



**Weill
Cornell
Medicine**

Children's Health Council



**Impact
Report**
July 2023

Table of Contents

Letter From Our Chair	1
Children's Health Council by the Numbers	2-3
The Power of Philanthropic Support: CHIF	4-5
Donor Spotlight: The Handjani Family	6-7
At a Glance: 2022-2023 Event Photos	8-9



From left: Erika Feil-Lincoln, Vice Chair of Programming; Alison Bernstein, Vice Chair of Membership; Casey S. Weiss, Chair; Danielle Rayman, Vice Chair of Marketing

Letter From Our Chair



This year, Children's Health Council members collectively donated nearly \$3.5 million towards children's health research, education and care, which is no small feat!

What a spectacular year this has been! In my first year as chair of the Children's Health Council, I feel truly honored to hold this position. It's been a delight to meet so many new members and to deepen relationships with long-term members. We've seen continued growth and have now reached 69 member households – 13 new families just this year – an impressive accomplishment that could not have been done without your passion for supporting children's health. This year, Children's Health Council members collectively donated nearly \$3.5 million towards children's health research, education and care, which is no small feat!

The researchers we've learned from this year are tackling some of the biggest crises we see kids face: mental health and mood disorders, pediatric cancers, genetic disorders and neurological disorders, among others. Through your generous philanthropy, we provided funding for researchers to continue their groundbreaking work in discovering ways to treat the youngest patients here at Weill Cornell Medicine and to develop treatments that can impact the lives of children everywhere.

Our incredible vice chairs and executive committee have shown inspiring leadership this year, helping drive our momentum, along with every Council member who has participated in one of our events. Whether you joined a lab tour on campus or engaged with physician-scientists at a panel, thank you for investing your time to get to know our esteemed faculty and our community of warm and dedicated families interested in expanding opportunities and care in children's health.

While this year has been filled with engaging events and connections, we also have much to look forward to! The continued priority of children's health as part of the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign puts our work at the forefront of important initiatives and breakthroughs at Weill Cornell Medicine.

As you review this year's Impact Report, I hope you'll see how integral you are to our mission and are proud of our accomplishments in changing pediatric medicine. We are so grateful to you!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey S. Weiss". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Casey S. Weiss
Chair, Children's Health Council

Children's Health Council

By the Numbers



17 Children's Health Investigators
Fund (CHIF) Recipients to date

Total member
households:

69

New Member
Households
FY 2023:

13

Children's Health areas funded:

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Cardiology

Emergency Medicine

Endocrinology

Gastroenterology and Nutrition

Hematology/Oncology

Neurology and Neurosurgery

Newborn Medicine

Otolaryngology

Pulmonology

Surgery



Total CHC
Funds raised
from 2014-2023:

\$21,525,466

July 2022 to April 2023:

86

WCM pediatrics
faculty had

109

unique publications,
including book chapters
and articles, published in
peer-reviewed journals

Fundraising FY 2023

Children's Health Investigators Fund

\$242,166

Other Children's Health Funds

\$3,242,255

Total Raised

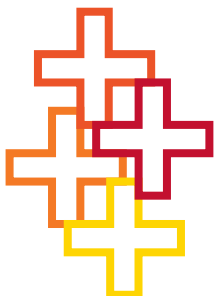
\$3,484,421

26

WCM pediatrics faculty held
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
awards in 2022, totaling over

**\$73.5
million**

in total project funds



281 open clinical studies in the Department
of Pediatrics, including

53 treatment protocols for pediatric diseases
being devised and tested

Children's Health Investigators Fund Recipients 2022-2023

The Children's Health Investigators Fund (CHIF) 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 July 2022, \$129,980 from the CHIF was distributed to support the exciting research projects outlined below.



Andrea F. Heras, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics

Dr. Andrea Heras's research aims to find novel therapies to minimize chronic lung disease in premature infants which often leads to long-term consequences such as impaired lung growth, asthma and early development of chronic pulmonary diseases. Uncovering the differences in premature lungs will help to determine which children are most at risk and may lead to new therapies for chronic lung disease prevention.

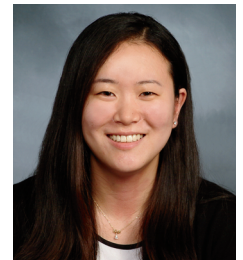
"I want to express my sincere gratitude for support from the CHC. Because of you, it's possible for families whose children struggle with chronic lung disease to have hope that someday we can serve their children better."



Jihye Kim, M.D.

Instructor in Psychiatry

Dr. Jihye Kim's research objective is to understand the molecular and neural circuit mechanisms underlying neuropsychiatric disorders such as obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder (OCD) and autism spectrum disorders (ASD). She observes how different pharmacological interventions in specific brain areas can improve these behaviors. She hopes this work will help identify novel drug targets to treat children and adolescents with OCD and ASD.



"I truly appreciate your support for our research as we look for refined treatments for children suffering with these behaviors. Donors like you who believe in our ambitious vision are the reasons young investigators can catapult forward."



Serena Lucotti, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Associate in Pediatrics

Dr. Serena Lucotti's research focuses on thromboembolism, the obstruction of a blood vessel by a blood clot dislodged from another site in the circulation. Children with cancer are 25 times more likely to develop this medical condition, yet there are currently no biomarkers to help identify at-risk patients who would benefit from preventative therapy. Dr. Lucotti's work is aimed at studying how exosomes contribute to blood clot formation in pediatric cancer patients.

"I am so thankful for the generous support of CHIF and its donors. Your kind support has led not only to the discovery of a new marker for clotting risk in pediatric patients, but it has the potential to improve the quality of life for millions of children."

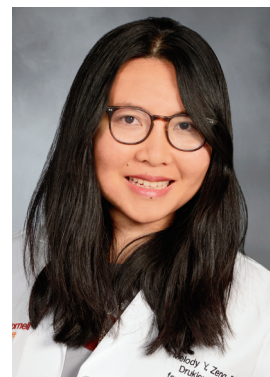


CHIF at Work: Supporting Success Melody Zeng, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Immunology in Pediatrics
Member, Gale and Ira Drukier Institute for Children's Health

Dr. Melody Zeng and the Zeng Laboratory was one of the initial awardees and beneficiaries of the generosity from the Children's Health Council and the creation of the Children's Health Investigators Fund. The initial seed funding that the Children's Health Council provided was to support her laboratory's primary research focus studying how gut immune cells and bacteria interact at the maternal-fetal/neonatal interface in the context of pediatric inflammatory diseases.

"I am deeply grateful for the support from the Children's Health Council," said Dr. Zeng. "Through both research funding and the warmth and support from all CHC staff and donors that welcomed me, it meant a lot as a new member of the Weill Cornell Medicine community."



The goal of Dr. Zeng's research is to develop strategies to use beneficial gut bacteria as candidates for maternal vaccinations to help protect babies from the type of inflammation that could lead to autoinflammatory diseases. Dr. Zeng also studies unique gut bacteria that have important functions in the development of the immune system in early life, in the regulation of maternal immune response to the fetus during pregnancy, and in the regulation of immune response to cancer. Some of the funds provided by the Children's Health Investigators Fund were used to purchase and install an anaerobic chamber in the lab that allows researchers to grow finicky gut bacteria with special nutritional and environmental requirements, such as low oxygen.

"Having these pieces of important equipment has been crucial in the success we have achieved thus far," said Dr. Zeng, whose work with her team has led to the publication of three research articles in less than four years, research manuscripts currently in review by high-impact journals, as well as several major research grants, including an NIH R01 grant and an R21 grant.

Dr. Zeng also notes the growth and success of her lab has benefited from collaboration with other faculty who work closely with the Children's Health Council, such as Drs. Virginia Pascual, David Lyden and Stefan Worgall.

"Our goal is to make discoveries to improve the treatments for pediatric diseases and improve the health of children," said Dr. Zeng. "I look forward to continuing to work together with the Children's Health Council to achieve this goal."

"Our goal is to make discoveries to improve the treatments for pediatric diseases and improve the health of children."



"We want to make sure that anyone who needs resources during or after **treatment** for a sick child has those available to them."



Donor Spotlight:

Sara and Amir Handjani

On the last day of Sara and Amir Handjani's three-year old son Darian's treatment for pneumonia at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center last December, they were greeted by a jolly visitor: Santa Claus himself. Toting presents for pediatric patients, Santa brought joy to the end of a long stay for Darian, said Sara and Amir, and the excellent treatment he received was a true gift.

"The way the doctors spoke to us and cared for Darian displayed such a soft touch," said Sara. "We were grateful for the constant care and attention."

"After five days we were able to take Darian home, on Christmas, in good health, to be with his family and his younger sister, Raya, which was so meaningful to us," said Amir.

Their positive experience prompted them to move all their doctors to Weill Cornell Medicine and explore ways to support the research and care taking place at the institution, including for those families who have had a child in an intensive care unit.

"Going through this experience ourselves, we really sympathize with families who have a sick child," said Sara. "We wanted to do anything we could to help other families access the best care."

Sara and Amir made two generous gifts to support pediatric research and care at Weill Cornell Medicine and became members of the Children's Health Council, as well as the Council's Executive Committee, in March this year.

"We want to make sure that anyone who needs resources during or after treatment for a sick child has those available to them," said Amir. "Folks don't really address the mental toll it can take, and we felt it was important to support that."

One of the couple's gifts does just that, supporting a new Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) follow-up clinic run by Dr. Christine Joyce, an assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medicine. The clinic will focus on addressing developmental and mental-health issues in both patients and their family members that may be attributable to a stay in the PICU. Through research, the program aims to identify and treat long-term issues associated with PICU admission such as PICS (post-intensive care syndrome) as well as depression, anxiety, impact on the family and PTSD.

"This program is critical to address the social, emotional and cognitive well-being of patients and their families," said Dr. Joyce. "We see firsthand the struggle of parents and families when faced with a child admitted to the PICU."

The program will also research how social determinants of health, such as economic stability, housing and transportation access, and food security impact patients and their families after a patient is discharged from the PICU.

"Support from philanthropy bolsters programs such as these and provides resources that may be difficult to obtain otherwise," added Dr. Joyce.

The second gift from the Handjanis will go toward the Children's Health Investigators Fund, supporting scientists working toward pediatric discoveries and breakthroughs.

"We are always trying to educate ourselves and follow the science.

That's our guiding light," said

Sara. "We think it's important to support causes that are research-based, such as the pediatric treatments that Weill Cornell Medicine researchers are developing. And we're excited to be part of the CHC to learn more and meet others who are also passionate about this work."

The Children's Health Investigators Fund has supported 17 early-career investigators at Weill Cornell Medicine in their research efforts since the fund's inception in 2015. It continues to show the power of philanthropic support for research.

"We want to make sure that institutions like Weill Cornell have the funds to investigate and find cures and treatments for children," said Amir. "We've seen that Weill Cornell has some of the best and brightest minds, and the more researchers they can attract to improve children's health, the better the world will be."



At a Glance

Children's Health Council Events 2022-2023



CHC Discovery Panel

From left: Susan Bostwick, M.D., Chair Casey S. Weiss, Jane Chang, M.D., Corinne Catarozoli, Ph.D. and Steven Rosenblatt, M.D.



Lab Tour with Dr. Camilia Martin

From left: Matthew Lincoln, Vice Chair of Programming Erika Feil-Lincoln, Camilia Martin, M.D., Martha Liu, Omar Hayatt and Charlotte LaPlante



CHC All-Member Meeting and Cocktail Reception

From left: Gabrielle Aboodi, Vice Chair of Membership Alison Bernstein and Chair Emeritus Christina Truesdale



CHC All-Member Meeting and Cocktail Reception
From left: Annalisa Snider and Charlotte Lenzner



Pediatric Simulation Center Experience
From left: Vice Chair of Marketing Danielle Rayman with future Weill Cornell Medicine students Freddy Rayman and Nash Weiss



Teen Lab Tour with Dr. Lisa Roth
From left: Allyson Kahne, Jordyn Bernstein, Daphne Bernstein, Lisa Roth, M.D. and Dylan Freedman



CHC New Member Reception
From left: Patricia T. Meadow, Patrick Wilson, Ph.D. and Virginia Pascual, M.D.



CHC New Member Reception
From left: Stephanie A. Sirota and Sallie Permar, M.D., Ph.D.



CHC All-Member Meeting and Cocktail Reception
From left: Hannah Blumenthal and Quentin Chu

Children's Health Council Members

Chair

Casey S. Weiss

Vice Chairs

Alison Bernstein
Erika Feil-Lincoln
Danielle Rayman

Executive Committee

Sara Alemzadeh Handjani and Amir Handjani
Gail Cohen
Gale Drukier, Ed.D. and Ira Drukier, Ph.D.
Mara Feil
Lori Freedman
Barbara B. Friedman
Debra Gelband
Lynne Hammerschlag
Maya Hartman, M.D.
Caroline Kaufman
Charlotte and Jed Lenzner
Ronay Menschel
Courtney A. Nataraj
Nancy Paduano
M. Steven Silbermann
Christina Truesdale

Council Members

Anne-Victoire A. and Benjamin C.
Gabrielle Aboodi
Madelyn Antoncic, Ph.D.
Alexandra and Max Bandier
Mackenzie and Stephen Bartlett
Alexandra and Michael Bassik
Jay Bernstein
Hannah Blumenthal and Quentin Chu
Kate and Matthew Burke
David Cohen
Phyllis and Jeffrey Cole
Rebecca and Loïc de Kertanguy
Brian Feil
Michael Fieldstone
Danielle and David Fowler
Michael Freedman
Samantha and Ryan Fuld
Michael Gelband
Barbara Glauber
Beth Goldman and Matt Mezvinsky
Ferne and Bernard Goldsmith
Mark Hammerschlag
Debra and Bruce Kahne
Elaine and John Kanas
Adam Kaufman
Bernadette and Dennis Kearney

Stephanie and James Kearney
Breanna and John Houry
Galina and Igor Kirman
Janet Krauthamer and Jason Schoenberg
Michelle and David Kroin
Rekha Kumar, M.D. and Vinay Kumar
Kim and Jonathan Kushner
Kate Lei and Shahan Yang
Matthew Lincoln
Hailey Lustig and Stephen Prince
Patricia T. Meadow
Richard Menschel
Caitlin Moscatello and Christopher Kellen
Naveen Nataraj
Anna and Emanuel Neuman
Alicia Nevarez-Bunnell and Mitchell Bunnell
Dan Paduano
Margaret and Andrew Paul
Robin and Michael Poulos
Cassy and Dick Quintal
Reed Rayman
Amanda and Jason Redlus
Eve H. Robbins
Izabella and Jordan Rubin
Marianne Ruggiero Farina and Anthony Farina
Jenna and Paul Segal
Mariel and Jamie Sholem
Julie A. Silbermann
Stephanie A. Sirota
Annalisa and Jonathan Snider
Whitney Snider, M.D. and David Snider
Jill Swid Rosen and Eric Rosen
Alexis and Drew Tarlow
Donald Truesdale
Noah N. Weiss
Cricket Whitton and Nick Hammerschlag
Carolyn Seely Wiener
Julia and John Zito
Stephanie and Richard Zogheb

Faculty Advisors

Francis S. Lee, M.D., Ph.D.
Interim Dean, Weill Cornell Medicine
Chair, Department of Psychiatry
Professor of Molecular Biology in Psychiatry

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



Weill Cornell
Medicine

We're
Changing
Medicine.

For more information, please visit
give.weill.cornell.edu/chc
To make a gift, please contact chc@med.cornell.edu