

UT Southwestern
Medical Center
Department of Pediatrics

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics

2023 Annual Report

"As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has – or ever will have – something inside that is unique to all time. It's our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression." (Fred Rogers)

These sage words are a guide for all who work with children and their families.

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The Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics incorporates specialists with clinical expertise to provide longitudinal support to children and adolescents with a multitude of challenges and vulnerabilities, including global developmental delays; developmental differences related to communication, language, and/or behavior; complex attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); dyslexia; learning disabilities; neurocognitive disorders; myelomeningocele; long-term neonatal follow-up; end-of-life issues; past trauma, often related to placement in the foster care system; recent exposure to child abuse/neglect; challenges to well-being in the adolescent developmental phase of growth; chronic medical complexities; Down syndrome; 22Q deletion syndrome; and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.



Richard C. Adams, M.D.
Professor, Division Chief







The Division’s commitment to teaching is central to its work.

In addition to providing all Pediatric and Combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics residents with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-required training in developmental behavioral pediatrics, the Division’s fellowship programs are robust and reflective of this commitment. The Division provides four fellowship tracks in the subspecialty areas of developmental and behavioral pediatrics, child abuse/neglect, adolescent medicine, and pediatric neuropsychology. Drs. Sari Bar, Suzanne Dakil, Jenny Francis, Veronica Bordes Edgar, and Beatriz MacDonald Wer serve as fellowship directors. The Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics’ core value of integrated training is reflected by the active program for graduate students in clinical psychology who have been selected to focus on children with developmental disabilities and who train alongside the Pediatric residents.

The increasingly active research endeavors of the faculty in the Division are clinically driven in nature. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies guide a better understanding of the needs, the applied interventions, and the outcomes among these vulnerable children and their families.

All the above efforts are reflections of the Division’s unified focus of acting on behalf of the vulnerable child.

Numbers at a Glance

 <p>Faculty: 20 New Faculty: 5 Promotions: 0</p>	 <p>Clinical Fellows: 6 Clinical Sites: 5</p>	 <p>Inpatient Encounters: 2,755* Outpatient Encounters: 21,447*</p>
 <p>Research Funding Total* Grants: N/A Contracts: N/A Total # Proposals Awarded: N/A Public Federal (# of K awards): N/A Public State of Texas: N/A Other: N/A Revenue from Active Clinical Trials as of 12/31/2023: \$1,132,396</p>	 <p>Active Clinical Trials: 2*</p>	 <p>Conferences/Lectures/Presentations: 31 Publications: 21* Citations: 566* Book Chapters: 0</p>

*Sources: Orbit report of RHi032 Organizational Research Dashboard, UTSW Office of Research and Grants Support, Faculty Affairs, Education Alumni Affairs, Clinical Business Operations-invoice creation period for 2023, CVs

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Honors/Awards

M. Brett Cooper

- Leadership Emerging in Academic Departments (LEAD) – UT Southwestern

Veronica Bordes Edgar

- Hispanic Health Leadership Award – National Hispanic Medical Association
- Jerry Sweet Leadership Award – American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology

Hilda Loria

- Texas Pediatric Advocates Honoree – Children at Risk
- Early Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Award – Association of American Medical Colleges

Katherine Maddox

- Texas Super Doctors (Rising Star) – *Texas Monthly*

Best Pediatric Specialists in Dallas, *D Magazine*

- M. Brett Cooper
- Jenny Francis
- May Lau

Top 5 Conference Locations

1. Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM), Chicago, March 2023
2. The Ray E. Helfer Society Annual Meeting, Tucson, Arizona, April 2023
3. Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., April-May 2023
4. Society for Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, September 2023
5. American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine, Chicago, September 2023

Education and Training

The vulnerable children served throughout the integrated programs within the Division benefit from individualized care that is optimally coordinated across medical, mental health, and developmental disciplines to achieve the approach to health care. The Division is built on the core value of providing integrated, person-centered care and is dedicated to the training of medical students, residents, fellows, and graduate students in mental health to extend and improve upon the model.

The care of vulnerable children with complex biopsychosocial issues is best delivered when clinicians with different professional perspectives combine their unique skill sets. Faculty in the Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics are committed to collaborative physician and psychologist education and training.

Exposure to issues of mental health and participation in this care, which is overseen by faculty in the Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, is a crucial component of medical training. The Division oversees and provides the ACGME-required training to the more than 100 Pediatric residents in the Children's Health/UTSW training program through

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two of the Divisional programs. All Pediatric residents are required to participate in extended training in both developmental behavioral pediatrics and in adolescent medicine during their three years of residency.

Division faculty provide direct teaching in developmental behavioral pediatrics for PL1 and PL2 residents in various clinics, both within the medical center and in settings throughout the community. Beyond “bedside” clinical teaching, a three-year curriculum for learning has been developed for small groups and semiformal didactics. Multiple electives are available to medical students and residents throughout their clinical training.

The Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics supports four growing fellowship programs. The Division’s Child Abuse Fellowship lasts three years and covers patient care and procedural skills, interpersonal and communication skills, medical knowledge, problem-based learning, system-based practice, and professionalism. Our Adolescent Medicine Fellowship covers the support and guidance of future adolescent medicine physicians to promote the optimal health and well-being of all adolescents and young adults. The Division’s fellowship in developmental behavioral pediatrics emphasizes the evaluation of development and behavior and the treatment of developmental disabilities. The Pediatric Neuropsychology Fellowship, guided by the Division’s Co-Director, Dr. Bordes Edgar, emphasizes culturally informed neurodevelopmental evaluations for children with complex medical needs.

Research Activities

Division faculty conduct research on a wide variety of children’s health and health care issues, including:

- Improvement of the health and health care of underserved children, including those who are poor, uninsured, racial/ethnic minorities, or immigrants, and those who face language barriers and have special health care needs
- Racial/ethnic, gender, and language disparities in children’s health and health care
- Community-based interventions for improving the health and health care of underserved children in foster care
- Innovative interventions for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- Prevention of pediatric hospitalization
- Transition to adult care models
- Prevention of teen pregnancy; health promotion of the HPV vaccine and use of text messages for adolescent outpatient appointment reminders
- Factors in the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Neurocognitive outcomes of neurodevelopmental and genetic disorders, including spina bifida
- Physical capacity in youth with spina bifida
- Psychotropic management in spina bifida
- Quality of life in parents of children with complex medical needs
- Well-being of siblings of children with complex medical needs
- Sexual and gender minority youth and mental health
- Sexual reproductive health
- Communication within the patient-parent-provider triad about adolescent health services
- Pressure injury prevention
- Improvement of electronic health record usability for providers caring for children with medical complexity
- Improvement of the approach to patients with chronic home ventilation for patients with severe neurological impairment
- Assessment of perceptions of palliative care among care teams, patients, and caregivers
- Improvement of communication strategies between palliative care and hospice

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Patient Care

The Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics provides outpatient care at Scottish Rite for Children and Children's Health (Dallas and Plano) in 12 specialized clinics.

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic

The Clinic offers comprehensive developmental and behavioral evaluations and care for children, from birth through adolescence.

Services provided include:

- Diagnostic evaluation
- Developmental-behavioral assessment
- Neuropsychological assessment
- Medication consultation and management
- Speech and language evaluation
- Educational assessments and support

Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders

- Located on the Scottish Rite for Children campuses
- Staffed by a multidisciplinary team of developmental-behavioral pediatricians, clinical and school psychologists, educational diagnosticians, speech-language pathologists, and academic language therapists
- Serves children between the ages of 5 and 15 with academic learning problems and associated disorders. Each consultation involves extensive information gathering and careful consideration of all factors that could contribute to academic difficulties.

Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine

- Dedicated to improving adolescent health through health care delivery, education, and research
- Staffed by faculty with special interest and training in the areas of adolescent and sports medicine
- Cares for patients 11-21 years old and welcomes referrals from community physicians and clinics
- Has research interests that include racial/ethnic disparities and HPV

Down Syndrome Clinic

The Down Syndrome Clinic is designed to provide coordinated medical care, with a primary focus on behavioral health needs, to children with Down syndrome. A team of clinicians from different disciplines comes together to provide a variety of services, often within one office visit. These include a developmental-behavioral pediatrician, developmental-behavioral pediatrics fellow, developmental nurse practitioner, geneticist, clinical nurse specialist, genetics counselor, and social worker.

Referral and Evaluation of At-Risk Children Program (REACH)

- Staffed by board-certified child abuse pediatricians, experienced pediatric nurse practitioners, a clinical psychologist, social workers, a child life specialist, and program coordinators
- Provides medical evaluations of cases of suspected child physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect
- Conducts medical evaluations in an inpatient setting in the Emergency Department at Parkland Memorial Hospital's burn unit or in the outpatient REACH Clinic
- Provides medical education to medical students, pediatric residents, and the local medical community on topics related to child abuse medical evaluations
- Expands research efforts in areas aimed at improving the identification of abuse and the primary and secondary prevention of child abuse

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Rees-Jones Center for Foster Care Excellence

- Dedicated exclusively to providing comprehensive primary medical care for children in the custody of Child Protective Services or those who were previously in the foster care system who have been adopted
- Provides placement exams, medical homes, and pre-adoption physicals for children from infancy to age 19 living in out-of-home placement due to child abuse or neglect
- Staffed with clinicians who work with Child Protective Services and community agencies to optimize each child’s health, health care, safety, and well-being

Pediatric Palliative Care

The Pediatric Palliative Care Program provides an extra layer of support for children with complex, difficult-to-treat diseases and their families. The team provides services in inpatient and outpatient settings. Because all children are unique, the support we provide is individualized and varies through the changing phases of illness. Our goal is to enhance the quality of life for all those being served.

Complex Care Medical Services

This Complex Care Specialty Clinic remains a unique model. It serves as the primary medical home for this high-risk cohort of children with multiple medical/surgical conditions and, for many, the requirement of technological support daily. Primary pediatric medical home care is critical to minimizing hospitalizations and emergency department visits. The program provides high-level care coordination for families as they navigate multiple other specialties across the UT Southwestern/Children’s Medical Center Dallas landscape.

Spina Bifida Program

Housed and functioning at Scottish Rite for Children, the program was one of nine selected sites in 2021 to work with an initiative through the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to demonstrate quality improvement changes to enhance the success of structured programming for transition services for these youth and their families. Outcomes from that project are now actively integrated into the routine clinical content of clinic visits. The efforts along with the AAP have resulted in extended training for other programs around the nation. Integrated care from UTSW Pediatric Urology, Pediatric Neurosurgery, Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, and Orthopaedic Surgery faculty support services to hundreds of families across Texas.

Patient Statistics

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics – Children’s Medical Center Dallas (CMC)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	990	1,400	1,816	1,665	1,815
New Patient Visits	440	613	704	408	441
Consults in Complex Care	85	122	78	80	78
Consults in 22Q Clinic	----	42	52	51	53

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Down Syndrome Clinic – CMC

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	403	302	589	728	698
New Patient Visits	143	80	90	163	118

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics – Scottish Rite for Children

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	1,750	1,413	1,418	1,510	1,588
New Patient Visits	311	162	229	237	274
In-Patient Admit/Consults	300	305	247	127	190

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Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders – Scottish Rite for Children

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	2,112	1,540	1,454	1,472	1,440
New Patient Visits	1,006	815	745	737	711

Complex Care Medical Services – CMC

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	1,911	1,757	1,768	1,475	1,709
New Patient Visits	36	46	36	328	350

Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine – CMC

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Outpatient Visits	2,947	2,584	2,922	2,913	2,964
New Patient Visits	759	550	673	649	631

Referral and Evaluation of At-Risk Children (REACH) Program – Children’s Health

Outpatient Visits	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dallas	1,615	1,285	1,135	1,155	1,132
Plano	241	87	141	138	150
Inpatient/ED Visits					
Dallas	1,427	383	455	431	374
Plano	214	33	65	44	41
New Patient Visits					
Dallas	682	616	504	419	407
Plano	24	64	102	98	102

Rees-Jones Center for Foster Care Excellence – Children’s Health

Outpatient Visits	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dallas	3,999	3,661	4,706	5,461	5,467
Plano	3,506	3,434	3,920	3,978	3,450
New Patient Visits	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dallas	791	645	556	387	1,038
Plano	563	443	458	229	690

Pediatric Palliative Care *

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Inpatient Consults	159	401	2,362	2,279	2,565
Outpatient Consults **	-----	83	411	437	488
New Patient Visits	-----	263	759	410	463

*Began September 2019 **Began September 2020

Total Patient Encounters Across Division

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Patient Encounters	26,017	18,790	23,487	23,944	24,202

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Top Five Peer-Reviewed Publications and Book Chapters

1. **Bar S**, Stephens SB, Mathew MS, Messiah SE, **Edgar VB**. [Quality of Life Among Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Cross Sectional Study](#). *J Autism Dev Disord*. 2023 Sep 26. PMID: 37751095
2. Edmondson S, Conrado AB, **Loria H**, McLeigh J, Tiro JA, Lee SC, **Francis JKR**. [Caregivers of youth in foster care in Texas and their role in contraception decision-making for adolescents in care](#). *Contraception*. 2023 Jun;122:109993. PMID: 36841462
3. Liu T, Ouyang L, Walker WO, Wiener JS, Castillo J, **Adams R**, O'Neil J, Wood H, Tanaka ST, et.al. [Education and employment as young adults living with spina bifida transition to adulthood in the USA: a study of the National Spina Bifida Patient Registry](#). *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*. 2023 Jun;65(6): 821-830. PMID: 36385606
4. Peeler E, **Dakil S**, Culotta P, Giardino A, Greeley C, Bachim A. [Financing pediatric hospital child abuse teams in 2015: National survey results](#). *Child Abuse Negl*. 2023 May;139:106114. PMID: 36878095
5. Roth LT, **Cooper MB**, Lurie B, Wueste B. [Developing an Entrustable Professional Activity to Improve the Care of LGBTQ+ Youth](#). *Acad Pediatr*. 2023 May-Jun;23(4):697-702. Epub 2022 Sep 16. PMID: 36122833