

NEWSLETTER



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From our Center Director

I am pleased to share the latest edition of the GENI Center Newsletter. This issue highlights GENI activities and members' accomplishments to discover the nutritional and metabolic factors each child requires for a long, healthy, and productive life.

This issue welcomes new faculty member Dr. Brittney Baumert, who was recruited into the GENI Center. Dr. Baumert brings extensive expertise in precision environmental health and pediatric metabolic disease. Since our last newsletter in March 2026, there are many new achievements to report for GENI members, including leadership appointments, national and international honors, impactful publications, and presentations at leading scientific meetings. Our Center members continue to make significant contributions across pediatric obesity, diabetes, nutrition, feeding disorders, and global health. This issue also highlights the work of the Feeding Lab, including the recent launch of the Center for Feeding Ethics and its continued leadership in advancing care and research for children with feeding disorders. Please also note upcoming GENI seminars, the Dept. of Pediatrics Annual Conference, and Research Resources.

I am especially excited to call your attention to our upcoming Building Bridges Workshop to Advance Pediatric Obesity Research. The day-long Workshop on October 2nd is co-sponsored by GENI, REACH, and Strong4Life. Pediatric obesity care is evolving at an extraordinary pace, highlighting the need for new research to inform evidence-based guidance for optimal obesity prevention and treatment strategies and to understand long-term outcomes. This interactive, in-person event is designed to foster new collaborations, strengthen existing partnerships, and accelerate pediatric obesity and cardiometabolic research across Emory, Children's, and our community partners. I encourage you to explore the many accomplishments, opportunities, and resources featured in this newsletter .

~Paul



New GENI Research Faculty

Welcome Dr. Brittney Baumert!



Brittney O. Baumert, PhD, MPH, recently finished her T32-supported Environmental Genomics Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. As an environmental epidemiologist, her research focuses on precision environmental health, specifically, how persistent organic pollutants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contribute to metabolic disease risk in children and adolescents. She integrates epidemiology with team science, multi-omics, and translational approaches to uncover mechanisms linking persistent organic pollutant exposure to metabolic disease, with the goal of identifying biomarkers and advancing precision health strategies.

Dr. Baumert received her BS in Environmental Health Science and MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Georgia in Athens. In 2016, she joined the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University for her doctoral training in Environmental Health Science. Here at Emory, Dr. Baumert established the SAWASDEE birth cohort study in Thailand to investigate prenatal pesticide exposure and child health. For her postdoctoral training, Dr. Baumert moved to the University of Southern California, working with Dr. Lida Chatzi – a renowned physician and environmental epidemiologist, in the Division of Environmental Health at USC. Dr. Baumert's training included working as an Intramural Research Training Award Fellow at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, where she conducted research on pesticide exposures and respiratory health in the Agricultural Health Study, and serving as an Environmental Epidemiology Fellow at the CDC.

Dr. Baumert has authored more than 40 peer-reviewed publications in areas of environmental health, diabetes, and obesity. Her ongoing research with the Teen-Longitudinal Assessment of Bariatric Surgery (Teen-LABS) consortium has identified novel links between PFAS exposure, lipid dysregulation, weight regain, and metabolic disease progression in adolescents.

Dr. Baumert has received numerous awards – including an award for her abstract presented at the annual Obesity Society Conference in Atlanta last November. Although early in her career, Brittney has successfully competed for several pilot awards as the PI and is a co-I on other federal funding.

We are absolutely thrilled that Dr. Baumert has accepted the Pediatric Nutrition/Precision Health & Child Obesity Researcher and Innovator research faculty position in the GENI Center. She started in June and has hit the ground running. She is sure to be a highly impactful and collaborative GENI member who will help drive our research efforts in precision nutrition. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Baumert!



Leadership Announcement

GENI Member **Daniel Hsia**, MD, has been named Division Chief of Endocrinology, effective August 1, 2026. Following an extensive national search that attracted a strong pool of highly qualified candidates, Dr. Hsia emerged as the clear choice to lead the division. Shari Barkin, MD, MSHS, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, reported, “We are fortunate to have a leader of his caliber already within our organization.”



Over the past two years, Dr. Hsia has helped strengthen the division’s operations and solidify its standing as the third-largest pediatric endocrinology program in the country. As Division Chief, he will lead efforts to further elevate the division’s impact on patient outcomes, research and education. His vision includes advancing innovative approaches to endocrine care, supporting faculty development and ensuring the highest-quality training environment for future pediatric endocrinologists.

Dr. Hsia earned his medical degree at Albany Medical College and completed his combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans, followed by a combined fellowship in adult and pediatric endocrinology at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital. His research focuses on improving the prevention and treatment of obesity and diabetes through a variety of clinical trials. He is particularly interested in translating effective therapies, such as pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery, into meaningful treatment options for pediatric patients.

Congratulations, Dr. Hsia!

Noteworthy Research-related Achievements

In February 2026, **Shari Barkin**, MD, Pediatrician in Chief and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, was featured on the TED Health podcast, where she discussed practical, science-backed strategies for raising healthy kids. In the episode “The Science of Raising Kids (Part 2): How to Raise Healthy Kids with Dr. Shari Barkin,” she explores everyday challenges, from navigating food choices to managing screen time and shares how caregivers can use just 10 minutes a day to model healthy habits. Her insights highlight simple, realistic ways families can thrive together.

In May 2026, Dr. **Shari Barkin** presented “Making Evidence Go Further: Leveraging the ACTIVE Agent-based Model and the GROW Trial to Inform the Design of Novel Interventions for Childhood Physical Activity” in an Abstract Award Session at the International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA) 2026 Annual Meeting in Cádiz, Spain.



Professional/Service Award, Distinction, or Recognition

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Class of 2025 Fellows:

AAAS selects Fellows for their outstanding efforts in the advancement of science based on research, teaching, administration and technology, as well as communicating and interpreting science to the public. Becoming an AAAS Fellow is considered a lifetime honor. In addition to advancing research, Fellows play a crucial role in shaping public policy and influencing national and global perspectives on critical issues.

Eric Ortlund, PhD, Professor and Vice Chair of Biochemistry, Scientific Director of the Emory Integrated Metabolomics and Lipidomics Core, was named a Class of 2025 Fellow (Biological Sciences) for generating deep insight into how lipids and hormones allosterically regulate nuclear receptors and enzymes, and for pioneering studies to understand the evolution of new function within proteins.

K.M. Venkat Narayan, MD, MSc, MBA, Executive Director of the Emory Global Diabetes Research Center, Ruth and OC Hubert Chair of Global Health, and Professor of Endocrinology and Epidemiology was named a Class of 2025 Fellow (Medical Sciences) for substantial, multidisciplinary work in diabetes and noncommunicable diseases (NCD) epidemiology, pathophysiology, trials, translation research and public health.

Link: <https://news.emory.edu/stories/2026/03/fourteen-emory-faculty-named-fellows-american-association-advancement-science>

Association of American Physicians: Four Emory researchers were elected to the Association of American Physicians (AAP). Only 70 members are elected each year internationally. These Emory researchers will join 2,700 active members across the United States, Canada and the world.

K.M. Venkat Narayan, MD, MSc, MBA, Rollins School of Public Health Ruth and O.C. Hubert Professor of Global Health and Epidemiology and executive director of the Emory Global Diabetes Research Center, was elected to the AAP. He investigates how noncommunicable diseases intersect with epidemiology, pathophysiology, translational research and public health. In a career defined by many firsts, some of his accomplishments include creating the world's first assessment of the lifetime risk of diabetes, documenting type 2 diabetes as a public health problem and publishing the first paper on the incidence of childhood obesity. With more than 570 publications, several high-impact studies and over 210,000 citations, his work exemplifies his global leadership and influence in diabetes and noncommunicable disease.

Link: <https://news.emory.edu/stories/2026/04/four-emory-researchers-elected-association-american-physicians>



Professional/Service Award, Distinction, or Recognition

On March 31, 2026 the Emory community gathered to celebrate global leadership and service at the International Awards Ceremony, hosted by Emory Global Engagement. The event honored four distinguished award winners from the Emory community, including students, alumni, faculty and staff, whose achievements and dedication exemplify the university's dedication to global connection and exchange. The *2026 Marion V. Creekmore Award for Internationalization* was presented to **Parminder Suchdev**, PhD, MPH. A physician-epidemiologist and professor of pediatrics and global health in the School of Medicine, Dr. Suchdev has dedicated more than 20 years to advancing maternal and child nutrition and strengthening global health systems. His work bridges research, clinical care and policy, translating evidence into practice to improve health equity worldwide. Dr. Suchdev also serves as a pediatric hospitalist at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

2026 "Top Doctors" in Atlanta Magazine

Physicians selected by their peers for excellence in their fields. This year's list highlights doctors recognized for their clinical expertise, patient care, and professional achievements. Dr. **Tanicia Daley** was listed in Atlanta magazine's 2026 'Top Doctors' issue in the area of pediatric endocrinology.

Dr. **Holly Gooding** was listed in Atlanta magazine's 2026 'Top Doctors' issue in the area of adolescent medicine.

Dr. **Barbara McElhanon** was listed in Atlanta magazine's 2026 'Top Doctors' issue in the area of pediatric gastroenterology.

Dr. **Jessica Reilly** was listed in Atlanta magazine's 2026 'Top Doctors' issue in the area of obesity medicine.

Publications

Xinyu Zhu, **Jean A Welsh**, Marjorie L McCullough, Allison C Sylvetsky, Terryl J Hartman, Alpa V Patel, Emily L Deubler, Erin P Ferranti, and Caroline Y Um. Association between Aspartame Consumption and Cancer Risk: Evidence from a Large Prospective Cohort. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 2026 May;156(5):e101460. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tjnut.2026.101460>

Kasman M, Hammond RA, Heerman WJ, Pate RR, Reader L, Sedlak AB, Innes-Gold R, Sommer EC, and **Barkin SL**. What Makes Them Move? An Agent-Based Model of Childhood Physical Activity. *Childhood Obesity*, 2026 July; 22(7):424-435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21532176261468924>

Pediatric Eating Disorders: The Medical Care of Children and Adolescents. **Anne B. Tanner**, MD, FAAP, FSAHM, CEDS-C, FAED, with forward by Ellen S. Rome, MD, MPH, FAAP, FSAHM. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 2026 August. <https://www.aap.org/Pediatric-Eating-Disorders-The-Medical-Care-of-Children-and-Adolescents-Paperback>

Feeding Lab Corner

GENI Special Interest Group

The Feeding Lab has been busy! Please see below for a summary of recent accomplishments.

William Sharp, PhD, Director of Children's Multidisciplinary Feeding Program, co-authored a publication in May with a large collaborative group establishing consensus on core elements of treatment for ARFID:

Lukens, CT; Dempster, RM; Eddy, KT; et al. 2026. Psychological Treatment for Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD) and Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID). *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 0:1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.70101>

William Sharp, PhD, was featured on an April 14th podcast for the launch of the Center for Feeding Ethics, a collaborative effort with Feeding Matters. Catch the podcast here: [Advancing Ethical Care for Pediatric Feeding Disorders with William Sharp, PhD - Becker's Hospital Review | Healthcare News & Analysis](#).

Also in April, **Kaitlin Proctor**, PhD, and her colleagues published an article describing the management of food aversion after an anaphylactic reaction:

KB Proctor, T Auguste-Jones, WG Sharp, and BP Vickery. Managing Renewed Food Avoidance Following an Allergic Reaction for Patients With Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder. *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*, 2026 Apr; 56(6):613–616. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cea.70308>

Valerie Volkert, PhD, wrote a piece on women in leadership in the field of ABA:

Volkert, VM. (2026). Empowering Women to Forge a Path in Behavior Analysis. *Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice*, 26(2), 64–71. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bar0000325>

Kaitlin Proctor, PhD, along with Brian Vickery, MD, and **William Sharp**, PhD, proposed a conceptual framework to account for the relationship between ARFID and food allergies:

Proctor, KB, Vickery, BP and Sharp, WG. (2026). When Medically Required Food Avoidance Goes Awry: A Conceptual Framework of ARFID as an Underrecognized Clinical Complication of Food Allergy. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 59(5): 864-868. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.70049>

8/21/2026 Feeding + Eating Psychology Summit: The Care we Share

<https://www.feedingmatters.org/psychology-summit-2026/>

GENI / REACH / S4L Event

Building Bridges - A Workshop to Advance Pediatric Obesity Research at Emory and Children's will be held on **Friday, October 2, 2026**, in the Health Sciences Research Building I Rollins Auditorium and Café area. Sponsored by GENI, REACH, and Strong4Life, the goal of this interactive workshop is to build new and strengthen existing connections between Emory and Children's researchers and healthcare providers, as well as key academic and community partners to accelerate and strengthen research around pediatric obesity and cardiometabolic health.

Friday, October 2, 2026
8:00am - 5:00pm

Emory University
Health Sciences Research Building I
Rollins Auditorium & Café
In-Person ONLY

BUILDING BRIDGES

*A Workshop to Advance Pediatric
Obesity Research at Emory and Children's*



Keynote Presentation

Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH

Director, Food is Medicine Institute
Jean Mayer Professor of Nutrition & Medicine
Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Professor of Medicine
Tufts University School of Medicine
Cardiologist
Tufts Medical Center



Workshop Schedule

8:00-9:00AM Specific Aims Power Hour
9:00-10:00AM Keynote Presentation (Virtual)
10:00-10:30AM Emory+Children's+Strong4Life
10:45-12:00PM Researcher Short Presentations
12:00-1:00PM Lunch/Networking/Programs/Cores
1:00-2:15PM Round Table Discussions - Session 1
2:15-3:30PM Round Table Discussions - Session 2
3:30-4:20PM Highlights from Round Tables
4:20-5:15PM Poster Session and Networking Hour

*Register before
October 2 and pay \$50
or
\$75 at the door*

REGISTER HERE

STRONG4LIFE



Register



GENI Research in Progress

Peijian He, PhD

Institute for Biomedical Sciences
Georgia State University

Mechanisms underlying the crosstalk between iron metabolism and diabetes

Thursday, September 17, 2026 2:00 PM

Zoom only Register [HERE](#)

GENI Seminar

Christine M. Pfeiffer, PhD

Chief, Nutritional Biomarkers Branch
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

The 2026 CDC National Nutrition Report - nutritional biomarkers viewed through the lens of NHANES over the past 25 years

Thursday, November 19, 2026 2:00 PM

HSRB I E260 and Zoom Registration coming soon



GENI Research in Progress

Lefteris Michailidis, PhD

Laboratory of Biochemical Pharmacology
Emory University School of Medicine

Primary human hepatocyte models of liver disease: from virus-host interactions to steatosis and genetic risk

Thursday, December 17, 2026 2:00 PM

HSRB I E260 and Zoom Registration coming soon

Upcoming Pediatrics Event

15th Annual Southeastern Pediatric Research Conference

**Bench to Bedside and Beyond:
Risk Factors and Intervention Strategies
in Childhood Disease and Injury**





FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2026
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM EDT
Georgia Aquarium

Event Highlights

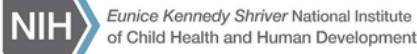
- ▶ Keynote Lectures
- ▶ Networking Opportunities
- ▶ Selected oral abstract presentations
- ▶ Poster sessions & competition
- ▶ Complimentary evening aquarium admission & door prizes

REGISTER HERE!

Early Bird Rate:
Until August 14
\$125 General | \$75 Trainees
Pay by credit card, SpeedType, or cost center

Regular Rate:
August 15 - 28
\$200 All
Pay by credit card only
(Subject to availability)





[Register](#)

Resources

GENI and Children's Publication Citation

Publications and research posters related to GENI and/or that benefitted from Pediatric Research Alliance resources should include "Children's Healthcare of Atlanta" in the Affiliations portion of the citation (appearing under the author line of the article or poster).

The proper affiliation citation is: **Center for Gastroenterology, Endocrinology, & Nutrition Innovation (GENI) of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Emory University Department of Pediatrics, Atlanta, GA USA**. Other examples of acceptable formats for citation are available [here](#).

This requirement is vital to ensure recognition of our work by both Emory and Children's and applies to all Center members, whether lab-based or non-lab based. Children's has been a significant supporter of the research operations that make all of our work possible and should be acknowledged.

Research Wows



Don't forget to share your latest research achievements through our very brief ["Research Wows" submission form](#). This information will be used for a) internal and external reporting on metrics and impact, and b) potential news and media coverage.

"Research Wows" FAQ's:

- **What type of information should I share?**
 - Impactful publications that have been accepted or published
 - New, major grants that have been awarded
 - New, major professional/service awards, distinctions, or recognitions received
 - Other noteworthy research-related achievements (e.g., patents, IND, clinical trials)
- **Who will receive this information?**
 - Pediatric research center Program Managers and Center Directors
 - Pediatric research leadership
 - Marketing and communications teams
- **When should I share my "Research Wows"?**
 - As soon as possible! While we will accept your "Research Wows" at any time for purposes such as internal reporting, the following timing is important to keep in mind for news and media purposes:
 - Accepted for publication in a journal
 - About to receive a notice of award for funding
 - Research that has received funding and is about to start but no data has been collected yet

Click here to submit your "Research Wows": <https://forms.office.com/r/Md9FCaYbTc> or email Debra Hamilton, GENI Program Manager, at drhamil@emory.edu.

Pediatric Research Cores



Children's
Healthcare of Atlanta



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Pediatric Core Services

Offering the equipment, tools, and skilled professionals to make your research faster and more impactful. From imaging and data analysis to clinical trial support, our pediatric cores provide key resources and expert support to help researchers at every step.

Animal Models

- Animal Physiology Core: offers services & equipment for complex technical & surgical procedures in animals. Provides access to Sysmex XN-1000V (a fully automated 5-part differential veterinary hematology analyzer) and metabolic cages for simultaneous measurement of key metabolic parameters in mice.
- CF Animal Models Core: provides murine models relevant to cystic fibrosis researchers.

Biorepositories & Clinical Research

- Children's Clinical and Translational Discovery Core: supports investigators with specimen processing, storage, and other services important to conducting clinical trials.
- CF Discovery Core and CF Biospecimen Repository (CF-BR): utilizes the CF-BR, a storage bank of several thousand biofluids collected from patients with cystic fibrosis at varying disease states.
- Laboratory and Pathology Clinical Research Core: provides clinical laboratory testing, specimen processing, histology services, and de-identified tumor bank specimens to investigators.
- Ian's Friends Foundation Brain Tumor Biorepository: collects, cultures, and distributes pediatric brain tumor biospecimen for research studies with Children's IRB approval and patient consent.

Biostatistics

- Pediatric Biostatistics Core: provides comprehensive expertise in statistical methodology and advanced data analysis to support the design, execution, and dissemination of studies, including grant proposals and manuscripts.

Clinical & Data Registry

- Pediatric Heart Diseases Data Registry Core: offers access to rich registry data from surgical, catheter-based and electrophysiologic studies and interventions for multiple pediatric heart diseases.
- Children's Health Informatics Core (CHIC): provides informatics expertise to access and leverage electronic health record data for funded research, multicenter collaboration, and interventions.

General Equipment

- General Equipment Core: offers access to select laboratory equipment to support pediatric research.

Imaging

- Animal Physiology Core: provides advanced ultrasound as part of its services related to animal models.
- Cardiovascular Imaging Research Core (CIRC): offers non-invasive cardiovascular imaging support for investigators involved in clinical research.
- Integrated Cellular Imaging Core: provides access to cutting-edge cellular imaging technologies and technical expertise to support pediatric research.
- Medical Imaging Resources: cross-disciplinary scientific, administrative, and educational home for imaging science through Emory Center for Systems Imaging (CSI) and Children's Pediatric Imaging Research Core (PIRC).

Research Grant Development

- Pediatric Research Development Core: offers three arms of support services to optimize researcher careers: General Resources and Services, Education and Training, and Proposal Development.

Sample Interrogation

- Biomarkers Core: offers state of the art equipment and up-to-date technology to provide high quality analysis of biological samples to support pediatric research.
- Pediatric/Winship Flow Cytometry Core: provides cytometry services for the analysis and sorting of cells, and expert consultation for experimental design and planning.
- ADJUST Laboratory: CLIA-certified, CAP-accredited lab for validating, implementing, and helping to develop new diagnostic technologies to be used from clinical laboratory to home, with focus on accessible, reliable, and affordable diagnostics for members of all communities and economic backgrounds.

Questions?

For more information about our cores and usage subsidies, please scan the QR code to visit our website at <https://pedsresearch.org/cores>, or contact Stacy Heilman, PhD, Vice Chair for Research Operations, at stacy.heilman@emory.edu. Links to other cores also available to pediatric researchers can be found on our website.

