculty will remain affiliated, there is no need to modify their appointment type if they reduce below 80% FTE.

On March 26, 2022, Quinnipiac hosted its **QTHON**, a ten-hour in person dance marathon raising funds and awareness for Connecticut Children's. Over 750 students participated in the year-long fundraising initiative, The QTHON community raised a total of \$125,040 for Connecticut Children's.

On April 2, 2022, UConn hosted its annual **HuskyTHON**, an eighteen-hour dance marathon benefitting Connecticut Children's. Over 3,500 students participated in the year-long fundraising initiative, each raising a minimum of \$250 for the cause. It was first year back in person since the COVID-19 pandemic and the HuskyTHON community had yet another unbelievably successful year, raising a total of \$1,340,671 for Connecticut Children's.



## APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

### Promotion to Professor Emeritus

- Paul H Dworkin, MD  
Executive Vice President for Community Child Health

### Promotion to Professor

- Olga Toro Salazar, MD, Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Cardiology
- Catherine Wiley, MD, Professor of pediatrics  
Division of General Pediatrics
- Brendan Campbell, MD, Professor of surgery  
Department of Surgery

### Appointment to Associate Professor

- Anna Tsirka, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Cardiology
- Karen Loechner, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes

### Promotion to Associate Professor

- Natalie Bezler, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Hematology/Oncology
- Donna Boruchov, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Hematology/Oncology
- Allison Cowl, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Pediatric Critical Care
- Brooke Davey, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Cardiology
- Richelle deMayo, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Clinical Informatics
- Felice Heller, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Cardiology
- Shabnam Lainwala, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
- Carla Pruden, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Emergency Medicine
- David Sink, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
- Heather Tory, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Rheumatology
- Jennifer Trzaski, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

- Alicia Wang, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Cardiology
- Bella Zeisler, MD, Associate Professor of pediatrics  
Division of Digestive Diseases, Hepatology and Nutrition

### Promotion to Assistant Professor

- Brooke E. Bohn, MD, Assistant Professor of pediatrics

### Promotion to Assistant Clinical Professor

- Jennifer Schwab, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor  
Division Head, Community Pediatrics

### New Faculty

In 2022, 50 new faculty members joined the Departments of Pediatrics and Surgery during 2022 in the following divisions: Adolescent Medicine; Cardiology, Cardiovascular Surgery, Child Abuse SCAN, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Craniofacial Clinic, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Digestive Diseases Hepatology and Nutrition, Emergency Medicine, Endocrinology and Diabetes; Fetal Medicine, Hematology-Oncology, Infectious Diseases and Immunology, Mental Health and Psychology, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, Nephrology, Neurology, Ophthalmology; Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Pediatric Hospital Medicine, Primary Care; Psychiatry, Pulmonary Medicine, Rheumatology, Weight Management (Surgery).



