



2025

Annual Report

Department of Pediatrics





DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

This report includes data and highlights from the Calendar Year 2025, Academic Year July 2024 - June 2025, and Fiscal Year April 2024 - March 2025.

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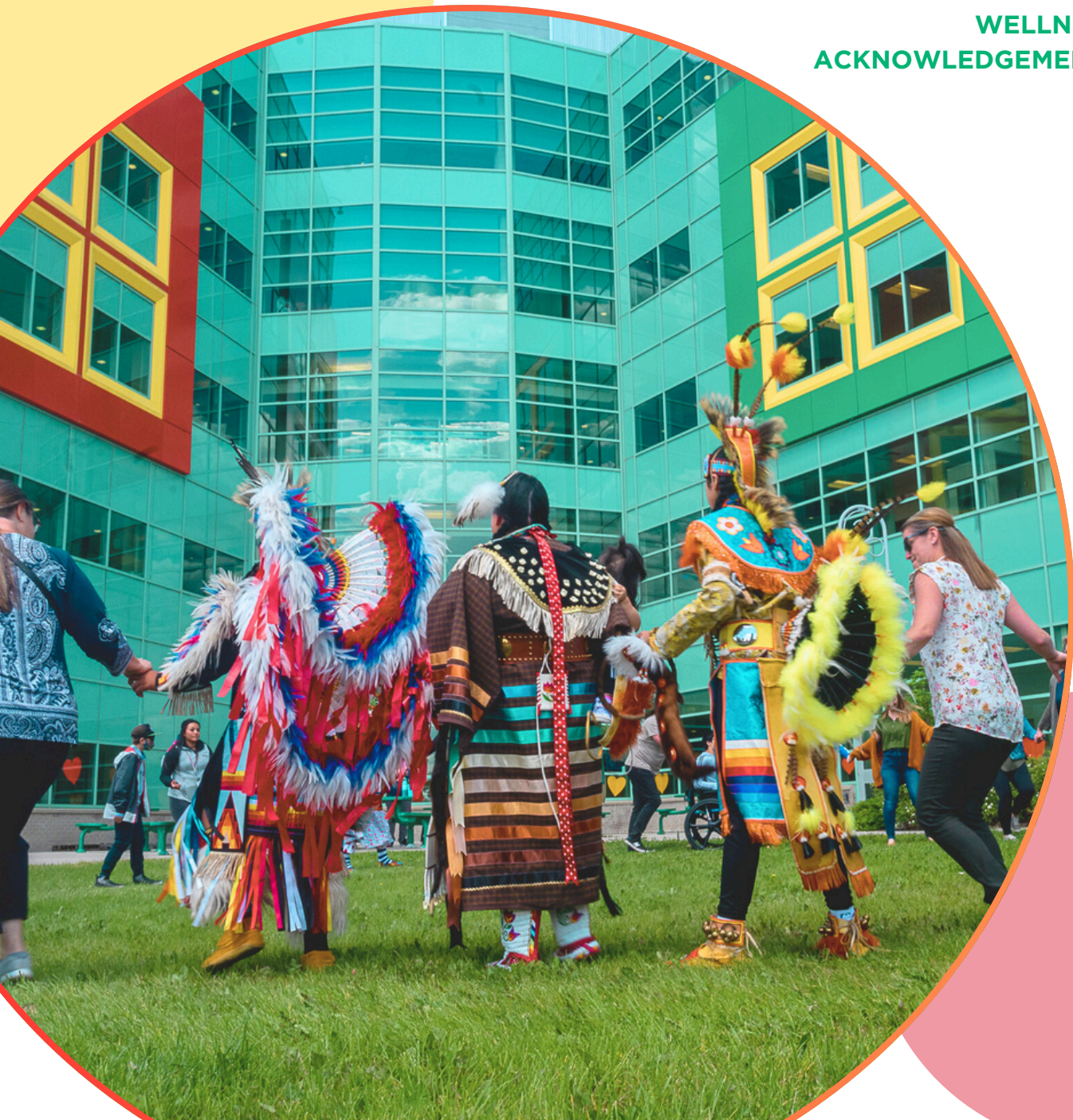
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2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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CONNECTION IN PEDIATRICS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DEPARTMENT HEAD



The pace and demands of our work in medicine can pull us in many directions, constantly drawing our focus to the next task or outcome. But despite increasing patient complexity and external pressures, we remain anchored by a shared purpose and deep commitment to providing the best care possible. At the heart of everything we do – every project, every conversation, and every achievement – there is one constant: *connection*.

Connection is more than just communication. It's the spark that turns ideas into action, challenges into opportunities, and individuals into teams. It's what reminds us that we're not alone in our efforts. That together, we can achieve more than we ever could apart.

Developing our Strategic Plan last year reignited our spirit of curiosity across the Department of Pediatrics. Over the past 12 months, we have deepened our focus on the goals and priorities identified by our members, turning ideas into meaningful progress. This year's annual report offers a glimpse into that work, highlighting the remarkable threads of connection that run throughout pediatrics. In 2025, one of our community pediatricians, Dr. Sonia Ménard, launched an innovative educational program in which residents learn essential clinical skills through working – and *connecting* – with horses. Her initiative inspired this year's theme, reminding us that connection is truly foundational to everything we do.



We did not have to look far to find countless other examples of connection within our pediatric community. We are inspired by how our members continue to break down silos and collaborate in new ways – across sections, hospitals, and communities – to deliver expert, multidisciplinary care for patients and families. Our dedicated leaders continually enable others to pursue their aspirations across our four CARE pillars: Clinical service, Advocacy, Research, and Education. Our hallways are filled with advocates dedicated to improving quality and safety; mentors who devote themselves to guiding the next generation of clinicians, educators and researchers; and individuals and teams who think boldly, work creatively, and go above and beyond every single day.

We hope these stories serve as an illustration that every connection matters, and that each of us can make a meaningful difference in the lives we touch. I have included some of my favourite family photos of my children when they were younger sharing a moment of connection with my horse Euriah as a reminder that when we take the time to truly connect – with our patients and families, our colleagues, and our communities – we create space for trust, collaboration, and continued growth. We foster opportunities to learn from one another at all stages of our careers, to support each other in the times we need it most, and celebrate our wins, both big and small.



Thank you to all our department members for everything you do and for playing such an important role in this journey we share. We are bonded through our collective purpose to improve the health and wellbeing of our young patients and their families, and I am so grateful to be walking this path alongside each and every one of you. Together, we're creating a culture of support, collaboration and extraordinary possibility.

And that is something to celebrate.

With deepest gratitude,

Dr. Antonia Stang
Professor and Head,
Department of Pediatrics

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE HERE](https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/departments/pediatrics/home/annualreport2025)

cumming.ucalgary.ca/departments/pediatrics/home/annualreport2025

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

FROM OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

Thriving together

MISSION

To optimize child and youth well-being through inclusive care, discovery, and collaboration; foster strong family and community connections; and support a positive and fulfilling work environment for our teams.

VIEW OUR
STRATEGIC PLAN
[HERE](#)

VALUES

Integrity
Compassion
Curiosity
Humanity
Gratitude

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

2025 ANNUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS



CARE AWARD - CLINICIAN

Dr. Adetayo Adeleye, Pediatric Respirology

Dr. Adetayo Adeleye is an inspiring clinician and exemplary leader who has excelled as Section Head for Pediatric Respirology. Widely regarded for his remarkable kindness, expertise, and dependable nature, he delivers meticulous, compassionate care to patients and families while serving as a trusted mentor to colleagues and trainees. His humble, collaborative leadership has guided the development of safe, evidence-based clinical pathways and unified multidisciplinary teams. Dr. Adeleye has led the Sleep Lab and Sleep Clinic at the Alberta Children's Hospital for many years, expanding services for children with complex needs and reducing provincial wait times through a community pediatric sleep service. He also established a pediatric sleep medicine training program, expanding specialized expertise to further improve the quality of care for patients and families. Dr. Adeleye's leadership strengthens morale, elevates clinical care, and delivers lasting impact across the Department of Pediatrics and beyond.



CARE AWARD - ADVOCATE

Dr. Shirmeem Doshi, Pediatric Emergency Medicine

Dr. Shirmeem Doshi is an outstanding Pediatric Emergency Medicine (PEM) physician and passionate advocate for patients and families. Recognized as a leader in education, she has made exceptional contributions across residency training, simulation, curriculum development, and educational innovation. Dr. Doshi has balanced major leadership roles, including Assistant Program Director for our Pediatric Residency Program and Competence by Design (CBD) Lead, playing a key role in its successful implementation. As Co-Chair of the Alberta Children's Hospital Child Death Review Committee and Patient Safety Lead for PEM, she advances shared learning, quality of care, and system improvement. Dr. Doshi is a highly respected clinician, an award-winning mentor and teacher, and an active researcher. She is a true role model whose advocacy for patients and families advances excellence across the full continuum of pediatric care.

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

2025 ANNUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS



CARE AWARD - RESEARCHER

Dr. Deborah Dewey, Child & Family Health Research Unit

Dr. Deborah Dewey is a world-recognized leader in neurodevelopmental research and a longstanding member of the Department of Pediatrics, with an extraordinary record of scholarly excellence. An international authority in developmental coordination disorder (DCD) and developmental neurotoxicology, her work has advanced understanding of environmental influences on neurodevelopment, shaping clinical practice and inspiring policy changes across the country. She has authored over 288 peer-reviewed publications, delivered hundreds of invited presentations, and secured nearly \$35 million in research funding as a principal investigator/co-principal investigator. A dedicated mentor and former Director of the Department of Pediatrics Behavioural Research Unit, Dr. Dewey's exceptional leadership and scholarship have transformed pediatric neurodevelopmental research nationally and internationally, advancing care and outcomes for children worldwide.



CARE AWARD - EDUCATOR

Dr. Melanie Willimann, Pediatric Emergency Medicine

Dr. Melanie Willimann is an exceptional Pediatric Emergency Medicine physician and national leader in pediatric point-of-care ultrasound (PoCUS) education. She has co-led the development of a highly regarded PoCUS course that has trained physicians, fellows, and residents across multidisciplinary teams throughout the hospital, directly enhancing patient care. She is Co-Director of kidSONO, an innovative, peer-reviewed national curriculum for pediatric PoCUS that she helped design and now co-leads at the Alberta Children's Hospital. Dr. Willimann also founded a national pediatric PoCUS fellowship and resident elective, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and expanding access to high-quality ultrasound education across Canada. In every aspect of her work, from curriculum design to mentorship and cross-disciplinary engagement, Dr. Willimann has demonstrated unwavering commitment to excellence in education.

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

2025 CARE AWARD RECIPIENTS



LEADERSHIP AWARD

Dr. Laura Davies, Pediatric Hospital Medicine

Dr. Laura Davies is an extraordinary physician leader and long-standing member of Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM), serving as Section Head since 2022. She has guided the Section through sustained growth, rising patient volumes, and unprecedented viral surges, advocating successfully for additional resources and strategic recruitment. Her outstanding leadership has strengthened clinical capacity, quality improvement, and system-management expertise across the Alberta Children's Hospital and Department of Pediatrics. Dr. Davies spearheaded the creation of an inpatient eating disorder service and expanded multidisciplinary care through the recruitment of advanced practice providers. Recently appointed President of the Canadian Paediatric Society's Section of Hospital Pediatrics, she is now advancing the growth of PHM nationwide. A generous mentor with a growth mindset, Dr. Davies leads with integrity, compassion, and vision, leaving a lasting impact on patients, families, and the teams she supports.



RISING STAR AWARD

Dr. Raman Chawla, Pediatric Hospital Medicine

Dr. Raman Chawla has made outstanding contributions across all four CARE pillars since joining the Department of Pediatrics in 2020. A highly respected clinician in Pediatric Hospital Medicine and Community Pediatrics, she is recognized for her advocacy, clinical excellence, and collegiality. She provides comprehensive care to underserved children at her community pediatric clinic in Siksika First Nation, promotes culturally safe Indigenous health care, and cares for children with medical complexity. An emerging researcher, she leads nationally relevant educational and clinical studies, and is the co-site lead for ROUTINE. Dr. Chawla holds many leadership positions - including Director of Resident Support with Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) - and supports learners at all levels. She is an award-winning educator and mentor, receiving the 2024 Mentor of the Year award and Educator of the Month in 2025. Dr. Chawla is a true rising star in the Department of Pediatrics and beyond.

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

2025 CARE AWARD RECIPIENTS



DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD

Dr. Jim Kellner, Pediatric Infectious Diseases

Dr. Jim Kellner has been a defining leader in pediatrics, renowned for his impactful research, policy influence, and clinical leadership. He began his career in pediatric emergency medicine before specializing in pediatric infectious diseases, and has led epidemiologic research and vaccine trials for more than 30 years. Dr. Kellner has established leading research teams who have contributed extensively to national and international networks. A trusted advisor on vaccine policy for decades, he also played key leadership roles during the COVID-19 pandemic, advancing pediatric research, public education, and evidence-based decision-making. At every stage of his career, Dr. Kellner has taken on leadership roles locally and nationally, including with the Paediatric Chairs of Canada (serving as President from 2013-2016), and the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Pediatric Health Centres (now known as Children's Healthcare Canada). As Head of the Department of Pediatrics (2008-2018), he led a 75% increase in departmental membership and guided significant expansion of clinical, educational, and research services. Dr. Kellner's remarkable career reflects an enduring commitment to scientific excellence, public service, and the health and well-being of children for generations to come.



COMMUNITY PEDIATRICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Dr. Doug Yeung, Panda Pediatrics (NW Calgary) & RGH NICU

Dr. Douglas (Doug) Yeung is a dedicated community pediatrician known for providing comprehensive, compassionate, and family-centered care. Alongside a thriving community practice at Panda Pediatrics in northwest Calgary, he makes invaluable contributions to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Rockyview General Hospital where he is a calm, reliable presence and a trusted team member in high-pressure settings. Dr. Yeung delivers high-quality, evidence-based care, skillfully supports medically fragile infants, and helps families navigate complex community resources. A humble and committed educator, he mentors learners with the utmost patience and professionalism. Guided by preventive care and multidisciplinary collaboration, Dr. Yeung is an inspiring leader in both the community and NICU, committed to fostering supportive and trusting relationships with every family he serves.

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

2025 CARE AWARD RECIPIENTS



THRIVING TOGETHER TEAM AWARD

Child Death Review Committee

Various Sections, Alberta Children's Hospital

The Alberta Children's Hospital's Child Death Review Committee is a multidisciplinary Quality Assurance subcommittee with longstanding commitment from members across all areas of the hospital and beyond, including but not limited to: critical care, emergency medicine, hospital medicine, complex care, oncology, ASSIST, palliative care, general surgery, NICU, neurology, pathology, nursing, social work/grief support, emergency medical services, the Medical Examiner's Office, pediatric and pediatric emergency medicine residents, and more. This committee meets monthly to review all pediatric deaths in southern Alberta, with each case independently reviewed to assess care, identify any safety or system issues, and recommend improvements. Cases with significant concerns are escalated, while trends are tracked to drive system-wide change. Run entirely by dedicated volunteers, the committee fosters collaboration and sustained commitment, while providing a space where members can support one another through these deeply important - and emotionally challenging - conversations. Through this shared effort, the committee has driven meaningful, lasting improvements in how children and families are supported during the most difficult moments of care.



CLINICAL



DEPUTY HEAD, CLINICAL AFFAIRS

A MESSAGE FROM DR. JONATHAN GILLELAND



In times of challenge or change, connection keeps us anchored to what matters most in our clinical work. At the heart of our efforts is a shared commitment to support the people and systems that make high-quality, patient-centered care possible.

Over the past year, we have partnered with clinicians, leaders, and stakeholders to improve care across our hospitals and communities through workforce planning, data-informed advocacy, and quality improvement initiatives grounded in real bedside experience. In 2025, we proudly welcomed 27 new members to the department and appointed four new Section Heads.

Much of our work this year has centered on leadership and connection – launching new resources, listening to frontline voices, and fostering collaboration across sections. By engaging and empowering those closest to patient care, we are ensuring that meaningful improvement begins where it matters most. Initiatives such as our Physician Leader Resource Hub website will help improve transparency and streamline access to information. Others, such as our inaugural Leadership Book Club, will help strengthen a culture of shared reflection, continued learning, and open dialogue.

Together, these efforts reflect our collective focus on building a resilient, engaged community for our members and leaders. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to optimizing working conditions, strengthening collaboration, and deepening connections to help shape a more sustainable future for our patients, their families, and the clinicians who care for them.

” By engaging and empowering those closest to patient care, we are ensuring that meaningful improvement begins where it matters most.

CLINICAL ACTIVITY

2024-2025 DATA AND METRICS

103,547

**EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT VISITS**

79,335 at ACH
15,247 at SHC

10,882

**INPATIENT VISITS
EXCLUDING SURGICAL &
MENTAL HEALTH ADMISSIONS**

4,384

**CRITICAL
CARE VISITS**
3,582 NICU ADMISSIONS
802 PICU ADMISSIONS

HEMOGLOBINOPATHY CLINIC

A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE



In the past, treatment for pediatric blood disorders – such as sickle cell disease and thalassemia – often meant juggling multiple appointments with different specialists in separate clinic locations. The Hemoglobinopathy Clinic at the Alberta Children’s Hospital has transformed that experience, offering a true “one-stop shop” where multidisciplinary care comes together in one place for patients and families. Hematologists, respirologists, registered nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, social workers, neuropsychologists, and other healthcare providers work side by side in a shared space, united by a common goal: delivering the best care possible.

Established in 2013, the clinic has built a model that places patients and families at the centre of care, partnering closely with teams across the site – including the emergency department – to standardize best practices. This innovative approach has fostered meaningful collaboration, communication, and shared learning across disciplines. At its heart, this model does more than improve outcomes – it lightens the load families carry.

The Hemoglobinopathy Clinic has transformed a historically long, fragmented journey into one woven with trust, understanding, and lasting connection – a place where families feel truly seen by an integrated team that walks alongside them, every step of the way.

The Hemoglobinopathy Clinic was the recipient of our first-ever Department of Pediatrics Thriving Together Team Award in 2024, as well as an AHS President’s Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement in Patient- and Family-Centred Care in 2019.



BETTER TOGETHER: AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR COMPLEX CARE IN PEDIATRICS



Children with medical and behavioural complexity represent approximately 2% of the patient population at the Alberta Children’s Hospital, yet their needs are among the most intricate. Each of these children requires a comprehensive care plan involving a unique mix of subspecialists, allied health services, and therapies, alongside coordinated access to educational supports, funding programs and community resources.

For families, navigating these complex systems – and the many layers of support they entail – can be overwhelming, particularly when care is fragmented between hospital and community settings. Delivering optimal care for this population relies on shared responsibility, strong relationships, and seamless communication among all members of the child’s care team.

Building an Integrated Model of Care

Historically, systems supporting children with complex care needs have largely operated in silos. In Calgary, however, several dedicated programs have been developed to better serve this population, including:

- Hospital Complex Care Program, supporting the most medically fragile children at the Alberta Children’s Hospital
- Neurodevelopmental Disorder (NDD) Care Coordination Program, supporting children with developmental and behavioural complexity in the community
- Community Complex Care Program, a newly established service supporting children with medical complexity in the community

Recognizing the need for stronger coordination across hospital and community settings, these programs formally united in 2023 to form the Alberta Children’s Hospital (ACH) Integrated Complex Care Program. This shared-care model was designed to bridge hospital- and community-based services, marking a significant shift from working in parallel to true collaboration.

Multidisciplinary Care Across Sites

The integrated team brings together physicians from Pediatric Hospital Medicine and Community Pediatrics, alongside nurses, clerks, care coordinators, and family resource specialists.

The program also works closely with a broad network of partners, including ACH allied health services (such as social work, rehabilitation, and home care), pharmacy, subspecialty clinics, Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), Children’s Services, education partners, and a wide range of community social service organizations.

Through shared workflows and cooperative approaches, the multidisciplinary team prioritizes clear communication, improved transitions, and coordinated service delivery across care settings. What began as a structural integration has evolved into a deeply collaborative network - one that meaningfully connects hospital-based expertise with community-based care in ways that did not previously exist for children and their families.

Improving Care for Families

Over the past year, the ACH Integrated Complex Care Program has delivered tangible improvements for the children and families it serves. Families consistently report a reduced burden of care, describing how coordinated support has eased the stress of managing multiple appointments, treatments, and services. Many have shared feeling more connected to the healthcare system and more confident in navigating it. By seamlessly linking hospital services with community resources, the program has created a comprehensive network of support that extends beyond clinical care.



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Our program has fostered a deeper connection between patients and the healthcare system, empowering them to navigate services with confidence and clarity.

**- Dr. Tracy Taylor,
Co-Medical Director,
ACH Integrated
Complex Care Program**

This integrated approach has strengthened continuity, improved health outcomes, enhanced social connection, and enriched the daily lives of families managing extraordinary medical and behavioural complexity.





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As the parent of a special needs child, there is so much we need to do and remember. Without the support of the Complex Care Team, I would not have known what to do. I have no words to express how much the team helped us - they supported us every step of the way.

-Parent of Complex Care Patient



ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP





EXCELLENCE, HUMANITY AND HEART:

RECOGNIZING THE EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF DR. JOSEPH VAYALUMKAL

The most influential leaders are those who build authentic connections – uniting people, strengthening teams, and cultivating a shared sense of purpose that endures long after the work is done.

Dr. Joseph Vayalumkal is one of those leaders.

One of Dr. Vayalumkal's guiding principles is that a physician should embody *Ability, Affability, and Availability* – a trio he not only embraces but exemplifies daily. Those fortunate enough to work alongside him recognize how naturally and consistently he models these values. An exceptional teacher, advocate, and team player, his quiet dedication has strengthened an entire community of healthcare professionals and staff, empowering them to deliver the best possible care to the patients and families they serve.

For 17 years (2008-2025), Dr. Vayalumkal served as the steady, reassuring presence at the helm of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) at the Alberta Children's Hospital. During this time, he provided calm, level-headed leadership through pandemics, epidemics, and numerous outbreaks affecting our pediatric population. Many know him as an accessible and trusted resource during times of crisis, from H1N1 to COVID-19 and, most recently, the resurgence of measles.

Far fewer see the countless hours he has devoted behind the scenes to protecting children from hospital-acquired infections and community outbreaks: from working weekends to investigate nursery outbreaks and spending late nights finalizing teaching materials, to responding without hesitation whenever IPC expertise was needed. Guided by an unwavering commitment to patient- and family-centred care, Dr. Vayalumkal helped shape how the Alberta Children's Hospital – and entire Calgary Zone – navigated moments of uncertainty during some of the most challenging periods in healthcare.

Effective leadership is rooted in connection, and Dr. Vayalumkal exemplifies this through the strong relationships he has cultivated across disciplines, including Pediatrics, Surgery, Anesthesia, Psychiatry, Public Health, Child Life Services, Environmental Services, Volunteer Services, and Facilities and Engineering, among many others.

He engaged individuals from every corner of the organization with intention and respect, fostering meaningful partnerships and strengthening alignment with IPC guidelines. Beyond the Alberta Children's Hospital, he provided valued guidance and expertise to multiple other sites, including the Rotary Flames House, Gordon Townsend School and Ronald McDonald House.

His impact has been especially profound across the four neonatal intensive care units/NICUs in the Calgary Zone - at the Foothills Medical Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus, and Peter Lougheed Centre. For more than a decade, he was an essential partner for the NICU teams, offering steady support, clinical expertise, and thoughtful leadership while advocating fiercely for our most vulnerable patients. He championed strong collaboration between the Sections of Newborn Critical Care and Pediatric Infectious Diseases, enhancing both patient safety and quality of care. Our NICU teams consistently describe their relationship with Dr. Vayalumkal as one grounded in openness, reliability, and deep mutual respect. Whether addressing emerging infection concerns, attending urgent meetings, or guiding teams through complex outbreaks, he was always present - calm, considerate, and unwavering in his commitment to families and healthcare teams alike. His humility, encyclopedic knowledge, and compassion anchored difficult conversations and instilled confidence in those caring for our province's most fragile newborns during unprecedented times.

Dr. Vayalumkal's creativity and strength as a mentor are exemplified through innovative initiatives such as the Volunteers for Infection Prevention (VIP) Program, which he established and championed at the Alberta Children's Hospital. During his tenure as IPC Director, he also co-led the development of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Fellowship Program, supported a broad range of educational initiatives and trainee-led research projects, and made significant contributions to provincial and national collaborations and publications. His calm professionalism fostered cross-disciplinary learning and instilled confidence and preparedness, even in the most complex and rapidly evolving circumstances. He was a consistent and generous presence at IPC meetings, sharing his knowledge with humility and warmth. His passion for teaching, paired with thoughtful and inclusive leadership, profoundly shaped IPC education across departments, hospitals, and the broader academic community.



It was only after joining the IPC team that I truly understood the incredible breadth of the physician role that Dr. Vayalumkal upheld all those years. He has left an indelible mark on pediatric infection prevention in Alberta, and undeniably big shoes to fill.

-Dr. Jessica Dunn, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist and Infection Prevention and Control Director at the Alberta Children's Hospital

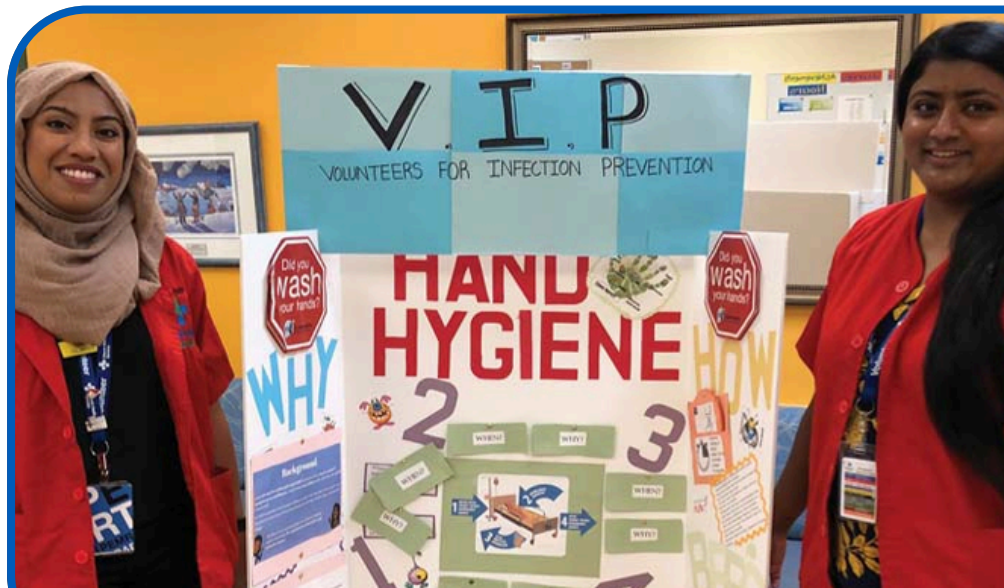


Dr. Vayalumkal's work has always been centred on what is best for children and their families. For nearly two decades, he was one of only a few pediatric IPC physicians in Alberta, bringing a vital pediatric voice to provincial tables where policy and guidelines were shaped. He played a critical role in developing provincial protocols for previously uncharted clinical situations, including the safe management of newborns born to mothers with COVID-19 or measles. His influence is reflected in practical yet profound policy shifts – most notably his advocacy for the family-centred principle that “parents are not visitors,” a reminder that has meaningfully shaped IPC guidance across the province. He consistently advocated for safer hospital design and for balanced approaches that aligned infection prevention with the mental health and developmental needs of patients, ensuring that decision-making was grounded in both scientific rigor and compassionate care.

Across sites, Dr. Vayalumkal is known as a curious, meticulous and conscientious leader. His colleagues describe him as approachable, deeply knowledgeable, and unconditionally supportive – particularly in times when pediatric IPC expertise was needed most. Whether navigating complex clinical decisions or responding to urgent situations, he is always professional, accessible, and collegial, leaving a lasting positive imprint on every team he works with. Relationships have always been at the heart of Dr. Vayalumkal's leadership; even simple gestures, such as monthly team lunches at his favourite restaurants, became meaningful rituals of connection and appreciation that strengthened trust, communication, and collaboration with his IPC colleagues.

VOLUNTEERS FOR INFECTION PREVENTION (VIP) PROGRAM

Established and championed by Dr. Joseph Vayalumkal, the Volunteers for Infection Prevention (VIP) Program at the Alberta Children's Hospital welcomes young volunteers into the hospital community and introduces them to core infection prevention principles. VIP volunteers engage patients and families across the hospital, teaching them how to prevent the spread of infection and demonstrating proper hand hygiene.





Above all, Dr. Vayalumkal has devoted his career to improving the lives of children, their families, and those who care for them. To many, he is not only an exceptional medical leader but also a trusted mentor and friend. His work reminds us that great leaders do more than lead – they lift others, strengthen their communities, and leave every place better than they found it.

As Dr. Vayalumkal steps down as IPC Director, we reflect with deep gratitude on his remarkable service and enduring legacy. What stands out most is not only what he accomplished, but how he did it: with quiet humour, saintly patience, and what many fondly describe as a “Hulk-sized heart.” He has helped foster a culture that is stronger, kinder, and unmistakably shaped by his values. His leadership has illuminated a clear and compassionate path for IPC at the Alberta Children’s Hospital and beyond, and his influence will continue to guide those who follow in his footsteps for many years to come.

Thank you, Dr. Vayalumkal, for all that you have done – and for all that you continue to inspire.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Jessica Dunn (ACH IPC Director and Pediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist), Dr. Mireille LeMay (former Section Head for Pediatric Infectious Diseases), Dr. Hussein Zein (NICU Medical Director, Foothills Medical Centre) and Dr. Khorshid Mohammad (NICU Medical Director, Alberta Children’s Hospital) for their thoughtful contributions to this feature.



ALBERTA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

RECOGNIZED BY CHOOSING WISELY CANADA

In 2025, the Alberta Children's Hospital (ACH) joined an increasing group of Canadian hospitals recognized by Choosing Wisely Canada, a national initiative aimed at reducing unnecessary tests and treatments in the delivery of patient care across the country. "We are proud to be recognized as a Choosing Wisely Canada Hospital," says JoAnn Beckie, ACH Senior Operating Officer. "This achievement reflects our deep commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based care that puts patients first." The journey to achieving this designation begins with clinician-led quality improvement initiatives, encouraging informed conversations with patients and families about the potential risks of unnecessary tests, treatments, and procedures.

Earning this designation involves active engagement from hospital staff and leadership, and a shared commitment to continuous quality improvement across the site.

The Department of Pediatrics would like to acknowledge the incredible efforts of Dr. Dana Stewart, Dr. Jennifer Thull-Freedman and Dr. Michelle Bailey for leading our qualifying projects while positively impacting the care of patients within the ACH Emergency Department and across our inpatient units.

"By reducing unnecessary tests and treatments, we're not only improving outcomes, but also building a culture of accountability and trust," says Dr. David Chaulk, ACH Medical Director. "This designation is a testament to the unwavering dedication of the entire team, and we're proud of the work we do every day to support the health and wellbeing of our community."

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This achievement reflects our deep commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based care that puts patients first.

- JoAnn Beckie, ACH Senior Operating Officer



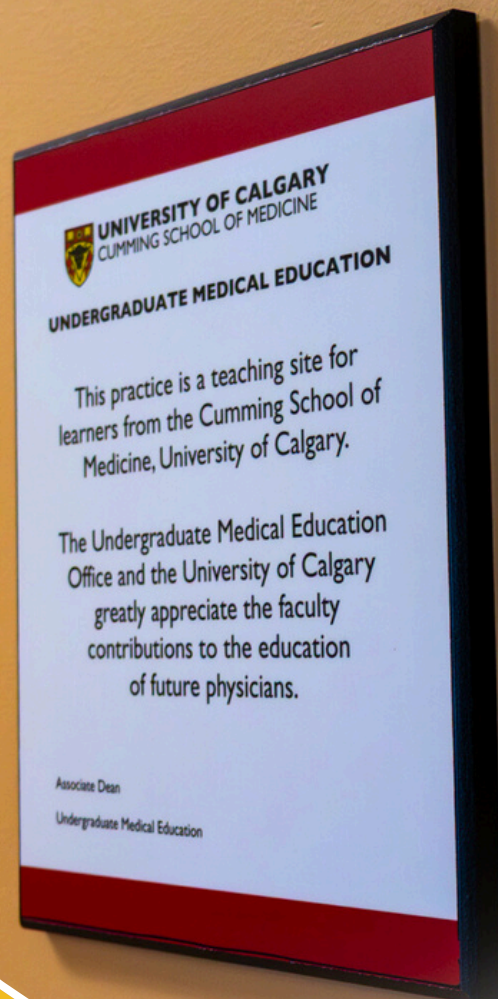
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This designation is a testament to the unwavering dedication of the entire team, and we're proud of the work we do every day to support the health and wellbeing of our community.

- Dr. David Chaulk, ACH Medical Director



EDUCATION



DEPUTY HEAD, EDUCATION

A MESSAGE FROM DR. LEANNA MCKENZIE



Long before medical trainees master procedures or technical skills, they learn the art of connection - with patients and families, with one another, and with themselves. This foundation transforms knowledge into wisdom and experience into purpose, shaping how learners grow within our teaching environments.

Over the past year, the Department of Pediatrics has strengthened our commitment to recognizing educational service and scholarship. We have actively championed nominations for teaching and academic awards at local, national, and international levels, with numerous educators receiving prestigious honours for their valuable contributions to medical education. Our 'Educator of the Month' initiative continues to celebrate faculty who demonstrate exceptional dedication to teaching, with recipients chosen by pediatric residents themselves. We have expanded funding for continuing medical education for our Program Directors, Competence Committee Chairs, and Undergraduate Medical Education leaders, ensuring they have the resources they need to grow, lead, and inspire.

By promoting webinars, workshops, and conferences aligned with the evolving interests and emerging needs of our members, we continue to support faculty development, foster professional growth, and enhance fulfilment across all educational roles within our department. We have worked diligently to advance educational scholarship and prioritize funding for our pediatric residency and subspecialty training programs, creating opportunities for our trainees to connect with the broader academic community at national and international conferences. Our hybrid Pediatric Grand Rounds model - blending in-person and virtual participation - has further strengthened engagement across our numerous sites and maintained consistently high attendance, with 4,460 virtual participants in 2025. Looking ahead, we are excited to launch a departmental Community of Practice in pediatric medical education, offering a shared space for faculty and trainees to learn together, exchange ideas, and collaborate in a supportive and creative environment.

Across all these efforts, one theme remains constant: connection elevates our teaching, strengthens our pediatric community across disciplines, and helps shape the educators and clinicians we become.



Connection elevates our teaching, strengthens our pediatric community across disciplines, and helps shape the educators and clinicians we become.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

2024-2025 DATA AND METRICS

4,460

VIRTUAL ATTENDEES FOR
PEDIATRIC GRAND ROUNDS

2,420

HOURS PGME ACADEMIC
HALF-DAY TEACHING

2,222

HOURS DIRECT
UME TEACHING

CONNECTING AUTHENTICALLY WITH THE HORSE-POWERED CURRICULUM



Horses teach us that humility is a form of strength. When we approach them with respect and openness, they respond with trust, reminding us that genuine connection is grounded in presence and authenticity rather than words. They reflect who we are in the moment, mirroring distraction or tension just as readily as calm presence. Through subtle cues – a softened eye, a long exhale – they show how trust grows through consistency and gentleness. In learning to connect with horses, we often learn to connect more honestly with one another. These lessons parallel the foundations of strong doctor-patient relationships – clear communication, deep listening, empathy and genuine presence – building trust and enhancing wellbeing for both patients and clinicians.

Drawing on her experience with horses, community pediatrician Dr. Sonia Ménard partnered with Equine-Assisted Coach Nicole Schaefer to develop an innovative educational project for medical learners at the University of Calgary. A novel approach in Canada applicable across all stages of training and practice, this initiative offers learners honest, real-time feedback from horses, prompting immediate self-reflection and emotional regulation, elements that can be difficult to replicate in simulated scenarios. As herd animals, horses model leadership, collaboration, and the importance of community. Through this unique learning experience, participants strengthen foundational skills – problem solving, empathy, resilience, teamwork, and mindful communication – that support a more sustainable, fulfilling career in medicine and enable deeper connections with the patients and communities they serve.

” **I truly cannot think of a better way to learn these attributes [such as communication and leadership]; they are skills that cannot be taught in a lecture.**
- Resident, Horse-Powered Curriculum

RECOGNIZING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE: DR. ERIKA VORHIES



Pediatric cardiologist Dr. Erika Vorhies is widely recognized within the Department of Pediatrics as an extraordinary educator and mentor, shaping the future of medicine through her dedication, curiosity, and unwavering commitment to excellence. An exceptional clinician and award-winning teacher, she exemplifies how one individual can make a lasting difference – not only in the care of patients and families, but in how future physicians are trained, supported, and inspired throughout their careers.

For nearly a decade, Dr. Vorhies served as the Educational Lead for Pediatric Cardiology, guiding and supporting trainees through every stage of their professional journeys. Whether learners were beginning a rotation or preparing to enter independent practice, she met them where they were, fostering growth through thoughtful mentorship and steady encouragement as they navigated their training. Her passion for medical education naturally extended into broader leadership roles, including joining the Pediatrics Residency Program Committee in 2015 as a pediatric subspecialty representative. Through this work, she developed a deep understanding of how effective, sustainable training programs are designed and supported. She further strengthened her expertise by completing a Master's degree in Health Sciences Education in 2023, expanding her impact as an educator and leader within the Department of Pediatrics and beyond.

Medical education in Canada has undergone a significant transition toward a competency-based model in recent years, a shift that has required

innovation, collaboration and thoughtful stewardship. As Chair of the General Pediatrics Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) Competence Committee, Dr. Vorhies plays a pivotal role in helping educators look beyond individual evaluations to gain a holistic understanding of each learner's progress, capabilities, and potential. In this capacity, she has implemented practical improvements to assessment processes, introducing tools and approaches that promote greater consistency, equity, and meaning for both learners and faculty.

She has also been involved in quality improvement initiatives, contributing to the identification of best practices and pragmatic solutions that will shape how educators and trainees are supported for years to come. Notably, she recently established a community of practice for Competence Committee Chairs and Program Directors within the Department of Pediatrics, creating a collaborative space where educators can share insights, learn from one another, and collectively address complex challenges – modeling the very teamwork and reflective practice we strive to cultivate in our trainees.

For aspiring educators, Dr. Vorhies' journey is a powerful reminder that teaching is not defined by a single title or role, but by a lifelong commitment to learning and growth. It is about showing up with intention, asking thoughtful questions, and continually striving to improve the systems that will shape the educational experience for future generations. Through her humility, leadership, and dedication, Dr. Vorhies inspires educators to believe that meaningful change in medical education is not only possible – it is well within their reach to lead.

EDUCATOR Q&A

DR. ERIKA VORHIES

How did you discover your passion for teaching and education?

I have always been drawn to teaching and medical education, even during my own training. Engaging in education allows me to contribute meaningfully to the development of future healthcare providers while continuing to grow as both a clinician and an educator. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of learning from many inspiring role models whose influence continues to shape my approach to medical education. Today, I find great purpose in serving as a mentor for learners at all stages of training, supporting and guiding them as they pursue their professional goals and unique career paths.

Where do you find inspiration as an educator?

I find inspiration in working alongside learners, physician colleagues, and allied health team members as we tackle challenges together – whether in patient care or medical education. These collaborative experiences continually renew my motivation to teach and remind me that, even as an educator, there is always something new to learn.

What advice or wisdom would you share with your trainees?

Take advantage of every learning opportunity available to you. Stay actively engaged in your own learning – ask questions, seek feedback, and remain curious. Remember that genuine growth often comes from moments of discomfort, so embrace challenges as opportunities to strengthen your skills and confidence. Most importantly, stay connected to the reason you chose this path. Your sense of purpose will carry you through the difficult days and help you fully appreciate the meaningful ones.

What is the best advice you have ever received as a clinician and/or educator?

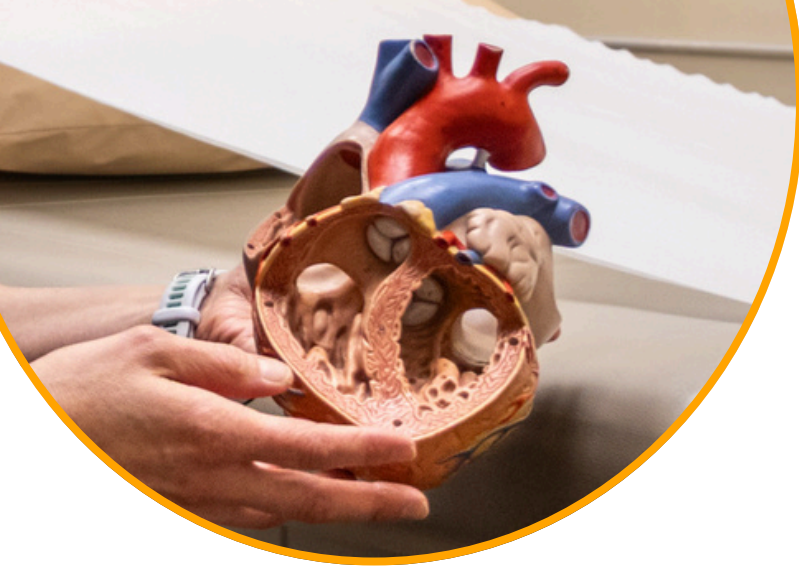
Show up prepared and invest time in building relationships. Nearly everything we do in medicine – clinical care, teaching, and teamwork – depends on the strength of the connections we build with others.



”

Stay connected to the reason you chose this path. Your sense of purpose will carry you through the difficult days and help you fully appreciate the meaningful ones.

**– Dr. Erika Vorhies,
Chair, General Pediatrics
PGME Competence
Committee**



What is the Department of Pediatrics Competence Committee Collaborative?

Assessment in medical education has always been challenging, and the introduction of the Competence by Design (CBD) model has added further complexity. In my current role as Pediatric Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) Competence Committee Chair, I work with Chairs and Program Directors from our subspecialty programs to build shared resources and support one another across the Department of Pediatrics. Through this collaboration, it became clear that many programs were facing similar challenges, which led to the idea of establishing a department-wide community of practice. The Department of Pediatrics Competence Committee Collaborative launched in spring 2025, bringing together Competence Committee Chairs across the department to share best practices, provide peer support, and strengthen assessment processes across all pediatric residency and fellowship programs. The group is now developing shared tools and resources, integrating quality improvement initiatives into practice, and aligning assessment processes with CBD and the accreditation standards of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

What impacts has the Collaborative had so far?

Although the Department of Pediatrics Competence Committee Collaborative is still a relatively new, department-focused initiative, I am very excited about its potential. It offers a meaningful forum for collaboration and shared problem-solving around assessment in medical education across our department. I believe it will continue to support our residency and fellowship programs by promoting more consistent, equitable, and transparent assessment practices, ultimately strengthening support for both learners and educators. The Collaborative has already enhanced communication and alignment across our programs, positioning us to better adapt to evolving expectations and standards as CBD continues to develop. Its early success also highlights its potential to serve as a model for broader implementation for other PGME Competence Committees across the Cumming School of Medicine.

What are the most challenging parts of teaching?

One of the greatest challenges in teaching is accurately identifying each learner's individual needs and providing the right support at the right time. While individualized growth is central to competency-based medical education, recognizing learner needs early and mobilizing appropriate resources can be complex. My work within the Pediatrics PGME program has deepened my appreciation for this challenge and reinforced the importance of continuous program evolution to better support learners throughout their training.

What are the most rewarding parts of teaching?

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is accompanying trainees throughout their professional journeys – from their early days as junior residents to becoming skilled, practice-ready physicians. I find deep fulfillment in watching learners grow as they grasp new concepts and apply them in clinical practice. Seeing their confidence build, their skills strengthen, and their clinical judgment mature over time is incredibly meaningful. I take great pride in supporting learners as they achieve their goals and pursue their chosen career paths, and I truly value being part of the vibrant community of educators within our Pediatric Cardiology team and the Department of Pediatrics. Working with learners across all stages of training and witnessing their growth in so many dimensions remains one of the most gratifying parts of my role as an educator.

What advice would you give to junior faculty interested in medical education?

Seek out those already working in medical education and ask where there is a need. Get involved – no matter how small the role may seem – and be open to new opportunities. Push yourself to grow, take risks, and try something new.

”

Nearly everything we do in medicine – clinical care, teaching, and teamwork – depends on the strength of the connections we build with others.

**– Dr. Erika Vorhies,
Chair, General Pediatrics
PGME Competence
Committee**

EDUCATOR OF THE MONTH

2025 RECIPIENTS



JANUARY

Dr. Colleen Curtis, Pediatric Neurology

"Dr. Curtis is a very dedicated educator within the Department of Pediatrics. She does a large amount of behind-the-scenes work and is a very knowledgeable source and advocate of all-things medical education!"



FEBRUARY

Dr. Leanne Morris, Pediatric Hospital Medicine

"Dr. Morris is an integral and valued part of the Pediatric Residency team. She has fresh approaches to education issues and confronts problems with a thoughtful and often creative approach. Dedication to hearing residents' opinions and concerns is a hallmark of her caring deeply for them and the program's continued success."



MARCH

Dr. Martin Perlsteyn, Newborn Critical Care

"Dr. Perlsteyn has done a huge amount of behind-the-scenes educational curriculum. He has been great at responding to Proskills specific needs and furthermore, was essential in the development of the Indigenous and maltreatment sims in direct response to the program's need."



APRIL

Dr. Marie-Anne Brundler, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine (Joint Appointment)

"As a current trainee, I have had the opportunity to witness Dr. Brundler's passion for pathology through our academic half day lectures. While learning histopathology may be daunting, Dr. Brundler's expertise and dedication to teaching makes the process rewarding and fun for trainees and staff alike."

EDUCATOR OF THE MONTH

2025 RECIPIENTS



MAY

Dr. David Patton, Pediatric Cardiology

“Dr. Patton is a wonderful teacher. He is always going out of his way to teach residents about the complex hearts we are seeing. He is kind, patient, and creates a safe learning environment for learners!”



JUNE

Dr. Pamela Veale, Developmental Pediatrics

“[Dr. Veale] is the kind of knowledgeable, supportive, and experienced educator every program would love to have at its side. She is patient, thinks outside the box, persistent if she has to be, and kind and considerate to learners in distress or with outside demands they have to juggle.”



JULY

Dr. Raman Chawla, Pediatric Hospital Medicine

“[Dr. Chawla] is incredibly approachable and is frequently identified by residents as a safe person that they can talk to for career advice and mentorship on how to fully reach their potential on clinical rotations. In 2024 she was selected by the residents as ‘Mentor of the Year.’”



AUGUST

Dr. Syeda Abbas, Community Pediatrics

“Dr. Abbas is such an awesome role model. She builds great rapport with patients and their families and really hears their concerns. She is super flexible to my learning goals and instills a level of confidence to try harder more complex things.”

EDUCATOR OF THE MONTH

2025 RECIPIENTS



SEPTEMBER

Dr. Lauren Redgate, Community Pediatrics

“During my time at Infinity, Dr. Redgate set aside time to do teaching at least weekly with me. She gave me the best balance between supervision and independence. I really appreciated the time and energy she gave towards my learning.”



OCTOBER

Dr. Genevieve de Caen, Pediatric Hospital Medicine

“Dr. Gen de Caen is an incredible physician, teacher, and mentor. Dr. de Caen is brilliant, patient, and kind - all qualities we aspire to emulate. We are grateful to learn from her excellent bedside manner and endless knowledge.”



NOVEMBER

Dr. Christopher Smith, Pediatric Medical Genetics

“Even though Dr. Smith is a relatively new faculty member, he is highly engaged in training, always very thoughtful in his teaching, feedback and coaching of residents. He is a role model for residents.”



DECEMBER

Dr. Melanie Willimann, Pediatric Emergency Medicine

“Dr. Willimann has been instrumental in the creation and growth of our kidSONO point-of-care ultrasound platform at ACH. Her work has had a transformative impact on PoCUS education across our department, and truly across the country. She really does exemplify the qualities of an outstanding medical educator.”

RESEARCH



RESEARCH LEAD

A MESSAGE FROM ASHTON CHUGH



In pediatrics, every research question begins with a child’s story. Each new discovery links evidence to practice, shaped by clinicians, scientists, learners, and community partners who believe we can build something better, together. These connections deepen our purpose and remind us that behind every dataset is the hope of a healthier future.

This year, we expanded our shared research infrastructure, increasing access to research assistants, grant-writing support, mentorship, and funding to advance numerous projects. We continued to advocate for access to essential data to help drive meaningful progress in quality improvement and patient safety, providing software, resources, and ongoing support to each of our clinical sections. Collaboration remained central to our achievements, with thriving partnerships across departments and institutes at the University of Calgary – including pediatric research teams at the Alberta Children’s Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI) – expanding opportunities for networking, mentorship, and access to specialized expertise.

We continue to sharpen our focus on recognizing the incredible breadth and impact of research throughout our department. Ten of our eleven successful Innovation Awards represented clinical sections across disciplines, including allied health and nursing. Many of these projects paired senior clinician-investigators with junior faculty or residents, fostering meaningful mentorship and supporting smaller initiatives with significant impact. As Research Lead, I have also served as a “Research Wayfinder,” developing accessible resources and guiding clinicians through the study start-up process. Through workshops, shared learning, and community-building events, we have continued to strengthen our culture of curiosity and collaboration throughout the Department of Pediatrics.

We look to the year ahead with optimism as the impact of this work continues to ripple across our department and our broader scholarly community. As always, our research efforts will remain anchored in connection – to each other, to the questions that drive us, and to the children and families who inspire everything we do.



By uniting curiosity, compassion, and collective vision, we continue to advance pediatric care through research that not only informs but inspires.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

2024-2025 DATA AND METRICS

\$25.53M

TOTAL RESEARCH
REVENUE

\$2.33M

TOTAL CIHR*
FUNDING

*CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH

910

TOTAL
PUBLICATIONS

MEANINGFUL MENTORSHIP

A CONVERSATION ON GROWTH AND CONNECTION

Participating in mentorship can be transformative for both mentors and mentees, enhancing personal fulfillment, building confidence, and fostering new opportunities. By investing in yourself and others, meaningful mentorship experiences help cultivate stronger, more connected communities where progress and success are shared and celebrated.

The following Q&A highlights perspectives from both sides of a longstanding, highly productive mentorship pair within the Department of Pediatrics: Dr. Deborah Dewey (mentor) and Dr. Sarah MacEachern (mentee).



Dr. Deborah Dewey

Child & Family Health Research Unit



Dr. Sarah MacEachern

Developmental Pediatrics

MENTORSHIP Q&A

DRS. DEBORAH DEWEY & SARAH MACEACHERN

How did your mentorship experience begin?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: It began in 2016, when I received an email from a first-year pediatrics resident - Dr. Sarah MacEachern - asking if I would consider supervising her research project. I was in Australia on a Research and Scholarship Leave at the time, so we arranged to meet via Skype (well before Zoom became the norm!). During that first conversation, we explored her goals and research interests, and I agreed to work with her on one condition: she had to choose a project she was genuinely passionate about. Through a series of online meetings and email exchanges, Sarah refined her idea into a strong research proposal which she later presented - and won an award for - at the Department of Pediatrics' Residents Research Day. She continued to advance her project and engage in related community initiatives throughout her residency, and we ultimately published a paper together based on the data she collected.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: About a decade ago, I was a new pediatrics resident at the Alberta Children's Hospital, searching for a mentor to help guide me through our mandatory research requirement. I was introduced to the remarkable work of Dr. Deb Dewey - an acclaimed researcher in the Department of Pediatrics - and was very interested in working with her. She agreed to meet with me over Skype (way before Zoom!) as she was away on sabbatical, and our first conversation left a strong impression. She walked me through several projects she was actively working on, and then asked a question no one had ever posed to me before: "What do *you* want to do?" I had completed a PhD before medical school and had some experience with clinical research, but all of it had centred on other people's ideas. With that one, simple question, Deb opened a door for me, encouraging me to pursue an idea I had carried for years and supporting me as I developed it into my first independent research project.





What are some meaningful outcomes of mentorship that people may not know about?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: I would highlight the growth in research productivity for both of us. Sarah and I have published several peer-reviewed papers together, with many more in progress. As a fellow, Sarah served as a co-investigator on an Owerko Centre Research Catalyst Grant (with myself and Dr. Nils Forkert as co-principal investigators), and since then I have mentored and collaborated with her as a co-applicant on two more successful grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Kids Brain Health Network. I have also had the opportunity to support her development as a supervisor for graduate students, co-supervising a Master's student and a PhD student alongside her. Mentorship creates countless opportunities to grow, contribute, and advance your career in meaningful ways.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: Deb has been an amazing mentor to me throughout my pediatrics residency and subspecialty residency in developmental pediatrics. Her guidance helped solidify my interest in pursuing a research-focused clinical role, and I am very grateful to be able to do that work today as a clinician-scientist. Since joining the Department of Pediatrics as faculty in 2022, Deb has continued to be a trusted source of support. The journey as an early-career researcher can be intense and often challenging. Having someone to help normalize those stresses and keep me focused on my long-term vision – even when short-term barriers arise – has been invaluable.

What can help maximize the benefits of mentorship?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: Honesty is essential as part of the mentoring relationship. If a mentee proposes a research idea that is overly complex or difficult to execute, it is important to be upfront. Research mentors bring valuable experience and insight into what makes a project feasible and what granting agencies are truly looking for. Some of the most valuable guidance I offered Sarah early on was straightforward and direct: *“Keep it simple.”* I believe that advice helped her refine her ideas into focused research projects that were both achievable and impactful.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: I truly believe that mentorship is key to success. Find someone you genuinely ‘click’ with and don’t be afraid to be open and honest – it’s difficult for a mentor to support you effectively if they don’t fully understand your needs or challenges. Regular check-ins can be incredibly helpful and when you feel stuck, your mentor is often just an email away and happy to offer guidance. At the same time, be mindful that mentors are often very busy. Planning ahead – especially when requesting things like reference letters – shows respect for your mentor’s time and reinforces the value you place on the relationship.

What is one thing you wish someone had told you when you were at the beginning of your career?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: I wish someone had encouraged me early on to seek out mentors who were supportive, had my back, and could help open doors as I was starting out in my career. Looking back, I truly believe mentorship is essential to success as an early-career investigator. Choose someone you fully trust – someone you feel comfortable communicating with openly and honestly. That foundation makes all the difference.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: I got lucky in meeting Deb and honestly, it was a very random set of circumstances that brought us together. What began as a straightforward supervisor-student dynamic naturally evolved into a deep and lasting mentorship relationship. My advice to others is to stay open to mentorship – these opportunities often appear when you least expect them. I've been paired with mentors through structured programs in the past, but none of these connections have stuck like the one that evolved organically with me and Deb.

How and where do you find inspiration in your work?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: I generate new questions almost daily in my own research, which keeps the work exciting, intellectually stimulating, and continually propels me forward. I am constantly inspired by the trainees and early-career investigators I've mentored, seeing them build successful careers in academia, public service, government, and industry. Some are emerging entrepreneurs developing innovations that are changing the world; others are health professionals providing essential care; and many are researchers themselves tackling important, unanswered questions. Ultimately, my goal for every mentee is simple: that they thrive – personally and professionally – in the career path they choose. Knowing that I've contributed, even in a small way, to the positive change they are creating is a powerful source of motivation and affirms that my work is making a meaningful difference.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: My work is directly inspired by the patients and families I see in my clinical practice – I want them to have a better everyday life. My expertise includes diagnosing neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in children and providing comprehensive assessment and treatment for those with behaviours of concern. Our team at the Child Development Centre provides care for a diverse range of patients, and I have built a research program that parallels our clinical focus on children with NDDs who present with behaviours of concern. My clinical work continuously informs and shapes my research, ensuring that – in collaboration with people with lived experience – we are addressing common, real-world challenges faced by these children and their families. This integration keeps our work relevant, responsive, and grounded in what matters most to those we care for.

What would be your top tips or advice to foster a positive mentoring relationship?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: Be honest but supportive and prioritize being a good listener. Encourage your mentee to develop their own solutions to problems rather than providing answers outright. Avoid imposing your own values or ideas and give advice only when asked. Remember that a strong mentor-mentee relationship is a two-way street – like any meaningful relationship, it thrives when both people are open to feedback and willing to learn from one another.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: Respect your mentor's time and energy. Provide plenty of advance notice when requesting a meeting or asking for support around something with a deadline, and communicate clearly about what you need and why. From my experience, strong mentorship can be truly transformative, shaping your confidence, broadening your opportunities, and opening doors that can influence the entire trajectory of your career. The mentorship possibilities in pediatrics are endless.



”

What began as a traditional mentor-mentee relationship has evolved into a mutually supportive bond, blending personal connection with professional collaboration.

**– Dr. Deborah Dewey,
Professor and Mentor**



What are some potential obstacles a person may have to overcome as a mentor/mentee?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: As a mentor, navigating difficult conversations is inevitable. Addressing sensitive topics – such as poor performance, shifting expectations, or career setbacks – requires careful handling and becomes more intuitive with experience. Time constraints can also pose challenges, as both mentors and mentees often juggle competing demands and deadlines that arise quickly. It's important for both partners in the mentorship duo to recognize this reality and remain flexible, understanding, and communicative when one cannot meet a particular timeline. Finally, knowing when it's appropriate to transition beyond the formal mentor-mentee relationship can be delicate. As a mentor, you must recognize when a mentee is ready to pursue their work independently and be there to help support that shift as a natural and healthy next step in their growth.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: As a mentee, the biggest challenge is often finding the right fit with a mentor. You may need to work with a few different people before discovering someone whose style, values, and guidance truly resonate with you. I've had mentorship relationships in the past where the well-meaning advice didn't quite align with my approach or goals, and that was difficult to navigate at times. I still learned a lot from those experiences in terms of my values and preferences as a researcher, and it also made it clear to me that there are many paths to success. Your path may not look the same as someone else's, but both are equally valuable. Taking the time to find a mentor that is the right fit for you will support your individual growth and help you move toward your own definition of success, whatever that may look like.

What has been your favourite part of mentorship?

Dr. Deborah Dewey: I value the camaraderie that has grown between me and Sarah over the years. What began as a traditional mentor-mentee relationship has evolved into a mutually supportive bond, blending personal connection with professional collaboration. We are comfortable openly discussing the challenges we encounter – in research or other areas like trainee supervision – and just as comfortable celebrating both our individual and shared successes.

Dr. Sarah MacEachern: Deb has been an unwavering source of support throughout the ups and downs of my clinical training and early career as a clinician-researcher. What I've appreciated most about her mentorship is having a trusted voice to turn to – someone I can bounce ideas off, seek steady guidance from, and share a laugh with about the often fickle and unpredictable world of research. It is a privilege now to get to pay some of the things I've learned from Deb forward to my own students and mentees.

Peer-Reviewed Publications:

- MacEachern S, Forkert ND, Lemay JF, Dewey D. Physical activity participation and barriers for children and adolescents for disabilities. *Int J Disability Dev Educ.* 2022 Mar; 69(1):204-2016. doi: 10.1080/1034912x.2021.1952939
- England-Mason G, MacEachern SJ, Amador K, Soomro MH, Reardon AJF, MacDonald AM, Kinniburgh DW, Letourneau N, Giesbrecht GF, Martin JF, Forkert ND, Dewey D. Using machine learning to investigate the influence of the prenatal chemical exposome on neurodevelopment of young children. *Neurotoxicology* 2025 May; 108:218-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuro.2025.04.001>

Grants:

- Owerko Centre Research Catalyst Grant (Drs. Deborah Dewey and Nils Forkert, Co-PIs): Using machine learning to predict the effects of maternal and early childhood exposure to neurotoxic chemical elements and essential nutrients on neurodevelopmental outcomes (\$75,000)
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research Catalyst Grant, SPOR Innovative Clinical Trials (iCT): Catalyzing an Innovative Clinical Trial of a Sleep Education Intervention to Improve Behaviours of Concern Amongst Youth with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (\$200,000)
- Kids Brain Health Network Development: Feasibility testing and validation of an instrument to measure behaviours of concern in children and youth with neurodevelopmental disorders (\$197,000)

INNOVATION AWARDS

2025 RECIPIENTS

This year's applicants submitted their ideas and were invited to present to a review panel and audience. Funding for the awards is provided by the Department of Pediatrics Innovation Award Endowment, supported by the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation through community donors.

Eleven successful applications were awarded a total of:

\$91,848.32

10

**CLINICAL SECTIONS
REPRESENTED,
INCLUDING ALLIED
HEALTH & NURSING**



**Many teams featured
senior clinician
investigators paired with
either junior faculty
members or residents,
serving as a valuable
mentorship opportunity
to lead small but
impactful projects**

INNOVATION AWARDS

2025 RECIPIENTS

The following list is in alphabetical order of the project lead's surname:

Dr. Raman Chawla “Circles of Connection: Building Trust Between Indigenous Youth and Healthcare Providers.” (Project theme – Indigenous Health Advocacy. Awarded \$9,880).

Dr. Jennifer deBruyn “Defining Normal Ultrasound-measured Bowel Wall Thickness in Children” (Project theme – Research. Awarded \$10,000).

Dr. Jonathan Guilfoyle “Are We Ready for AI Scribes in Paediatric Emergency Departments? Perspectives from Adolescents, Caregivers, and Clinicians.” (Project theme – Research. Awarded \$9,968.82).

Dr. Sujith Gurram “Machine learning and visual computing for diagnosis of clinical encephalopathy” (Project theme – Clinical Improvement. Awarded \$10,000).

Dr. Marina Journault “Ice Cream Rounds (Critical Incident Stress Management & Beyond)” (Project theme – Wellness. Awarded \$8,779.5).

Dr. Carsten Krueger “Exploring Parental Perceptions and Concerns about Antibiotic Use and Stewardship at a Tertiary Care Children’s Hospital” (Project theme – Research. Awarded \$3,420).

Dr. Kara Murias “BrainSTAND: Brain Stimulation for Anxiety and Depression in youth - Extended follow-up.” (Project theme – Research. Awarded \$9,900).

Dr. Phillip Quon, “Improving Pediatric Clinic Experience for Patients with Autism and/or Anxiety Through a Pre-Visit Orientation Video” (Project theme – Clinical Improvement. Awarded \$3,000).

Dr. Jumana Samara “Developing a Neonatal Lung Ultrasound Simulator and Structured Training Program for Healthcare Providers in Calgary NICUs” (Project theme – Education. Awarded \$10,000).

Dr. Graham Thompson “Solving the pediatric research biosample availability conundrum: Comparing OLINK- \propto E Proximity Extension Assay proteomics in residual-clinical vs research-specific plasma in febrile young infants. (The ReSolve Study)” (Project theme – Research. Awarded \$10,000).

Dr. Peter Vetere “Improving Subjective Global Nutritional Assessment Completion in Pediatric Nutritional Screening Test Positive Pediatric Inpatients” (Project theme – Clinical Improvement. Awarded \$6,900).

WELLNESS

NURSE FOR A DAY



DEPUTY HEAD, PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

A MESSAGE FROM DR. SUSAN KUHN



Forming connections – at work and in our personal lives – deepens our sense of purpose and belonging. In the workplace, connection transforms collaboration into trust and shared momentum. Beyond work, it roots us in relationships that offer joy, support, and authenticity. When we have what we need to nurture both, we move through the world with greater confidence, compassion, and a stronger sense of who we are.

This year, we continued to prioritize building safe, supportive, and healthy work environments for our members. Our Wellness & Culture Committee played a central role in these efforts, championing meaningful recognition, promoting resources that support physical and emotional well-being, and strengthening communication, collaboration, and relationships across the continuum of pediatrics. Our Professionals Engaging with Purpose Program (PEPP) expanded its offerings, providing additional resources and support for fulfilling, sustainable work and mentorship at all career stages. Our third Physician Wellness Survey, conducted in partnership with The Well Doc Initiative in fall 2025, saw strong engagement that highlighted our shared commitment to well-being across the department.

We also continued to grow our podcast, The Thrive Home, and launched a video series celebrating the personal hobbies and interests that enrich the lives of our members beyond their clinical and academic roles. Looking ahead, we are excited to introduce a new Peer Support Program, an important step in supporting physician wellness and deepening our sense of community within the Department of Pediatrics.

We aim to continue strengthening these bonds of connection in the coming year, ensuring our department remains a place where everyone feels seen, valued, and supported. Our members are the heart of everything we do – the source of our shared compassion, innovation, and momentum. By nurturing a culture where people feel recognized and cared for, we not only uplift one another; we create an environment where our best work can truly flourish, together.



By nurturing a culture where people feel recognized and cared for, we not only uplift one another; we create an environment where our best work can truly flourish, together.

WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS

NEW VIDEOS & PODCAST EPISODES



Point-of-Care Ultrasound (PoCUS): Drs. Melanie Willimann and Mark Bromley

In this episode of The Thrive Home Podcast, hosted by faculty and residents at the Alberta Children's Hospital, we explore the growing role of Point-of-Care Ultrasound (PoCUS) in pediatric care. Pediatric emergency medicine physicians and PoCUS leads - Dr. Mark Bromley and Dr. Melanie Willimann - join the conversation to share how bedside ultrasound is transforming clinical decision-making, education, and patient experience across our hospital and beyond.



Sustaining Ourselves in Pediatrics: Dr. Estee Grant's Story (Part 1)

Hosted by Pediatric Resident Dr. Siobhan Wong and Hospitalist Dr. Leanne Morris, Dr. Estee Grant shares her story from her early love of teaching and communication, through the shifts that comes with becoming a parent, to the moment she realized that the work she once resisted - Palliative Care - was actually where she could grow the skills she valued most: connection, emotional presence, and supporting families through their hardest moments.



WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS

NEW VIDEOS & PODCAST EPISODES

Docs Who... is a video series that encourages physicians to prioritize their mental and physical wellbeing by engaging in physical activities and hobbies outside of work. Through real stories from department members, we highlight the importance of balance, joy, and self-care in medicine.



DOCS WHO... HOOP

How does 6 AM basketball positively affect physicians? We interviewed a group of department members who have been dribbling and hooping together for many years and have turned it into a morning routine before their clinics!

DOCS WHO... NURSE FOR A DAY

Guided by nurse Taylor Phillips, watch as our very own Deputy Head of Clinical Affairs, pediatric intensivist Dr. Jonathan Gilleland, takes on the role of a nurse for an entire shift at the Alberta Children's Hospital's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit for charity.



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