



**Weill
Cornell
Medicine**



Children's Health Council

**Annual
Impact
Report**

September
2025



"We are so thrilled to be a part of this community of donors who are committed to making a difference in children's lives and advancing health care. **As parents of young children ourselves, we understand how important it is to support pediatric research at Weill Cornell Medicine.**"

Charlotte and Jed Lenzner
CHC members since 2022

"I value my involvement with the Children's Health Council, and especially with the physician-scientists who are making incredible advances to ensure a healthier future for the next generation."

Patricia Meadow
CHC member since 2022



Eighty households are now part of Weill Cornell Medicine's Children's Health Council. Members know that their giving helps fund the research and medicine that can change lives.

To learn more about membership in the Children's Health Council, please contact chc@med.cornell.edu

To make a gift, please visit
<https://give.weill.cornell.edu/childrens-health-council>

Letter From Our Chair



Through your generous contributions, we've funded two young scientists whose work is opening new directions in children's health, and supported faculty research across a full range of specialties.

It's a pleasure to share with you our annual Children's Health Council Impact Report for 2025.

As you'll see in these pages, it's been another incredible year for Weill Cornell Medicine and for the Council. Through your generous contributions, we've funded two young scientists whose work is opening new directions in children's health, and supported faculty research across a full range of specialties. We've also hosted great events for our members, welcomed seven new member households, and learned so much from our wonderful faculty through panel discussions, Q-&A sessions and the casual conversations we share at CHC events. We have a great deal to be proud of!

And it's also been a year of change – the Weill Cornell Medicine community has demonstrated resilience as we weather the challenges to our research enterprise. Here's where all of you make a difference: You understand the power of research and you support it – not just as philanthropists, but also as ambassadors, sharing with your networks why you care about Weill Cornell Medicine and the future of our children's health. During an uncertain time, your steadfast commitment points to the brightness ahead.

I am honored to play a role in keeping you connected to Weill Cornell Medicine. It's a privilege I share with our amazing vice chairs and executive committee – their dedication brings a special energy to the Council. Partnership is key to our work, helping us plan and shape opportunities for learning and for fun. Please watch your inbox for our fall calendar offerings.

Thank you for all you do for the Children's Health Council. When you participate in a CHC event, tell friends about our work, or make a thoughtful contribution, you help propel the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign and lead us to life-changing discoveries and breakthroughs for children and families.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey S. Weiss".

Casey S. Weiss
Chair, Children's Health Council



CHC Executive Committee Leadership

Children's Health

Total CHC Funds raised
from 2014-2025:

\$28,274,987

Fundraising FY2025

Children's Health
Investigators Fund

\$525,832

Other Children's
Health funds

\$4,169,515

Total raised

\$4,695,347

FY2025
New member
households:

7

FY2025
Total member
households:

80

Council

87 of WCM pediatrics faculty had

179 unique publications

including book chapters and articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

Children's Health areas funded by CHC since 2014

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Cardiology

Emergency Medicine

Endocrinology

Gastroenterology and Nutrition

Global Health

Health Equity

Hematology/Oncology

Neurology

Neurosurgery

Newborn Medicine

Otolaryngology

Pulmonology

Surgery

43

WCM pediatrics faculty held National Institutes of Health awards as of May 31, 2025 – over

\$33 million

in total project funds

22 

Children's Health Investigators Fund (CHIF) recipients since 2014

Children's Health Investigators Fund Recipients 2024-2025

The Children's Health Investigators Fund is a vital source of support for early-career scientists, providing the funds needed for Weill Cornell Medicine pediatric investigators to establish promising preliminary results and then qualify for large-scale federal grants. In September 2024, **\$204,000** was distributed from the Fund to support the exciting research projects outlined on these pages.

Emilie K. Grasset, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology
Assistant Professor of Immunology in Pediatrics
Assistant Professor, Gale and Ira Drukier Institute for
Children's Health at Weill Cornell Medicine

Dr. Emilie Grasset's long-term objective is to uncover novel mechanisms underlying Crohn's disease, a progressive, incurable illness characterized by intestinal inflammation and complications that often require bowel surgery. Crohn's is most often diagnosed in adolescence or early adulthood; the onset of the disease in children usually predicts a more aggressive disease course. Dr. Grasset's goal is to identify novel therapeutic targets by focusing on two previously disconnected hallmarks of Crohn's, both associated with disease complications: expanded abdominal adipose tissue – "creeping fat" – that wraps around the intestine, and anti-microbial antibodies.

"The award has been crucial in supporting novel aspects of my research on the mechanisms underlying Crohn's disease pathology. We are also able to generate the preliminary data we need to qualify for larger grants. The generosity and dedication of the members of the Children's Health Council bring us one step closer to achieving our long-term objectives."



Woan-Yu Lin, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Associate in Neuroimmunology

Dr. Woan-Yu Lin's research focuses on the impact of fungi in the gut on immune regulation and neurological disorders, with implications for conditions like inflammatory bowel disease and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Using innovative models of fungal colonization, she has discovered a link between

immunodeficiency and OCD-like symptoms in mice, and has found that gut fungal imbalance can drive compulsive behaviors independently of bacterial factors. These findings highlight the fungal community's role in mental health and point toward potential new therapies targeting OCD and other disorders.



"Support from the Children's Health Investigators Fund has been vital in advancing my research. Generous philanthropy has not only accelerated my discoveries, but has also laid critical groundwork for developing future therapies to improve children's mental health."

Revisiting a Former Recipient

Avital Falk, Ph.D.

Director, Division of Digital and Treatment Innovations
Director, Child and Adolescent Psychology
Charisse Chinery Clinical Scholar in Psychology
Associate Professor of Psychology in Clinical Psychiatry

As part of her efforts to increase access to effective treatments for anxiety disorders, Dr. Falk helped create a novel software tool to assist patients. We asked her to tell us more about herself and her work and to update us on the impact of her 2020 CHIF award.

I am passionate about developing and disseminating treatment models for anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and related conditions, with the goal of getting the best possible care to those who need it most.

The CHIF grant was incredibly helpful in my work with *Maya*, an interactive app we designed at Weill Cornell Medicine to provide youth with practical cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) tools to help manage symptoms of anxiety and depression. The grant provided essential support so that I, along with our team, could enhance the app, customize it to match specific presentations and individuals, and test it in rigorous research trials.

Collaborating with teams both internal and external to Cornell University to build *Maya* was an amazing learning experience and my first entry into the digital space. Every step was an education – building content, working with designers, considering user experience, navigating app development and testing our product. It's been exciting to see how both digital and non-digital treatment innovations can enhance the lives of youths and families – and support from the CHC made that a reality.

CHIF opens doors for junior faculty to pursue projects that otherwise wouldn't be possible. Receiving this grant means one has a seed with the potential to grow. It's a privilege to plant it and then use the resulting tree to plant many more.



"The CHIF grant was incredibly helpful in my work with *Maya*, an interactive app we designed at Weill Cornell Medicine to provide youth with practical cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) tools to help manage symptoms of anxiety and depression."

Member Spotlight

Family Values

Four Children's Health Council members – two families connected by two brothers – continue the legacies of philanthropy and public service that have shaped their lives.



David Snider and Whitney Snider, M.D., grew up in the Boston area – both raised in households that held a deep commitment to multigenerational philanthropy. Whitney’s parents primarily focused their support on higher education and scientific research, while David’s family supported numerous impactful local charities. Whitney – now a physician who leads venture capital investments in life sciences and biotech – and David, a tech entrepreneur, each embraced this fundamental family value.

“Our parents always stressed the importance of getting involved and giving back to your community,” notes Jonathan (Jonny) Snider, David’s brother. Jonny, an investor and real estate developer, and his wife, Annalisa Snider, a health-care industry professional, share this same commitment. Annalisa’s family has been dedicated to serving disadvantaged children, carrying forward a legacy of compassion and public service.

Today, both Snider couples live in Manhattan and have turned their attention to advancing pediatric research as members of Weill Cornell Medicine’s Children’s Health Council (CHC). Whitney and David joined the CHC in 2021; Whitney has served as the Council’s vice chair of membership since 2024.



Whitney and David Snider, with their sons

“Joining the Children’s Health Council felt like a natural extension of our commitment to Weill Cornell Medicine,” says Whitney. “As David and I prepared to grow our family, deepening our engagement with an institution at the forefront of pediatric innovation was both intuitive and inspiring.”

Soon after joining, David and Whitney encouraged Jonny and Annalisa to become members too.

“For us, getting involved with the CHC was part of a more holistic philanthropic endeavor in our community,” says Jonny. “Annalisa and I now live near Weill Cornell Medicine, and it is very much a part of the fabric of our neighborhood.”

Different Family Needs, Same Goals

For Whitney and David, their relationship with the CHC has grown significantly over time. When they joined, they were just beginning their journey as parents; their first child is now 3½. The birth of their second son solidified their appreciation for Weill Cornell Medicine when the baby developed health complications that

required integrated care from a range of pediatric specialists. The family praises the exceptional coordination provided by their lead pediatrician, Dr. Corey Wasserman, assistant professor of clinical pediatrics.

“We are profoundly moved by the outpouring of support from our fellow CHC members,” Whitney reflects. “There is no greater fear for a parent than witnessing their child unwell. The ability to swiftly identify the most capable experts to intervene is truly invaluable.”



Jonny and Annalisa Snider, with their son

Annalisa and Jonny have a 2-year-old son and are expecting their second child soon. They believe that being a part of the CHC means helping support research that equips doctors with the tools and expertise to care for all children who need the most sophisticated, life-saving treatments.

“We’re so blessed with good health today, but we don’t know what will happen in the years ahead,” says Annalisa. “Research needs to happen now in order to make a difference for the future.”

Tradition and Innovation

Each member of the Snider families finds something unique to value in the CHC. The couples have encouraged friends to join the group – several have done so, while others have made contributions to children’s health-related areas.

“Anybody who gets involved in the CHC comes to realize how great Weill Cornell Medicine is,” says Jonny. Annalisa concurs: “It is so rewarding to know that we are doing a small part to help support and contribute to the organization’s mission.”

And, for all of the Sniders, the CHC has become an important way to uphold a cherished tradition.

“The CHC is an important part of our lives now,” David says. “Our families love giving back, and we get so much in return, such as meeting like-minded people, supporting state-of-the-art research and, of course, helping Weill Cornell Medicine provide the finest pediatric care in New York City.”

Whitney agrees: “There is seemingly more opportunity for scientific breakthroughs than ever before, yet simultaneously more uncertainty about funding sources. We hope to help ensure that innovation can continue to flourish so that every child has access to the best possible care available.”

Children's Health Council Events 2024-2025

Fall Reception – October, 2024 Stress Management for Parents



Dr. Rebecca Rendleman, Sara Alemzadeh Handjani, Amirali Handjani



Jason Vahn, Blair Vahn, Casey Weiss



Erika Feil-Lincoln, Matt Lincoln

Discovery Panel – November, 2024 Trends and Transformations in Pediatric Care



Christina Truesdale, Dr. Maya Hartman



Ronay Menschel, Nancy Paduano



Dr. Liana Senaldi, Dr. Cami Martin, Dr. Stefan Worgall



Casey Weiss, Noah Weiss, Sara Alemzadeh Handjani



Family Science Day – February, 2025
Families enjoyed age-appropriate activities designed just for them.



Spring All-Member Meeting – May, 2025
2024-25 CHIF recipients presented updates on their research.



Dr. Rebecca Rendleman, Dr. Francis Lee, Dr. Woan-Yu Lin, Dr. Emilie Grasset, Dr. Sallie Permar, Dr. Robbyn Sockolow, Casey Weiss, Dr. Virginia Pascual

Dr. Sallie Permar, Aditi Banga

Children's Health Council Members

Chair

Casey S. Weiss

Vice Chairs

Erika Feil-Lincoln, Vice Chair of Programming
Danielle Rayman, Vice Chair of Marketing
Whitney M. Snider, M.D., Vice Chair of Membership

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Aditi Banga
Karla Bookman
Gail Cohen
Gale Drukier, Ed.D.
Ira Drukier, Ph.D.
Mara Feil
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Beth Goldman and Matt Mezvinsky
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Stephanie and James Kearney
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Kate Liebman and Konstantinos Vamvourellis
Matthew Lincoln
Sandra and Anthony Loucas
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Richard Menschel
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Donald Truesdale
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Faculty Advisors

Virginia Pascual, M.D.
Drukier Director, Gale and Ira Drukier
Institute for Children's Health
Ronay Menschel Professor of Pediatrics

Sallie Permar, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Pediatrics
Nancy C. Paduano Professor

Rebecca Rendleman, M.D., C.M.
Vice Chair for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry
Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry

As of June 30, 2025



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