

PAS 2024: Nemours Children's Health Researchers to Present on Youth Mental Health, Vaccination, Autism and Respiratory Illness

Studies encompass crucial topics in children's health

WILMINGTON, Del. (May 1, 2024) –Researchers from Nemours Children's Health will present findings from a range of studies at the 2024 [Pediatric Academic Societies \(PAS\) Meeting](#), May 2-6 in Toronto. Key presentations will address pediatric mental health, vaccination, autism diagnosis, social determinants of cardiovascular health and treatment of bronchiolitis—one of the most common respiratory illnesses in children that requires hospitalization.

"Nemours researchers go well beyond medicine every day to improve children's health and well-being by connecting to clinical care. Our research helps provide the foundation for the latest in diagnostic advances and evidence-based practice," said Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, Executive Vice-President, Enterprise Physician-in-Chief and Chief Scientific Officer, Nemours Children's Health. "The Nemours presentations at PAS showcase the breadth of our efforts to extend our laboratory into communities of care and benefit children's health beyond our walls."

Nemours researchers will deliver several key presentations, including the following:

Neighborhood-level Deprivation and Hypertension in Youth: Carissa Baker-Smith, MD, MPH, Director of the Nemours Preventive Cardiology program and Co-Director of the Nemours Center for Cardiovascular Research and Innovation in Delaware, will discuss the relationship between socioeconomic factors and children's risk of developing hypertension, a leading risk factor for childhood heart disease and other health problems. Baker-Smith uses neighborhood-level analysis to characterize deprivation and identifies ways to add resources and reduce time to hypertension diagnosis within high-deprivation communities.

Medical Hospitalizations for Children with Mental Health Conditions Before & During COVID-19: Following a well-documented increase in pediatric mental health hospitalizations before and during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, pediatric hospitalist Sahar Barfchin, MD, of Nemours Children's Hospital, Delaware examined whether the trend persisted through the later stages of the pandemic. Barfchin will present data that shows that mental health remains a critical issue that merits continuing focused attention and support.

Comparing Autism Evaluations in a Primary Care Clinic to a Specialty Center; Examining Differences in Wait Time, Demographics and Barriers to Care: Families seeking to have a child evaluated for autism often face long wait times at specialty centers due to a shortage of pediatric developmental specialists. Pediatricians Meghan Harrison, DO, and Brittany Perry, DO, at Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley examined the differences between autism evaluations conducted in primary care clinics and those conducted in specialty centers, and found that primary care practices may play an important role in reducing wait times and improving access to autism assessments.

Early HPV Vaccine Uptake Through the Lens of Health Disparities: A QI Initiative to Increase HPV Vaccine Uptake Prior to 11 Years Old: Vaccination against human papilloma virus (HPV) is a key strategy in reducing the risk of cervical cancer. To date, many children receive their first HPV vaccine at age 11. To improve uptake of the vaccine, Nemours researchers launched a quality improvement initiative to start the vaccination series at age 9 or 10. Fourth-year medical student Caitlin Miller will discuss results that showed the initiative boosted HPV vaccination rates from 49.2% in 2019 to 59.5% in 2022.

Sustainable Improvement and Integration of a System-wide Clinical Pathway for Bronchiolitis in Primary Care: Bronchiolitis is a lung infection that commonly stems from viruses like the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) that can often be treated with simple measures like hydration and supportive care. But past research has shown that patients treated in primary care settings were too often prescribed bronchodilators and steroids, which have not been proven to work. Nemours researchers designed a clinical pathway to standardize treatment and promote best practices. Associate Professor and emergency medicine physician Andrea Rivera-Sepulveda, MD, MSc, from Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida will discuss how the initiative successfully reduced the use of bronchodilators and steroids across the Nemours Children's Health system.

Other Nemours research presentations at PAS 2024 include:

- Characterizing the Intestinal Microbiome of Premature Infants with Growth Failure - Rhea Basu, MD, Neonatology
- Disparities in Vision Screening in Primary Care for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, A National Review - Kimberly Hoover, MD, Resident
- Group Well-child Care for Mothers in Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder: Implementation Outcomes - Neera Goyal, MD, MSc, Pediatric Primary Care

Additional Nemours experts will be onsite and will be available to discuss PAS presentations. Experts attending include:

- Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, Executive Vice-President, Enterprise Physician-in-Chief and Chief Scientific Officer
- David C. Brousseau, MD, MS, Pediatrician-in-Chief and Chair of Pediatrics, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley
- Kanekal S. Gautham, MD, MS, Chair of Pediatrics, Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida
- Jonathan Miller, MD, Division Chief of Primary Care, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley

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About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of more than 70 primary and specialty care practices. Nemours Children's 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 Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours 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. For more information, visit Nemours.org.

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