

Nemours Children's Health Researchers Awarded \$10.9 Million NIH COBRE Grant Supporting Work 'Well Beyond Medicine'

Research to focus on expanding access to child health and improving health equity

(Wilmington, Del., April 28, 2022) — The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently awarded a Phase 1, 5-year \$10.9 million Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) award, entitled Research Expanding Access to Child Health (REACH) Center to Anne Kazak, PhD, Enterprise Director, and Melissa Alderfer, PhD, Director of the Center for Healthcare and Delivery Science (CHDS) at Nemours Children's Health.

It has long been known that there are many factors outside of the health system that affect a child's overall health. Therefore, the goal of this award is to address the myriad of complex social and ecological factors that hamper access to child health and contribute to health inequities and disparities in care. The grant and Nemours supported REACH Center will work with community partners to harness the power of technology to address barriers to health care access and foster the development of new, innovative care models. By elevating existing expertise and research infrastructure through core resources, the Center will support health equity research for children, and establish a core group of independent multidisciplinary investigators.

"We are thrilled to advance the creation of the REACH Center which will further expand upon Nemours Children's [swell beyond medicine](#)' strategy that supports each child's whole health, including the social, economic, behavioral, and environmental factors that affect their lives and future health," said Mary M. Lee, MD, Nemours Children's Chief Scientific Officer and Physician-in-Chief in the Delaware Valley. "I look forward to see communities, researchers and physicians come together as part of this newly established center, all with the shared vision to create the healthiest generations of children."

Nemours Children's Health, as one of the nation's largest multi-state pediatric health systems, is uniquely positioned to serve as a hub for children's health equity research. Currently, research is underway to meet the criteria of this grant. Thao-Ly Phan, MD, a physician within Nemours Children's Weight Management Clinic, is working to advance technology to improve access to care for children with obesity in rural Delaware. Erica Sood, Ph.D, a Nemours Children's clinical psychologist is developing ways to help families cope and educate themselves about a prenatal diagnosis of congenital heart disease in preparation for their baby's arrival.

In an effort to address infrastructure, a training program focused on state-of-the art research approaches will be available to multidisciplinary investigators within Nemours and across Delaware through the IMPACT (Intervention Methods: Provision and Connections through Technology) Core, led by Kimberly Canter, PhD. In addition, the PROMISE (Pediatric Research Optimizing Methods in Stakeholder Engagement) Core, led by J.J. Cutuli, PhD, will support investigators in taking a community-based, participatory approach in their research. Finally, REACH Center staff will provide extensive mentoring to assure that scientists will be successful in growing their innovative research and will fund competitive pilot grants for projects in the early stages of development.

This is the second NIH COBRE grant awarded recently to Nemours Children's Health. Researchers at Nemours Children's Health, Delaware received a \$10.5 million grant to support the Delaware Comprehensive Sickle Cell Research Program in 2021.

About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, including two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of nearly 80 primary and specialty care practices across five states. Nemours seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves.