



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2025 has been a challenging year for our team at the Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyle’s & Nutrition (CHLN) but like many of you, we have continued to grow and support each other in our work to help children and their families live healthier lives. Our amazing team continues to advance CHLN’s profile across our focus areas of advocacy, clinical, community, education, and research and support our members through various educational platforms and working groups. We are delighted to present you with this report of our members’ accomplishments throughout 2025.

Our research program continues to flourish, including our recent growth area of assisting physicians to become federally funded researchers, which was a focus of one of our inaugural Scientific Advisory Board members, Dr. Kathy Christoffel—thanks Kathy! Our clinical program continues to grow in their own space in the Broadway Building at CMH, adding several new providers, and improving access for the patients we serve. Our community programs continue to grow, especially the Kansas City Healthy Lifestyles Collaborative, which continues to have exciting quarterly meetings that are well attended across many sectors and tackle concrete projects that make Kansas City a healthier place to live. Our educational programs continue to contribute to the education of future leaders in our fields, especially our CHLN postdoctoral fellows.

You may remember that we had a leadership change in 2024—well, we’ve had another one in 2025, specifically in the CHLN Division at Children’s Mercy. While CHLN Center maintains the same leadership structure we’ve had for the last many years (including Drs. Ann Davis, Jordan Carlson, John Thyfault and Felicia Steger), we have had a change in the division leadership at CMH. Dr. Jordan Carlson is serving as Interim Division Director while Dr. James (the Chair of Pediatrics) is conducting a national search to fill the role of Division Director, so keep your eye out for an exciting new team member who will hopefully be joining the CHLN team!

As a reminder, this annual report covers calendar year 2025 accomplishments and is structured into 5 main sections. The first section covers a few special projects that we chose to highlight for you in article form; in the second we focus on the support CHLN provides to our members—we focus heavily on making CHLN a resource to our members. Third, we focus on our 5 programmatic areas including Advocacy, Clinical, Education, Community, and Research, providing a narrative update on major 2025 activities in each area. In section 4, we present our top grants and our most impactful and representative publications from the year. And, finally, in section 5 we give a listing of every active member of CHLN and their publications and grants for 2025. As you will see, our team continues to grow, not only in terms of number of members, but also in terms of the depth and breadth of our interdisciplinary work.

We are so grateful for the support KUMC and CMH provide to CHLN and continue to be blown away by the impressive accomplishments of team members. CHLN continues to be an example of how we can accomplish so much more as a team than we would individually. We hope you enjoy this report, and if you’re not already a member of our team, feel free to join us—it’s going to be a very exciting 2026!



Ann M. Davis, Ph.D., MPH, ABPP
Director



Jordan Carlson, Ph.D.,
Associate Director

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TRAINING TOMORROW'S OBESITY RESEARCHERS: BUILDING A TRANSLATIONAL PIPELINE FOR OBESITY RESEARCH

ADDRESSING OBESITY AND METABOLIC DISEASE requires a stronger pipeline of scientists who can connect the lab, the clinic, and the community. That is the purpose of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) T32 training grant, Translating Obesity, Metabolic Dysfunction, and Comorbid Disease States (TOMADS), which trains predoctoral scientists in translational obesity and metabolism research.



Drs. Doug Wright and John Thyfault

NIH T32 awards are nationally competitive and decided through a rigorous peer-review process that evaluates the training plan, mentor track records, prior trainee outcomes, and the strength of the research environment. The NIH-funded program is co-led by John P. Thyfault, Ph.D., FACS, FTOS, Scientific Director of Basic Research at CHLN and the Director of the KU Diabetes Institute and Doug Wright, Ph.D., Professor and Vice Chair of Research in the Dept of Anesthesiology, both at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC). Through this program, the next generation of researchers and clinicians at CHLN and KUMC gain exposure to basic and clinical research environments, hands-on clinical observations, and community-engaged projects, building the skills and cross-disciplinary exposure needed to connect basic discovery, clinical care, and community impact.

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY IMPACT

Complex, chronic conditions like obesity do not fit neatly into a single field. Basic scientists study the molecular and physiological mechanisms that drive weight gain and metabolic dysfunction. Clinician-researchers test interventions, track outcomes, and see

firsthand how obesity affects patients' lives. Community-based investigators help translate evidence into prevention and care strategies that work in real-world settings. Silos among these areas can slow progress and outcomes.

"For the most effective research, we need the questions from the community and the clinic to be translated and tested in the basic science lab and vice versa," Dr. Thyfault said.

The TOMADS T32 is designed to support that kind of bi-directional thinking from the very beginning of a scientist's career. Trainees develop expertise in obesity and metabolism while learning to communicate across disciplines and plan research programs that span bench, bedside, and community settings.

"Our biggest goal was to try to expose students from both sides of that spectrum to each other," Dr. Thyfault said.

By design, the program invites graduate students from multiple disciplines into a shared training environment, centered on obesity and metabolic diseases.

WHAT TRAINEES EXPERIENCE

Once selected, TOMADS trainees join a structured yet flexible program designed to enhance, not replace, their primary lab experience. Each trainee remains rooted in their original laboratory and mentor relationships, while the T32 program adds targeted training, exposure, and career development.

“90% of what they do is with their lab and their mentor,” Dr. Thyfault said. “We don’t want to do so many activities that we distract from that.”

Within that principle, the program builds in several core elements:

- **Cross-exposure experiences.** Trainees spend several weeks gaining experience in complementary environments. Those based in basic science labs observe clinical research processes, while clinically focused trainees gain exposure to basic and mechanistic approaches.
- **Didactic sessions shaped by trainee needs.** Trainees meet regularly for hour-long sessions that cover topics they help identify, from navigating NIH funding pathways to building a sustainable research program.
- **Seminars and conferences.** Trainees are expected to attend obesity- and metabolism-focused seminars across KUMC, CHLN, and Children’s Mercy. They also attend The Obesity Society’s annual scientific meeting, a leading translational conference for obesity research.
- **Grant-writing expectations.** TOMADS encourages and supports trainees in preparing and submitting NIH F32 training-grant applications, using their time on the T32 as a springboard to the next phase of their careers.

Trainee progress is tracked through annual NIH research performance progress reports, and an External Advisory Committee visits regularly to hear presentations, meet with trainees, and assess program quality. Collectively, these checkpoints establish a clear record of momentum, with publications, presentations, and progress that demonstrate the rising cohort is well positioned to lead obesity science.

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A COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM

Thyfault shared how the collaborative culture and dedication to scientific excellence at CHLN, Children’s Mercy, and KUMC enrich training experiences and make this training grant and program possible.

“Our pediatric obesity medicine program was one of the first to really do the GLP-1 drugs for pediatrics, and it’s going to be standard throughout the nation,” Dr. Thyfault said. “You can’t really refine that without doing research on the side while you’re also doing the clinical care. And [CHLN] provides that opportunity.”

Clinical programs at Children’s Mercy and KUMC give trainees a front-row seat to innovation in pediatric obesity treatment and prevention, and CHLN’s infrastructure makes it possible to pair clinical care with rigorous research.

“We have a really strong clinical community,” he says. “There’s support across the board, especially in obesity metabolism, with strong infrastructure, and a lot of people who are willing to collaborate and work with each other.”

Beyond infrastructure, he emphasizes the importance of the culture of support and encouragement trainees find at CHLN, Children’s Mercy, KUMC, and in Kansas City itself.

“Kansas City is affordable and a friendly place to live, so that kind of mindset is also in our academic and research institutions,” Dr. Thyfault said. “It would be hard to find someone who won’t talk to you and work with you and help you at these institutions.”

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION

In addition to the predoctoral trainees who are a part of TOMADS, CHLN also has a postdoctoral fellowship program with several fellowship openings each year for students who have completed their predoctoral work and are moving to the next step in the academic pipeline—a postdoctoral fellowship. One CHLN postdoctoral fellowship position each year is made possible through a generous gift from the W.T. Kemper Charitable Trust, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee, and led by Sheila Kemper Dietrich, a Kansas City philanthropist and tireless champion of CHLN.

Another CHLN fellowship position is funded by the two primary institutions that provide financial support to CHLN each year—KUMC and Children’s Mercy. Often the faculty at CHLN also hire other fellows each year with funding from their grants and other sources. This group of fellows forms the CHLN fellowship program each year, and they receive access to didactic trainings, opportunities

“When you have someone get their first grant or finish their first paper, it feels so good. You know how hard it was for you, so you just want to make it easier for them.”

—DR. THYFAULT, PH.D., FACSM, FTOS

to present to the CHLN Scientific Advisory Board, and the option to apply for scholarships to fund travel to national conferences.

Fellows can also join case conferences and seminars, present work in progress, and partner with mentors at Children’s Mercy, KUMC, and across the country to shape patient-centered research questions and methods.

Together, the TOMADS predoctoral training program and the CHLN Fellowship Program showcase a clear continuum of training that strengthens collaboration, accelerates skill development, and prepares rising cohorts to guide the direction of pediatric obesity and healthy lifestyles research.

MULTIPLYING IMPACT FOR YEARS TO COME

The TOMADS T32 is in its fourth year of funding, but the team is continuing to adjust its infrastructure and plan for the future. “The goal is to get funded for another five years and then just keep it going,” Dr. Thyfault said. “Several places that have these kinds of grants have them for 15, 20, 25 years.”

As the program matures, its impact will amplify. Future researchers and clinicians will have the cross-disciplinary training and support to sustain discovery, elevate patient care, and translate evidence into practice. The support that shaped his career now anchors Dr. Thyfault’s resolve to help open doors for emerging researchers and clinicians.

“Most of us who have been successful had someone invest in us, and so you feel compelled to carry it forward,” Dr. Thyfault reflects. “If I can train four, five, six other scientists—or more—and then they go have an impact, it’s a force multiplier where I’ll have a bigger impact on the world than my work alone.” That commitment, he says, is fueled by the trainees he works with every day.

“A lot of times, what gets me out of bed in the morning is the young people that I interact with,” Dr. Thyfault said. “It’s very motivating and rewarding to try to pass knowledge on and help them succeed. When you have someone get their first grant or finish their first paper, it feels so good. You know how hard it was for you, so you just want to make it easier for them.”

The TOMADS T32 predoctoral training program and CHLN postdoctoral fellowship program form a durable training ecosystem. CHLN, Children’s Mercy, and KUMC are setting a standard across academia by advancing obesity science and investing in the next generation of researchers and clinicians who will carry it forward. Together, these programs drive progress in better prevention, treatment, and long-term health for children and families in Kansas City and everywhere.





INVESTING IN EARLY-CAREER RESEARCH CHANGES CHILDREN'S LIVES

WHEN EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS

have the time and resources to pursue innovative ideas, their work opens doors to develop and move pediatric obesity research forward. That's the aim of the National Institutes of Health's career development awards, known as "K" awards, which provide support for mentored research studies and additional training that address critical health challenges and develop the skills of obesity researchers.



Drs. Anna Wallisch, Carolyn Bates, and Robert Gibler

Carolyn Bates, CHLN member and recipient of an NIH K08, said, "It aims to help early career researchers launch their program of research to be able to then apply for independent federal funding."

This structure gives scientists the opportunity to develop independent programs early in their careers, helping them become competitive for future R-series research funding.

Many CHLN members are currently on K awards in the area of pediatric healthy lifestyles, including Dr. Dana Bakula, Dr. Alice Zhang, Dr. Bethany Forseth, Dr. Stephani Stancil, Dr. Dan Tilden, and Dr. Dave White. These projects span many areas of healthy lifestyle research, including pediatric oncology, autism care, and chronic pain, for example. This work is proving how investing in researchers' unique areas of interest early in their careers can accelerate discoveries that transform pediatric healthy lifestyles.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR INDEPENDENT SCIENCE

NIH K awards fund up to five years of mentored research and specialized training to support early-career investigators in their transition to research independence. K08 awards typically support laboratory-based or translational research scientists, while K23 awards fund clinician-scientists conducting patient-oriented studies. The grants support about 75 percent of a recipient's professional effort, allowing time for advanced coursework, data collection, and mentorship.

"A K award is a unique award type—it's not just funding a scientific project; it's an investment in funding the researcher themselves," Dr.

DRIVING IMPACT ACROSS THREE AREAS

Cancer research

Dr. Bates is a pediatric psychologist who specializes in family influences on pediatric health. Her K08 award, funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), addresses long-term health challenges for children who are undergoing intensive treatment for the most common childhood cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). Although treatment advances have resulted in high survival rates of about 90% for school-age children or younger, the ALL treatment course is intensive and lasts two to three years, profoundly disrupting family life.

Additionally, up to half of children gain an excessive amount of weight during ALL treatment, primarily attributed to shifts in diet and activity levels as they cope with the side effects and stress of chemotherapy. Dr. Bates recognized that effective behavioral interventions were needed during ALL treatment, especially those that accounted for the immense family stress that accompanies this diagnosis.

"Cancer care already asks a lot of families," Dr. Bates said. "We're exploring how to integrate health promotion in ways that are

feasible and acceptable for really busy families.” To bridge this gap, Dr. Bates developed a family-based intervention designed to support families during the intense early phase of ALL treatment. The program targets positive health behaviors, such as nutrition and physical activity, and helps families cope with treatment-related stress. The research leverages resources from CHLN, including high-tech activity tracking monitors and software to accurately measure patient movement. Dr. Bates is currently in the third year of the award and running a pilot clinical trial to evaluate feasibility, family engagement, and satisfaction during treatment.

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—DR. CAROLYN BATES, PH.D.

Autism research

Dr. Anna Wallisch is an occupational therapist and feeding specialist in the second year of her four-year NIH K23 award, funded by the National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD), which focuses on understanding mechanisms underlying eating challenges in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to eventually develop personalized approaches for children with ASD. Her research addresses the pervasive problem of challenging eating behaviors in children with ASD, particularly those who are highly specific and rigid about their food choices. This issue affects up to 80 percent of children with autism and can lead to serious health consequences, including both a higher prevalence of obesity and an overlap with eating disorders. Clinically, this manifests as children eating a very limited variety of foods, causing daily stress for parents who may resort to more forceful strategies to encourage eating, which are well-intentioned but, counterintuitively, make the child even less likely to accept new foods.

Dr. Wallisch’s work aims to better understand the underlying mechanisms at play in these situations. Her research uses a biopsychosocial approach, focusing on the stressful interactions that occur at mealtimes. She is studying the phenomena of physiological synchrony, investigating how stress can spread from parent to child and, conversely, how parents can act as a stress buffer. Her project

uses high-tech measurements combined with ecological momentary assessment (EMA)—brief, in-the-moment surveys and photos—to capture the variability in parent and child affect, stress, and strategies. The ultimate goal is to identify points of high-quality interaction that can be incorporated into effective, personalized interventions.

She is grateful to her mentors and the CHLN, Children’s Mercy, and KUMC network for providing crucial expert mentorship and interdisciplinary feedback during the grant-writing process.

“It’s nice to have guided mentorship through early career training to support your individual training plan and help you find opportunities that fit your goals,” Dr. Wallisch said. “It just makes me incredibly grateful because I don’t think there are very many other circumstances in which you get that mentored and dedicated time to focus on how to launch your career.”

Chronic pain research

Dr. Robert Gibler is a CHLN member and pediatric psychologist who specializes in pediatric pain psychology, addressing chronic conditions such as migraine, abdominal pain, and musculoskeletal pain. His K23 application to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) bridges the critical gap between chronic pain and obesity in adolescents. These two conditions often intersect but have rarely been studied together.

“People are always surprised when I tell them that one in five children will have a chronic pain problem at some point in their development,” Dr. Gibler said. “People really find that shocking, and I agree it is shocking.”

Chronic pain is often unresponsive to pharmacological treatments. Instead, psychological and physical therapies are the gold standard interventions, but it is often very difficult for kids with chronic pain to get more physical activity. Dr. Gibler also observed in his clinical practice that children with chronic pain who also met criteria for obesity appeared to benefit less from existing pain interventions, finding it harder to incorporate pain management skills into their daily lives.

These co-occurring conditions present a significant challenge. Children with both pain and obesity are particularly vulnerable, facing the double stigma associated with an invisible condition like chronic pain and the visible identity of living in a larger body. Due to the limited number of specialized pediatric pain clinics in the United States, these children may never have pain problems identified and treated. As a result, Dr. Gibler hopes to study how to incorporate pain psychology into other treatment settings.

Dr. Gibler’s study aims to adapt and refine an established behavioral pain intervention for delivery directly in a weight

“I want to help kids with chronic pain make their lives better”

—DR. ROBERT GIBLER, PH.D.

management context. His proof-of-concept pilot study will assess the preliminary evidence of the efficacy of this adapted intervention in terms of its impact on pain and physical activity, while also supporting weight management outcomes.

“I want to help kids with chronic pain make their lives better,” Dr. Gibler said. “This is such a good place to be able to do that.”

Dr. Gibler’s proposal, which brings together collaborators from the University of Kansas Medical Center and Children’s Mercy Hospital, received an exceptionally strong NIH score, signaling high scientific merit and interest in the topic. While awaiting the official K award notice, Dr. Gibler and his team are hopeful for acceptance in the coming months.

THE CHLN ADVANTAGE

Behind each award lies a collaborative network that makes ambitious early-career research possible.

“Since all of our research is in some way weight or healthy lifestyle related, CHLN has been critical to our success in obtaining these awards,” Dr. Bates said.

Drs. Bates, Wallisch, and Gibler each emphasized how CHLN’s academic partnership between Children’s Mercy Kansas City and KUMC provides the infrastructure, mentors, and cross-site collaborators their work relies on.

“We have access to so many strong institutions and partnerships through CHLN, such as a panel of experts called the Scientific Advisory Board,” Dr. Gibler said. “We have an opportunity as investigators to present our grants to them, so it’s almost like a mini-NIH study section where you can get feedback ahead of time. I can’t express how valuable that was for me.”

All three investigators pointed to Dr. Ann Davis, Director of CHLN and Ralph L. Smith Professor of Pediatrics at KUMC, as the anchor of that support system. As primary mentor on each award, she shaped training plans, strengthened scientific aims, and guided the strategic decisions that helped these proposals succeed.

“Dr. Davis spends an incredible amount of time mentoring junior faculty,” Dr. Bates said. “She has guided us through every stage—from developing training plans to refining research questions.”

FROM APPLICATION TO IMPACT

Securing a K award is a rigorous and competitive process. Each investigator assembled a multidisciplinary mentoring team, crafted an individualized training plan, and used protected time to develop studies and skills that lead to independent funding.

“As an early-career investigator, to have five years dedicated to lay a solid foundation for our area of research—it’s irreplaceable,” Dr. Bates said.

“It’s such a lesson in persistence,” Dr. Gibler said. “If you’re in the right place with the right team and the right goal, you can do the research that matters to you.”

“I agree. I think persistence is the biggest thing,” Dr. Wallisch said. “It’s hard to put into words what it means to receive a K award, and it is only the beginning of your career trajectory.”

Across different stages of the K award process, all three innovative studies are already gaining momentum. Backed by dedicated mentors and CHLN’s partnership model, the investment in these researchers’ careers is laying the groundwork for discoveries that will change lives and improve children’s health for years to come.

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—DR. ANNA WALLISCH, PH.D.



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: TRANSLATING COMPASSION INTO ACTION TO TRANSFORM PEDIATRIC WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

IN PEDIATRIC CARE, even minor improvements can change the trajectory of a child's health. At Children's Mercy Hospital and the Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition (CHLN), that belief has driven a growing portfolio of quality improvement (QI) as a structured way to make intentional changes evident, consistent, and sustainable. Led by Cristina Fernandez, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Medicine and Education Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, the team's QI work at the weight management clinic has earned national and institutional recognition, including the 2024 Department of Pediatrics Quality Improvement Team Award.

As an experienced clinician in the weight management program, Dr. Fernandez has helped turn everyday clinic challenges into opportunities to redesign systems, support families, and improve outcomes over time. For her, quality improvement is more than a technical framework; it's an expression of values.

"Quality improvement is a way of translating compassion into action," she said. "It is a structured, informed process that helps us to identify gaps in care and test solutions based on real-world feedback."

UNDERSTANDING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

QI offers a disciplined approach for making care safer, more efficient, and more equitable. Dr. Fernandez and the team focus on meaningful, incremental change. For example, if a project moves a key metric by a



Fernandez Team

few percentage points and sustains that change over time, it creates meaningful change for patients and providers alike.

At CHLN, QI projects start with a defined problem in everyday clinical care—missed appointments, preventable hospitalizations, or screening gaps. The team measures a baseline, designs a simple intervention, and tests it in cycles, learning and adjusting along the way. The team integrates sustainability from the beginning, weaving changes into clinic workflows, the electronic health record, and team culture to ensure these improvements endure. Across each effort, the team's goal is the same: build systems that reliably support healthier lives for kids and adolescents.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

Within the CHLN team, QI has become part of the fabric of care. The QI team works closely with physicians, nurses, dietitians, social workers, pharmacists, QI specialists, students, and residents to identify high-impact questions and design practical solutions. Dr. Fernandez says internal support from CHLN and Children's Mercy QI allows clinicians to focus on patients while still contributing to data collection, project design, and interpretation of results. This work

requires strong institutional backing, and leaders make time for QI, help troubleshoot barriers, and champion projects at every level.

"[QI is] a lot of effort from a lot of people," she said. "The institution sees its worth, and I love that. It's really nice to have that support."

QI IN ACTION: PROJECTS MAKING A MEASURABLE DIFFERENCE

Over the past several years, the team has launched a series of QI projects focused on issues that affect families and staff:

- **Reducing missed first visits.** One of Dr. Fernandez's earliest QI projects took aim at a familiar challenge: families missing their first weight management appointment, often after waiting weeks or months to be seen. Through a structured program that blended enhanced reminders, education, and staff training, the team dramatically reduced no-shows for initial visits from 37% to 13%. That change means more children are entering care sooner with fewer wasted appointment slots.
- **Preventing dehydration after bariatric surgery.** In response to a concerning pattern of adolescents returning to the hospital for dehydration in the weeks following bariatric surgery, Dr. Fernandez and colleagues developed a comprehensive post-operative hydration protocol. This intervention included structured pre-discharge teaching, weekly follow-up visits for the first two weeks, and clear guidance on fluid goals and warning signs. The impact was striking: no patients have been admitted for dehydration after bariatric surgery in the last year. In 2025, The Obesity Society accepted the project as a poster for its annual international scientific conference, ObesityWeek®, highlighting how the team's local QI work contributes to national conversation and best practices for pediatric bariatric care.
- **Standardizing screening for eating disorders.** The weight management team also recognized the need for more consistent screening and follow-up for adolescents with possible eating disorders, a newly recognized critical concern in pediatric obesity care. Staff lacked a consistent, reliable way to identify children who needed specialized help. To close that gap, the QI team implemented a brief adolescent screening tool and partnered with the electronic health record team to build the screener directly into the clinician workflow, reducing manual tracking and ensuring every patient received the same standard of care. They evaluated how well this new approach worked, shared the results at an international pediatric psychology conference in the United Kingdom, and will prepare a manuscript for a childhood obesity journal to share lessons learned with other programs around the country.

MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION OF QI LEADERS

For Dr. Fernandez, QI is also a powerful way to engage students, residents, and fellows in meaningful, hands-on learning. At any given time, she works with three or four students who help collect data, build run charts, and present findings. These projects give trainees a chance to see how structured improvement can change real patients' experiences and contribute to their own career development.

"If I can work with the students and residents my whole life, I will," she said. "I love to help them grow to be good doctors and responsible team members, and they're still my friends. That's the most important part for me."

Many students who start with a single project go on to present posters at national meetings, often for the first time, or lead their own initiatives, multiplying the clinic's impact over time.

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—DR. CRISTINA FERNANDEZ, M.D.

CHARTING WHAT COMES NEXT: GLP-1 MEDICATIONS AND SYSTEM-WIDE BARRIERS

Looking ahead, the QI team is already focused on two ambitious projects that extend beyond a single clinic.

As more patients receive injectable GLP-1 medications, the team is working to more closely integrate the pharmacy into obesity care. The goal is to increase the number of families who fill their GLP-1 prescriptions through the hospital pharmacy, where clinicians and pharmacists can coordinate training, monitor medication use, and respond quickly to questions or side effects. Standardized education materials will help families feel more confident managing these medications at home.

“I want to leave a legacy, but I don’t care much about my ownership. Doing QI projects is a long process. The whole team has to be involved to be successful, and I feel proud of what we are doing.”

—DR. CRISTINA FERNANDEZ, M.D.

Dr. Fernandez is also helping lead a large, multi-specialty QI project examining why patients across Children’s Mercy sometimes do not pick up essential medications, from anti-seizure drugs to treatments for chronic conditions. By surveying thousands of providers, pharmacists, and families, the team hopes to identify structural barriers and social determinants of health, such as language, cost, transportation, and health literacy, and use the findings to drive

changes in policies, workflows, and communication. The team presented early pre-intervention data at an American Academy of Pediatrics meeting in September 2025.

SUSTAINING A LEGACY OF IMPROVEMENT

Dr. Fernandez often describes herself as energized by the chance to solve problems with her colleagues and students. She says rather than personal recognition, she’s motivated by the knowledge that each project leaves something important that lasts for patients and the team.

“I want to leave a legacy, but I don’t care much about my ownership,” she said. “Doing QI projects is a long process. The whole team has to be involved to be successful, and I feel proud of what we are doing.”

Her mindset mirrors CHLN’s broader commitment to system-level change. As Dr. Fernandez and her partners continue to refine processes, test new ideas, and mentor future clinicians, their QI efforts are powerfully and systematically transforming pediatric weight management. Each reduced no-show, avoided readmission, and timely screening represents a child whose care was safer, smoother, and more responsive to their needs, ensuring compassion is innate in the culture and built into every visit.





TRANSLATING NATIONAL POLICY INTO EQUITABLE PEDIATRIC CARE

IN 2023, THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (AAP)

released a landmark clinical practice guideline (CPG) for the evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents with obesity. Dr. Sarah Hampl, M.D., Director of Advocacy for the Center for the Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition (CHLN), led the writing team for the guideline, which offers clear, evidence-based recommendations, but publishing it is only the first step. To change children's lives, those recommendations have to reach busy primary care settings that care for the youth most affected by obesity.

That is the driving force behind CHLN's current implementation work today. Through a coordinated group of federally funded projects (led by Drs. Hampl and CHLN Director Ann Davis, Ph.D., MPH), CHLN is partnering with clinics to turn the guideline language into real-world systems, workflows, and family-centered treatment options. The goal is simple yet ambitious: take the CPG-based care models already implemented at academic medical centers like Children's Mercy



Ann M. Davis, Ph.D.



Sarah Hampl, M.D.

Hospital and the University of Kansas Medical Center and extend them to rural or other primary care clinics that have not yet had access to this level of support.

"We want this care to be available to any child that needs it, regardless of their location," Dr. Hampl said. "This is a start to helping in a way that takes the particular characteristics of the clinics into consideration. Because

it's sometimes a little easier when you're a well-staffed academic medical center, but when you are a private practice in a rural state and have fewer resources, it's much different."

A MULTI-GRANT STRATEGY TO MOVE GUIDELINES INTO PRACTICE

Traditional education about new guidelines often includes conference talks, webinars, and handouts, all of which are important pieces of the rollout, but these are often insufficient to actually change medical practice. "The AAP has made other tools for this guideline, but sometimes just educating isn't enough," Dr. Davis said.

Many practices serving children and adolescents with obesity face constrained staffing, limited specialist support, complex billing rules, and competing demands that make it hard to add a new program on top of these day-to-day burdens.

To bridge that gap, CHLN is leading and collaborating on complementary federally funded implementation projects that focus on different practice settings. These efforts share a common objective: to help primary care teams deliver the full range of guideline-based care, including medical evaluation, medication treatment, and

"We want this care to be available to any child that needs it, regardless of their location"

—DR. SARAH HAMPL, M.D.

intensive, family-based behavioral treatment. Together, these grant-funded initiatives allow CHLN teams to test what it takes to implement the CPG in real-world clinics, learn from those experiences, and scale successful approaches so more children and families can benefit.

EQUITY AT THE CENTER OF CPG IMPLEMENTATION

The projects intentionally focus on clinics and communities that have historically been left out of clinical trials and specialized obesity services, including rural practices and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that care for many patients insured by Medicaid.

Rural clinics often rely on family medicine physicians who may be less familiar with pediatric-specific guidelines, while FQHCs manage high volumes of patients with limited time and resources. Many families also face barriers such as food insecurity, transportation challenges, and a lack of safe spaces for physical activity. By targeting the needs of both clinic settings and families, CHLN's implementation efforts are designed not only to disseminate the guideline but also to do so in ways that explicitly address the social and structural drivers of health.

PROJECT 1: IAMHEALTHY CPG PARTNERS WITH RURAL PRACTICES

The iAmHealthy CPG is a five-year NIH-funded trial working with rural clinics across Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and South Carolina. Sixteen clinics across these four states will participate in two interventions. The Healthy Clinic intervention focuses on provider training and practice facilitation sessions to change practice patterns of the providers and the clinic. Teams receive regular feedback through chart audits, education on guideline-adherent care, and support for practical changes such as prompts in the electronic medical record.

The second component, the iAmHealthy intervention, delivers virtual, family-based behavioral treatment for pediatric obesity directly to children and caregivers over a five-month period, giving families structured support to make sustainable, health-promoting changes at home.

Dr. Davis serves as principal investigator for the iAmHealthy CPG study. She says a key research question the team aims to answer is whether the behavioral program works better when it is offered in clinics that have already been educated about the guideline and are actively advocating for treatment.

"We think that if the clinic gets educated first, patients will be more likely to sign up, finish the program, and get more out of it than if we're doing the iAmHealthy program first and the clinic hasn't gotten their intervention yet," Dr. Davis said.

Because rural practices are short on time and juggling many demands, the study is intentionally designed to minimize

"We are very excited to bring this large clinical trial to rural clinics and rural families across these four states, as those groups are often not included in any type of clinical trial, especially pediatric clinical trials."

—DR. ANN DAVIS, PH.D., MPH

administrative burdens. Sites can choose how they receive support, from remote chart reviews and brief virtual touchpoints to more intensive in-person facilitation and learning collaboratives where providers share what works in rural settings.

"We are very excited to bring this large clinical trial to rural clinics and rural families across these four states, as those groups are often not included in any type of clinical trial, especially pediatric clinical trials," Dr. Davis said.

Learn more about the project at iamhealthycpg.org.

PROJECT 2: EQUIPPING FQHCs TO DELIVER COMPREHENSIVE OBESITY CARE

CHLN investigators and collaborators are also partnering with FQHC systems in Missouri to strengthen obesity care for youth and adults who receive Missouri Medicaid.

"We wanted to work with FQHCs because they typically have not only medical providers, but also behavioral health professionals and sometimes registered dietitian nutritionists who are part of their clinic team, and we thought this would be a good environment to support obesity care," Dr. Hampel said.

Supported by a National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) grant and funding from the Missouri Department of Social Services, this project tests different levels of training intensity and implementation support, from a higher-touch model to a streamlined version that better fits busy schedules. One of the central efforts is the Advancing Biopsychosocial Care (ABC) training initiative, which partners with four large FQHC systems in Missouri with around 30 clinics to compare these training approaches to support clinics in delivering comprehensive, Medicaid-reimbursed obesity care.

The program helps teams collaborate and learn to deliver evidence-based care for obesity aligned with national recommendations,

while making sure this work aligns with clinics' quality goals, Medicaid rules, and relationships with community partners, so clinics strengthen the obesity care they already provide.

PROJECT 3: ADDRESSING SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH THROUGH THE REACH GRANT

Through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, CHLN and partners at the University of Missouri–Kansas City are strengthening the Family Healthy Weight Program (FHWP) at Children's Mercy and assisting Swope Health, the largest FQHC in the Kansas City area, to start their own FHWP. The project also has nutrition and physical activity pillars and is designed to improve access for underserved families in Kansas City, Missouri. The FHWP element includes updating Children's Mercy's Family Healthy Weight Program, translating FHWP program materials into Spanish, and supporting Swope Health to recruit families, launch, and evaluate its inaugural KidsCare FHWP.

Implementation acknowledges social determinants of health with training that helps teams screen for factors such as food insecurity, transportation barriers, and neighborhood safety. Then it connects families to concrete resources such as food pantries, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs, and other community supports.

"Tailoring our training to guide clinic teams to address youth and adults with obesity and their socioeconomic challenges is really important," Dr. Hampl said. "We're trying to put an emphasis on identifying those social drivers and pointing patients and families in the right direction to be successful in making the changes that they want to make."

These tailored, culturally appropriate materials and community partnerships are essential for helping families effectively put CPG recommendations into practice.

LEARNING FROM CLINICS AND REDUCING BURDEN

Across projects, one of the biggest surprises has been the challenges associated with recruiting clinics and sustaining their participation, even when training is free and closely aligned with their mission.

"The business of medicine has changed a lot, so I think these clinics are just under so much pressure that even if they're interested, it's hard for them to take advantage of these types of free resources," Dr. Davis said. "They're taxed right now, even when they're committed to this excellent care."

Those realities shape how CHLN designs and delivers support, and the teams hope to make it easier to apply CPG practices in every type of clinic.

"One of the things I've tried to keep top of mind is how much can we take off their plates," Dr. Davis said. "How much do we need them to do, versus how much can we do for them? We try to plan things so that it takes as little of their time and attention as possible, but we also need to be able to individualize it for people who do want more interaction."

The team offers options such as remote chart audits, concise virtual visits, and flexible scheduling that become part of patient care. Investigators also invest time up front to understand each clinic's strengths and barriers, so implementation plans fit each clinic's particular setting.

LOOKING AHEAD: TOOLS AND TRAINING THAT OUTLAST THE GRANTS

This implementation work is possible because of CHLN's collaborative culture across Children's Mercy Kansas City, the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), other local academic institutions, and very active community partners.

"Our team is one of the best teams in the country, especially for pediatric obesity," Dr. Davis said. "We cross all the sectors—clinical, research, community, advocacy, education; we're ticking all the boxes, presenting the top research, and to me, it's all about the team."

The current grants are still in progress, but the long-term vision is clear. The teams are currently focused on meeting project milestones, including completing clinic trainings, delivering family-based treatment programs, and collecting data on outcomes and implementation. As findings emerge, CHLN will use them to develop tools, resource guides, and training models that make it easier for clinics everywhere to implement the guideline.

State American Academy of Pediatrics chapters, professional societies, and community partners will play a crucial role in bringing those tools to more clinics and advocating for supportive payment policies.

"[These partners] will be a good resource for us as we disseminate training and different treatment options beyond our grants, because we don't want the work to end when the grant ends," Dr. Hampl said.

The ultimate goal is a future in which the CPG is more than a document on a website; rather, it is a lived reality in clinics of all sizes—urban and rural, academic and community-based. By pairing national leadership in guideline development with on-the-ground implementation science, CHLN, Children's Mercy, the University of Kansas Medical Center, and their partners are working to ensure comprehensive, evidence-based obesity care is within reach for every child and family who needs it.

FUNDS CHLN PROVIDED COMPETITIVELY TO OUR MEMBERS IN 2025

CHLN-AWARDED GRANTS

All our grant programs are strategically focused on providing support to our more junior colleagues to eventually grow the number of National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01-funded investigators at CHLN. This will enable us to apply for larger group grants, such as the NIH T32 training grant, or the NIH Nutrition Obesity Research Center grant. We have transitioned our funds for CHLN-funded graduate students into a CHLN-funded postdoctoral position, further growing the science at our center. We continue to support research mechanisms including pilot funds, trainee travel grants, equipment loans, clinical trial coordinators and research support staff.

2025 CHLN Pilot Grant Award Recipient

—Dr. Matthew Chrisman

Matthew Chrisman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Nursing and Health Studies, University of Missouri Kansas City

Title “Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Train-the-Trainer Approach for Integrating Nutrition Education into Rural Teachers’ Curricula”

Funding: \$33,000 from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026



ANNUAL UPDATE FROM FIVE KEY PROGRAMMATIC AREAS AT CHLN

ADVOCACY

STRATEGIC GOAL #1:

Increase access to weight management services.

- **CHLN members were active in advocacy and related research in 2025**, with the aim to improve access to obesity treatment for youth and families. CHLN members Drs. Meredith Dreyer Gillette, Jordan Carlson and Sarah Hampl and study team completed the pilot of family-based behavioral treatment in Children's Mercy's and Freeman Health System's primary care clinics through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-funded Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration (CORD) grant. This pilot demonstrated a small but significant improvement in weight status for children in contrast to a matched comparison group. The intervention was rated as highly acceptable by families. Publication of the main outcomes is pending. Drs. Hampl and Dreyer Gillette remain members of a Family Healthy Weight Program Advisory group to the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and along with Dr. Helena Laroche aided the Swope Health Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), the largest FQHC in Kansas City, in launching their own Family Healthy Weight Program which started in October. This project is supported by a CDC REACH grant, in which these CHLN members are collaborating with Dr. Robin Shook and colleagues from UMKC.
- **Drs. Hampl and Dreyer Gillette's advocacy efforts** regarding the existing Missouri HealthNet (MOHN) biopsychosocial obesity treatment benefit resulted in MOHN creating an amendment to this benefit to increase access to treatment through removal of several administrative barriers such as required prior authorization. This policy change became effective October 30th. Supported by a grant from NIDDK, Drs. Hampl, Dreyer Gillette and Laroche are partnering with other state colleagues to train healthcare professionals in approximately 30 Missouri FQHC clinics in pediatric and adult obesity evaluation, structural risk factors, weight stigma and treatment and delivery of the intensive/family-based behavioral treatment and medical nutrition therapy that are covered by MOHN. Clinic training began in 2025 and roughly 1/3 of the primary care providers have been trained thus far.

- **Drs. Hampl and Sweeney are meeting monthly** with MO HealthNet's (Missouri Medicaid) Pharmacy and Medical Directors of the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations to coordinate efforts for obesity care and track the utilization of GLP-1 medications, which began being covered in January. Dr. Hampl and Dr. Amy Braddock an adult obesity medicine colleague from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine presented to the Missouri Behavioral Health Coalition/Primary Care Health Home Medical Directors in April and on behalf of MO HealthNet, gave a statewide webinar on this policy change in July.
- **Dr. Hampl represented CHLN as a member of a grassroots advocacy group** convened by the Obesity Action Coalition which aided MO Senator Patty Lewis in developing legislation requiring commercial insurers to cover comprehensive pediatric obesity treatment. This legislation was scheduled to be introduced in January, 2026.

STRATEGIC GOAL #2:

Increase the effectiveness of healthcare professionals' delivery of weight management services.

- **Nationally, CHLN member Dr. Lauren Ptomey authored** the American College of Sports Medicine's position stance on physical activity for individuals with disabilities. CHLN member Dr. Libby Milkovich was a co-author of a new AAP policy statement on digital media. Dr. Dreyer Gillette worked with the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery on psychosocial care guidelines. CHLN member Dr. Chelsea Kracht wrote for the Society of Behavioral Medicine's Outlook newsletter on home disruptions to healthy habits.
- **With colleagues from the Missouri Council for Activity and Nutrition's (MOCAN) Healthcare Workgroup**, the University of MO Continuing Education Department and MO Dept of Health and Senior Services, Drs. Hampl and Dreyer continued work on a statewide plan for comprehensive multidisciplinary pediatric and adult obesity treatment training for healthcare professionals. Live and pre-recorded, some of these trainings launched in July and others will launch in 2026. Drs. Dreyer Gillette, Hampl and Cristina Fernandez served as hub team members for the University of MO Telehealth Network's Pediatric Weight

Management ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes), which began its 5th year in August. These members and Dr. Sweeney gave didactics at this ECHO. Dr. Dreyer Gillette leads and Dr. Hampl is a hub team member of a new Intensive/Family-Based Behavioral Treatment of Obesity ECHO which began in July, and presented didactic sessions to this new group. This ECHO serves as a route for behavioral health professionals and RDs to qualify to be recognized as providers of intensive and family-based behavioral treatment by MO HealthNet. Dr. Hampl is aiding Dr. Ann Davis in her NIH-funded iAmHealthy CPG grant to train PCPs in four states as part of a set of interventions to improve pediatric obesity care.

- **CHLN clinical faculty and other members gave local, statewide and national talks** during 2025. Audiences included primary care and behavioral health providers, medical residents, registered dietitians and other healthcare professionals. Drs. Hampl and Sweeney along with Weight Management Clinic colleagues Celtina Reinert, PharmD and Lora Edwards, RD gave a well-attended workshop to local and regional pediatric PCPs at Children’s Mercy’s annual Clinical Advances in Pediatrics conference in September. In March, Dr. Sweeney spoke at the Advanced Therapies for Pediatric Obesity Conference to national audiences. Dr. Hampl presented at the AAP National Conference and Exhibition on the work of the AAP cross-organizational workgroup on the intersection of eating disorders and obesity in youth in September. CHLN member Dr. Jannette Berkley-Patton spoke to Jamaica, West Indies clinicians about UMKC School of Medicine’s experience with the Diabetes Prevention Program, while member Dr. Stephani Stancil presented on eating disorders in youth at the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics’ annual conference as well as an NIH pharmacology lecture series.

STRATEGIC GOAL #3:

Increasing awareness of public/community agencies regarding weight management and healthy lifestyles.

- **At the national level**, the 2024 US Physical Activity Report Card for Children and Youth which was led by Dr. Jordan Carlson appeared in the Make America Healthy Again Report and in new federal legislation proposed in Congress. His free transit work was featured in a national news article. Dr. Milkovich was featured in an article about digital media by the Children’s Hospital Association. Dr. Hampl was interviewed about childhood obesity treatment by nine national news outlets.
- **At a state level, Drs. Dreyer Gillette, Laroche and Hampl continued** participation in MOCAN and its healthcare workgroup, which Dr. Hampl co-chaired. CHLN member Dr. Sarah Behrens provided subject matter expertise on early relational health to both the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Family Advisory Council and the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel. CHLN member Dr. Lisa Mische-Lawson provided expertise related to disability and drowning prevention for the Kansas Unintentional Drowning Prevention Plan.
- **At the regional/local level, CHLN member Dr. Dana Bakula serves on the board of directors** for the Renewal, Empowerment, Support and Time in Kansas City organization. Dr. Stephanie Stancil presented talks on eating disorders and emerging treatments in youth to the Univ of Missouri-Kansas City Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence annual conference. Dr. Milkovich was interviewed by local public radio station KCUR about the AAP Digital Media policy statement.



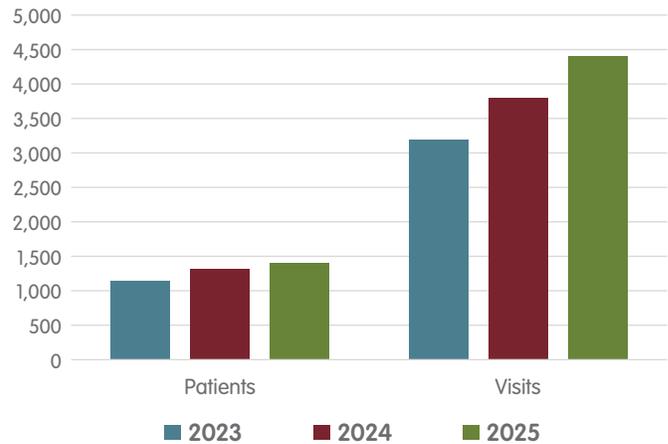
CLINICAL

Our clinical team continues to excel with clinical service, patient satisfaction, national recognition, and regional and local leadership in the areas of research, education and advocacy. With continued increase in demand for our services, we added two more Nurse Practitioners in October 2025 (for a total of 4) who will begin seeing patients independently in March of 2026. We are also interviewing for a new physician to add in 2026. Together, this should greatly increase our capacity to see more patients and improve access. We continue to see a high volume of referrals so that despite increased capacity, at the end of 2025 we still had over 1700 new referrals waiting for appointments. In addition to seeking more clinicians, we have continued education of the local, regional and national workforce in obesity medicine best practices to meet these needs. In 2025, we supported 10+ programs nationally through individual coaching and teaching. We continue to improve our transition program to safely allow patients to continue their current advanced weight management therapies as they transition out of pediatric weight management into adult care. We have done specialized advance obesity treatment and medication prescribing seminars co-led by our pharmacist and a physician for CMH subspecialist who also serve patients with obesity including Sleep, Endocrinology, Nephrology, and transplant Team in 2025. We have plans to include Hepatology, Adolescent Subspeciality, and Primary care (at both KU and CMH) in 2026. We also have an endocrinologist joining us in weight management 2 times per month (a former fellow we trained); this year we have the pediatric chief resident working with us weekly to increase her skills which she will take out into her primary care practice locally when she finishes in June.

“The care team at the weight loss management center was amazing. The initial assessment was comprehensive. By the time I left, we had a care plan already implemented. Thanks.”

—PARENT OF 13 YR OLD

Patient and Visit Volume

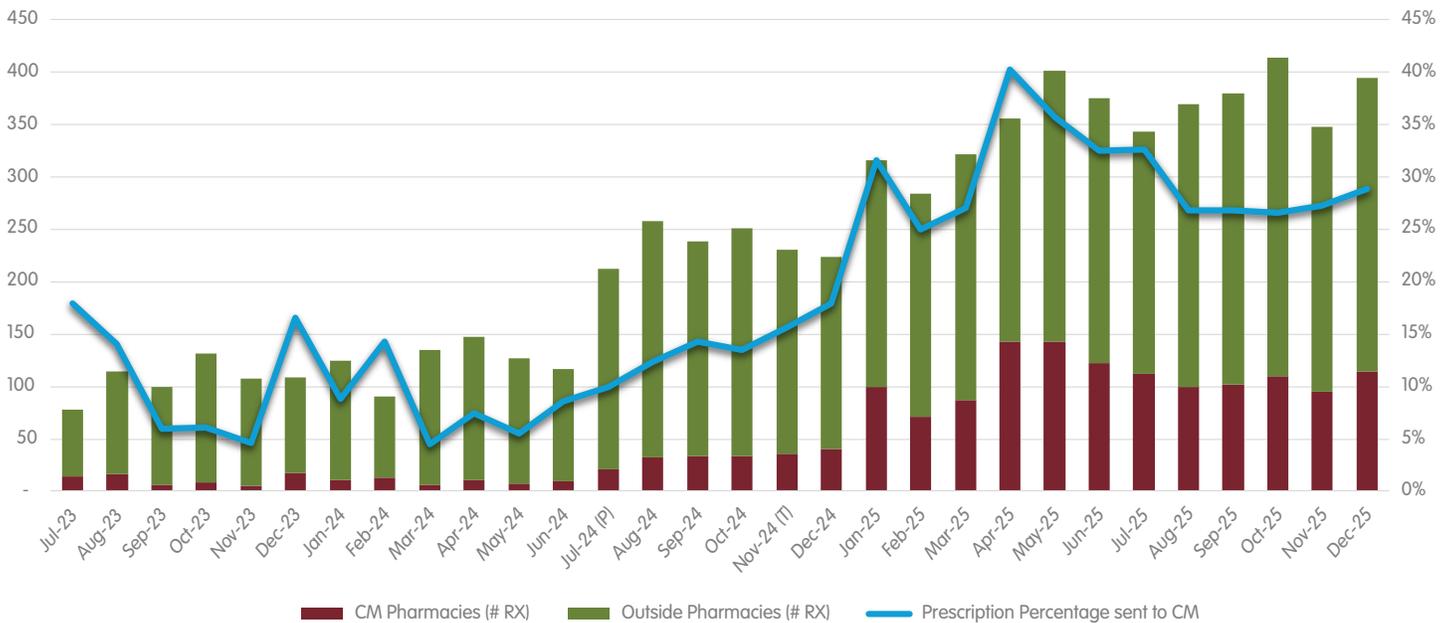


Our patient volumes continue to increase and in 2025 we managed 1400 patients seen in 4411 visits (see figure). We continue to see improvements in clinical processes through our multiple Quality Improvement projects. This year, projects have focused on the measurement of body composition in those pre and post bariatric surgery and on highly effective obesity medicines, especially GLP1s. We have now had our pharmacy technician and pharmacist with our team for over one year. This added support has led to improved insurance authorizations, better access to medications, and enhanced pharmacy support for medication selection, safety and efficacy. We have noted significant increase in prescribing of medications and a larger percentage of prescriptions sent to CMH pharmacies owing to the excellent service families receive from the pharmacy staff. Our team developed a packet of information for our patients starting GLP-1 Receptor Agonists, to assure adequate fluid, protein and vitamin intake, healthy routines and plans to minimize and address side effects. We continue to present our quality improvement projects nationally, including the 2025 Obesity Society meeting: the results of the post-surgery hydration project and the bio-impedance scale intervention.

Our net promoter score remained high at 93.3% compared to the CMH average of 87%, and we had an increase in our provider ratings from 91% (2024) to 95% (2025).

“I cannot say enough good things about the team. They treat my daughter with respect and kindness plus go above and beyond to build her up. We are so thrilled to be a part of this team’s care. I feel hope as her mother that there is a team with us on her health journey that will set her up to be successful and thrive!” Parent of 9 yr old

2023–2025 Weight Management Prescriptions



We continue to improve our family-based behavioral groups, keeping up with changes in the field of Obesity Medicine and the advent of highly effective obesity medications. Our ability to offer these intensive health behavior and lifestyle treatment options aligns with the AAP clinical practice guideline and is vital to comprehensive treatment given the scarcity of these types of programs nationally. Drs. Shook, Hampl, Dreyer Gillette and Laroche continue to work on a REACH grant from the CDC in partnership with investigators at UMKC that includes further cultural adaptation of our family-based behavioral treatment and training providers to implement this program at a local federally qualified health center. They have obtained additional funding to translate and culturally tailor the program for Spanish speaking families and to test the new Spanish curriculum in two groups of patients. Drs. Hampl (MPI), Dreyer-Gillette and Laroche are part of an NIH grant to train 30 federally qualified health centers throughout the state to provide family-based and individual behavioral treatment for child and adult obesity. Dr. Laroche has an R01 testing a combination of this family-based treatment with community health workers to improve engagement, retention and outcomes and examine parent bandwidth.

Clinical research continues to flourish. In 2025 we completed recruitment for a Phenotyping study (Sweeney, site PI) to further the field of personalized medicine in obesity care. We continue to recruit for the special needs weight management clinic registry (Dr. Dreyer Gillette, PI), a randomized clinical trial of setmelanotide for rare genetic disorders of obesity (Dr. Sweeney, Site PI), and a pilot on muscle changes in patients on GLP1 Receptor Agonists (Dr. Shook, PI). We began a collaboration with genomic medicine, pharmacogenetics, hepatology, and endocrinology to study outcomes and predictors of WM success including genetics for children on GLP-1s. Our collaboration submitted our first R01 in December. In addition, we collaborate with other areas, assist other Children’s Mercy researchers recruiting from our population, and have a standardized clinic recruitment process and training. Our research assistants and clinical trial coordinators are integrated into the clinical team, sharing in clinic huddles and team celebrations. Our clinical staff has continued to grow as a highly functioning team, allowing us to excel in direct service, while continuing to be national leaders in improving care for children with obesity through advocacy, education and research.

COMMUNITY

2025 Weighing In/Kansas City Healthy Lifestyles Collaborative Update Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyle and Nutrition Annual Report



KANSAS CITY HEALTHY LIFESTYLES COLLABORATIVE

2025 was a productive year for the **Kansas City Healthy Lifestyles Collaborative** (formerly Weighing In) program in achieving our strategic goals. Our mission is to align community programs to promote healthy lifestyles through collaborative community-based approaches. This positive impact in our community is perfectly envisioned in our ongoing initiatives, including the **Kansas City Physical Activity Plan** and the CDC project **Communities Leading Change**. Our team includes Research Associates Katy Eighmy, Natalie Updyke, MPH, Kelly Clay, MPH, and Director Robin Shook, Ph.D.

The Kansas City Physical Activity Plan

The **Kansas City Physical Activity Plan** remains our largest initiative and continues to grow in reach and impact. The Kansas City Physical Activity Plan is a comprehensive, multi-sector collaboration working to create safe and equitable opportunities to live an active lifestyle in our region. We have ten sectors (Early Childhood, Schools, Healthcare, Faith-Based settings, Parks and Recreation, Infrastructure, Sport, Marketing and Communications, Public Health and Business), with each sector led by a community partner. More information, including all meeting notes in the form of newsletters distributed to our community partners, can be found at kcphysicalactivityplan.org.

The Kansas City Physical Activity Plan granted its final round of **implementation grants** in 2025 to our community partners. Over a two-year period, we distributed \$110,783 to 25 organizations to support active living through Kansas City Physical Activity Plan strategy and tactic implementation.

A sample of the funded projects includes: two separate regional early childhood center training workshops- one on physical activity promotion and one on establishing gardens within childcare centers; the development of online physical activity training modules for health professionals; the creation of a University of Missouri- Kansas City School of Medicine Family Medicine clerkship focused on Exercise is Medicine; support for the “Safety Around Water” curriculum for all second graders at Stony Point North and South school (now under consideration for expansion to the entire Kansas City, KS school district); and funding research that demonstrated walking and biking rates doubled after bike and pedestrian amenities were added to Cleaver Blvd in Kansas City, MO. Our community partners highly valued these implementation grants, and we are now seeking funding for a new round of implementation grants for 2026.



We are at the halfway point of a 5-year \$3.6 million Centers for Disease Control and Prevention project titled “**Communities Leading Change: Advancing Capacity to Create Physical Activity and Nutrition Environmental and Systems Change.**” The purpose of the project is to: 1) Improve access and amenities in and around parks and school grounds in eastern KCMO, 2) Implement policy that result in community design changes to increase active transportation opportunities in eastern KCMO neighborhoods, 3) Improve the target area food system to increase fruit and vegetable access, 4) Increase fruit and vegetable consumption among families, 5) Support implementation to enhance and expand family healthy weight plan delivery to Swope Health clinics, and 6) Create community and clinical linkages to family healthy weight programming.



In 2025 we completed our two-year partnership with **Aspen Institute** for Kansas City to become the 14th Project Play city in the United States. In September 2024 we released **State of Play Kansas City**, a report detailing data collected over the previous 12 months through a 4,186-person youth survey, focus group discussions with young people, coaches, sports administrators and parents, existing reports and public data, and discussions with community members at the State of Play Kansas City Summit held in April 2024. In August 2025 we hosted a “Community Conversations Around Youth Sports” workshop with the Aspen Institute. Over 100 attendees heard a keynote address by the Positive Coaching Alliance, breakout sessions on “Communications—Power of Data for Advocacy” and “Holistic Coach Training and Development” featuring the Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative and Play Like a Champion Today, and a discussion on the Lasting Legacy from the World Cup 2026. We believe that this project will serve as a springboard for significant financial and programmatic investment in this area, and the Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition has an opportunity to lead many of these efforts. The full report can be found at projectplay.org/communities/kansas-city.

Also within the Kansas City Physical Activity Plan Sport Sector, in partnership with the Midwest Center for Non-Profit Leadership at the University of Missouri-Kansas, we recently completed a “systems map” of the youth physical activity environment in Kansas City. This effort identified 541 organizations providing 3,399 youth physical activity programs. Soccer is the most common sport offered, with

268 total programs, followed by swimming (247), dance (227), basketball (183), and baseball (157). We also collected important information on how each program fits within the larger youth physical activity ecosystem which we are now using to promote collaboration. We have made this information publicly available kcsportsdirectory.org, which features multiple searchable fields for families to easily find physical activity programs based on their needs and interests.

Throughout all of activities, the Kansas City Healthy Lifestyles Collaborative continued to carry out our “normal” work of **improving the capacity of our partners to support healthy lifestyles through convening, communication, and leadership**. This includes hosting working groups and quarterly meetings (155 total meetings hosted involving 1,143 individuals), communicating healthy lifestyle research and regional projects through 30 newsletters sent to our over >1,100 partners, holding leadership positions on regional committees/organizations (Missouri Council on Activity and Nutrition, BikeWalkKC, National Physical Activity Steering Committee, etc.) and disseminating our work at a variety local, national, and international meetings (e.g., National Strength and Conditioning Association, Active Living Conference) and in peer-reviewed publications (e.g., Childhood Obesity).



EDUCATION

CHLN supports education through several initiatives and efforts, including an ongoing seminar series of invited speakers, a postdoctoral fellowship program, and mentoring of students and junior faculty by numerous Center members. Many Center members work with undergraduate, masters, and/or Ph.D. students from various degree programs at KUMC, KU, KCU medical school, and UMKC, as well as medical fellows from Children's Mercy.

CHLN seminars are part of the broader Kansas City Diabetes, Obesity, and Nutrition Seminar (KC-DONS) series that spans the CHLN, KU Diabetes Institute, the Department of Dietetics & Nutrition at KUMC and the Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research at KUMC. This integrated KC-DONS series holds an educational seminar every week for the spring and fall semesters. CHLN sponsors one speaker each month, which includes Center members as well as experts from across the U.S. and around the world. In 2025, several new Center members and emerging investigators presented their work through this seminar series, including Dr. Danielle Christifano from KUMC and Drs. Matthew Chrisman, Nicholas Marchello, and Anita Skarbek from UMKC. Long-time Center member Dr. Robin Shook also presented on his recent work from his K award.

Notable outside KC-DONS speakers included Dr. Webb Smith (Le Bonheur Children's Hospital; University of Tennessee) who presented on "Treatment for Youth with Severe Obesity: The Role of Clinical Exercise Medicine in Anti-Obesity Medications and Bariatric Surgery," Dr. Kate Heelan (University of Nebraska at Kearney) who spoke on "Designing for dissemination: Key lessons learned from packaging a Pediatric Weight Management Intervention—Building Healthy Families—for implementation in rural and micropolitan communities—The Nebraska CORD 3.0 Project," Dr. Ryan Rhodes (University of Victoria) who spoke on "Promoting Child Physical Activity within the Family System: Current Evidence and Future Directions," Dr. Erik Willis (University of North Carolina), who presented on "Supporting Early Childhood Health in Child Care and Home Environments," Dr. Amanda Staiano (Pennington Biomedical Research Center) who presented on "Harnessing Screens to Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Weight Practices in Youth," and Dr. Mark Hopkins (University of Leeds) who spoke on "The Role of Lean Tissue in the Control of Appetite During Weight Stability and Weight Loss." We are grateful to all the presenters who took the time to share their expertise on behalf of the Center this past year.

We were thrilled to bring in Dr. Aaron Kelly (University of Minnesota) as our Kemper Healthy Lifestyles Lecture speaker, which allows us

to host a national expert for a "Grand Rounds" type presentation. Dr. Kelly delivered a fantastic presentation on "Disordered Eating and Risk for Eating Disorders in Treatment of Pediatric Obesity" and met with numerous Center members during his two-day visit. We had a great time with Dr. Kelly and are grateful for his collaboration and consultations.

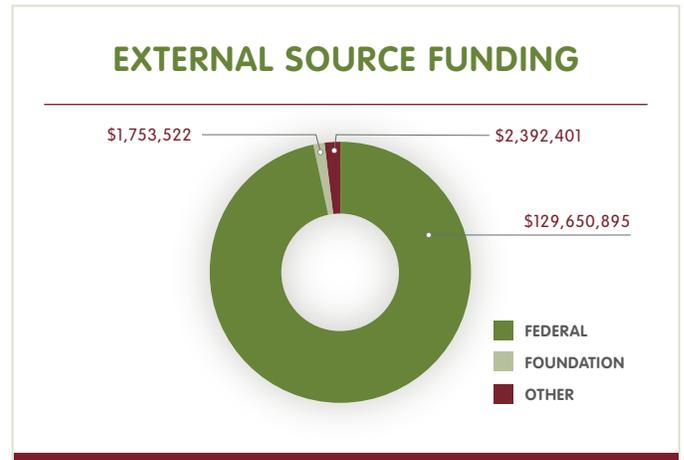
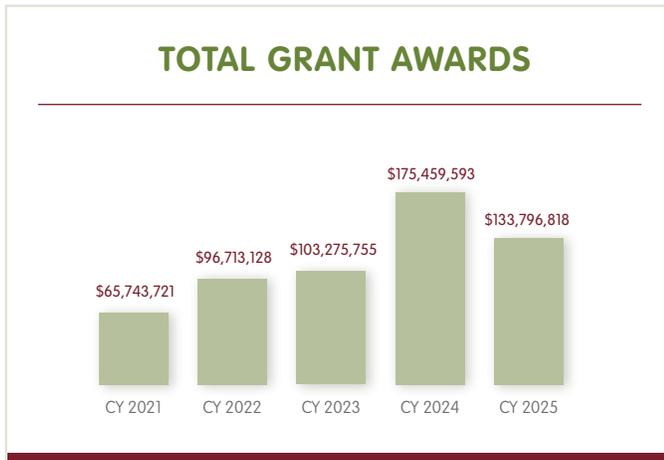
CHLN's postdoctoral fellowship program has continued and currently includes two postdoctoral fellows, one funded by the Kemper Fellowship and another funded by the Center; we also work with other fellows funded by individual investigators. CHLN postdocs work closely with their primary mentor, who supports the postdoc by providing guidance and opportunities, including working together on projects, publications, and other research and career development activities. Postdocs also network with other investigators and postdocs at both institutions (KUMC and Children's Mercy) to broaden and enhance their training experience. Postdocs work with their mentor to develop an Individualized Development Plan and Scholarly Oversight Committee to guide and personalize their training experience. CHLN connects each postdoc with ongoing meetings and seminars at KUMC and Children's Mercy that provide valuable opportunities for learning and career development, including through the cross-institution Frontiers Clinical & Translational Science Institute, the Children's Mercy's collective for Aspiring Scientists and Trainees for Research Advancement, and KUMC's T32 on Translating Obesity, Metabolic Dysfunction, and Comorbid Disease States. At the end of 2025, CHLN posted an ad for new postdoctoral fellows for 2026–2028 and received a very strong group of applicants. We are excited to continue the CHLN educational program with a new cohort of trainees.



RESEARCH

CHLN remains focused on increasing National Institutes of Health and other federal funding. CHLN continued to grow in this regard in 2025 as documented by the metrics below. As you can see, we continue to see impressive growth in our grant metrics, and our faculty continue to contribute publications in top tier journals, making important discoveries for our field.

TOTAL GRANT AWARDS IN 2025



TOP 10 GRANTS ACTIVE IN 2025

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	SPONSOR	TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	TOTAL
Eve-Lynn Nelson	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	KanAWARE	2022-09-30	2027-09-29	\$7,199,996
Christie Befort	National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Kansas Center for Implementation Science	2023-09-11	2028-08-31	\$6,886,397
Jordan Carlson	National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Characterization of Sedentary Patterns and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Markers in Hispanics/Latinos	2019-07-17	2026-06-30	\$5,960,344
Christie Befort	National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Rural Engagement in TelemedTeam for Options in Obesity Treatment Solutions (RE-TOOL)	2022-02-15	2027-01-31	\$4,445,165
Doug Wright	National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE)	2025-05-01	2026-04-30	\$4,051,579
Lauren Ptomey	National Institute on Aging (NIA)	The Promotion of Physical Activity for the Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease in Adults with Down Syndrome	2019-08-01	2025-04-30	\$3,948,074
Brenda Salley	The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	Kansas Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program	2021-07-01	2026-06-30	\$3,320,769
Lauren Ptomey	University of Kansas Center for Research (KUCR) [National Institute on Aging (NIA)]	A Dyadic Approach for a Remote Physical Activity Intervention in Adults with Alzheimer's Disease and their Caregivers	2019-09-15	2025-05-31	\$3,043,193
Ann Davis	National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)	iAmHealthy Parents First	2022-03-03	2026-12-31	\$3,018,591
Sandra Billinger	University of Southern California [National Institute on Aging (NIA)]	Model-based cerebrovascular markers extracted from hemodynamic data for diagnosing MCI or AD and predicting disease progression	2018-09-01	2025-05-31	\$2,741,732

HIGHEST IMPACT FACTOR PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATION	IMPACT FACTOR SCORE
Thiffault, I., Farrow, E., Barrett, C., Scott, M., Ross, A., Means, J. C., Cheung, W., Johnson, A., Koseva, B., McLennan, R., Grundberg, E. , Bi, C., Schwendinger-Schreck, C., Yoo, B., Johnston, J., Viso, F., Paolillo, V., Herriges, J., Zhang, L., Gibson, M., Cohen, A., Alaimo, J., Saunders, C. & Pastinen, T. (2025). Clinical long-read sequencing test for genetic disease diagnosis. <i>JAMA Pediatrics</i> , 179(12), 1355-1357. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.3320	26.1
Tilden, D. R., Befort, C. A. , Lockee, B., Wagemode, A., Williams, D., & Clements, M. A. (2025). Assessing Neighborhood Deprivation Reveals Rural-Urban Disparities in CGM Access Among Children With Type 1 Diabetes. <i>Diabetes Care</i> , 48(7), e88-e90. Doi: 10.2337/dc25-0077	16.2
Griebel-Thompson, A. K., Sands, S., Chollet-Hinton, L., Christifano, D., Sullivan, D. K., Hull, H. , Camargo, J. & Carlson, S. E. (2025). Maternal urinary fluoride levels of a large pregnancy cohort in the United States: findings from the ADORE study. <i>Environmental Health Perspectives</i> , 133(3-4), 047001. https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP14711	10.4
Nelson, E. L. , Punt, S., Stiles, R., & Cain, S. E. (2025). Community Health Workers: Bridge to Pediatric Mental Health Equity. <i>Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry</i> , 64(5), 541-546. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2024.07.917.	9.5
Bateh, K., Saurman, J., Bartsch, B., Xu, Y., Aboul-Nour, H., Hanson, A., Guan, E., Su, K., Bateh, A., Peterson, S., Billinger, S. , Nahab, F. & Hu, X. (2025). Abstract TP45: Advancements in Digital Cognitive Assessments for Post-Stroke Patients: A Scoping Review. <i>Stroke</i> , 56(Suppl_1), ATP45-ATP45. https://doi.org/10.1161/str.56.suppl_1.TP45	8.9
Adam, E. C., Gibler, R. C. , Beebe, D. W., Powers, S. W., Hershey, A. D., Kabbouche, M., Kacperski, J. & Reidy, B. L. (2025). Characterizing sleep, headache-related disability, and psychological functioning among adolescents with continuous headache: A pilot study from a tertiary clinical setting. Headache: <i>The Journal of Head and Face Pain</i> . https://doi.org/10.1111/head.14990	7.9
Smith, A. N., Sullivan, D. K., Herda, T. J. , & Taylor, M. K. (2025). Eight weeks of creatine monohydrate supplementation is associated with improvements in muscle size in Alzheimer's disease. <i>Alzheimer's & Dementia</i> , 21, e105967. https://doi.org/10.1002/alz70860_105967	6.9
Ponte, M. E., Prom, J. C., Newcomb, M. A., Jordan, A. B., Comfort, L. L., Hu, J., Puchalska, P., Koestler, D., Geisler, C., Hayes, M. & Morris, E. M. (2025). Reduced liver mitochondrial energy metabolism impairs food intake regulation following gastric preloads and fasting. <i>Molecular Metabolism</i> , 102167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molmet.2025.102167	6.6
Killian, H. J., Forseth, B., Bakula, D. M., Ptomey, L. , Glynn, E., Yeh, H. W., Davis, A. & Gillette, M. D. (2025). Weight Trajectories among Children with Down Syndrome: A Retrospective Study. <i>The Journal of Pediatrics</i> , 280, 114491. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114491	6.4
Lawrence, A. S., Materia, F. , & Villwock, J. A. (2025, March). Reply to: Correspondence for Article Titled "Age-Related Differences in Olfactory Training Outcomes: A Prospective Cohort Study". <i>International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology</i> (Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 365-366). https://doi.org/10.1002/alr.23552	6.4

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES



The Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition is located at 610 E. 22nd Street in Kansas City, Missouri, at the Donald Chisholm Center. It is a 14,000-square-foot facility designed to support clinical and bench research, individual clinical and group educational interventions and house faculty and research staff. The center’s 800-square-foot demonstration kitchen features four prep stations, each with a GE Profile refrigerator and microwave. The kitchen contains four oven/stove/exhaust hood combinations and two dishwashers. The 500-square-foot wet lab features extensive countertop space, an exhaust hood and an 80-degree freezer. Testing rooms contain an indirect calorimeter, treadmill and DXA among other equipment and services. Clinical exam rooms and a waiting room are also available. The Center’s 2,400-square-foot exercise facility features treadmills, stationary bicycles, elliptical trainers and weight machines and has a large area for group physical activity. Locker rooms, showers and laundry facilities are also available. The center provides conference room facilities for 10-50 attendees and a second room that can seat up to 50 as well as a physical activity measurement core. Many of our faculty office within Don Chisholm, but faculty and staff office in other spaces across KUMC and CMH campuses as well.

Our Scientific Advisory Board had four active members in 2025 from clinical, basic and translational work (see below). They participated in one annual meeting with our team in person in March and consulted with our teams throughout the year on specific projects.



SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



KARTIK SHANKAR, PH.D., DABT, is a professor of pediatrics, Section of Nutrition at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and assistant director for Basic Research, Lifecourse Epidemiology of Adiposity and Diabetes (LEAD) Center at the University of Colorado Denver-

Anschutz Medical Campus. Dr. Shankar and his lab conduct research leading to fundamental understanding of the role of maternal and early nutrition in development of obesity, metabolic disease and associated co-morbidities (2020–2027).



ELISSA JELALIAN, PH.D., is a professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior and Pediatrics at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Associate Director of The Miriam Hospital Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center and Director of Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral

Fellowship Training at Brown (2021–2028).



KYUNG (KAY) RHEE, M.D., MSC, M.A., FAAP, is a professor and Vice Chair of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at UC San Diego School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Chief of the Division of Child and Community Health, and Medical Director of the Medical Behavioral Unit at Rady

Children's Hospital San Diego and the UCSD Center for Healthy Eating and Activity Research (2023–2026).



MICHAEL W. BEETS, M.ED., MPH, PH.D., is a Carolina Distinguished Professor, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina; Director, Arnold Healthy Kids Initiative (<https://sph.sc.edu/acoii>); Associate Director, Research Center for Child Well-Being (<https://rccwb.sc.edu/>);

Director, Clinical Trials Logistics Core, Research Center for Child Well-Being; Fellow, Royal Society for Putting Things on Top of Other Things (2025–2028).

ACTIVE MEMBERS FOR 2025

Our final and most important section of our annual report lists each of our active members for 2025 and highlights their current peer reviewed publications and active external grant funding for the year. These are the people (listed alphabetically by last name) who are working every day to contribute to our five key programmatic areas, and we are very excited to highlight some of their key contributions from 2025.



BEN ALLEN, PH.D., is a faculty member in the Brain, Behavior, and Quantitative Program in the Department of Psychology at The University of Medical Center. He is interested in machine learning models for obesity, health disparities, and generally how the environment impacts health. Specifically, he uses explainable

artificial intelligence to open the black box of machine learning models to reveal new insights about the factors contributing to obesity.

Ongoing Research Support

University of Kansas

2024–2025

Fostering Research Expansion in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Publications

Descarpentrie, A., Esaian, S., **Allen, B.**, Espinoza, J., Midya, V., Young, N., Alderete, T. & Goran, M. I. (2025). Social and Behavioral Factors Associated With Diabetes in Southern California vs the US. *JAMA Network Open*, 8(10), e2538377-e2538377.



UDAYAN APTE PH.D., DABT, is a professor in the Department of Pharmacology, Toxicology and Therapeutics at KU Medical Center. Dr. Apte studies mechanisms of normal and abnormal cell proliferation in the liver. He is investigating mechanisms of hepatocyte proliferation during liver

development, liver regeneration and pathogenesis of liver cancers including hepatocellular carcinoma and hepatoblastoma (main liver cancer in the children). He is also investigating mechanisms of adverse effects of perfluoroalkyl substances on liver in children and adults. Finally, he is involved in a collaborative project with

Dr. Voytek Slowik, a member of CHLN, investigating mechanism of pediatric nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Dr. Apte utilizes cell specific transgenic mouse models of liver diseases and extensive next generation sequencing technology in his research work.

Ongoing Research Support

Investigator Assistance Program Award

Apte (PI)

10/01/2025–06/30/2025

Role of HNF4a in MASLD induced by CDE diet model

2024 Fall Enhancement Award

Apte (PI)

01/01/2025–10/30/2025

Role of HNF4a in Drug Induced Liver Injury

R01ES033709

Saini (PI)

04/01/2023–03/31/2028

Modulation of RNA Binding Proteins in Xenobiotic-induced Hepatotoxicity

Role: Co-Investigator

Health and Environmental Science Institute

04/2022–04/30/2025

Identifying biomarkers of chemical carcinogenesis

P20GM144269

Weinman and Thyfault (MPis)

03/01/2022–02/28/2027

Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research COBRE

Role: Core

Publications

Apte, U. (2025). Cell-to-cell signaling cross-talk in liver regeneration: A prostaglandin-Wnt axis. *Hepatology*, 82(1), 14-15. DOI: 10.1097/HEP.0000000000001090

Paine-Cabrera, D., Harvey, L. K., Pritchard, M. T., Thyfault, J., Artigues, A., **Apte, U.**, & Slowik, V. (2025). Proteomics Used in Identifying Novel Correlates of Disease in Pediatric Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease. *Clinical and Translational Science*, 18(6), e70271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cts.70271>

Bhushan, B., & **Apte, U.** (2025). Liver regeneration after acetaminophen overdose. In *Acetaminophen Toxicity* (pp. 143-163). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-15877-3.00016-8>

Apte, U. (2025). Liver regeneration. In *Regenerative Hepatology and Liver Transplantation* (pp. 297-305). Academic press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-823524-9.00017-4>



DANA BAKULA, PH.D., is a pediatric psychologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City in the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition. Her research interests center around the relationship between parent and child well-being among children with feeding disorders and other complex medical

conditions. She is particularly interested in interventions that promote parent mental health as a mechanism to improve parent and child well-being. She is conducting research on the benefits of brief parent mental health interventions in pediatric settings.

Ongoing Research Support

Daisy Foundation Award

Nash (PI)

06/01/2025–01/01/2027

Parent-Caregiver Experience Tube Weaning in the Home Setting: A Qualitative Comparative Case Study

Role: Co-Investigator

NIH/NIMH

Bakula (PI)

06/01/2024–06/01/2026

Promotion of Parent Mental Health within Pediatric Feeding Treatment

K23 MH133874

Bakula (PI)

05/01/2024–06/30/2028

Brief Mental Health Treatment for Parents of Children with Pediatric Feeding Disorder

Gerber Foundation

Bakula, Edwards, Erickson, and Edwards (MPIs)

07/2023–06/30/2026

Leveraging mHealth care model for pediatric enteral feeding tube weaning: CHAMP For the Feeder

Publications

Ricketts, A., **Bakula, D. M.**, Edwards, S., Nash, K., Escobar, A., Graham, R., Thompson, R., Bullard, S., Brogren, J., Feldman, K. & Erickson, L. A. (2025). Missed Opportunities in Pediatric Feeding Clinic: A Multivariate Analysis. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2025.07.001>

Bakula, D. M., Crump, N., Ryan Smith, T., & Goodwin, E. J. (2025). Enhancing Community Education on Family Caregiver Well-being Through Partnership. *Pediatrics*, 156(3), e2024070372. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2024-070372>

Dattilo, T. M., Traino, K. A., Creech, K. F., Biggs, T. A., Cherry, A. S., Zamudio, T., Johnson, M., Roth, A., Mullins, L. & **Bakula, D. M.** (2025). Childhood adversity and posttraumatic stress among caregivers of children admitted for inpatient rehabilitation: A preliminary report. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 13(4), 383-389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21694826251365261>

Bakula, D. M., Zax, A., Edwards, S., Nash, K., Escobar, A., Graham, R., Ricketts, A., Thompson, R., Bullard, S., Brogren, J., Shimmens, L. & Erickson, L. A. (2025). Applying the Nonadoption, Abandonment, Scale-Up, Spread, and Sustainability (NASSS) Framework to Adapt the CHAMP App for Pediatric Feeding Tube Weaning: Application and Case Report. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9, e67398. doi: 10.2196/67398

Killian, H. J., Forseth, B., **Bakula, D. M.**, Ptomey, L., Glynn, E., Yeh, H. W., Davis, A. & Gillette, M. D. (2025). Weight Trajectories among Children with Down Syndrome: A Retrospective Study. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 280, 114491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114491>

Bakula, D. M., Zax, A., & Dreyer Gillette, M. L. (2025). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for a Parent of a Child With Pediatric Feeding Disorder: A Case Study. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 13(1), 83-88. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpp0000549>



CAROLYN BATES, PH.D., is an assistant professor in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Sciences at KU Medical Center and a pediatric psychologist. Her research examines contextual influences on child health, with an emphasis on the role of the family in pediatric populations. Building on this work, she is interested in

developing interventions that improve health outcomes for youth with chronic illnesses by optimizing family functioning.

Ongoing Research Support

National Cancer Institute K08 Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award

09/15/2023–08/30/2028

Bates (PI)

University of Kansas Medical Center, Children's Mercy Kansas City
A Healthy Weight Intervention for Family Stress during the Early Phases of ALL Treatment: NOURISH-ALL

1R56NR021161-01

National Institute of Nursing Research

09/22/2023–07/31/2025

Nelson (PI)

Health Equity and Rural Education (HERE!) Clinical Trial: A Healthcare-Community Partnership Leveraging School-Based Community Health Workers to Improve Student Attendance
Role: Co-Investigator

R37CA302422

National Cancer Institute

9/01/2025–8/31/2030

McGrady (PI)

A Tailored Medication Adherence-Promotion Intervention for Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Bates, C. R., Van Asselt, A., Gilbert, R. M., Okuno, H., Dean, K. M., August, K. J., Befort, C., Stern, M. & Davis, A. M. (2025). Adaptation of family-based health promotion to pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia treatment: NOURISH-ALL. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 59(1), kaaf090. <https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaaf090>

Gilbert, R., Fleming, K., Alsmann, K., Granberg, R., Fulbright, J., Nelson, E. L., Lowry, B. & **Bates, C.** (2025). Treatment-related and social determinants of transition from pediatric to adult cancer survivorship care. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 21694826251319301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21694826251319301>

Bates, C. R., Gibson, S. M., Johnson, P. R., Hunt, S. L., Dyjak, P. M., Gibson, C. A., Sharkey, C. & Klages, K. L. (2025). Behavioral health interventions for pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia: a scoping review. *Frontiers in Oncology*, 15, 1697894. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fonc.2025.1697894>



CHRISTIE BEFORT, PH.D., is a professor at KU Medical Center and an associate director of Cancer Prevention & Control and co-leader of Cancer Control & Population Health Program at the KU Cancer Center. Dr. Befort's research focuses on developing and implementing behavioral weight control interventions to

improve cancer prevention, survivorship and quality of life. Most of her research is targeted for residents in rural communities and for cancer survivors. Her teaching interests include behavioral medicine, counseling skills, quality improvement, survey research and behavioral clinical trial research. Her belief is that learning is greatest when students experience high expectations and genuine enthusiasm from their instructor as well as a participatory and supportive learning environment.

Ongoing Research Support

NCI R01

Klemp & Greiner (MPIs)

2024–2029

KanSurvive 2.0: Improving cancer survivorship care in rural practice
Role: Co- Investigator

PCORI

Befort (PI)

2023–2026

Implementing Obesity Treatment in Primary Care Utilizing Evidence-Based Structure

P20 GM139733-01A1

Befort (PI)

09/11/2023–08/31/2028

Implementation Science and Equity Center for Biomedical Research Excellence

A COBRE to support junior faculty successfully transition to R01-level independent funding and to grow institutional capacity for implementation science aimed at promoting equity in health

PCORI

Holtrop & Nederveld (MPIs)

2023–2026

Implementing Obesity Treatment in Primary Care Utilizing Evidence-Based Structures

To examine implementation strategies for increasing adoption and sustainability of clinic-based obesity treatment within rural primary care settings based on the core components of our prior PCORI-funded successful trials

5R01NR019810

Davis (PI), Befort (MPI)

03/2022–12/2026

Putting Parents First in Rural Pediatric Obesity Treatment: A Randomized Clinical Trial of iAmHealthy Parents First

R01CA268034

Befort (PI)

02/2022–01/2027

Rural Engagement in TelemedTeam for Options in Obesity Treatment Solutions (RE-TOOL)

Publications

Greteman, B. B., Cole, A., Charlton, M. E., Shannon, J., Kepka, D., Paskett, E. D., Borrayo, E., Studts, J., Thompson, H., Scarinci, I., Hinton, L., Chrischilles, E., Garcia-Auguste, C., Christini, K., Aker, H., Plascak, J., Harper, F., Baskin, M., Bae, S., Pandya, V., Kim, Y., Faseru, B., **Befort, C.**, Kuo, H., Dignan, M., Canedo, J., Champion, V., Drake, B., Davis, K., Friedman, D., Elsaid, M., Mama, S. & Cohn, W. F. (2025). Cancer-related health behaviors during the COVID 19 pandemic in geographically diverse samples across the US. *BMC Cancer*, 25(1), 50. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12885-024-13373-5>

Jacobson, L. T., **Befort, C.**, Okut, H., Zackula, R., Dowling, J., Stern, J. E., Robbins, D., Wolfe, M., Kluding, P. & Grainger, D. A. (2025). Electronic Monitoring of Mom's Schedule (eMOMSTTM): A Feasibility Randomized Controlled Trial Targeting Postpartum Weight Retention

and Breastfeeding Duration Among Populations With Overweight/Obesity. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 41(1), 115-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08903344241297604>

Tilden, D. R., **Befort, C. A.**, Lockee, B., Wagemode, A., Williams, D., & Clements, M. A. (2025). Assessing Neighborhood Deprivation Reveals Rural-Urban Disparities in CGM Access Among Children With Type 1 Diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 48(7), e88-e90. Doi: 10.2337/dc25-0077

Radcliff, T. A., Côté, M. J., Shankar, M. N., Durning, P. E., Ross, K. M., Janicke, D. M., **Befort, C.**, Curran, L. & Perri, M. G. (2025). Cost-effectiveness of the rural lifestyle eating and activity program (Rural LEAP). *PLoS One*, 20(7), e0326383. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0326383>

Brown, A. R., Gajewski, B. J., Mayo, M. S., Ellerbeck, E. F., & **Befort, C. A.** (2025). Using Previous Longitudinal Group-Randomized Rural Weight-Loss Study Data to Design a Prospective Rural Weight-Loss Trial. *International Journal of Clinical Biostatistics and Biometrics*, 11(1), 058. <https://doi.org/10.23937/2469-5831/1510058>

Brown, A. R., Ellerbeck, E. F., Sullivan, D. K., Nelson, E. L., Klemp, J. R., Gajewski, B. J., Onge, J. & **Befort, C. A.** (2025). Protocol for the rural engagement in TelemedTeam for options in obesity treatment solutions (RE-TOOL): Cluster randomized trial investigating team-based telemedicine in rural primary care. *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications*, 101559. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2025.101559>

Bates, C. R., Van Asselt, A., Gilbert, R. M., Okuno, H., Dean, K. M., August, K. J., **Befort, C.**, Stern, M. & Davis, A. M. (2025). Adaptation of family-based health promotion to pediatric acute lymphoblastic leukemia treatment: NOURISH-ALL. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 59(1), kaaf090. <https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaaf090>



JANNETTE BERKLEY-PATTON, PH.D., is a professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Medicine Biomedical and Health Informatics Department, director of the UMKC Community Health Research Group, and the director of the UMKC Health Equity Institute. She is an expert in using

community-engaged approaches to develop and test culturally tailored health screening and linkage to care interventions to address African American health disparities including HIV/STDs, mental health, dementia, diabetes and COVID-19 in collaboration with community and health agency partners. Dr. Berkley-Patton has been honored with induction into the KU Women's Hall of Fame and the University of Missouri System Cross-Cultural Community Engagement Presidential Award and is appointed as the Merle and Muriel Hicklin Endowed Chair in Internal Medicine at the UMKC School of Medicine.

Ongoing Research Support
Contract # 0.5746
Jackson County (MO) Office
Berkley-Patton (PI)
01/1/2023–12/31/2026
Our Healthy Eastside–KC/Jackson County

Department of Transportation
Lightner & Grimes (PI)
01/2023–10/2026
Sustainability for Zero Fare Transit (Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Program)
Prime Award: Kansas City Area Transit Authority
Role: Co-Investigator

U01 MD018310-01
Berkley-Patton & Yvonne (MPIs)
11/01/2022–10/31/2025
Faithful Response II: COVID-19 Rapid Test-to-Treat with African American Churches

1R01DK132350-01
Berkley-Patton/Carlson (PI)
04/2022–01/2026
Health Impacts of City-Wide Zero-Fare Bus Transit: A Natural Experiment

Fellowship Award 4-22-PDFN-06
Materia (PI)
04/2022–03/2025
American Diabetes Association
Understanding African Americans' Adoption and Engagement with
mHealth for Lifestyle Modification to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes
Role: Collaborator

R01 DK124664-01
Berkley-Patton (PI)
4/2020–3/2025
Addressing Social Determinants of Health to Improve Diabetes
Prevention Program Outcomes Among Underserved
African Americans

Publications

Berkley-Patton, J., Thompson, C. B., Bauer, A. G., Berman, M., Christensen, K., Bradley-Ewing, A., Catley, D., Williams, E., Wainright, C., Derose, K., Geyer, A., Thompson, F., Dennis, L., Smith, S & Allsworth, J. E. (2025). HIV Testing in African American Churches: Results from the Taking It to the Pews Cluster-Randomized Trial. *AIDS and Behavior*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-025-04852-2>

Lightner, J. S., Vonnahme, G., Chesnut, S., Ziegler, N., Nguyen, N., Sylvaine, C., Snead, R., Carlson, J., **Berkley-Patton, J.**, Grimes, A. & Grimes, A. (2025). Funding for public transportation: results from a Midwest exit poll. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 31, 101433. doi:10.1016/j.trip.2025.101433

Derose, K. P., **Berkley-Patton, J.**, Thompson, C. B., Burgin, T., Hamilton-Burgess, C., Williams, E., Wainright, C., Simon, S. & Allsworth, J. E. (2025). Effects of a Faith-Based, Multilevel Intervention on HIV-Related Stigma and HIV Knowledge Among African American Church-Affiliated Populations. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-025-02436-3>

Drees, B. M., Chilamkuri, P., Nguyen, B., Elounais, R., Suzuki, S., Appelhans, B. M., Jacinda, N., Amanda, M., Powell, L. & **Berkley-Patton, J.** (2025). The Association between Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, or Cannabis and Metabolic Syndrome. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 49(1), 52-63. <https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.49.1.5>



GINA BESENYI, PH.D., MPH, is an associate professor and director of the Physical Activity Research in Community Settings (PARCS) Laboratory in the Department of Kinesiology at Kansas State University. Her research explores how built environments contribute to physical activity and population health. Within this broader field of

health promotion, she has a specific interest in the role of parks and nature, and how improvement of and active use of such community resources influences physical activity and reduces population risk of chronic disease (e.g., cardiovascular, cancer) and related mortality. As well, she has a specific interest in how innovative technology can be utilized within this public health research agenda to promote health equity.

Ongoing Research Support

Harold and Letha Reser Family and Community Innovation Award
Mailey (PI)
01/2026–12/2026
Dads Grounded: Helping Fathers Develop Strong Roots
Role: Co-Investigator

Johnson Cancer Research Center Undergraduate Research Award
Besenyi (PI)
01/2026–06/2026
Funded undergraduate student Sydney Nyp to work on the Walking in Nature and Nutrition (WINN) for Cancer Survivors Project

Johnson Cancer Research Center Innovative Research Award
Besenyi (PI)
01/2025–12/2025
Walking in Nature (WIN) for Cancer Survivors

1R34MH126043-01A1
Besenyi (PI)
03/2022–02/2025
Physical Activity to Reduce Cardiometabolic Risk in Adults with Serious Mental Illness (PARCS) Study

Frontiers Clinical & Translational Science Institute
Mailey (PI)
07/2024–06/2025
Integrating nature-based physical activity into mental healthcare:
Development of a toolkit and training intervention for university
counseling centers
Role: Co-PI

REI Cooperative Action Fund: Advancing Nature
and Health Evidence
Mailey (PI)
06/2024–05/2026
Can nature-based physical activity improve symptoms
of clinical depression and anxiety?
Role: Co-PI

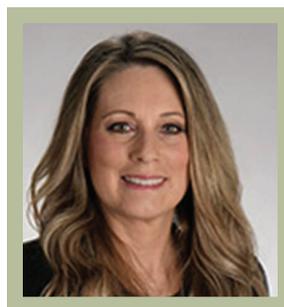
Publications

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., Chen, S., Stoepker, P., Hamilton, C.
N. B., **Besenyi, G. M.**, & Mailey, E. L. (2025). Beyond the Guidelines:
Exploring the Prevalence and Correlates of No-to-Low Moderate
to Vigorous Physical Activity Among US Adolescents. *Journal of
Physical Activity and Health*, 1(aop), 1-14. [https://doi.org/10.1123/
jpah.2025-0317](https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2025-0317)

Onanuga, O. A., **Besenyi, G. M.**, Kaup, M. L., Chen, Z., & Gabbard,
T. R. (2025). Housing Influences on Active Aging: Perspectives from
African Immigrant Elders in Chicago's South Side. *Journal of Healthy
Eating and Active Living*, 5(3), 199. [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.
gov/41255719/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41255719/)

Davis, C. L., Bell, H., Andrews, V., Stewart, J., de Seixas Soares, A.,
Weiser, J., Rico Martinez, E., Frazier, B., McEvoy, J. & **Besenyi, G. M.**
(2025). The PARCS Pilot Study Randomized Controlled Trial: Feasibility
and Acceptability of a Park-Based Exercise Program Led by Peer
Specialists for Peers with Serious Mental Illness. *Journal of Healthy
Eating and Active Living*, 5(2), 146. [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.
gov/40909368/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40909368/)

Streetman, A. E., Durtschi, J., **Besenyi, G. M.**, & Mailey, E. L. (2025).
Helping clients overcome barriers to physical activity: a theory-
based approach for mental healthcare providers. *Psychology,
Health & Medicine*, 1-16. [https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2025.2
465653](https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2025.2465653)



**SANDRA BILLINGER, PH.D., PT,
FAHA**, is a professor at KU
Medical Center. Dr. Billinger leads
the Research in Exercise and
Cardiovascular Health Laboratory
and is assistant director of the
Imaging Core and the
Neurovascular Division Director of
the KU Alzheimer's Disease
Center. She is an internationally

renowned speaker on exercise testing and interventions in people
living with stroke. Dr. Billinger has received continuous grant funding
from internal and external funding sources including NIH, American
Heart Association and the American Physical Therapy Association.
Dr. Billinger has mentored numerous graduate students,
postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty at the local, national and
international level. Dr. Billinger received the Stata Norton Teaching
Award and the KU Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award in
2016. Dr. Billinger served as president of KU Medical Center's
Women in Medicine and Science group from 2013–2017.

Ongoing Research Support

KU Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Pilot Grant
Hull (PI)

2024–2025
ADORE Brain
Role: Co-Investigator

T32AG078114
Vidoni (PI)
08/01/2022–07/31/2027
Multidisciplinary Research Training Program in Alzheimer's Disease
and Related Disorders
Role: Co-PI

R61AG078087
Martin (PI)
2022–2027
Guided Episodic Future Thinking to Increase Physical Activity
Adherence and Promote Healthy Brain Aging
Among Mid-Life Adults
Role: Co-Investigator

5T32AG078114-02
Burns(PI)
08/01/2022–07/31/2027
Title: Multidisciplinary Research Training Program in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders
Role: PI

P30 AG053982
University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
(KU ADRC)
2021–2026
Role: Other Significant Contributor

R01NR018979
Klingman (PI)
09/16/2020–06/30/2025
The SLEEP study: Sleep Effects on Post-stroke Rehabilitation
Role: Site PI

University of Southern California
2018–2025
Model-based Cerebrovascular Markers Extracted from Hemodynamic Data for Diagnosing MCI or AD and Predicting Disease Progression
Role: Site PI

Publications

Bateh, K., Saurman, J., Bartsch, B., Xu, Y., Aboul-Nour, H., Hanson, A., Guan, E., Su, K., Bateh, A., Peterson, S., **Billinger, S.**, Nahab, F. & Hu, X. (2025). Abstract TP45: Advancements in Digital Cognitive Assessments for Post-Stroke Patients: A Scoping Review. *Stroke*, 56(Suppl_1), ATP45-ATP45. https://doi.org/10.1161/str.56.suppl_1.TP45

Bartsch, B. L., Whitaker, A. A., Oloyede, S., Waghmare, S., & **Billinger, S. A.** (2025). Feasibility of a Recumbent Stepper for Short-Interval, Low-Volume High-Intensity Interval Exercise in Stroke. *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy*, 49(2), 82-89. https://journals.lww.com/jnpt/abstract/2025/04000/feasibility_of_a_recumbent_stepper_for.4.aspx#:~:text=DOI%3A%2010.1097/NPT.0000000000000482

Palmer, J. A., Kaufman, C. S., Whitaker-Hilbig, A. A., & **Billinger, S. A.** (2025). APOE4 carriers display loss of anticipatory cerebrovascular regulation across the Alzheimer's disease continuum. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(5), e70229. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70229>

Marmarelis, V., **Billinger, S.**, Joe, E., Shin, D., Hashem, S., Rizko, J., Hazen, E., Cardim, D., Burns, J., Zhang, R. & Chui, H. C. (2025). Dysregulation of cerebral perfusion dynamics is associated with Alzheimer's disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring*, 17(3), e70134. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dad2.70134>

Pressler, D., Schwab-Farrell, S. M., Reisman, D. S., **Billinger, S. A.**, & Boyne, P. (2025). Effects of maximal speed locomotor training on spatiotemporal gait changes in individuals with chronic stroke: A secondary analysis of a randomized controlled trial. *Gait & Posture*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaitpost.2025.07.325>

Garrity, C., Reisman, D. S., **Billinger, S. A.**, Pressler, D., Wagner, E., Awosika, O., Bartsch, B., Britton-Carpenter, A., Carl, D., Engler, A., Foster, J., Kim, J., McCartney, K., Moores, A., Sucharew, H., Thompson, E., Walters, K., Wasik, E., Wright, H., Yeazell, M. & Boyne, P. (2025). Protocol for the HIT-Stroke Trial 2 randomized controlled trial: Moderate-intensity exercise versus high-intensity interval training to determine the optimal training intensity for walking rehabilitation in chronic stroke. *medRxiv*, 2025-07. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2025.07.30.25332470v1#:~:text=https%3A//doi.org/10.1101/2025.07.30.25332470>

Boyne, P., Miller, A., Schwab-Farrell, S. M., Sucharew, H., Carl, D., **Billinger, S. A.**, & Reisman, D. S. (2025). Training parameters and adaptations that mediate walking capacity gains from high-intensity gait training post-stroke. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 10-1249. DOI: 10.1249/MSS.00000000000003691

Norling, A. M., Lipsitz, L. A., Dufour, A. B., Trivison, T. G., Sewell, K. R., Collins, A. M., Wan, L., Grove, G., Huang, H., Oberlin, L., Jian, S., Karikari, T., Morris, J., Jakicic, J., McAuauley, E., Kramer, A., Hillman, C., Vidoni, E., **Billinger, S.**, Burns, J., Marsland, A., Kang, C. & Erickson, K. I. (2025). Arterial stiffness moderates the link between NFL and cognition: The IGNITE study. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(8), e70554. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70554>

Garrity, C., Reisman, D. S., **Billinger, S. A.**, Carl, D., & Boyne, P. (2025). Effects of ignoring anaerobic contributions when measuring change in the energy cost of walking in chronic stroke. *medRxiv*, 2025-08. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.08.13.25333627>

Gupta, A., Pires, P. W., **Billinger, S. A.**, Carmichael, S. T., Cortes, C. J., Daneman, R., Hu, X., Kaufer, D., Levendovszky, S., Sorond, F., Stillman, C., Tarantini, S., Wilcock, D., Williamson, J., Yabluchanskiy,

A., Elahi, F. & Zuloaga, K. L. (2025). From dark horse to front-runner: vascular contributions to brain health: Proceedings of the 2022 annual workshop of the Albert research institute for white matter and cognition. *GeroScience*, 47(5), 6191-6201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11357-025-01840-1>

Palmer, J. A., & **Billinger, S. A.** (2025). APOE4 carriers resistant to cognitive decline show unique relationships between cerebrovascular response to exercise and dual-task cognitive-balance performance. *bioRxiv*, 2025-09. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.09.30.679544>

Leavens, E. L., Wagener, T. L., Lambart, L., Mayo, M. S., Brown, L., Ellerbeck, E. F., **Billinger, S.**, Comfort, B., Woodward, J., Sear, B., Beaman, S., Cox, L. & Nollen, N. L. (2025). E-cigarette puff topography instruction to enhance switching among COPD patients who smoke. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 13, 1664400. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1664400>

Saver, J. L., Duncan, P. W., Stein, J., Cramer, S. C., Fox, E. J., Zorowitz, R. D., **Billinger, S.**, Eickmeyer, S., Kirshblum, S., Androwis, G., Edwards, J., Savitz, S., Koch, S., Shall, M., Black-Schaffer, R., Bonato, P., Cuccurullo, S., Barcikowski, J., Cao, N., Bornstein, N. & EMAGINE 1 Trial Investigators. (2025). Electromagnetic Stimulation to Reduce Disability After Ischemic Stroke: The EMAGINE Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Network Open*, 8(10), e2537880-e2537880. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.37880

Billinger, S. A., Vidoni, E. D., Motwani, K., Bartsch, B. L., Baldrige, T., Walker, M., & Shojaie, A. (2025). Age alters integrated cerebrovascular and cardiovascular dynamic responses to exercise: insights from a systems modeling approach. *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 139(6), 1447-1461. <https://doi.org/10.1152/jappphysiol.00393.2025>



AMY BODDE, PH.D., MPH, is a research assistant professor of Physical Activity & Weight Management at KU Medical Center. Dr. Bodde's primary focus is the evaluation of physical activity promoting interventions for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She is currently

assessing the effect of physical activity on functional fitness, activities of daily living and caregiver impacts for young adults with Down syndrome. She is also using qualitative assessments to explore the experiences of parent caregivers of adults with Down syndrome as they face aging related declines.

Ongoing Research Support

R01HD116832

Donnelly (PI)

01/2025–12/2029

Cooking skills to improve long-term weight loss in young adults with intellectual disabilities

Role: Co-Investigator

Frontiers CTSI

Bodde (PI)

2025–Present

It's time to THRIVE: Translating Healthy lifestyle Research in Intellectual disability with Virtual Engagement

Frontiers CTSI

Bodde (PI)

2025–Present

CHIP-ID at Sherwood

KUMC Implementation Science for Equity Center

Forseth & Bodde (PI)

2024–Present

CareWell Community

1U01HD116477

Ptomey (MPI)

09/17/2024–05/31/2029

Metabolic Health, Lifestyle, and Risk of Co-Occurring Health Conditions in Down Syndrome (MET-DS)

Role: Co-Investigator

KL2TR002367

Noleen (PI)

07/01/2024–09/07/2027

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute at University of Kansas–Institutional Career Development Core-
INCLUDE Supplement
Role: Co-Investigator

5R33AG078967

Ptomey (PI)

09/2022–08/2026

The Impact of Weight Loss on Alzheimer’s Disease Risk in Adults with
Down Syndrome
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Helsel, B. C., Sherman, J. R., **Bodde, A. E.**, Washburn, R. A., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). A Comparison of commonly used prediction equations for estimating resting metabolic rate in adults with Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 69(5), 428-436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.13215>

Clina, J. G., **Bodde, A. E.**, Chang, J., Helsel, B. C., Sherman, J. R., Vidoni, E. D., Williams, K., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Factors Associated With Physical Activity in Alzheimer’s Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study of Individuals and Their Caregivers. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 08982643251318766. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643251318766>

Montgomery, R. N., **Bodde, A. E.**, & Vidoni, E. D. (2025). Jointly assessing multiple endpoints in pilot and feasibility studies. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research*, 34(3), 561-573. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09622802241311219>

Ptomey, L. T., Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R. A., Montgomery, R. N., Krebill, R., Danon, J. C., Shermna, J., Forsha, D., **Bodde, A.**, Szabo-Reed, A., Gorczyca, A. & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). The promotion of physical activity for use in Alzheimer’s disease prevention trials in adults with Down syndrome: Results from a 12-month randomized trial. *Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(2), e70115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70115>

Hilgenkamp, T., **Bodde, A.**, Mann, S., Helsel, B., Sherman, J., Danon, J., & Ptomey, L. (2025). Successful Online Exercise Intervention Studies for Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities Including Down

Syndrome: Best Practices and Recommendations. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(3), e70080. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70080>

Bodde, A. E., Brooks, J. V., Forseth, B., Wolfe, T., Williams, K., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Caregiving for Adults With Down Syndrome: Caregiver Experiences and Support Needs. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(5), e70118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70118>



ANDREA BRADLEY-EWING, MPA, M.A., is the director of community-engaged research in the Division of Health Services and Outcomes Research at Children’s Mercy Kansas City. Ms. Bradley-Ewing is primarily interested in engaging patients and members of the community in the design, development,

implementation and dissemination of health science research. Ms. Bradley-Ewing has collaborated extensively with researchers, health care providers, patients and families and community organizations to develop and test effective individual and community level strategies to promote health behavior change, particularly in underserved communities. Ms. Bradley-Ewing’s current research involves establishing partnership networks between academic health researchers, patients and community members to improve health outcomes.

Ongoing Research Support

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Research Broderick Crawford
Community Research Partnership

Lipprand (PI)

Building a Community-Research Partnership to Improve Lupus Care
Role: Co-Investigator

Masonic Cancer Alliance

Bradley Ewing (PI)

01/01/25–12/31/26

University of Kansas Cancer Center

Engaging Latinx populations in pediatric cancer research

1R01DK139363-01

Laroche (PI)

04/01/24–01/13/2027

Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Child Obesity Treatment Using Community Health Workers: The Role of Parental Bandwidth in Treatment Effectiveness- Feasibility Study for Full Scale RCT
Role: Co-Investigator

Noah's Bandage Project

Bradley Ewing (PI)

08/01/23–07/31/26

Increasing Diversity in Pediatric Cancer Trials: Noah's Legacy

Janssen/Johnson and Johnson Race to Health Equity Award

Bradley Ewing (PI)

05/1/23–04/30/26

Increasing Diversity in Pediatric Cancer Trials: Noah's Legacy

Eugene Washington Capacity Building Award

Bradley Ewing (PI)

03/1/23–02/28/25

Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute

Addressing Disparities in African American Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

U01MD018310

Berkeley-Patton (PI)

11/1/21–10/31/25

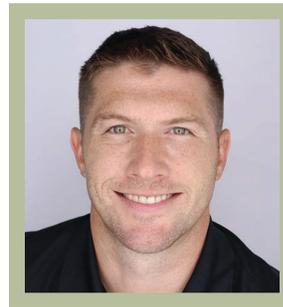
Faithful Response II: COVID-19 Rapid Test-to-Treat with African American Churches

Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Berkley-Patton, J., Thompson, C. B., Bauer, A. G., Berman, M., Christensen, K., **Bradley-Ewing, A.**, Goggin, K., Catley, D., Williams, E., Wainright, C., Derose, K., Geyer, A., Thompson, F., Dennis, L., Smith, S. & Allsworth, J. E. (2025). HIV Testing in African American Churches: Results from the Taking It to the Pews Cluster-Randomized Trial. *AIDS and Behavior*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-025-04852-2>

Berrios, C., Basey, T., **Bradley-Ewing, A.**, Daniels-Young, S., Lewis, D., Feldman, K., Moffatt, M., Pastinen, T. & Grundberg, E. (2025). Black community member perceptions and ethics recommendations on epigenomic research. *Clinical Epigenetics*, 17(1), 33. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13148-025-01840-0>



DENVER BROWN, PH.D., is

currently an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Kansas State University. He completed his Ph.D. in Kinesiology at McMaster University and then went on to complete Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Mental Health and Physical Activity Research Centre at the University of Toronto

and the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster University. The overarching goal of Dr. Brown's research program is to improve the health and well-being of children and youth through helping them to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles. Given the complex challenges of accomplishing this goal, he works at the intersection of multiple disciplines, including but not limited to: exercise psychology, behavioral medicine and time-use epidemiology. His current research focuses primarily on two streams of inquiry directed towards: 1) application and refinement of theories/models used for understanding physical activity maintenance with an emphasis on post-intentional processes such as identity and habit; and 2) understanding how physical activity and other movement behaviors (i.e., sleep and sedentary behavior) that we engage in over the course of a whole day interact to influence mental health symptomology as a complex dynamic system.

Ongoing Research Support

Kansas IDEa Network of Biomedical Research Excellence

Developmental Research Project Program Award

Brown (PI)

2025–2027

Using Network Science to Examine Temporal Relationships Between 24-Hour Movement Behaviors and Depression During the Transition to College

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Kwam (PI)

2025–2029

Sustaining physical activity during Transition into Emerging Adulthood: examining motivational and real-time factors impacting Daily-assessed behaviors-Project STEADY

Role: Co-Investigator

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Kwan (PI)
2025–2030
Building a Pan-Canadian Community of Practice: The Creating Opportunities through Physical Literacy for All Newcomer children and Youth (CO-PLAY) Network
Role: Collaborator

1R01AG086310-01A1
Golob (PI)
2025–2029
Testing mechanisms for relations between high-level cognition and perception in normal aging
Role: Co-Investigator

Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Maternal Child Health Block Grant
Stoepker (PI)
2025–2026
Examining the effectiveness of a data coaching proves to increase child physical activity, perceived motor competence, and staff physical activity promoting practices: A randomized controlled Trial
Role: Co-Investigator

Kansas State University
College of Health and Human Sciences Pilot Project Award
Brown & Stoepker (MPIs)
2025–2026
Context Matters: Exploring Physical Activity Patterns Among Rural-Dwelling Children and Youth

Kansas State University
Big 12 Faculty Fellowship
Brown (PI)
2025–2026

University of Texas at San Antonio: College for Health, Community and Policy Pilot Grant
Francis (PI)
2024–2025
Early detection of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy using biomarkers and biosensors
Role: Co-PI

Publications

Chen, S., **Brown, D.**, Pfladderer, C. D., Huang, W. Y., & Tremblay, M. S. (2025). Temporal trends of no moderate to vigorous physical activity in adolescents: a 16-year trend analysis of 115,926 participants. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-025-01862-0>

Teague, F., Munn, C., Kandasamy, S., Gordon, L., Gillett, J., **Brown, D. M.**, & Kwan, M. Y. (2025). The Archway program: a qualitative exploration of a support program for first-year University students during COVID-19. *Academia Mental Health and Well-Being*, 2(4). <https://www.doi.org/10.20935/MHealthWellB8021>

Fairclough, S. J., Clifford, L., Banks, J., Edwards, P., Gilmour, A. M., Tyler, R., **Brown, D.**, Rowlands, A. & MacDonald, M. (2025). Seasonal changes in the volume and intensity of children's school year physical activity. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7122314/v1>

Schwartzkopf, K., Arraiga, S., Mailey, E., **Brown, D. M.**, & Stoepker, P. (2025). OST-Coach: Impact of a Data-Coaching Process on Staff Physical Activity Promoting Behavior. *Health Education & Behavior*, 10901981251399128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981251399128>

Kracht, C. L., **Brown, D. M.**, Gorczyca, A. M., Jakicic, J. M., Szabo-Reed, A., Washburn, R., & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). Association Between Wake-Time Movement Behaviors and Weight Loss Maintenance. *Obesity*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.70082>

Pfladderer, C. D., Mullane, E. J., **Brown, D. M.**, Burkart, S., Hunt, E. T., Johnson, A., Parker, H. & Salvo, D. (2025). Five-year trends in US child and adolescent 24-hour movement behavior guideline adherence, 2018–2022. *Journal of Activity, Sedentary and Sleep Behaviors*, 4(1), 16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s44167-025-00086-8>

Brown, D. M., Meca, A., & Osman, A. (2025). Development of the multidimensional inventory of physical activity identity. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 102990. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2025.102990>

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., Chen, S., Stoepker, P., Hamilton, C. N. B., Besenyi, G. M., & Mailey, E. L. (2025). Beyond the Guidelines: Exploring the Prevalence and Correlates of No-to-Low Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity Among US Adolescents. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 1(aop), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2025-0317>

Bourke, M., **Brown, D.**, & Kwan, M. Y. (2025). Lifestyle Behavior Patterns During the Transition From Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood: Associations With Mental Health and Wellbeing. *Emerging Adulthood*, 13(6), 1381-1394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968251376750>

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., Stoepker, P., Chong, K. H., Kracht, C. L., & Fairclough, S. J. (2025). Device-independent Physical Activity metrics and adiposity-related indicators among children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 43(21), 2551-2564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2025.2540663>

Brown, D. M., Wing, D., Pfladderer, C. D., Stoepker, P., Fairclough, S. J., & Carlson, J. A. (2025). Considerations in using heart rate-based physical activity estimates from consumer wearables in individuals with varying weight status. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 22(1), 106. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-025-01801-z>

Maher, J. P., Jochim, A., Seo, Y., Hudgins, B. L., Khan, I. F., Greco, P. A., Postlethwait, E., Patel, O., Leonard, K., Yang, C-H. & **Brown, D. M.** (2025). Longitudinal associations between waking movement behaviors and health-related quality of life in older adults: a compositional data analysis approach. *Journal of Activity, Sedentary and Sleep Behaviors*, 4(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s44167-025-00080-0>

Wang, S., Yang, C. H., **Brown, D.**, Cheng, A., & Kwan, M. Y. (2025). Participant compliance with ecological momentary assessment in movement behavior research among adolescents and emerging adults: systematic review. *JMIR mHealth and uHealth*, 13(1), e52887. <https://doi.org/10.2196/52887>

St. Germain, L., McKay, B., Barbera, L., Tandon, C., Seedu, J., Carrillo, C., **Brown, D.** & Carter, M. J. (2025). Autonomy-supportive instructional language does not enhance skill acquisition compared to controlling instructional language. *Psychological Research*, 89(1), 26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-024-02059-z>



AMANDA BRUCE, PH.D., is an assistant professor at KU Medical Center and a pediatric obesity researcher. She uses functional neuroimaging (fMRI) to research how the brain is involved in childhood obesity. She is also interested in the ability to delay gratification and how this contributes to obesity.

Ongoing Research Support

R01DK126050

Keller (PI)

2021–2025

Characterizing resilience to food-cute induced overeating in children

Role: Co-investigator

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

2023–2025

Integrating CF-CBT into CF team based mental health care: A

Randomized implementation trial

Role: Co-investigator

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Success with Therapeutics Research Committee

Bruce (PI)

2021–2025

Exploring Attitudes Toward Nutrition (EATN)

Publications

Bruce, A. S., Crespi, J. M., Hayes, D. J., Lagoudakis, A., Lusk, J. L., Schreiber, D. M., & Wu, Q. (2025). Differential brain activations between Democrats and Republicans when considering food purchases. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 44(1), 60-76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.2>

Friedman, D., Mullen, T. M., Behrman, M., Nikravan, L., Chaudhary, N., Wei, R., Georgiopoulos, A., Yonker, L., He, J., Chadwick, A., Greenberg, J. & **Bruce, A. S.** (2025). "How Do You Live the Best Life You Can With This Pain?" A Qualitative Study of Adults Living With CF and Pain in the Modulator ERA. *Pediatric Pulmonology*, 60(4), e71087. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppul.71087>

Friedman, D., Quittner, A. L., He, J., Chaudhary, N., Mullen, T. M., **Bruce, A. S.**, Sher, Y., Smith, B. & Georgiopoulos, A. M. (2025). Preliminary Psychometric Characteristics of the Cystic Fibrosis Coping Self-Efficacy (CF-CSE) Scale. *Pediatric Pulmonology*, 60(6), e71164. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppul.71164>

Powers, K. E., Bustos, A., McCoy, J., Reid, E., Scallorn, E., Robichaud, J., & **Bruce, A. S.** (2025). Review of Disordered Eating Behaviors in Cystic Fibrosis. *Life*, 15(9), 1355. <https://doi.org/10.3390/life15091355>

Bruce, A. S., Suttiratana, S. C., Grabowski, H., Sweeney, L., Ward, A., Mazuera, S., Alvarez, J, Yablon, D. & Naranjo, D. (2025). "All my food is customized*": Barriers & facilitators concerning nutrition for persons living with cystic fibrosis. *Journal of Cystic Fibrosis*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcf.2025.07.012>

Shook, R. P., Lim, S. L., **Bruce, A. S.**, Philips, T. C., Halpin, K. L., Davis, A. M., Donnelly, J., Blundell, J. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Associations between physical activity, adiposity, appetite and metabolic health in adolescent males. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114525105370>

Bruce, A. S., Mullen, T. M., Behrman, M., Robichaud, J., Wei, R., Chaudhary, N., Georgiopoulos, A., Yonker, L., He, J., Chadwick, A. Greenberg, J. & Friedman, D. (2025). Patient-centered development of a cognitive behavioral pain intervention for cystic fibrosis: The PACE CF program. *Pain Medicine*, pnaf167. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pm/pnaf167>



DAVE BURNETT, PH.D., RRT, WAE-C, is an associate professor at KU Medical Center. He is the chair of the Department for Respiratory Care Education and co-director of the KU Asthma Center. Dr. Burnett's primary research interests involve investigating treatment strategies for exercise induced

bronchoconstriction (EIB) and asthma. His current research activity is steeped in collaboration among asthma stakeholders in order to achieve a better understanding on approaches for improving the burden of EIB and asthma.

Ongoing Research Support

Resources and Services Administration
07/2024–Current

This project will use a statewide Age-Friendly Health Systems Action Community and reciprocal partnership between academia and primary care sites/delivery systems (including nursing homes), and community organizations serving older adults in rural and/or underserved KS to improve the health of older adults
Role: co-lead on clinical Health

Health Resources and Services Administration
Burnett (PI)
09/2023–Current

This project supports the health careers opportunity program (HCOP), with a focus on developing a rural scholars program.

Burnett (PI)
08/2022–Current

Health Resources and Services Administration
This project is a health care workforce training grant focusing on specialty training for interdisciplinary clinicians in rural communities to treat Long-COVID for underrepresented populations



JORDAN CARLSON, PH.D., M.A.,

is Director of Community-Engaged Health Research at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and is also the Associate Director of the Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition; Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. His research interests include

active living, school-based physical activity, neighborhood walkability, improving uptake and implementation of physical activity interventions, and physical activity measurement technology.

Ongoing Research Support

R01DK139363

National Institutes of Health Laroche (PI)

04/01/2024–01/31/2027

Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness-feasibility study for full-scale RCT

Role: Co-Investigator

R01HL168535

National Institutes of Health Natarajan (PI)

12/10/2023–11/30/2027

Leveraging deep learning to classify sitting posture and measure sedentary patterns from accelerometer data in diverse cohorts

Role: Co-Investigator and subcontract PI

O.5506

Jackson County

Berkley & Patton (MPIs)

10/01/2023–12/31/2025

Our Healthy Jackson County (OHJC): Addressing COVID-19 and Social Determinants on KC Eastside

Role: Co-Investigator

K08CA279877

Bates (PI)

09/15/2023–08/31/2028

A Healthy Weight Intervention for Family Stress during the Early Phases of ALL Treatment: NOURISH-ALL

Role: Advisor

K01DA056698

Wagner (PI)

07/15/2022–6/30/2026

Vending machine Naloxone Distribution for Your community (VENDY): Increasing reach and implementation of naloxone distribution

Role: Co-Mentor

R01DK132350

Berkley-Patton & Carlson (MPIs)

04/15/2022–01/31/2026

Health impacts of city-wide zero-fare bus transit: a natural experiment

4-22-PDFN-06 Fellowship Award

04/2022–03/2025

Understanding African Americans’ Adoption and Engagement with mHealth for Lifestyle Modification to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Role: Collaborator

R01NR019810

Davis & Befort (MPIs)

03/01/2022–12/31/2026

Putting Parents First in Rural Pediatric Obesity Treatment: A Randomized Clinical Trial of iAmHealthy Parents First

Role: Co- Investigator and Subcontract PI

1R01ES030994

Kaufman (PI)

09/2020–08/2025

SOLAir: Environmental factors and diabetes development in Latinos

Role: Co-investigator and subcontract PI

Publications

Milkovich, L. M., **Carlson, J. A.**, Chertoff, M. K., & Randell, K. A. (2025). How School-Related Internet Use Shapes Teens’ Learning, Communication, Academic Stress, Online Behavior: A Qualitative Study. *Academic Pediatrics*, 103210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2025.103210>

Carlson, J. A., Moon, M., Steel, C., Bai, Y., Dodson, E. A., Dooley, E. E., Forseth, B., Fox, A., Greenberg, J., Grimes, A., Hasson, R., Hibbing, P., Jiang, Q., Pate, R., Serrano, N., Spring, K., Stanish, H., Webber-Ritchey, K.& Staiano, A. E. (2025). Results From the 2024 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 1(aop), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2024-0872>

Heidler, J., Marchiori, M. P., **Carlson, J. A.**, & Schipperijn, J. (2025). Unveiling Trips—A LABDA Consortium Study. *Journal for the Measurement of Physical Behaviour*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1123/jmpb.2025-0009>

Michaud, T. L., Hill, J. L., Heelan, K. A., Fiechtner, L., Ruggiero, C. F., French, D. D., Smith, J., Salmon, J., Lindros, J., Jelalian, E., Shepard, D., Darling, K., Robinson, T., Matheson, D., Haydel, K., Flora, J., Wilfley, D., **Carlson, J.**, Hampl, S., Staiano, A., Graham, A., Muzaffar, S. & Estabrooks, P. A. (2025). Considerations for Cost Assessment of Implementing Family Healthy Weight Programs Across Community and Clinical Contexts. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21532176251389760>

Wagner, N. M., **Carlson, J. A.**, Bean, M., Wineland, A., Blum, J., Cardona, S. A., Covarrubias, S., Kempe, A., King, A. & Huebschmann, A. G. (2025). Increasing opportunities for community input in harm reduction program development using iterative engagement. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 22(1), 1-12. 173 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-025-01323-8>

Jiang, Q., Gallo, L. C., Roesch, S., Sallis, J. F., Jankowska, M. M., Forseth, B., McClain, A., Sotres-Alvarez, D., Batalha, M., Zhou, H., Pirzada, A., Cordero, C., Daviglus, M. & **Carlson, J. A.** (2025). Neighborhood Retail Food Environment and 6-Year Changes in Cardiometabolic Health in Hispanics/Latinos: HCHS/SOL CASAS. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-025-02653-w>

Smith, C. M., Spalt, E. W., Gallo, L. C., **Carlson, J.**, Allison, M., Sotres-Alvarez, D., Cordero, C., Qi, Q., Chambers, E., Daviglus, M., Pirzada, A., Talavera, G., Kaplan, R., Kaufman, J. & Mooney, S. J. (2025). Neighborhood environment and incident diabetes, a neighborhood environment-wide association study ('NE-WAS'): Results from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL). *PLoS one*, 20(7), e0329282. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0329282>

Brown, D. M., Wing, D., Pfladderer, C. D., Stoepker, P., Fairclough, S. J., & **Carlson, J. A.** (2025). Considerations in using heart rate-based physical activity estimates from consumer wearables in individuals with varying weight status. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 22(1), 106. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-025-01801-z>

Forseth, B., **Carlson, J.**, Lancaster, B., Trofimoff, A. S., Glover, K., Hendel, K. R., Hoft, G. & Davis, A. M. (2025). School participation in a health behavior program: qualitative perspectives from schools

that did and did not adopt the iAmHealthy program. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 15(1), ibaf036. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaf036>

Cushing, C. C., Ortega, A., Fedele, D. A., Leslie-Miller, C. J., **Carlson, J. A.**, Davis, A. M., & Smyth, J. M. (2025). Moderators of a mHealth Intervention for Adolescent Physical Activity: Intervention Refinement Study. *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting*, 8(1), e59334. doi: 10.2196/59334

Stoepker, P., Biber, D., Dauenhauer, B., Steel, C., & **Carlson, J. A.** (2025). The integration of a data sharing process to address out-of-school time physical activity, locomotor skills, and program leader behavior: A pilot study. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15248399251348168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399251348168>

Lightner, J. S., Vonnahme, G., Chesnut, S., Ziegler, N., Nguyen, N., Sylvaine, C., Snead, R., **Carlson, J.**, Berkley-Patton, J. & Grimes, A. (2025). Funding for public transportation: results from a Midwest exit poll. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 31, 101433. Doi: 10.1016/j.trip.2025.101433

Mooney, S. J., Smith, C. M., Spalt, E. W., Piepmeier, L., Gasset, A. J., Gunning, G., **Carlson, J.**, Evenson, K., Chambers, E., Daviglus, M., Lovasi, G., Gullon, P., Hirsch, J., Plascak, K., Rundle, A., Fry, D., Bader, M., Kaufman, J. & Kaplan, R. (2025). Built Environment Change over Time Using Google Street View Assessments of Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL) Cities: Mooney et al. *Journal of Urban Health*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-025-00980-1>

Forseth, B., **Carlson, J. A.**, Ortega, A., Steel, C., Lancaster, B., Fitzpatrick, L. K., Jiang, Q. & Davis, A. M. (2025). O the places rural children will go... to get physical activity: a cross sectional analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1188. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-22442-8>

Mediano, M. F., Mok, Y., Ballew, S. H., Gonzalez, F., Sotres-Alvarez, D., Mossavar-Rahmani, Y., **Carlson, J.**, Alver, S., Daviglus, M., Garcia-Bedoya, O., Evenson, K., Schrack, J. & Matsushita, K. (2025). The association of physical activity fragmentation with all-cause mortality in Hispanics: a prospective cohort study. *The Lancet Regional Health—Americas*, 42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2025.100996>

Jiang, Q., Fitzpatrick, L., Laroche, H. H., Hampl, S., Steinbach, S., Forseth, B., Davis, A., Steel, C. & **Carlson, J. A.** (2025). Associations of Neighborhood Food Retail Environments with Weight Status in a

Regional Pediatric Health System. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2024.0283>

Jankowska, M. M., Tribby, C. P., Hibbing, P. R., **Carlson, J. A.**, Greenwood-Hickman, M. A., Sears, D. D., LaCroiz, A. & Natarajan, L. (2025). Movement-and Posture-based Measures of Sedentary Patterns and Associations with Metabolic Syndrome in Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic Adults. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 12(5), 3086-3094. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-024-02114-w>



CARISSA CASCIO, PH.D., is a professor of Psychology and Senior Scientist in the Life Span Institute at KU. Her lab focuses on the neural basis of sensory and affective differences in individuals with autism. She is interested in how differences in sensory processing, particularly those related to body sensing, may

impact core autism symptoms and individual health behaviors in autistic people. Her background and degree are in human cognitive and systems neuroscience, and her lab uses behavioral, neuroimaging, and physiological approaches to study autism across the lifespan. Her training and early career took her on a tour of the Southeast, with stops at Emory University, University of North Carolina, and Vanderbilt University, where she was on the faculty until she became a proud new Jayhawk in 2025.

Ongoing Research Support

1R01MH135028-01A1

Smith (PI)

08/2024–05/2029

Ultra-high resolution imaging of category-selective visual cortex in autism

Publications

Zoltowski, A. R., Failla, M. D., Wu, F., Convery, C. A., Lewis, B., Woodward, N. D., Rogers, B. & **Cascio, C. J.** (2025). Insular functional connectivity in autistic and non-autistic development. *Biological Psychology*, 198, 109043. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2025.109043>

McGugin, R. W., Newton, A. T., Lewis, B. J., Convery, C. A., Eyoh, E. E., Gauthier, I., & **Cascio, C. J.** (2025). Ultra-high resolution imaging of laminar thickness in face-selective cortex in autism. *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13415-025-01298-w>

Russo, N., **Cascio, C. J.**, Baranek, G. T., Woynaroski, T. G., Williams, Z. J., Green, S. A., & Schaaf, R. (2025). A cascading effects model of early sensory development in autism. *Psychological Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000558>

Bress, K. S., Quinde-Zilbut, J., Zoltowski, A. R., Convery, C. A., Lewis, B., Rogers, B. P., Vandekar, S., Travers, B. & **Cascio, C. J.** (2025). A sensorimotor basis for facial expressivity differences in autism. *Imaging Neuroscience*, 3, IMAG-a. <https://doi.org/10.1162/IMAG.a.981>



JULIE CHRISTIANSON, PH.D., is a professor of anatomy and cell biology and a professor of anesthesiology, pain and perioperative medicine at KU Medical Center. Her research program is designed to understand the mechanisms underlying centralized pain syndromes related to early life

stress, and clinically applicable therapies designed to reverse or prevent these permanent changes in pain processing.

Ongoing Research Support

R01 DK099611

Julie Carlsten Christianson (PI)

2020–2025

Effect of neonatal and adult stress on pelvic pain disorders and comorbidity

NIH

Warren Nothnick, Vargheese Chennathukuzhi (PI)

2021–2026

REST/NRSF, miRNAs, and tissue remodeling in adenomyosis pathophysiology

Role: Co-investigator

1R01DK124792
DeBerry (PI)
04/2022–03/2027
Preclinical phenotypic modeling of chronic urologic pelvic pain
Role: Co-investigator

5R01HD104619-05
Hayashi (PI)
04/2021–03/2026
Complex inflammatory mechanisms and therapeutic targeting
in endometriosis
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Dodds, K. N., Fattori, V., Andrews, N. A., Appleyard, C. B.,
Christianson, J. A., Gomez, R., McAllister, S., Missmer, S., Nagel, J.,
Nunez-Badinez, P., Rogers, M., Saunders, P., Tejada, M., Vincent,
K., Hummelshoj, L., Bruner-Tran, K. & Greaves, E. (2025). WERF
Endometriosis Phenome and Biobanking Harmonisation Project
for Experimental Models in Endometriosis Research (EPHect-EM-
Pain): methods to assess pain behaviour in rodent models of
endometriosis. *Molecular Human Reproduction*, 31(3), gaaf023.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/molehr/gaaf023>

Willits, A. B., Kader, L., Choudhury, S., Ewald, M., Meriano, S.,
Christianson, J., Baumbauer, K. & Young, E. (2025). Intrarectal
Antagonism of Calcitonin Gene-Related Peptide Prevents
Spinal Cord Injury-Associated Neurogenic Bowel Phenotypes.
Journal of Neurotrauma, 08977151251406659. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08977151251406659>



DANIELLE CHRISTIFANO, PH.D.,
is a research assistant professor
in the Department of Dietetics and
Nutrition at KU Medical Center.
Her research focuses on the
intersection of nutrition and
lifestyle in maternal and child
health. Specifically, she is
interested in how metabolism
and diet impact autonomic

nervous system function of both the mother and the fetus
throughout gestation. Her future research goals include the design
and implementation of interventions to alleviate the burden of
metabolic stress and obesity on the health and well-being of future
generations.

Ongoing Research Support

2025–2027 US DOHaD Society Conferences
Christifano (PI)
10/2025–10/2028
Source: Boroughs Welcome Fund

Maternal Intake of Eggs and Infant Neurodevelopment (MIND) Study
Christifano (PI)
08/1/25–07/30/28
USDA NIFA AFRI

Docosahexaenoic Acid Food Frequency Questionnaire
as a Tool for Assessing Ocean Fish Consumption in Kansas WIC
Clinics and a Metropolitan Obstetrics Clinic
Christifano (PI)
02/2025–02/2026
Seafood Institute Research Foundation

Longitudinal Assessments of Maternal Autonomic Function and
Metabolism among Obese Pregnant Women
Christifano (PI)
03/2025 – 03/2026
KC-MORE COBRE Pilot Award (Magnolia Study)

SHP Ph.D. Research Award: Obianuju Onuoha
06/2024–06/2025
KUMC School of Health Professions
Role: Mentor

Optimizing DHA Supplementation in Pregnancy (OPT-DHA)
DSM-firmenich
10/2023–12/2025
Role: PI

GR 17352
Christifano (PI)
10/2022–05/2025
Nestle Nutrition
Infant Formula and the Infant Gut-Brain Axis

Publications

Colombo, J., Shaddy, D. J., Mathis, N., **Christifano, D. N.**, Brown, A. R., Gajewski, B. J., Carlson, S., & Gustafson, K. M. (2025). Effects of prenatal DHA dose on infant visual attention. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 67(5), e70072. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.70072>

Christifano, D. N., Liao, K., Mathis, N. B., Carlson, S., Colombo, J., Chollet-Hinton, L., & Gustafson, K. M. (2025). Neuroprotective Nutrients in Pregnancy and Infant Brain Function. *Clinical Nutrition ESPEN*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnesp.2025.05.030>

Fortin-Miller, S. A., Gajewski, B. J., Carlson, S. E., Colombo, J. A., **Christifano, D. N.**, Sullivan, D. K., & Hull, H. R. (2025). Ethnicity modifies the relationship between added sugars and fructose exposure in the first 1000 days and offspring body composition at 24 months. *Nutrition Research*, 139, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nutres.2025.04.009>

Griebel-Thompson, A. K., Sands, S., Chollet-Hinton, L., **Christifano, D.**, Sullivan, D. K., Hull, H., Camargo, J. & Carlson, S. E. (2025). Maternal urinary fluoride levels of a large pregnancy cohort in the United States: findings from the ADORE study. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 133(3-4), 047001. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40043234/>



VICKI COLLIE-AKERS, PH.D., is the Associate Director of Health Promotion Research at the Center for Community Health and Development at KU-Lawrence. Her research is primarily focused on applying a community-based participatory research orientation to working with communities to understand how collaborative

partnerships and coalitions can improve social determinants of health and equity and reduce disparities in health outcomes.



CHRISTOPHER CUSHING, PH.D., is an assistant professor in the Clinical Child Psychology Program at the University of Kansas. He is interested in sleep, diet and physical activity. Specifically, he uses smartphones and body sensors as well as laboratory tasks to study the impact of these behaviors

on children's mood, cognition and social functioning.

Ongoing Research Support

1R34HL127022
Forbush(PI)
05/01/2025–04/30/2025
Smart Technology for Anorexia Nervosa Recovery: A Pilot Intervention for the Post-Acute Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa
Role: Co- Investigator

1R34HL153570
Coller (PI)
05/01/2025–04/30/2025
Respiratory Exacerbation Plans for Action and Care Transitions for Children with Severe CP
National Heart Lung and Blood Institute
Role: Co- Investigator

R34HL167214

Cushing & Flemming (MPIs)

2023–2026

Optimizing a Sensor-Enabled mHealth Intervention for Adolescents with Suboptimal Asthma Control, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health

003780A122,

Fedele, D. F. (PI)

01/01/2023–12/31/2025

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Personalized Mobile Health Platform to Promote Physical Activity in Adolescents and Young Adults with Cystic Fibrosis.

Role: Site PI

2930000

Advanced Personalization Ideation Collaboration

Cushing (PI)

08/2022–2025

PepsiCo.

Publications

Cushing, C. C., Ortega, A., Fedele, D. A., Leslie-Miller, C. J., Carlson, J. A., Davis, A. M., & Smyth, J. M. (2025). Moderators of a mHealth Intervention for Adolescent Physical Activity: Intervention Refinement Study. *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting*, 8(1), e59334. <https://doi.org/10.2196/59334>

Bejarano, C. M., Ortega, A., & **Cushing, C. C.** (2025). Inhibitory Control, Attentional Bias, and Palatable Food Consumption in Adolescents: A Laboratory Feasibility Randomized Controlled Trial. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9(1), e77579. <https://doi.org/10.2196/77579>

Coller, R. J., Singh-Verdeflor, K., Eickhoff, J., Chung, P. J., Kloster, H. M., **Cushing, C. C.**, Gerber, D., Katz, B., La, S., Wagner, T., Delgado-Martinez, R., Warner, G., Porras-Javier, L., Kiltzner, T. & Lerner, C. F. (2025). Preventing respiratory illness in cerebral palsy: Results of a pilot randomized controlled trial. *PLoS One*, 20(6), e0325970. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0325970>

Leslie-Miller, C. J., Goltz, S. R., Barrios, P. L., **Cushing, C. C.**, Badshah, T., Ungaro, C. T., Qu, S., Berezhnaya, Y. & Brisbois, T. D. (2025). Evaluating the Acceptability and Utility of a Personalized Wellness App (Aspire2B) Using AI-Enabled Digital Biomarkers: Engagement Enhancement Pilot Study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9(1), e63471. doi: 10.2196/63471

Davis, A. M., Darden, P., Lancaster, B., Chang, D., **Cushing, C. C.**, Janicke, D. M., Lim, C., Olalde, M., Bullard, S., McCulloh, R., Perry, D., Pyles, L., Staiano, A., Serrano-Gonzalez, M., Davis, D. & Jelalian, E. (2025). A family-based behavioral group obesity randomized control feasibility trial across a clinical trials network: a focus on contact hours. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 50(3), 280-288. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsae110>



ANN DAVIS, PH.D., MPH, ABPP, is the Ralph L. Smith Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Pediatrics at KU Medical Center. She is a pediatric psychologist who is passionate about the intersection between behavioral principles and eating/

nutrition and all aspects of family healthy lifestyles. She is passionate about bringing empirically supported treatments to rural and underserved children and families using novel technologies and her work is primarily treatment outcome-focused.

Ongoing Research Support

R01NR019810

Davis (PI), Befort (MPI)

03/2022–12/2026

Putting Parents First in Rural Pediatric Obesity Treatment: A Randomized Clinical Trial of iAmHealthy Parents First

R01NR021278

Davis (PI), Darden (MPI)

07/2024–04/2029

Implementation of the New Pediatric Obesity Clinical Practice Guideline in Rural Families and Clinics: A Randomized Clinical Trial

1R01HD093933

Davis (PI)

12/01/2017–06/30/2025

The Safety and Efficacy of Megestrol as part of an Outpatient Feeding Protocol for Children with Chronic Medical Conditions

<p>UG1OD024943 Davis (PI), Jones (MPI) 09/2025–08/2030 Clinical Sites for the ECHO IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials Network-3rd cycle; Sunflower Pediatric Clinical Trials (SPeCTr 3.0)</p>	<p>K23AR078337 Bill Black (PI) 07/2021–06/2026 Resilience Factors, Pain, and Physical Activity in Adolescent Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain Role: Primary Mentor</p>
<p>R01DK139363 Helena Laroche (PI) 04/2024–03/2027 Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of mediators and parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness—feasibility study for full-scale RCT Role: Co-investigator</p>	<p>K23MH133874 Dana Bakula (PI) 05/2024–03/2028 Intervention for Stress and Mental Health with Parents of Children with Feeding Problems Role: Primary Mentor</p>
<p>P20DK144689 Jakicic, Donnelly (PI) 09/2025–06/2030 NORC-RRC Role: Co-Investigator</p>	<p>K08CA279877 Carolyn Bates (PI) 09/15/2023–08/31/2028 A Healthy Weight Intervention for Family Stress During the Early Stages of ALL Treatment: NOURISH-ALL Role: Primary Mentor</p>
<p>R56NR021161 Eve-Lynn Nelson (PI) 09/2023–08/2028 Health Equity and Rural Education (HERE!) Clinical Trial: A Healthcare-Community Partnership Leveraging School-Based Community Health Workers to Improve Student Attendance Role: Co-Investigator</p>	<p>K23HD113822 Anna Wallisch (PI) 08/2024–07/2028 Examining mechanisms of challenging eating behaviors in children with autism using a biopsychosocial approach Role: Primary Mentor</p>
<p>P20GM144269 Steve Weinman, John Thyfault, Joe Donnelly (PI) 04/01/2022–03/31/2027 Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research (KC-MORE) COBRE Role: Director of mentoring and project mentor</p>	<p>KL2 Alice Zhang (PI) Parent-Mediated Feeding Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder via telehealth: A Pilot Study Role: Primary Mentor</p>
<p>T32DK128770-01A1 Wright, Thyfault (PI) 06/2022–05/2027 Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA); Institutional Research Training Grant (Parent T32); Translating Obesity, Metabolic Dysfunction and Comorbid Disease States (TOMADS) Role: Internal Advisory Committee Member (Davis, Miles, Nudo, Werle)</p>	<p>KL2 Bethany Forseth (PI) Understanding health behaviors of Hispanic youth through social determinants of health constructs and ecological momentary assessment Role: Primary Mentor</p>
	<p>1K23HD098299-01A1 Kim Randell (PI) 03/2020–02/2025 Promoting Healthy Relationships among At-Risk Adolescents: A Feasibility Trial in the Emergency Department Role: Co-Mentor</p>

K23MH130728

Stephaine Stancil (PI)

05/01/2023–04/30/2027

Development of a pharmacodynamic biomarker of opioid antagonism in adolescents with eating disorders

Role: Co-Mentor

KL2

Kate Kyler (PI)

Obesity's influence on systemic corticosteroid exposure and response in children with Asthma

Role: Co-Mentor

K23HL173648

Kyler (PI)

05/01/2025–04/30/2030

Systemic corticosteroid pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamic biomarker identification in children with asthma and obesity

Role: Senior Mentor

COBRE (Nemours)

Thao-Ly Phan-Vo (PI)

03/01/2022–02/28/2025

Mobile Integrated Care for Childhood Obesity (MICCO): A Technology-Facilitated Psychosocial Approach to Obesity Care in Rural Communities

Role: Co-Mentor

Publications

Forseth, B., Carlson, J. A., Ortega, A., Steel, C., Lancaster, B., Fitzpatrick, L. K., Jiang, Q. & **Davis, A. M.** (2025). O the places rural children will go... to get physical activity: a cross sectional analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1188.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-22442-8>

Zhang, E., Alduraidi, W., Snyder, M., Kaiser, E., Hunley, S., **Davis, A.**, Nelson, E. & Cheak-Zamora, N. (2025). Pilot rural–urban comparison of health care experiences among autistic adolescents and young adults. *Autism*, 13623613251337506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613251337506>

Forseth, B., Carlson, J., Lancaster, B., Trofimoff, A. S., Glover, K., Hendel, K. R., Hoff, G. & **Davis, A. M.** (2025). School participation in a health behavior program: qualitative perspectives from schools that did and did not adopt the iAmHealthy program. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 15(1), ibaf036. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaf036>

Foster, K. L., Sanders, S., Madden, C. A., Malloch, L., Swango-Wilson, A., Jandasek, B., Garza, M., Baldner, J., Dawley, E., VanWagoner, T., Saul, J. & **Davis, A. M.** (2025). Study team perspectives on a multisite randomized clinical trial with underserved rural populations: A mixed methods feasibility analysis. *PLoS One*, 20(9), e0333229. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0333229>

Lancaster BD, Hefner T, Leslie-Miller CJ, Sexton K, Bakula DM, Van Allen J, Cushing CC, Lim CS, Janicke DM, Jelalian E, Dayani K, **Davis AM.** Systematic review and meta analysis of psychological interventions to prevent or treat pediatric chronic disease in rural communities. *J Pediatr Psychol*. 2025 Jul 1;50(7):579-595. doi: 10.1093/jpepsy/jsae054. PubMed PMID: 38981115.

Davis, A. M., Darden, P., Lancaster, B., Chang, D., Cushing, C. C., Janicke, D. M., Lim, C., Olalde, M., Bullard, S., McCulloh, R., Perry, D., Pyles, L., Staiano, A., Sorzano-Gonzalez, M., Davis, D. & Jelalian, E. (2025). A family-based behavioral group obesity randomized control feasibility trial across a clinical trials network: a focus on contact hours. *J Pediatr Psychol*, 50(3), 280-288. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsae110>

Black WR, von Klinggraeff L, White DA, Forseth B, Jackson JL, Bates CR, Pfladderer CD, Dobbins S, Hoskinson KR, Gehred A, **Davis AM.** Systematic review and meta-analysis of combined cognitive-behavioral therapy and physical activity and exercise interventions for pediatric chronic disease. *J Pediatr Psychol*. 2025 Jul 1;50(7):620-632. doi: 10.1093/jpepsy/jsae087. PubMed PMID: 39514679.

Lancaster, B., Goldenberg, E., Trofimoff, A. S., Dai, Y., Forseth, B., Romine, R. S., Fleming, K. & **Davis, A.** (2025). Mental health outcomes of a pediatric-focused obesity randomized control trial in rural communities. *Health Psychology*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/hea0001518>

Shook, R. P., Lim, S. L., Bruce, A. S., Philips, T. C., Halpin, K. L., **Davis, A. M.**, Donnelly, J., Blundell, J. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Associations between physical activity, adiposity, appetite and metabolic health in adolescent males. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114525105370>

Black, W. R., Hart, H., Christofferson, J., Connelly, M., Goubert, L., Wallace, D. P., Ellingson-Sayen, L. & **Davis, A. M.** (2025). Resilience Factors and Physical Activity Engagement in Adolescents with Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 14(21), 7621. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm14217621>

Jiang Q, Fitzpatrick L, Laroche HH, Hampl S, Steinbach S, Forseth B, **Davis AM**, Steel C, Carlson JA. Associations of Neighborhood Food Retail Environments with Weight Status in a Regional Pediatric Health System. *Child Obes.* 2025 Mar;21(2):137-147. doi: 10.1089/chi.2024.0283. PubMed PMID: 39436828.



MEREDITH DREYER GILLETTE, PH.D., is a pediatric psychologist at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She works primarily in the treatment and prevention of childhood obesity, with a special emphasis on the challenges that are encountered

among parents of young children with special needs such as autism spectrum disorders or Down syndrome.

Ongoing Research Support

1 R01 DK134961-01A1
MPI-Wilfley/Hampl
10/1/23–09/30/28
Increasing Access to USPSTF-Recommended Obesity Care for Youth and Adults Who Are Recipients of Medicaid: Evaluation of a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Obesity Care Training Program in FQHCs
Role: Co-Investigator

04/1/24–03/31/27
Laroche (PI)
NIH/NIDDK
Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness—feasibility study for a full-scale RCT
Role: Co-Investigator

RFA-DP-23-0014
Lightner/Grimes (PI)
08/30/23–08/29/28
CDC
Communities leading change: Advancing Black and Latino capacity to create nutrition and physical activity environmental and systems change
Role: Co-Investigator

1U18DP006425-01
Wilfley (PI)
04/01/2019–03/01/2025
CDC
Dissemination and implementation of an evidence-based pediatric weight management program for use by low-income families: A user-friendly package of family-based behavioral treatment
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Kunam, L., Sweeney, B., Fischer, R. T., Campbell, N., Fraser, J. D., Hendrickson, R., Mullapudi, B., Kotecha, M., **Dreyer, M.** & Slowik, V. (2025). A Case Report of a Simultaneous Pediatric Orthotopic Liver Transplant and Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy in a 10-Year-Old Male With Cirrhosis and Obesity. *Pediatric Transplantation*, 29(5), e70124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ptr.70124>

Killian, H. J., Forseth, B., Bakula, D. M., Ptomey, L., Glynn, E., Yeh, H. W., Davis, A. & **Gillette, M. D.** (2025). Weight Trajectories among Children with Down Syndrome: A Retrospective Study. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 280, 114491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114491>

Bakula, D. M., Zax, A., & **Dreyer Gillette, M. L.** (2025). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for a Parent of a Child With Pediatric Feeding Disorder: A Case Study. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 13(1), 83-88. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpp0000549>



SARAH EDWARDS, DO, is a pediatric gastroenterologist at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and professor of pediatrics at The University of Missouri-Kansas City. Dr. Edwards specializes in treating children with feeding disorders and is the medical director of the Interdisciplinary Pediatric

Feeding and Swallowing Program at Children’s Mercy.

Ongoing Research Support

Davis (PI)
12/01/2017–06/30/2025
The Safety and Efficacy of Megestrol as part of an Outpatient Feeding Protocol for Children with Chronic Medical Conditions
Role: Co-I and Site PI

Publications

Ricketts, A., Bakula, D. M., **Edwards, S.**, Nash, K., Escobar, A., Graham, R., Thompson, R., Bullard, S., Brogren, J., Feldman, K. & Erickson, L. A. (2025). Missed Opportunities in Pediatric Feeding Clinic: A Multivariate Analysis. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2025.07.001>



KEITH FELDMAN, PH.D., is an assistant professor of pediatrics and researcher at Children's Mercy Kansas City. His work is focused on the field of health informatics, where he explores the ways in which data mining, machine learning and statistical techniques can aid practitioners and researchers in understanding,

analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing the wealth of health and wellness data now digitally available. He is interested in answering questions and developing informatics-driven methods to enhance the effectiveness of those engaged in the health care system, augmenting their existing knowledge rather than replacing the individual.

Ongoing Research Support

American Heart Association Transformational Project Award
Feldman (PI)

07/01/2023–06/30/2026

Risk Factors for Fontan Associated Liver Disease: A Computational Framework to Improve

Matched Case-Control Study Design

R01 DK132350-01

Berkley-Patton & Carlson (MPIs)

04/2022–03/2026

Impacts of City-Wide Zero-Fare Bus Transit on Ridership, Physical Activity, Health Determinants, and Diabetes-Related Health

Outcomes: A Natural Experiment

Role: Co-I



CRISTINA FERNANDEZ, M.D., FAAP, is a clinical professor who joined Children's Mercy recently after being a general pediatrician for more than 20 years. In the last 10 years, she was able to establish a program in obesity at Omaha Children's Hospital. She feels that working with childhood obesity has

been a challenge but completely rewarding.



BETHANY FORSETH, PH.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the Department of Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Science, & Athletic Training. Her research focuses on the promotion and health benefits of physical activity for families. She is specifically interested in the

prevention of chronic diseases (e.g., obesity, type 2 diabetes) through increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviors. She also has an interest in physical activity measurement.

Ongoing Research Support

2024 Community Engagement Pilot Awards

Forseth & Bodde (MPI)

10/2024–06/2025

Community Partnership for Implementation of a wellbeing intervention for Caregivers (CareWell Community; P20GM139733)

2024 Edward Ellerbeck Implementation Science

for Equity Center Pilot

Forseth (MPI)

Implementation and effectiveness of a wellbeing intervention for caregivers (CareWell Community; P20GM139733)

KL2TR002367

Forseth (PI)

07/2024–06/2026

Developing and refining a pilot sequential multiple assignment randomized trial (SMARTs) to optimize an obesity treatment for rural children

R01 DK135735-01A1

Jakicic (PI)

12/2023–11/2028

Effectiveness of the Addition of Yoga to a Behavioral Weight Loss Intervention for Adults with Overweight or Obesity

Role: Co-Investigator

R01DK132362

Gorczyca (PI)

09/15/2023–05/31/2028

The National Diabetes Prevention Program in Rural Communities

Role: Co-Investigator

R01NR016255

Davis (PI), Befort (MPI)

3/3/2023–12/31/2026

Putting Parents First in Rural Pediatric Obesity Treatment A Randomized Clinical Trial of iAmHealthy Parents First

Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Jakicic, J. M., Behrens, C. E., Deemer, S. E., **Forseth, B.**, Katsanos, C. S., Nickerson, B. S., Prado, W., Wang, X., Deru, L., & Rogers, R. J. (2025). Physical activity and exercise within the context of obesity treatment: Enhancing health beyond weight loss. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 101097. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2025.101097>

Bodde, A. E., Brooks, J. V., **Forseth, B.**, Wolfe, T., Williams, K., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Caregiving for Adults With Down Syndrome: Caregiver Experiences and Support Needs. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(5), e70118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70118>

Jiang, Q., Gallo, L. C., Roesch, S., Sallis, J. F., Jankowska, M. M., **Forseth, B.**, McClain, A., Sotres-Alvarez, D., Batalha, M., Zhou, H., Pirezada, A., Cordero, C., Daviglus, M., & Carlson, J. A. (2025). Neighborhood Retail Food Environment and 6-Year Changes in Cardiometabolic Health in Hispanics/Latinos: HCHS/SOL CASAS. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-025-02653-w>

Forseth, B., Carlson, J., Lancaster, B., Trofimoff, A. S., Glover, K., Hendel, K. R., Hoft, G., & Davis, A. M. (2025). School participation in a health behavior program: qualitative perspectives from schools that did and did not adopt the iAmHealthy program. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 15(1), ibaf036. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaf036>

Forseth, B., Carlson, J. A., Ortega, A., Steel, C., Lancaster, B., Fitzpatrick, L. K., Jiang, Q., & Davis, A. M. (2025). O the places rural children will go... to get physical activity: a cross sectional analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1188. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-22442-8>

Lancaster, B., Goldenberg, E., Trofimoff, A. S., Dai, Y., **Forseth, B.**, Romine, R. S., Fleming, K., & Davis, A. (2025). Mental health outcomes of a pediatric-focused obesity randomized control trial in rural communities. *Health Psychology*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/hea0001518>

Bodde, A. E., Helsel, B. C., Danon, J., Sherman, J., Rice, A., Williams, K., **Forseth, B.**, Donnelly, J., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Factors Associated With Depression in Caregivers of Adults With Down Syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 69(3), 234-242.

Killian, H. J., **Forseth, B.**, Bakula, D. M., Ptomey, L., Glynn, E., Yeh, H. W., Davis, A., & Gillette, M. D. (2025). Weight Trajectories among Children with Down Syndrome: A Retrospective Study. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 280, 114491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114491>

Jiang, Q., Fitzpatrick, L., Laroche, H. H., Hampl, S., Steinbach, S., **Forseth, B.**, Davis, A., Steel, C., & Carlson, J. A. (2025). Associations of Neighborhood Food Retail Environments with Weight Status in a Regional Pediatric Health System. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2024.0283>



DANIEL FORSHA, M.D., MHS, FASE,

Professor of Pediatrics, focuses on clinical non-invasive imaging (echocardiogram and cardiac MRI/CT) and imaging research as a faculty member of the Heart Center at Children's Mercy Kansas City.

One area of his research is the evaluation of dyssynchronous and disorganized ventricular

contraction patterns using strain echochardiography to determine whether certain children may benefit from cardiac resynchronization therapy. Another research interest is using strain echo and other tools to assess the reversibility of early obesity-related cardiovascular disease in populations of teenagers with intellectual delays. He is excited to work as part of CHLN to improve our understanding of the cardiovascular health consequences of obesity and how improving lifestyle may reverse this disease process.

Ongoing Research Support

1R01HD116832-01

Donnelly (PI)

01/2025–12/2029

Cooking skills to improve long-term weight loss in young adults with intellectual disabilities

Role: Safety Officer

Grant#1019144

Forsha (PI)

2023–2026

Additional Ventures Foundation–Single Ventricle Research Fund

A comprehensive and non-invasive assessment of skeletal muscle in adolescents with single ventricle circulation

PF-07302048

2023–2027

Pediatric Heart Network/Pfizer.

Low-interventional cohort study of myocarditis/pericarditis associated with Comirnaty in persons less than 21 years of age:

CAMP

Role: Site PI

3U24HL 135691-03S3

2020–2027

NIH/Pediatric Heart Network

Long-term Outcomes after the Multisystemic Inflammatory Syndrome in Children: MUSIC-RECOVER

Role: Site PI

Publications

McCrary, A. W., Collins, S. D., Spector, Z. Z., Kropf, P. A., Barker, P. C., Kisslo, J., & **Forsha, D. E.** (2025). Development of right ventricular electromechanical dyssynchrony following surgical repair of tetralogy of Fallot in infants. *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 12, 1443924. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fped.2024.1443924>

Truong, D. T., Trachtenberg, F. L., Hu, C., Pearson, G. D., Friedman, K., Sabati, A. A., Dionne, A., Oster, M., Anderson, B., Block, J., Bradford, T., Campbell, M., D'Addese, L., Dummer, K., Elias, M., **Forsha, D.**, Garuba, O., Hasbani, K., Hayes, K., Hebson, C., Jone, P., Krishnan, A., Lang, S., McCrindle, B., McHugh, K., Mitchell, E., Morrison T., Muniz, J., Payne, M., Portman, M., Russell, M., Sanil, Y., Shakti, D., Sharma, K., Shea, J., Sykes, M., Shekerdeman, L., Szmuszkovicz, J., Thacker, D., Newburger, J. & Sarkissian, A. (2025). Six-month outcomes in the long-term outcomes after the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children study. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 179(3), 293-301. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.5466

Lopez, K. N., Truong, D., Anderson, B. R., Baker-Smith, C. M., Bradford, T. T., Dionne, A., Dummer, K., **Forsha, D.**, Franklin, W., Handler, S., Harahsheh, A., Hasbani, K., Liu, I., Jone, P., Lang, S., McHugh, K., Oster, M., Partman, MN., Preminger, T., Russell, M. & Newburger, J. W. (2025). Sociodemographic Disparities in Severity of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children: The National Cross-Sectional MUSIC Study. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 114670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114670>

Goyal, A., Parthiban, A., White, D. A., **Forsha, D.**, & Aly, D. (2025). Two-dimensional speckle tracking of the ascending aorta: a novel approach to evaluate arterial stiffness in pediatric patients with repaired conotruncal anomalies using echocardiography. *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine*, 12, 1555568. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcvm.2025.1555568>

Green, C. R., Zhang, R., Stainback, R. F., Ye, S. W., **Forsha, D. E.**, Garcia-Sayan, E., Hill, J., Mitchell, C., Rigolin, V., Sachdev, V., Sengupta, P., Sorrell, V., Strom, J., Ye, A. & Taub, C. C. (2025). Analyzing the Creation and Use of Abbreviations in Cardiology and

Cardiac Imaging Society Guidelines. *JACC: Advances*, 4(2), 101561. doi: 10.1016/j.jacadv.2024.101561

Ptomey, L. T., Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R. A., Montgomery, R. N., Krebill, R., Danon, J. C., Sherman, J., **Forsha, D.**, Bodde, A., Szabo-Reed, A., Gorczyca, A. & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). The promotion of physical activity for use in Alzheimer's disease prevention trials in adults with Down syndrome: Results from a 12-month randomized trial. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(2), e70115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70115>

Clina, J. G., White, D. A., Sherman, J. R., Danon, J. C., **Forsha, D. E.**, Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Daily physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness in adults with Down syndrome with and without congenital heart disease. *Disability and Health Journal*, 101778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2025.101778>

Foster, L., Lawson, L. M., & Moreland, H. (2025). Impact of a Responsive Feeding Intervention on Children and Caregivers: A Nonrandomized, Repeated-Measures Study. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 79(5), 7905205060. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2025.051100>

Mische Lawson, L., **Foster, L.**, Surber, C., & Hamner, K. (2025). The Essential Role of Recreational Therapy in Aquatics Programming for Children with Autism. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 59(1). <https://doi.org/10.18666/TRJ-2025-V59-I1-12558>

Alduraidi, W., Zhang, E., **Foster, L.**, & Mische-Lawson, L. (2025). Exploring Goal Attainment Scaling Among Occupational Therapy Students: A Retrospective Descriptive Analysis. *Occupational Therapy International*, 2025(1), 6034855. <https://doi.org/10.1155/oti/6034855>



LAUREN FOSTER, OTD, OTR/L, is a clinical assistant professor in occupational therapy education at KU Medical Center and teaches courses in KU's entry-level and post-professional doctoral degree programs in occupational therapy. Her clinical experience includes work in a variety of settings, including early intervention, mental

health, telehealth services and physical rehabilitation. Her research and practice efforts focus on adult learning strategies, coaching and community-based supports for adults and children with disabilities.

Ongoing Research Support

1R21HD111917-01A1

Mische-Lawson (PI)

12/13/23–05/30/2026

Testing Effects of Swim Instruction on Autistic Children's Swimming and Water Safety Skills

Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Behrens, S., Lawson, L. A. M., Bigelow, K., Dean, E., Zhang, A., **Foster, L. H.**, & Bridges, M. S. (2025). Exploring home visitors' use and perceptions of developmental monitoring: A mixed methods study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 71, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.11.011>



ANDREW T. FOX, PH.D., is an applied experimental psychologist by training and research scientist at Children's Mercy Kansas City. His research interests include incentive-based and behavioral-economic approaches to understanding and promoting behavior change with a focus on the areas of smoking, diet and exercise and health behavior change interventions in general.

Publications

Schoor, R., Bruce, J. M., Staggs, V. S., **Fox, A. T.**, Bruce, A., Lynch, S., & Catley, D. (2025). Mechanisms of Action of Combination Motivational Interviewing-Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Reversing Medication Non-Adherence in Patients With Multiple Sclerosis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23796>

Carlson, J. A., Moon, M., Steel, C., Bai, Y., Dodson, E. A., Dooley, E. E., Forseth, B., **Fox, A.**, Greenberg, J., Grimes, A., Hasson, R., Hibbing, P., Jiang, Q., Pate, R., Serrano, N., Spring, K., Stanish, H., Webber-Ritchey, K. & Staiano, A. E. (2025). Results From the 2024 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 1(aop), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2024-0872>



HEATHER GIBBS, PH.D., RD, LD, is a registered dietitian and associate professor in the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at KU Medical Center. Her research focuses on nutrition literacy, which concerns an individual's ability to use nutrition information to follow a healthy diet. Building upon the tools she

has validated for measuring nutrition literacy, her current interest lies in delivering interventions to improve nutrition literacy leading to healthier diets and chronic disease prevention.

Ongoing Research Support

KU Center for Community Access, Rehabilitation Research and Education

Gibbs (PI)

08/01/2024–07/31/2025

A Dyadic Multicomponent lifestyle InteRvention for families living with dementia (ADMIRE 2.0) Pilot

1P20GM139733-01A1

Gibbs (PI)

09/11/2023–08/31/2028

Nutricity: AmHealth nutrition intervention to improve diet quality among Latino children

Publications

Dai, J., Gajewski, B. J., Shergina, E., Mount, R., & **Gibbs, H. D.** (2025). Integrating a pilot study and large trial into one adaptive design. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 159, 108112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2025.108112>

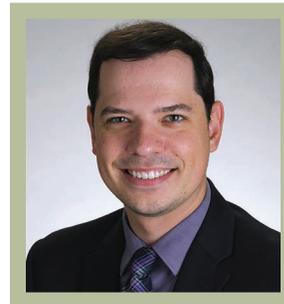
Sullivan, A. M., Burns, J. M., Sullivan, D. K., Taylor, M. K., Mazzotti, D. R., & **Gibbs, H. D.** (2025). Preimplementation of malnutrition screening in the context of outpatient memory care: A quality improvement project. *Nutrition in Clinical Practice*, 40(6), 1518-1528. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ncp.70050>

Marchello, N. J., Camargo, J. T., Gajewski, B. J., Sullivan, D. K., & **Gibbs, H. D.** (2025). Developing subscale threshold scores for the nutrition literacy assessment instrument (NLit). *Discover Public Health*, 22(1), 308. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-025-00677-5>

Chen, X., Beilman, B., **Gibbs, H. D.**, Hamilton, J. L., Parker, N., Bur, A. M., Caudell, J., Gan, G., Hamilton-Reeves, J., Jim, H., Kirtane, K., Lominska, C., Crowder, S., & Arthur, A. E. (2025). Nutrition in head and neck cancer care: a roadmap and call for research. *The Lancet Oncology*, 26(6), e300-e310. [Doi:10.1016/S1470-2045\(25\)00087-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(25)00087-7).

Gibbs, H. D., Taylor, M. K., Gibson, C., Mount, R. R., Sullivan, A., Williams, K., & Sullivan, D. K. (2025). Uncovering nutrition needs in dyads of caregivers and persons with dementia. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 104(2), 525-536. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13872877251317737>

Towner, E. K., **Gibbs, H. D.**, Hu, E., & Patton, S. R. (2025). Systematic review of interventions for dietary adherence in pediatric disease management. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, jsae109. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsae109>



ROBERT GIBLER, PH.D., is a pediatric psychologist and assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He completed his clinical residency and research fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Dr. Gibler's research focuses on identifying

strategies to promote optimal daily functioning in children and adolescents with complex chronic pain conditions. He is particularly interested in the roles of physical activity and exercise in the treatment and prevention of pediatric chronic pain.

Publications

Adam, E. C., **Gibler, R. C.**, Beebe, D. W., Powers, S. W., Hershey, A. D., Kabbouche, M., Kacperski, J., & Reidy, B. L. (2025). Characterizing sleep, headache-related disability, and psychological functioning among adolescents with continuous headache: A pilot study from a tertiary clinical setting. *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/head.14990>



ANNA GORCZYCA, PH.D., is an assistant research professor in the Center for Physical Activity and Weight Management at KU Medical Center. Her research interests include the beneficial effects of physical activity, weight loss and decreasing sedentary time and health outcomes. More specifically, she is interested in the

impact of weight loss and physical activity in the preconception phase in women and subsequent pregnancy rates, maternal outcomes and fetal outcomes, as well as working with rural populations.

Ongoing Research Support

P20GM139733

Gorczyca (PI)

2025–2026

Kansas Center for Implementation Science

Optimizing mobility limitation identification in the EHR

2L30AG069274-02A1

Gorczyca (PI)

2025-2027

NIA

Lifestyle Changes for Improved Health Outcomes in Aging Populations

R01DK132362

Gorczyca (PI)

09/23/2023–05/31/2028

The National Diabetes Prevention Program in Rural Communities

Publications

Kracht, C. L., Brown, D. M., **Gorczyca, A. M.**, Jakicic, J. M., Szabo-Reed, A., Washburn, R., & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). Association Between Wake-Time Movement Behaviors and Weight Loss Maintenance. *Obesity*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.70082>

Poulimeneas, D., Anastasiou, C. A., Vlachogianni, E. E., Charokopou, A., Bitsa, M., Das, S. K., Sayer, D., Roberts, S., Hill, J., Yannakoulia, Wyatt, H., Menta, T., Bachiashvili, V., Kiu, C., Chiu, C-Y., Friedman, J., Oslund, J., Donnelly, J., **Gorczyca, A.**, Clina, J., Caldwell, A., Peters, J., Greenyway, F., Thomas, D., Dao, M. & Whigham, L. (2025). A pilot study on traditional vs. digital self-administered questionnaire

completion in the International Weight Control Registry. *Clinical Nutrition ESPEN*, 67, 174-177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnesp.2025.03.015>

Wagner, G., Estabrooks, P., Forseth, B., Michaud, T., Rice, A., Steger, F., Holmes, C., Johannes, E., Koon, L., Montgomery, R, Donnelly, J. & **Gorczyca, A.** (2025). 2101-LB: Recruitment Strategies to Increase the Reach of the National Diabetes Prevention Program in Rural Populations. *Diabetes*, 74(Supplement_1), 2101-LB. <https://doi.org/10.2337/db25-2101-LB>

Wagner, G., Koon, L. M., Smith, P., Suire, K. B., Hastert, M., Donnelly, J. E., Olfert, M., Estabrooks, P. & **Gorczyca, A. M.** (2025). Assessing the Fit of a Digitally Delivered National Diabetes Prevention Program Among Rural Living Adults: Qualitative Study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9(1), e70406. <https://doi.org/10.2196/70406>



ELIN GRUNDBERG, PH.D., is a research faculty member at the Genomic Medicine Center at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She holds the Roberta D. Harding & William F. Bradley, Jr. Endowed Chair in Genomic Research. Dr.

Grundberg’s main area of investigation concerns obesity and metabolic complications, and her team is applying next-generation sequencing approaches to understand genetic and environmental (epigenetic) factors underlying disease susceptibility.

Ongoing Research Support

1R01HD117565-01

07/2025-06/2030

Pastinen & Grundberg (MPIs)

Complete human parent-of-origin genome: functional signatures and developmental determinants of disease

5UL1TR002366-04

10/2024–09/2027

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Award, Kansas University Role: Co-Investigator

Paul Hensen
10/2024–10/2026
Early life epigenomic signatures and primed immune states predict the development of type 1 diabetes
Role: MPI

1R01HD115359-01A1
Grundberg (PI)
07/2024–06/2029
5-base HiFi sequencing to advance the understanding of genetic determinants of pregnancy loss

GAPPD
10/2023–10/2026
Early life epigenomic signatures and primed immune states predict the development of type 1 diabetes
Role: MPI

1R01HL162937-01A1
09/2023–08/2027
DLL4 in the Developing Lung and Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD)
Role: Co-Investigator

Brenda and Stephen Edgerly Family Foundation
Grundberg (PI)
12/2022–12/2026
Recurrent Pregnancy Loss

2R01HD020676-34
09/2022–08/2027
Trophoblast Differentiation
Role: Co-Investigator

R01MD015409-01
Grundberg (PI)
08/2020–04/2026
Ethical Implementation of Social Epigenomics Research on Asthma in a Health Disparity Population

3R01MD015409
Grundberg (PI)
08/2020–04/2025
Contextualizing and Addressing Population-Level Bias in Social Epigenomics Study of Asthma in Childhood Asthma is a common, multifactorial disease of childhood that disproportionately impacts African American children

5R01MD015409
Grundberg (PI)
08/2020–04/2025
Understanding Mechanisms Underlying Chronic Stress-Induced Asthma in Children by Population and Single-Cell Epigenomics Approaches

5R01HD100545
08/2020–04/2026
A Histamine Pharmacodynamic Biomarker to Guide Treatment in Pediatric Asthma
Role: Co-Investigator

Sosland Foundation
01/2015–01/2026
Center for Perinatal Research
My role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Pastinen, T., **Grundberg, E.**, Bradley, T., Honkanen, J., Cheung, W., Vuorela, A., Johnston, J., Yoo, B., Khanal, S., McLennan, R., Llonen, J., Vaarala, O., Krischer, J. & Knip, M. (2025). Evolving epigenomics of immune cells in type 1 diabetes at single nuclei resolution. *Research Square*, rs-3. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-5588592/v1>

Smail, C., Cheung, W. A., Koseva, B., Johnson, A. F., Bi, C., Schreck, C. F., Lydic, M., Holoch, K., Repnikova, E., Herriges, J., Marsh, C., Thiffault, I., Pastinen, T. & **Grundberg, E.** (2025). Expanded map of genomic imprinting reveals insight into human disease. *medRxiv*, 2025-09. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.09.15.25335770>

Thiffault, I., Farrow, E., Barrett, C., Scott, M., Ross, A., Means, J. C., Cheung, W., Johnson, A., Koseva, B., McLennan, R., **Grundberg, E.**, Bi, C., Schwendinger-Schreck, C., Yoo, B., Johnston, J., Viso, F., Paolillo, V., Herriges, J., Zhang, L., Gibson, M., Cohen, A., Alaimo, J., Saunders, C. & Pastinen, T. (2025). Clinical long-read sequencing test for genetic disease diagnosis. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 179(12), 1355-1357. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.3320

Spector, B. L., Koseva, B., McLennan, R., Banerjee, D., Lankachandra, K., Bradley, T., Selvarangan, R. & **Grundberg, E.** (2025). Methylation patterns of the nasal epigenome of hospitalized SARS-CoV-2 positive patients reveal insights into molecular mechanisms of COVID-19. *BMC Medical Genomics*, 18(1), 62. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12920-025-02125-4>

Spector, B. L., Koseva, B. S., Sante, D., Cheung, W. A., Alisch, R. S., Kats, A., Bergmann, P., **Grundberg, E.**, Wyckoff, G. & Willig, L. K. (2025). Total plasma cfDNA methylation in pediatric kidney transplant recipients provides insight into acute allograft rejection pathophysiology. *Clinical Immunology*, 275, 110475. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clim.2025.110475>

Berrios, C., Basey, T., Bradley-Ewing, A., Daniels-Young, S., Lewis, D., Feldman, K., Moffatt, M., Pastinen, T. & **Grundberg, E.** (2025). Black community member perceptions and ethics recommendations on epigenomic research. *Clinical Epigenetics*, 17(1), 33. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13148-025-01840-0>



KELSEE HALPIN, M.D., MPH, is a pediatric endocrinologist at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and an assistant professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine. Dr. Halpin’s clinical expertise is in children with prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, and genetic syndromes associated with obesity. She currently serves

as Co-Director of Multidisciplinary Prader Willi Syndrome Clinic and sees patients in the Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Clinic and Diabetes Clinic at Children’s Mercy. Her current research is primarily focused on understanding precision-based treatment of obesity and prediabetes, specifically relating to pharmacokinetics of metformin.

Ongoing Research Support

Foundation for Prader Willi Syndrome Research

Halpin (PI)

2025–2026

PWS Clinical Investigation Collaborative (PWS-CLIC) Studytrax Database Investigator

Foundation for Prader Willi Syndrome Research (FPWR)

2024–2025

“Exploring Relationships between Growth Hormone Therapy and Sleep Disturbances in Infants and Young Children with Prader-Willi Syndrome: Multi-Site Polysomnogram Findings and Clinician Survey Insights”

Role: Sub-Investigator

NCT06144645

Foundation for Prader Willi Syndrome Research

2024–Present

A Clinical Evaluation of Non-Invasive Vagus Nerve Stimulation for Temper Outbursts in People With PWS (VNS4PWS)

Role: Site PI

NCT06173531

ACADIA Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Paprocki (Site PI)

2024–Present

Study of Carbetocin Nasal Spray for the Treatment of Hyperphagia in Prader-Willi Syndrome

Role: Sub-Investigator

NCT05330325

Novo Nordisk

Moore (Site PI)

2023–Present

A Research Study to Compare Somapacitan Once a Week With Norditropin® Once a Day in Children Who Need Help to Grow (REAL 8)

Role: Sub-Investigator

NCT04598893

Provention Bio, Inc.

Moore (Site PI)

2023–Present

Recent-Onset Type 1 Diabetes Extension Study Evaluating the Long-Term Safety of Teplizumab

Role: Sub-Investigator

NCT04233034

Jaeb Center for Health Research

Clements (PI)

2022–Present

Hybrid Closed Loop Therapy for Beta Cell Preservation in New Onset Type 1 Diabetes (CLVer): Extension Study (CLVerEX)

Role: Sub-Investigator

R01HD081299

Prasad (PI)

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

2021–2026

“Ontogeny of drug transport”

Role: Subaward PI (20% effort Years 1-2, 25% Years 3-4)

NCT00097292
University of South Florida
Moore (PI)
2017–Present
TrialNet Pathway to Prevention of T1D
Role: Sub-Investigator

Publications

Shook, R. P., Lim, S. L., Bruce, A. S., Philips, T. C., **Halpin, K. L.**, Davis, A. M., Donnelly, J., Blundell, J. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Associations between physical activity, adiposity, appetite and metabolic health in adolescent males. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114525105370>



JILL HAMILTON-REEVES, PH.D., is a professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Hamilton-Reeves works with urologists and medical oncologist to foster the discovery of better diet and exercise approaches to benefit patients with cancer. Her nationally funded research program is focused on nutrition

interventions in patients with cancer. Dr. Hamilton-Reeves received her Ph.D. degree in nutrition from the University of Minnesota in 2006. She is an American Cancer Society Research Scholar. Her academic career is devoted to improving patient outcomes from cancer treatment with diet and physical activity. Her work is currently funded by the National Cancer Institut

Ongoing Research Support

NIH-NCI R37CA218118-06
Hamilton-Reeves (PI)
08/7/2023–05/31/2027
Effect of Immune-Enhancing Nutrition on Radical Cystectomy Outcomes-MERIT extension

P30 University of Kansas Cancer Center
Hamilton-Reeves (PI)
12/2024–12/2025
METRICS Study: Metabolic Evaluation Through Resting Indirect Calorimetry in Bladder Cancer

KU Research Institute
Hamilton-Reeves (PI)
07/2023–06/2025
Impact of carbohydrate ingestion prior to urologic surgery to improve patient outcomes

NIH/NCI P30
Jensen (PI)
07/2022–07/2027
The University of Kansas Cancer Center
Role: Co-Director of Nutrition Shared Resource and Lead Researcher of PIVOT

NIH/NCI through NCORP/DCP-NCI
Hamilton-Reeves (PI)
07/2018–05/2025
A Randomized Phase III Double-Blind Clinical Trial Evaluating The Effect Of Immune-Enhancing Nutrition on Radical Cystectomy Outcomes (SIMMune) S1600

1R37CA218118
Hamilton-Reeves (PI)
07/2018–05/2025
Effect of Immune-Enhancing Nutrition on Radical Cystectomy Outcomes

Publications

Fang, A., Frigo, D. E., Hahn, A., Razouki, Z., Hwang, J., Koutroumpakis, E., Lawen, T., Smith, M., **Hamilton-Reeves, J.**, DiGiovanni, Higgason, N., Garcia, R., Chapin, B., Pettaway, C., Chery, L., Troncoso, P., Logothetis, C., Daniel, C., Wei, P. & Gregg, J. R. (2025). GLP-1 Agonist Use Among Men with Localized Prostate Cancer: A Narrative Review and Rationale for Prospective Clinical Trials. *Urology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.urology.2025.04.056>

Chen, X., Beilman, B., Gibbs, H. D., **Hamilton, J. L.**, Parker, N., Bur, A. M., Caudell, J., Gan, G., Hamilton-Reeves, J., Jim, H., Kirtane, K., Lominska, C., Crowder, S. & Arthur, A. E. (2025). Nutrition in head and neck cancer care: a roadmap and call for research. *The Lancet Oncology*, 26(6), e300-e310. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(25\)00087-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(25)00087-7)

Trecarten, S., Liss, M. A., **Hamilton-Reeves, J.**, & DiGiovanni, J. (2025). Obesity, dietary interventions and microbiome alterations in the development and progression of prostate cancer. *Frontiers in Immunology*, 15, 1448116. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2024.1448116>



SARAH HAMPL, M.D., FAAP,

is the Kemper Endowed Professor for Healthy Lifestyles at the Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition (CHLN) at Children's Mercy and Professor of Pediatrics at UMKC School of Medicine. She leads the Advocacy area at the CHLN. Dr. Hampl provides clinical care in the PHIT Kids Weight

Management Clinic and medical oversight of the PHIT Kids and Zoom to Health evening group programs. Dr. Hampl supports primary care providers in childhood obesity treatment through development and delivery of education as well as mentorship. She serves as an AAP Section on Obesity coach for colleagues in the Midwest and leads the University of MO Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO on pediatric weight management. She and colleagues advocate for increased access to obesity treatment through the MO Council for Activity and Nutrition's Healthcare Workgroup. Dr. Hampl and CHLN and state colleagues are federally funded to study the impact of the MO Medicaid treatment benefit for children with obesity, and the use of clinical tools to aid obesity prevention and treatment. Other research interests include correlates of patient attrition from weight management and interventions to improve retention, clinical outcomes of clinic- and group-based treatment and impact of healthcare professional educational interventions on obesity treatment.

Ongoing Research Support

1R01NR021278-01

Davis & Darden (PI)

07/30/2024–04/30/2029

Implementation of the New Pediatric Obesity Clinical Practice Guideline in Rural Families and Clinics: A Randomized Clinical Trial
Role: Co-Investigator

1R01DK139363

Laroche (PI)

04/01/2024–03/31/2027

Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness—feasibility study for a full-scale RCT
Role: Co-Investigator

NU58DP007644-01-00

Lightner, Grimes, Shook (PI)

09/30/2023–09/29/2028

Communities Leading Change: Advancing Black and Latino Capacity to Create Nutrition and Physical Activity Environmental and Systems Change
Role: Co-Investigator

1R01DK134961-01A1

Wilfley, Hampl (MPIs)

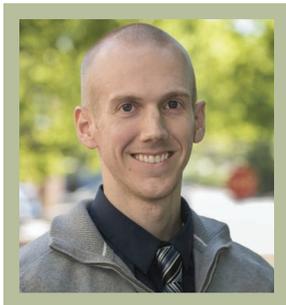
09/01/2023-08/31/2028

Increasing Access to USPSTF-Recommended Obesity Care for Youth and Adults Who Are Recipients of Medicaid: Evaluation of a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Obesity Care Training Program in FQHCs

Publications

Michaud, T. L., Hill, J. L., Heelan, K. A., Fiechtner, L., Ruggiero, C. F., French, D. D., Smith, J., Salmon, J., Lindros, J., Jelalian, E., Shepard, D., Darling, K., Robinson, T., Matheson, D., Haydel, K., Flora, J., Wilfley, D., Carlson, J., **Hampl, S.**, Staiano, A., Graham, A., Muzaffar, S. & Estabrooks, P. A. (2025). Considerations for Cost Assessment of Implementing Family Healthy Weight Programs Across Community and Clinical Contexts. *Childhood Obesity*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21532176251389760>

Lightner, J. S., Gardiner, K., Grimes, A., Shook, R. P., **Hampl, S.**, Prochnow, T., & Collie-Akers, V. Communities Leading Change: Using Implementation Science to Improve Physical Activity and Nutrition Among Racially Minoritized Communities in Kansas City. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15248399251343048. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399251343048>



BRIAN HELSEL, PH.D., is a postdoctoral research fellow with the Division of Physical Activity and Weight Management at KU Medical Center. His research is focused on improving the validity and reliability of physical activity ambulatory assessments in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This

includes the monitoring of movement (e.g., via accelerometry), physiological function, contextual information and the use of ecological momentary assessments to capture real-time data to inform and adapt interventions. Dr. Helsel is interested in using these assessments to uncover the time-varying, within-person physical activity determinants that may lead to discoveries related to the antecedents leading to or consequences following physical activity episodes and their subsequent effect on physical and cognitive health.

Ongoing Research Support

National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences

Bodde & Helsel (MPIs)

08/2025–6/2026

Time to THRIVE: Translating Healthy lifestyle Research to those with Intellectual disabilities through Virtual Engagement

R01HD116832-01

Ptomey & Donnelly (MPIs)

01/2025–01/2030

Cooking skills to improve long-term weight loss in young adults with intellectual disabilities

Role: Co- Investigator

MET-DS; U01 HD116477)

Ptomey (PI)

09/2024–05/2029

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Federal

Metabolic Health, Lifestyle, and Risk of Co-Occurring Health Conditions in Down Syndrome

Role: Co-Investigator

K01 AG083130

Helsel (PI)

09/2023–05/2028

National Institute on Aging

Assessment of Physical Activity for Alzheimer's Disease Research in Down Syndrome

R61/R33 AG078967

Ptomey (PI)

2022–2026

National Institute on Aging

The Impact of Weight Loss on Alzheimer's Disease Risk in Adults with Down Syndrome

Publications

Clina, J. G., **Helsel, B. C.**, Hartley, S. L., Fleming-Batayneh, V. L., Handen, B., Christian, B., Hartley, S., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Hom, C., Burns, J., Ances, B., Ptomey, L... & Alzheimer Biomarker Consortium–Down Syndrome (ABC-DS) Investigators. (2025). The joint association of obesity and physical activity on cognitive function in Down syndrome. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 108(3), 1328-1338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13872877251386474>

Yoon, D. M., Plante, D. T., Fleming, V., Handen, B., Lao, P., Peven, J., Christian, B., Okonkwo, O., Laymon, C., Ances, B., Hom, C., **Helsel, B.** & Hartley, S. L. (2025). Preliminary investigation of obstructive sleep apnea and Alzheimer's disease in down syndrome. *Sleep Advances*, 6(3), zpaf044. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sleepadvances/zpaf044>

Ptomey, L., Hom, C., Wilkins, H., Doran, E., Wright, S. T., Hoang, D., Delehoy, B., Lott, I., Perales-Puchalt, J., **Helsel, B.**, Burns, J., Grill, J. & Head, E. (2025). Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Down Syndrome Cores: Experience from two sites. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(8), e70612. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70612>

Lamoureux, N. R., Dixon, P. M., **Helsel, B. C.**, & Welk, G. J. (2025). Development of a Modifiable Fall Risk Score for evaluating changes in fall risk over time. *Injury Prevention*. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ip-2025-045669>

Suire, K., **Helsel, B.**, Bowling, A., Staiano, A. E., Sherman, J., Rice, A., & Ptomey, L. (2025). The Adoption of the GameSquad Exergaming Intervention for Young Adults with Down Syndrome: A Qualitative Analysis. *Medical Research Archives*, 13(6). <https://doi.org/10.18103/mra.v13i6.6608>

Clina, J. G., Danon, J. C., **Helsel, B. C.**, Lepping, R. J., Martin, L. E., Sherman, J. R., Brucks, M., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). The association between cardiorespiratory fitness and resting-state functional connectivity in adults with Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(5), e70297. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70297>

Ptomey, L. T., **Helsel, B. C.**, Washburn, R. A., Montgomery, R. N., Krebill, R., Danon, J. C., Sherman, J., Forsha, D. Bodde, A., Szabo-Reed, A., Gorczyca, A. & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). The promotion of physical activity for use in Alzheimer's disease prevention trials in adults with Down syndrome: Results from a 12-month randomized trial. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(2), e70115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70115>

Fleming, V. L., Peven, J., **Helsel, B. C.**, Ptomey, L. T., Clina, J., Barry, A., Ances, B., Handen, B., Christian, B., Laymon, C., Zammit, M., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Okonkwo, O., Hartley, S. & Alzheimer Biomarkers Consortium–Down Syndrome. (2025). Physical activity as a resistance or resilience mechanism in Down syndrome Alzheimer's disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(3), e70127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70127>

Helsel, B. C., Sherman, J. R., Bodde, A. E., Washburn, R. A., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). A Comparison of commonly used prediction equations for estimating resting metabolic rate in adults with Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 69(5), 428-436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.13215>

Clina, J. G., White, D. A., Sherman, J. R., Danon, J. C., Forsha, D. E., **Helsel, B. C.**, Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Daily physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness in adults with Down syndrome with and without congenital heart disease. *Disability and Health Journal*, 101778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2025.101778>

Clina, J. G., Bodde, A. E., Chang, J., **Helsel, B. C.**, Sherman, J. R., Vidoni, E. D., Williams, K., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Factors Associated With Physical Activity in Alzheimer's Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study of Individuals and Their Caregivers. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 08982643251318766. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643251318766>

Fleming, V. L., **Helsel, B. C.**, Ptomey, L. T., Handen, B. L., Krinsky-McHale, S. J., Hom, C. L., Zammit, M., Minhas, D., Luo, W., Laymon, C., Lee, J., Lott, I., Cohen, A., Ances, B., Brickman, A., Pulsifer, M., Clare, J., Rosa, D., Lai, F., Harp, J., Schmitt, F., Price, J., Zaman, S., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Chhristian, B., Okonkwo, O., Hartley, S. & Alzheimer's Biomarkers Consortium–Down Syndrome. (2025).

Longitudinal study of body mass index in relation to Alzheimer's disease pathology and symptomatology in Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(6), e70387. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70387>



TRENT HERDA, PH.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences and the director of the Neuromechanics Laboratory and Hawk Fitness Academy at the University of Kansas His primary research interests include examining the effects of acute and chronic

exercise and obesity on muscle composition and motor unit behavior. Of particular interest to the Neuromechanics Laboratory is quantifying alterations in the composition of the muscle (e.g. muscle size, intramuscular fat, etc.) as a result of endurance- and resistance-training exercise interventions and, subsequently, the effects of changes in muscle composition may have on motor unit behavior and the neural costs to match force tasks. The Hawk Fitness Academy is a youth exercise program that is designed to improve muscle strength, agility and balance while teaching exercise techniques that can be used throughout adulthood.

Ongoing Research Support

Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition
Pilot Research Program

Shook (PI)
2025–2026

Dose response of exercise in adolescence on metabolic outcomes—a pilot study

Role: Co- Investigator

Kemper Family Foundation
Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyle & Nutrition

Shook (PI)
2024–2025

Associations between anti-obesity pharmacotherapy-induced changes in skeletal muscle function and appetite in adolescents with obesity: A pilot study

Role: Co-Investigator

Additional Ventures-Single Ventricle Research Fund
Forsha (PI)
2023–2026

A comprehensive and non-invasive assessment of skeletal muscle in adolescents with single ventricle circulation
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Smith, A. N., Sullivan, D. K., **Herda, T. J.**, & Taylor, M. K. (2025). Eight weeks of creatine monohydrate supplementation is associated with improvements in muscle size in Alzheimer's disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21, e105967. https://doi.org/10.1002/alz70860_105967

Smith, A. N., Sullivan, D. K., Morris, J. K., Carbuhn, A. F., **Herda, T. J.**, & Taylor, M. K. (2025). Eight weeks of creatine monohydrate supplementation is associated with increased muscle strength and size in Alzheimer's disease: data from a single-arm pilot study. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 12, 1670641. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2025.1670641>

Gu, Y., Su, W., Malik, N., Nguyen, T., Jordan, A., **Herda, T.**, & Song, Y. (2025). Lower limb muscle activation and biomechanics during single-leg hopping in different directions. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 7, 1733669. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2025.1733669>



CARA HOFFART, DO, MSCE, is a pediatric rheumatologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City and professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Dr. Hoffart specializes in researching and treating pediatric pain amplification syndromes in children.

Publications

Scheurich, J. A., Beals-Erickson, S. E., Wallace, D. P., Cramer, E., Fox, E. J., Black, W., Jones, J. & **Hoffart, C. M.** (2025). Safety and outcomes of intensive interdisciplinary pain treatment for patients with and without pediatric generalized joint hypermobility: a longitudinal retrospective study. *Rheumatology International*, 45(9), 202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00296-025-05947-8>

Harris, J. G., Holland, M. J., Fox, E., Favier, L., **Hoffart, C.**, Ibarra, M., Jones, J., Harris, L. & Cooper, A. M. (2025). Optimizing laboratory medication safety monitoring in patients with juvenile idiopathic arthritis to advance value-based care. *Clinical Rheumatology*, 44(3), 1293-1297. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10067-025-07342-x>



HOLLY HULL, PH.D., is a professor in the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at KU Medical Center. She is an expert in body composition assessment and analysis. Her research agenda explores how the maternal environment impacts fetal development and programs offspring disease risk. Further, she

studies intervention methods to prevent excessive gestational weight gain and how pregnancy influences maternal disease risk.

Ongoing Research Support

University of Kansas Medical Center Research Administration
Clinical/Lied Pilot program

Finkle(PI)

07/2025–06/2026

GLP-1 effects on lean mass and bone Health in midlife women (GLOW)

Role: Mentor

Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) at KUMC
Hull (PI)

07/2024–06/2025

Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and brain health in midlife

1P20GM144269-01

Donnelly (PI)

04/2022–02/2027

Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity REsearch (KC-MORE) -
Alteration and Renovation

Role: Co-investigator

Publications

Fortin-Miller, S. A., Gajewski, B. J., Carlson, S. E., Colombo, J. A., Christifano, D. N., Sullivan, D. K., & **Hull, H. R.** (2025). Ethnicity modifies the relationship between added sugars and fructose

exposure in the first 1000 days and offspring body composition at 24 months. *Nutrition Research*, 139, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nutres.2025.04.009>

Griebel-Thompson, A. K., Sands, S., Chollet-Hinton, L., Christifano, D., Sullivan, D. K., **Hull, H.**, Camargo, J. & Carlson, S. E. (2025). Maternal urinary fluoride levels of a large pregnancy cohort in the United States: findings from the ADORE study. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 133(3-4), 047001. <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP14711>

Hand, L. K., Taylor, M. K., Sullivan, D. K., Siengsukon, C. F., Morris, J. K., Martin, L. E., & **Hull, H. R.** (2025). Pregnancy as a window of opportunity for dementia prevention: a narrative review. *Nutritional Neuroscience*, 28(3), 347-359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1028415X.2024.2371727>



KAI LING KONG, PH.D., is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She focuses on the prevention of obesity during infancy, in particular, targeting the development of eating behaviors in infants and toddlers. The obesity epidemic spares no age groups, and rapid

weight gain during the foremost years is of utmost importance to treat, since its prevalence and severity generally increase with age. Therefore, early preventive strategies that positively impact weight and behaviors that lead to obesity, are imperative. The premise of her work is grounded in the behavioral economics framework and necessitates valid early measures of food and non-food reinforcement. Based on this framework, an individual's choice to obtain commodities, such as food or fun activity is influenced by the constraints on those choices, as well as the availability of alternatives surrounding them. Secondly, the premise of her work is grounded by research on environmental enrichment and principle of choice architecture. Literature in these two areas suggests that arrangement of one's physical environment, such as increasing the availability of choices, substitutability between reinforcers and constraints on complements to eating, can be used to make healthful lifestyle choices more obvious and accessible.

Ongoing Research Support

National Endowment for the Arts

Kong (PI)

01/2025–12/2027

Do-Re-Me-Family: Music-based parenting intervention to improve quality of parent-infant interaction among families from low socioeconomic status

Publications

Serwatka, C. A., Smith, L. M., Moore, A. M., Sethi, T., Engel, H., Smith, A. R., & **Kong, K. L.** (2025). The Impact of Feeding Styles on Unhealthy Dietary Intakes and Weight-For-Length z-Scores: Investigating Sweet Beverages and Snack Food Consumption During Early Childhood in a Diverse Sample. *Appetite*, 108319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2025.108319>

Rips-Goodwin, A. R., Jun, D., Griebel-Thompson, A., **Kong, K. L.**, & Fazzino, T. L. (2025). US infant formulas contain primarily added sugars: An analysis of infant formulas on the US market. *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*, 141, 107369. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfca.2025.107369>

Kubiniec, E., White, H. I., Eiden, R. D., Epstein, L. H., Fabiano, G. A., **Kong, K. L.**, & Anzman-Frasca, S. (2025). Effects of a shared activities parenting intervention on weight outcomes in middle childhood: An exploratory study. *Eating Behaviors*, 102002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2025.102002>

Smith, A. R., Salley, B., Hanson-Abromeit, D., Paluch, R. A., & **Kong, K. L.** (2025). The Impact of a Community-Based Music Program on the Quality of Parent–Child Language Interactions: A One-Year Follow-Up. *Infant and Child Development*, 34(3), e70012. <https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.70012>

Rips-Goodwin, A. R., Jun, D., Griebel-Thompson, A., **Kong, K. L.**, & Fazzino, T. L. Infant Formulas Sold in the United States Contain Primarily Added Sugars: Findings from an Empirical Analysis of Infant Formula Products. Available at SSRN 5037726. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfca.2025.107369>

Smith, A. R., & **Kong, K. L.** (2025). Music enrichment programs may promote early language development by enhancing parent responsiveness: A narrative review. *Child Development Perspectives*, 19(1), 20-29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12519>



CHELSEA KRACHT, PH.D., is an assistant professor in the Division of Physical Activity and Weight Management in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Kracht's research focuses on promoting an adequate balance of 24-hour movement behaviors (physical

activity, sedentary time [namely screen-time], and sleep) in children and their caregivers through community, school, and home-based efforts. Most of her research focuses on the first 2,000 days, including pregnancy to age 5.

Ongoing Research Support

P20GM144269

National Institutes of Health

Kracht (RPL)

03/2024–03/2029

Intensive longitudinal assessment of stress and stress-related concepts across a behavioral weight loss intervention

R00HD107518

National Institutes of Health

Kracht (PI)

05/2024–04/2027

A home-based intervention to improve adherence to the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines in young children

Publications

Kracht, C. L., Brown, D. M., Gorczyca, A. M., Jakicic, J. M., Szabo-Reed, A., Washburn, R., & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). Association Between Wake-Time Movement Behaviors and Weight Loss Maintenance. *Obesity*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.70082>

Cabre, H. E., Falkenhain, K., Altazan, A. D., Flanagan, E. W., **Kracht, C. L.**, Sparks, J. R., Kebbe, M., Woolf, E., Hsia, D., Gilmore, A., Beyl, R., Apolzan, J. & Redman, L. M. (2025). Examining the Impact of a Codeveloped Multicomponent Mobile eHealth Lifestyle Intervention on Physical Activity and Its Association With Gestational Weight Gain in Underserved Women: A Statewide Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 27, e73962. doi: 10.2196/73962

Luecking, C. T., **Kracht, C. L.**, Ferrante, M. J., Moding, K. J., Kielb, E., Rolke, L. J., Wagner, B., Colella, J., Speirs, K., Robinson, C. & Neshteruk, C. D. (2025). Upstream Interventions in Clinical Settings Focused on Nutrition to Prevent Obesity During the First 1000 Days: A Scoping Review. *Advances in Nutrition*, 100529. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.advnut.2025.100529>

Falkenhain, K., **Kracht, C. L.**, Flanagan, E. W., Altazan, A. D., Hsia, D. S., Cabre, H. E., Apolzan, J. & Redman, L. M. (2025). Differential effects of a stakeholder-informed intensive perinatal eHealth behavioral weight gain intervention between non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White individuals: a secondary analysis of a randomized clinical trial. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 59(1), kaaf072. <https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaaf072>

Baumann, H., Singh, B., Amanda, S. E., Gough, C., Ahmed, M., Fiedler, J., Timm, I., Wunsch, K., Button, A., Yin, Z., Vasiloglou, M., Sivakumar, B., Petersen, J., Dallinga, J., Huong, C., Schoeppe, S., **Kracht, C.**, Spring, K., Maher, C. & Vandelanotte, C. Effectiveness of mHealth interventions targeting physical activity, sedentary behavior, sleep or nutrition on emotional, behavioral and eating disorders in adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Digital Health*, 7, 1593677. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2025.1593677>

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., Stoepker, P., Chong, K. H., **Kracht, C. L.**, & Fairclough, S. J. (2025). Device-independent Physical Activity metrics and adiposity-related indicators among children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 43(21), 2551-2564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2025.2540663>

Kebbe, M., Falkenhain, K., Beyl, R., Altazan, A. D., Flanagan, E. W., **Kracht, C. L.**, Cabre, H., Woolf, E., Hsia, D., Apolzan, J. & Redman, L. M. (2025). An eHealth intervention in pregnancy on maternal body composition and subsequent perinatal outcomes: a randomized trial. *Obesity*, 33(9), 1680-1693. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.24357>

Neshteruk, C. D., Luecking, C. T., **Kracht, C. L.**, Burkart, S., Melnick, E. M., Anderson III, R. E., & Lane, H. G. (2025). Implementation strategies used in policy, systems, and environmental interventions addressing obesity-related outcomes in early childhood education settings: A systematic review. *Implementation Science Communications*, 6(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43058-025-00718-9>

Kracht, C. L., Harville, E. W., Cohen, N. L., Sutton, E. F., Kebbe, M., & Redman, L. M. (2025). Trends in adverse pregnancy outcomes in Louisiana, 2017 to 2022. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1), 9704. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-94092-0>

Kracht, C. L., Tate, A., de Brito, J. N., Trofholz, A., & Berge, J. M. (2025). Association between parental stress, coping, mood, and subsequent child physical activity and screen-time: an ecological momentary assessment study. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 729. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-21738-z>

Kracht, C. L., Tovar, A., Gans, K. M., Lee, R. E., Tandon, P. S., von Ash, T., & Francis, L. (2025). How to integrate and leverage digital health modalities for health promotion in early childhood education: Opportunities to improve intervention access and engagement. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 15(1), ibaf006. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaf006>



KATHRYN (KATE) KYLER, M.D., MSc, FAAP, is a pediatric hospitalist and researcher at Children's Mercy Kansas City and an associate professor of pediatrics at University of Missouri-Kansas City. Dr. Kyler's research interests center on hospitalized children with obesity, including examination of gaps in hospital outcomes for children with

obesity and improvement of safety and equity of care provided to children with obesity during hospitalization.

Ongoing Research Support

K23HL173648

Kyler (PI)

05/01/2025–04/30/2030

Systemic corticosteroid pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamic biomarker identification in children with asthma and obesity

NCATS KL2TR002367

Kyler (PI)

07/1/2024–01/1/2025

Funder: NIH NCATS KL2 Mentored Career Development Award (Frontiers)

Obesity's influence on systemic corticosteroid exposure and response in children with asthma

Ed Connolly Scholar Award: Children's Mercy Kansas City

Kyler (PI)

10/01/2023–09/30/2025

Obesity's Influence on Circulating Immune Cell Responses to Systemic Corticosteroids

Publications

Jenkins, A. M., Hendry, E., Power-Hays, A., Valentino, M., Hall, M., **Kyler, K. E.**, Antoon, J., Girdwood, S., Goldman, J., Morel, A., Savage, T., Orth, L & Archer, N. M. (2025). Increasing ketamine administration in children's hospitals for youth with sickle cell disease. *Blood Advances*. <https://doi.org/10.1182/bloodadvances.2025016826>

Helfer, V. E., Gonzalez, D., **Kyler, K. E.**, Dunlap, T. C., Williams, V., Radford, J., Selvarangan, R., Sasidharan, A., Chan, S., Artz, N., Retke, B., Toren, P., Gibson, K. & Shakhnovich, V. (2025). Exploring the Influence of Obesity and CYP2 C19 Genotype on Lansoprazole Pharmacokinetics in Pediatric Patients: A Population Modeling Approach. *Clinical Pharmacokinetics*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40262-025-01517-0>



HELENA LAROCHE, M.D., FAAP, is a combined internal medicine/pediatric physician who focuses on weight management and is the scientific medical director of CHLN and associate professor at University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her research focuses on community and family approaches to obesity prevention.

She works in partnership with community-based organizations to design interventions for families. These interventions support healthy behaviors while also addressing the social needs and circumstances that influence those behaviors. She is also working with other weight management physicians on research to improve weight management treatment for children.

Ongoing Research Support

NEA

Kong (PI)

01/01/2025–12/31/2026

Do-Re-Me-Family: Music-based parenting intervention to improve the quality of parent-infant interaction among families from low socioeconomic status

Role: Co-Investigator

Kemper Foundation; Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition Pilot Grant

Shook (PI)

10/01/2024–09/30/2026

Associations between anti-obesity pharmacotherapy-induced changes in skeletal muscle function and appetite in adolescents with obesity: A pilot study

Role: Co-Investigator

UG1 OD024943

Corcoran, Hsia, King (MPIs)

05/01/2024–06/30/2027

NIH: ECHO IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials Network (ISPCTN) Phentermine's Impact on Treatment in Teens (PhITT): A Randomized Placebo-Controlled Trial of Phentermine for Adolescents with Obesity

Role: Site PI

1R01DK139363

Laroche (PI)

04/01/2024–01/31/2027

Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness—feasibility study for full-scale RCT

R13HL173969

Fuemmeler (PI)

03/13/2024–03/12/2025

Society of Behavioral Medicine 2024 Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions

Role: Co-Investigator

RFA-DP-23-0014 CDC REACH grant

Grant, Shook, Lightner and Grimes (MPIs)

09/30/2023–09/29/28

Communities leading change: Advancing Black and Latino capacity to create nutrition and physical activity environmental and systems change Funding Opportunity

Role: Co-Investigator

R01DK134961

Wilfley (PI)

09/1/2023–06/30/2028

Increasing Access to USPSTF-Recommended Obesity Care for Youth and Adults Who Are Recipients of Medicaid: Evaluation of a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Obesity Care Training Program in FQHCs

Role Co-Investigator

Publications

Robinson, K. M., Scherer, A. M., Zorn, A. N., Mengeling, M. A., & **Laroche, H. H.** (2025). Association Between Weight Stigma Experiences in Healthcare and Self-Reported Healthcare Avoidance in a National Sample. *Obesity Science & Practice*, 11(5), e70095. <https://doi.org/10.1002/osp4.70095>

Jiang, Q., Fitzpatrick, L., **Laroche, H. H.**, Hampl, S., Steinbach, S., Forseth, B., Davis, A., Steel, C. & Carlson, J. A. (2025). Associations of Neighborhood Food Retail Environments with Weight Status in a Regional Pediatric Health System. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2024.0283>



EMILY LAW, PH.D., is a pediatric psychologist and professor in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Kansas Medical Center, where she is the Vice Chair for Research. She serves as the Director of Research and Development Training for the Digital Health Co/Lab at the

University of Kansas. Dr. Law and her team study digital health and telemedicine interventions for children and families with migraine and other headache diseases, recurrent and chronic pain, concussion, insomnia and other sleep disturbances.

Ongoing Research Support

2R01HD090230
Chrisman & McCarty (MPIs)
2023–2028
Optimizing Collaborative Care for Youth with Persistent Post- Concussive Symptoms
Role: Co-Investigator

R34MH130634
Berk & Manber (MPIs)
2023–2026
Pilot Effectiveness Trial of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Enhanced with Internet-Delivered Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia for Adolescents with Depression and Comorbid Insomnia
Role: Consultant

NIH/NIDDK R01
Palermo & Conwell (MPIs)
2023–2028
Hybrid Effectiveness Implementation Trial of an Internet-Delivered Pain Self-Management Program for Persons with Painful Chronic Pancreatitis
Role: Co-Investigator

Children’s Hospital Colorado
Mindfulness Training for Adolescents with Migraine
Clementi (PI)
2023–2025
Role: Co- Mentor

R01HD101471
Law (PI)
2020–2025
Enhancing Efficacy of Migraine Self-Management in Children with Comorbid Insomnia
Role: Co-Mentor

NIH/NCCIH/NINDS K23
Clementi (PI)
2020–2025
Feasibility Trial of a Remotely Delivered Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Adolescents with Migraine



MARISSA LOVE, M.D., Marissa Love, MD is certified by the American Board of Allergy and Immunology and the American Board of Pediatrics. She completed a fellowship in allergy, asthma and clinical immunology at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She earned her medical degree from the University of Illinois

College of Medicine and completed her residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She is trained to treat the whole spectrum of pediatric and adult allergy, asthma, and immunology-related diseases. During her medical training, she participated in medical education and research, which awarded her presentations at national conferences. She was a recipient of the highly regarded Chrysalis Project sponsored by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology in 2015. She continues to be actively engaged in medical education and has a strong interest in adult and pediatric research. She is also an active member of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and the American Academy of Pediatrics. As an allergist and immunologist, she sees pediatric patients at our Prairie Village office and adult patients at the Medical Pavilion in Kansas City, Kansas. She looks forward to working with you to treat all aspects of allergic, asthmatic and immunological diseases and to provide patient-centered care plans for all ages, from infancy to adults.

Ongoing Research Support

Love (PI)
2025–Present

A Phase 3 Study Evaluating the Efficacy and Safety of PT027 Compared with PT007 Administered As Needed in Participants 12 to < 18 Years of Age with Asthma-AC

Children Mercy Research Institute
2024–Present

A Histamine Pharmacodynamic Biomarker to Guide Treatment in Pediatric Asthma

Role: Co-Investigator

Sunflower Pediatric Clinical Trials

Davis (PI)

2024–Present

ECHO ISPCTN Junior Investigator

Academy of Medical Educators, Medical Education Mentored Award

Love (PI)

2023–Present

Culinary Medicine SER Week

Menorah Heritage Foundation

2022–Present

Pilot study with Food Equality Initiative

Role: Co-Investigator

Pharma solutions, Inc

Gierer (PI)

2019–Present

TARGET-DERM

Takeda Pharmaceuticals

Gierer (PI)

2019–Present

Empower HAE trial

Role: Sub-Investigator

Publications

Anagnostou, A., Lieberman, J., Bingemann, T., Buckey, T., Cianferoni, A., Cospers, A., Kim, E., **Love, M.**, Mallapaty, A., Moore, L., Wasserman, R., Nowak-Wegrzyn, A., Somani, S., Yu, J. & Greenhawt, M. (2025). 10 ways to improve your management of food allergy. *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, 134(5), 616–618. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anai.2025.01.014>

Warren, C., Bilaver, L., Davis, C., **Love, M.**, Martinez, E., Brown, E., Pitts, K., Onal, C. & Chinthrajah, S. (2025). Implementation and Impacts of a Multi-site, Online Food-as-Medicine Intervention for Pediatric Food Allergy Patients at Risk of Food Insecurity. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 155(2), AB446. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaci.2024.12.1026>



COLIN MCCOIN, PH.D., is a research assistant professor at KU Medical Center in the Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology. His research interests center around investigating the impact of obesity on mitochondrial quality and function and how various treatment modalities, including

standard pharmacological therapeutics, impact these outcomes. He is particularly interested in the sex-dependence of mitochondrial energetics and mitophagy.

Publications

Swaminathan, A., Kenzior, A., Price, A., Li, H., **McCoin, C.**, Hintermann, A., Weaver, K., Morris, N., Keene, A., Rohner, N. & Rohner, N. (2025). A repeatedly evolved mutation in Cryptochrome-1 of subterranean animals alters behavioral and molecular circadian rhythms. *iScience*. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2025.112874.

Johnson, C. N., Lysaker, C. R., Gast, E. C., **McCoin, C. S.**, Kemna, R. E., Fuller, K. N., Kulger, B., Franczak, E., Csikos, V., Allen, J., John, C., Wolf, M., Morris, M., Thyfault, J., Wilkins, H., Geiger, P. & Morris, J. K. (2025). APOE4 exerts partial diet-dependent effects on energy expenditure and skeletal muscle mitochondrial pathways in a preclinical model. *Function*, 6(2), zqaf017. <https://doi.org/10.1152/function.104.2025>

Davis, X. C., **McCoin, C. S.**, Morris, E. M., Allen, J., Stierwalt, H. D., Franczak, E., Queathem, E., Fulghum, K., Puchalska, P., Crawford, P. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Ketone body-supported respiration in murine isolated brain mitochondria is augmented by alpha-ketoglutarate and is optimized by neuronal SCOT expression. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E822–E832. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00058.2025>

Franczak, E., Kugler, B. A., Salathe, S. F., Allen, J. A., Sardu, M. E., **McCain, C. S.**, Hevener, A., Morris, E. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Loss of ovarian function prevents exercise-induced activation of hepatic mitochondrial flux. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E869-E884. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00107.2025>

Lysaker, C. R., Kugler, B. A., Csikos, V., Birky, C. J., Gilmore, C. A., Wenger, M., Franczak, E., Davis, X., Hauger, B., Allen, J., Troutwine, B., Gonzalez-Duran, L., **McCain, C.**, Chauhan, M., Harris, J., Frazier, A., Winter, M., Koch, L., Britton, S., Thyfault, J. & Wilkins, H. M. (2025). A polygenic rat model of divergent aerobic capacity reveals a liver-brain interaction impacting Alzheimer's disease-like phenotypes. *The Journal of Physiology*. <https://doi.org/10.1113/JP286750>

Ernst, N. J., Franczak, E., Allen, J., Minchew, E. C., Readyoff, A. T., Farlow, M. C., Spangenburg, E., Miller, B., Morris, J., Shankar, K., Sardu, M., Zhu, H., Stanford, J., Thyfault, J. & **McCain, C. S.** (2025). Donepezil treatment, alone or combined with exercise, enhances skeletal muscle function in healthy and advanced aging disease mouse models. *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 139(6), 1660-1675. <https://doi.org/10.1152/jappphysiol.00895.2024>



WALKER MCKINNEY, PH.D., is a clinical psychologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Health and an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. He completed his clinical residency at Nationwide Children's Hospital and

his research fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Dr. McKinney's research focuses on treatment development for individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities. He is also interested in identifying social-environmental drivers of phenotypic differences in individuals with neurogenetic conditions such as Fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and Angelman syndrome.

Publications

McKinney, W. S., Nelson, M., Shaffer, R. C., Dominick, K. C., Erickson, C. A., & Schmitt, L. M. (2025). Brief Report: Differences Between Stanford-Binet Abbreviated and Full-Scale Estimates of IQ in Fragile X Syndrome Vary Across Development. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-025-07062-w>

McKinney, W. S., Corsmeier, A., Dapone, A., Gross, C., Dominick, K. C., Erickson, C. A., & Schmitt, L. M. (2025). Beyond the Fragile X protein: neighborhood characteristics explain individual differences in IQ and adaptive behaviors of Fragile X syndrome. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 16, 1636987. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2025.1636987>

Christensen, D., Shin, Y. S., Wang, J., Cuomo, C. R., Dentry, T., Gemmell, H. M., Pulver, S., Orlando, A., **McKinney, W.**, Stevens, C., Unruh, K., Karmakar, B., Coonbes, S., Mosconi, M. & Wang, Z. (2025). Subcortical brain volume variations in autistic individuals across the lifespan. *Molecular Autism*, 16(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-025-00673-1>

McKinney, W. S., Tadevich, L. J., Schmitt, L. M., Horn, P. S., Ruberg, J. R., White, S. W., Reisinger, D., Burkett, K., Sarawgi, S., Kang, S. & Shaffer, R. C. (2025). Study protocol for a randomized controlled trial of Regulating Together (RT), a group therapy for emotion dysregulation in school-age autistic youth and their caregivers. *BMC Psychology*, 13(1), 436. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02737-6>

McKinney, W. S., Schmitt, L. M., De Stefano, L. A., Ethridge, L., Norris, J. E., Horn, P. S., Dauterman, S., Rosselot, H., Pedapati, E., Reisinger, D., Dominick, K., Shaffer, R., Chin, D., Friedman, N., Hong, M., Sweeney, J., & Erickson, C. (2025). Results from a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, single-dose, crossover trial of lovastatin or minocycline in fragile X syndrome. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 35(4), 211-221. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cap.2024.0103>



LAURA MARTIN, PH.D., is the Director of the Structure and Function Unit, Hoglund Biomedical Imaging Center Associate Professor, Department of Population Health at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She is passionate about sharing her enthusiasm for research with students and

discussing all aspects of the research process including but not limited to critically evaluating others' research, developing research questions, and deciding what methods are most appropriate to answer a research question. She feels it's important to motivate students to gain an understanding of how neuroimaging research can inform and enhance their research and training—working with trainees at all levels from high school to faculty.

Ongoing Research Support

1K23MH130728-01A1
 Stancil (PI)
 Development of a Pharmacodynamic Biomarker of Opioid Antagonism in Adolescents with Eating Disorders
 Role: Mentor

NIH, PI - Eric Vidoni
 2021–2026
 Differential Effects of Exercise Modality on Cognition and Brain in Older Adults (COMET)
 Role: Co-I

NIH
 Bailey (PI)
 2022–2027
 Age- and Alzheimer's-related changes in using event segmentation and prior knowledge to retrieve everyday memories
 Role: Co-I



FRANK T. MATERIA, PH.D., MHS, is an assistant professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the Department of Otolaryngology and Center for Health Innovation and Transformative Care. His research focuses on mobile health (i.e., mHealth) and investigating how wireless portable technologies

can be utilized to deliver (all or portions of) face-to-face clinical and behavioral interventions, as well as monitor biopsychosocial health processes as patients go about their daily lives. His research has a strong focus on: behavioral medicine; implementation science; chronic disease; patient-centered design; community-based research with underserved populations; and patient acceptability, adoption, and engagement in digital health programs.

Ongoing Research Support

KUMC School of Medicine Sustainability Student Interest Group
 Kaczorowski-Worthley & Bird
 Investigating Sustainability of Supply Chains for Medical Grade Saline
 Role: Co-Mentor

1R34AA031358-01
 LaBrie & Trager (MPIs)
 07/01/2024–06/30/2027
 Digitally Prompted Parenting: A Text Message Parent-Based Alcohol Intervention for Incoming College Students
 Role: Consultant

TL1R002368
 Bird (PI)
 07/01/2024–06/30/2025
 A Behavioral Health Precursor to SINGS - Song-based Intervention for Neuromusculature in the Geriatric Swallow
 Role: Co-I/Co-Mentor

Foundation Research Grant
 Villwock (PI)
 American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
 06/01/2024–05/31/2025
 Pediatric Caregiver Perceptions of the Allergic March and Implications for Asthma Prevention
 Role: Co-I/Co-Mentor

2L30TR003925-02 (NIH LRP Renewal)

Materia (PI)

07/01/2023–06/30/2025

Using Implementation Science to Better Understand mHealth Adoption and Engagement of Digital Health Interventions

Contract #O.5746

Berkley-Patton (PI)

12/01/2022–11/30/2025

Jackson County, Missouri

Our Healthy Eastside – Jackson County/KC, A County-Wide Initiative to Address Health Disparities

Role: Co-I (sub-award w/ Carlson)

4-22-PDFN-06

Materia (PI)

04/2022–03/2025

American Diabetes Association

Understanding African Americans' Adoption and Engagement with mHealth for Lifestyle Modification to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Publications

Bird, C., **Materia, F.**, & Villwock, J. (2025). 449 Foundations for prescribing song-based therapies: A quantitative analysis of laryngeal exercises. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 9(s1), 132-133. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2024.1046>

Lawrence, A. S., **Materia, F.**, & Villwock, J. A. (2025, March). Reply to: Correspondence for Article Titled "Age-Related Differences in Olfactory Training Outcomes: A Prospective Cohort Study". *International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology* (Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 365-366). <https://doi.org/10.1002/alar.23552>

Lawrence, A. S., Veach, J., Alapati, R., Virgen, C. G., Wright, R., **Materia, F.**, & Villwock, J. A. (2025, January). Age-related differences in olfactory training outcomes: A prospective cohort study. *International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology* (Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 18-26). <https://doi.org/10.1002/alar.23451>



LIBBY MILKOVICH, MD, FAAP, is a distinguished developmental and behavioral pediatrician at Children's Mercy Kansas City. She serves as an assistant professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. Dr. Milkovich earned her medical degree from the University of Kansas School of

Medicine. She completed her pediatric residency at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, followed by a fellowship in developmental and behavioral pediatrics at Children's Mercy Kansas City. As the leader of the Milkovich Lab, Dr. Milkovich collaborates with various investigators and community partners to study environmental factors on children's development and behavior. Her research includes evaluating the effects of digital health habits of adolescents in the context of their environment and improving the implementation of evidence-based adolescent mental health interventions within community settings.

Ongoing Research Support

CARES Act Funds Our Healthy Jackson County
Milkovich (PI)
01/2024–Present
Jackson County

Publications

Bolch, M. B., Moore, R. M., Robertson, G. C., Scafe, M. J., & **Milkovich, L. M.** (2025). Screens Are Not the Enemy: Recommendations for Developing Healthy Digital Habits in Youth. *Missouri Medicine*, 122(4), 297. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40787030>



LISA MISCHÉ LAWSON, PH.D., CTRS, is a professor of occupational therapy education at KU Medical Center and the director of KU Sensory Enhanced Aquatics, a swimming and water safety program for children with autism spectrum disorder. She is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation specialist, and her research

focuses on promoting health of vulnerable populations through leisure and physical activity. Dr. Mische Lawson is a President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition I Can Do It, You can Do It Advocate, bringing national resources for promoting healthy eating and physical activity to Kansans with disabilities

Ongoing Research Support

NCTRC Research Grant

Mische Lawson (PI)

05/01/2024–04/30/2025

Exploring the Effects of Swim Instruction on Motor Skills and Health of Children with Autism

1R21HD111917-01A1

Mische Lawson (PI)

12/13/2023–11/30/2025

Testing Effects of Swim Instruction on Autistic Children's Swimming and Water Safety Skills

Publications

Behrens, S., **Lawson, L. A. M.**, Bigelow, K., Dean, E., Zhang, A., Foster, L. H., & Bridges, M. S. (2025). Exploring home visitors' use and perceptions of developmental monitoring: A mixed methods study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 71, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.11.011>

Foster, L., **Lawson, L. M.**, & Moreland, H. (2025). Impact of a Responsive Feeding Intervention on Children and Caregivers: A Nonrandomized, Repeated-Measures Study. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 79(5), 7905205060. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2025.051100>

Hansen, K., **Mische Lawson, L.**, & Wilpers, A. (2025). Prenatal Psychosocial Distress Screening for Individuals Experiencing Pregnancies Complicated by Fetal Anomalies. *Journal of Personalized Medicine*, 15(7), 322. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jpm15070322>

Mische Lawson, L., Foster, L., Surber, C., & Hamner, K. (2025). The Essential Role of Recreational Therapy in Aquatics Programming for Children with Autism. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 59(1). <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/v2-external?opid=n6x5xl&recordId=uz5b3nfpsv&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doi.org%2F10.18666%2FTRJ-2025-V59-I1-12558>

Alduraidi, W., Zhang, E., Foster, L., & **Mische-Lawson, L.** (2025). Exploring Goal Attainment Scaling Among Occupational Therapy Students: A Retrospective Descriptive Analysis. *Occupational Therapy International*, 2025(1), 6034855. <https://doi.org/10.1155/oti/6034855>



E. MATTHEW MORRIS, PH.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology at KU Medical Center. He investigates the role of liver energy metabolism in the development of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. His work centers around how the function

or dysfunction of the primary energy producing cellular bodies, mitochondria, can impact liver function and ultimately systemic health. His current focus is how liver mitochondrial function can, through neural pathways to the brain, influence high fat diet-induced weight gain via changes in food intake and storage of dietary fat. Ultimately, the goal of his research is to describe mechanism and therapeutic options to reduce or prevent metabolic disease in adult and adolescent populations.

Ongoing Research Support

KU Diabetes Institute Pilot Grant

Morris (PI)

07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Regulation of meal termination by hepatocyte membrane polarization state

1P20GM144269-01

Weinman (PI)

04/2022–03/2025

VMH fatty acid oxidation regulates energy homeostasis
Role: Research project leader

1R01DK134737-01

Ni (PI)

01/01/2023–12/31/2026

Mechanisms regulating lipoprotein secretion and lipid metabolism

Role: Co-PI

Publications

Davis, X. C., McCoin, C. S., Salathe, S. F., Franczak, E., Allen, J. A., Queathem, E. D., Fulghum, K., Puchalska, P., Crawford, P., Thyfault, J. & **Morris, E. M.** (2025). Hepatic ketogenic insufficiency blunts exercise-induced energy expenditure and alters mitochondrial proteins in skeletal muscle. *bioRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.09.16.676620>

Ponte, M. E., Prom, J. C., Newcomb, M. A., Jordan, A. B., Comfort, L. L., Hu, J., Puchalska, P., Koestler, D., Geisler, C., Hayes, M. & **Morris, E. M.** (2025). Reduced liver mitochondrial energy metabolism impairs food intake regulation following gastric preloads and fasting. *Molecular Metabolism*, 102167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molmet.2025.102167>

Franczak, E., Kugler, B. A., Salathe, S. F., Allen, J. A., Sardu, M. E., McCoin, C. S., Hevener, A., **Morris, M.** & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Loss of ovarian function prevents exercise-induced activation of hepatic mitophagic flux. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E869-E884. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00107.2025>

Johnson, C. N., Lysaker, C. R., Gast, E. C., McCoin, C. S., Kemna, R. E., Fuller, K. N., Kugler, B., Franczak, E., Csikos, V., Allen, J., John, C., Wolf, M., **Morris, M.**, Thyfault, J., Wilkins, H., Geiger, P. & Morris, J. K. (2025). APOE4 exerts partial diet-dependent effects on energy expenditure and skeletal muscle mitochondrial pathways in a preclinical model. *Function*, 6(2), zqaf017. doi: 10.1093/function/zqaf017

Davis, X. C., McCoin, C. S., **Morris, E. M.**, Allen, J., Stierwalt, H. D., Franczak, E., Queathem, E., Fulghum, Puchalska, P., Crawford, P. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Ketone body-supported respiration in murine isolated brain mitochondria is augmented by alpha-ketoglutarate and is optimized by neuronal SCOT expression. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E822-E832. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00058.2025>



EVE-LYNN NELSON, PH.D., is a professor of behavioral pediatrics at KU Medical Center. She has primary research interest is using outreach strategies, including technologies, to deliver best practices in children's healthy lifestyles to rural and underserved communities. Dr. Nelson is currently focusing on Project

Extension of Community Outcomes, a technology-supported education approach to build the capacity of rural primary care to assess/treat common conditions using evidence-based strategies. She is also interested in home-based telehealth interventions.

Ongoing Research Support

NSF SBIR

Schnetzer (PI)

2024–2025

A novel caregiver-centered mobile app and AI coaching intervention for pediatric ADHD

Role: Consultant

The Health Resources and Services Administration

Nelson (PI)

2024–2029

TeleCollaboration ROCKS

The Health Resources and Services Administration

Nelson (PI)

2024–2029

Telehealth ROCKS Missouri

NINR

Nelson (PI)

2024–2026

HERE! Pilot

NCI

Gilbert (PI)

2024–2025

Transition and Health Implications of Posttraumatic Growth in Pediatric Cancer Survivors–F31

Role: Primary Mentor

1R56NR021161-01

Nelson (PI)

09/22/2023–07/31/2025

Clinical Trial: A Healthcare-Community Partnership Leveraging School-Based Community Health Workers to Improve Student Attendance

Role: PI

1R01CA268034-01

Befort (PI)

02/2022–01/2027

Rural Engagement in TelemedTeam for Options in Obesity Treatment Solutions (RE-TOOL)

SAMHSA

Nelson (PI)

2022–2027

KanAWARE School-Based Behavioral Health Initiative

The Health Resources and Services Administration

Nelson (PI)

2021–2026

Telehealth ROCKS Together

The Health Resources and Services Administration

Nelson (PI)

2021–2026

Telehealth ROCKS Communities

Health Resources & Service Administration,

Office for the Advancement of TeleHealth

Nelson (PI)

2016–2025

Heartland Telehealth Resource Center

HRSA, MCHB

Jamison (PI)

2016–2026

Kansas Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)

Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Zhang, E., Snyder, M., Alduraidi, W., Kaiser, E., Hunley, S., Wright, L., Romine, R., **Nelson, E-L.** & Cheak-Zamora, N. (2025). Health care transition for autistic adolescents and young adults: A pilot rural and urban comparison survey study. *Autism*, 29(6), 1403-1414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613241304495>

Law, K. B., McCord, C., Ward, M. M., Ullrich, F., Marcin, J. P., Carter, K. D., **Nelson, E-L.** & Merchant, K. A. (2025). Differences in Behavioral Health Treatment among Rural American Clinics Utilizing In-Person and Telehealth Treatment Modalities. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 10(2), 364-372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-024-00436-4>

Nelson, E. L., Punt, S., Stiles, R., & Cain, S. E. (2025). Community Health Workers: Bridge to Pediatric Mental Health Equity. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 64(5), 541-546. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2024.07.917.

Swails, L., Zhang, E., Bellinger, S., Danley, C. M., Adams, H., & **Nelson, E. L.** (2025). TeleCARE: Adapting and Piloting Child Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) Workshop for Videoconferencing Delivery During the Pandemic. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 34(9), 2487-2499. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-025-03123-x>

Brown, A. R., Ellerbeck, E. F., Sullivan, D. K., **Nelson, E. L.**, Klemp, J. R., Gajewski, B. J., Onge, J. & Befort, C. A. (2025). Protocol for the rural engagement in TelemedTeam for options in obesity treatment solutions (RE-TOOL): Cluster randomized trial investigating team-based telemedicine in rural primary care. *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications*, 101559. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2025.101559>



ADRIAN ORTEGA, PH.D.,

professional goals are to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of children and adolescents. His clinical interests include healthy lifestyles treatments and the treatment of dysregulated eating and weight-related behaviors, particularly in youth with chronic health

conditions such as obesity. His program of research focuses on the design, optimization, and implementation of evidence-based interventions, including digital tools, to improve healthy lifestyles and dysregulated eating behaviors in adolescents.

Ongoing Research Support

1L30HL176031-01

Ortega (PI)

07/2024–06/2026

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)–
Loan Repayment Program

Optimizing the Design of Digital Healthy Lifestyle Interventions
for Adolescents

Publications

Bejarano, C. M., **Ortega, A.**, & Cushing, C. C. (2025). Inhibitory Control, Attentional Bias, and Palatable Food Consumption in Adolescents: A Laboratory Feasibility Randomized Controlled Trial. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9(1), e77579. <https://doi.org/10.2196/77579>

Cushing, C. C., **Ortega, A.**, Fedele, D. A., Leslie-Miller, C. J., Carlson, J. A., Davis, A. M., & Smyth, J. M. (2025). Moderators of a mHealth Intervention for Adolescent Physical Activity: Intervention Refinement Study. *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting*, 8(1), e59334. <https://doi.org/10.2196/59334>

Graham, A. K., **Ortega, A.**, Rooper, I. R., & Smith, A. C. (2025). Mental Health Clinicians as Advocates for Effective, Equitable, Accessible, and Safe Digital Mental Health Services. *Focus*, 23(3), 307-313. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20250001>

Kruger, M., Goldschmidt, A. B., **Ortega, A.**, Wharton, A., Chapa, D. A., Stalvey, E. R., Rooper, I., Obleada, K., Miller, G. & Graham, A. K. (2025). Applying design to design: demonstrating how to create a human-centered design session interview guide for use

with adolescents. *Frontiers in Digital Health*, 7, 1507517. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2025.1507517>

Rooper, I. R., Azubuike, C., **Ortega, A.**, Miller, G. C., Parsons, L. M., Lipman, L. D., Kruger, M., Flynn, R., Silverberg, B., Wildes, J. & Graham, A. K. (2025). ‘Harder to reach’ versus reaching harder: Exploring preferred dissemination pathways to a digital binge-eating intervention for adults with or at risk of food insecurity. *Eating Behaviors*, 57, 101970. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2025.101970>

Forseth, B., Carlson, J. A., **Ortega, A.**, Steel, C., Lancaster, B., Fitzpatrick, L. K., Jiang, Q. & Davis, A. M. (2025). O the places rural children will go... to get physical activity: a cross sectional analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1188. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-22442-8>

Perez Ramirez, A., Osorio, A. M., Lai, S., James, R., **Ortega, A.**, & Canter, K. S. (2025). A scoping review of Spanish language pediatric digital health interventions. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, jsaf013. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsaf013>

Rooper, I. R., **Ortega, A.**, Massion, T. A., Lakhtakia, T., Kruger, M., Parsons, L. M., Lipman, L., Azubuike, C., Tack, E., Obleada, K. & Graham, A. K. (2025). Optimizing Testimonials for Behavior Change in a Digital Intervention for Binge Eating: Human-Centered Design Study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9(1), e59691. <https://doi.org/10.2196/59691>

Ortega, A., Rooper, I. R., Massion, T., Azubuike, C., Lipman, L. D., Lakhtakia, T., Camin, M., Parsons, L., Tack, E., Alshurafa, N., Kay, M. & Graham, A. K. (2025). Co-designing prediction data visualizations for a digital binge eating intervention. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 15(1), ibaf009. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaf009>

Obleada, K. T., **Ortega, A.**, Rooper, I. R., Parsons, L. M., Kruger, M., Azubuike, C., Lipman, L., Chen, D., Wildes, J. & Graham, A. K. (2025). Exploring pathways between internalized weight bias, eating disorder psychopathology, and weight loss expectations in treatment-seeking adults with binge eating and obesity. *Eating and Weight Disorders—Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 30(1), 17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40519-025-01725-4>

Mohr, D. C., Silverman, A. L., Youn, S. J., Areán, P., Bertagnolli, A., Carl, J., Carlton, T., Chaudhary, N., Cooper, D., DeVito, S., Eaneff, S., Flom, M., Forman-Hoffman, V., Fortunato, L., Franchino, K., Graham, A., Greenberger, H., Haulflaire, J., Kaveladze, B., Kornfield, R.,

Kruzan, K., Kuhn, E., Maclver, C., Muench, F., Misch, R., **Ortega, A.**, Palko, L., Richards, D., Salhi, L., Schremp, J., Szigethy, E., Tatro, N., Teachman, B. & Histon, T. (2025). Digital mental health treatment implementation playbook: successful practices from implementation experiences in American healthcare organizations. *Frontiers in Digital Health*, 7, 1509387. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2025.1509387>

Perez Ramirez, A., **Ortega, A.**, Stephenson, N., Muñoz Osorio, A., Kazak, A., & Phan, T. L. (2025). mHealth App to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for Diverse Families Living in Rural Areas: Usability Study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 9, e60495. <https://doi.org/10.2196/60495>

Graham, A. K., **Ortega, A.**, & Egbert, A. (2025). New Mechanisms and Populations to Target in Binge Eating Treatment. *JAMA Network Open*, 8(8), e2525076-e2525076. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.25076



LAURA PLENCNER, M.D., is a pediatric hospitalist at Children's Mercy. She completed her residency and chief residency at Children's Mercy and joined the pediatric hospital medicine faculty in 2013. She is passionate about addressing barriers to optimal health in children and their families and has an interest in

finding innovative ways for the healthcare system to address social determinants of health including food insecurity. With a colleague she developed and co-chairs the Children's Mercy Hunger Free Hospital Council with the goal of leading multidisciplinary strategies to improve the food security of the Children's Mercy patients and Kansas City community and seeks to implement and evaluate programs to improve the nutrition security of children and families.



LAUREN PTOMEY, PH.D., RD, LD, is an associate professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at KU Medical Center. Dr. Ptomey's primary research focus is the use of technology for the promotion of weight management and physical activity in adolescents who are both typically developing and those

with intellectual disabilities, such as Down syndrome. Additionally, she is interested in the impact of diet and physical activity on body composition, cognition and metabolism in adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

Ongoing Research Support

R01HD116832

Donnelly (PI)

2025–2029

Cooking skills to improve long-term weight loss in young adults with intellectual disabilities

Role: MPI

1F32AG094116-01A1

Clina (PI)

09/08/2025–09/07/2027

Body composition, physical activity, and cognitive function in Down syndrome

Role: Primary Mentor

R21HD111917

Mische Lawson (PI)

12/01/2024–11/30/2026

Testing Effects of Swim Instruction on Autistic Children's Swimming and Water Safety Skills

Role: Co-Investigator

U01HD116477

Hartley (PI)

2024–2029

Metabolic Health, Lifestyle, and Risk of Co-Occurring Health Conditions in Down Syndrome (MET-DS)

Role: MPIs

KL2TR002367-08S1
Bodde (PI)
08/28/2024–06/30/2027
The Adaptation of the Reducing Disability in Alzheimer's Disease Intervention for Individuals with Down Syndrome
Role: Primary Mentor

R01DK137986
Jakicic
04/01/2024–03/31/2027
Prevention of Weight Gain and Impaired Glucose Metabolism Post Kidney Transplantation: A Pilot and Feasibility Study
Role: Co-Investigator

ACI-24-AD-DS-2102
Michael Rafii (PI)
2023–2026
A phase 1b/2, multicenter, adaptive, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study to assess the safety, tolerability, immunogenicity, and pharmacodynamic effects of ACI-24.060 in subjects with prodromal Alzheimer's disease and in adults with Down syndrome (ABATE)
Role: Site PI

R01DK132362
Anna Gorczyca (PI)
2023–2028
The National Diabetes Prevention Program in Rural Communities
Role: Significant Contributor

K01AG083130
Benjamin Handen(PI)
2023–2028
Assessment of Physical Activity for Alzheimer's Disease Research in Down Syndrome
Role: Primary mentor

U19 AG068054-04S1
Benjamin Handen(PI)
2023-2025
Alzheimer's Biomarkers Consortium–Down Syndrome
Role: Site PI

1R61AG078967-01
Ptomey (PI)
09/2022–08/2027
The impact of Weight Loss on Alzheimer's Disease Risk in Adults with Down Syndrome

3R61AG066543-02S1 (Sub-Award)
Raf II (PI)
09/2022–08/2025
Clinical trials to prevent Alzheimer's Disease in Down Syndrome
Role: Site PI

P20GM144269
Weinman (PI)
04/2022–02/2027
Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research (KC-MORE)
Role: Co-investigator

Publications

Hilgenkamp, T. I., Davidson, E., Diaz, K. M., Fleming, R., Foster Kirk, R., Hastert, M., Kim, J., Mann, S., Usseglio, J., Videlefsky, A. & **Ptomey, L.** (2025). Weight-loss interventions for adolescents with Down syndrome: a systematic review. *Obesity*, 33(4), 632-658. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.24233>

Killian, H. J., Forseth, B., Bakula, D. M., **Ptomey, L.**, Glynn, E., Yeh, H. W., Davis, A. & Gillette, M. D. (2025). Weight Trajectories among Children with Down Syndrome: A Retrospective Study. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 280, 114491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2025.114491>

Clina, J. G., Bodde, A. E., Chang, J., Helsel, B. C., Sherman, J. R., Vidoni, E. D., Williams, K., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). Factors Associated With Physical Activity in Alzheimer's Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study of Individuals and Their Caregivers. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 08982643251318766. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08982643251318766>

Clina, J. G., White, D. A., Sherman, J. R., Danon, J. C., Forsha, D. E., Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). Daily physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness in adults with Down syndrome with and without congenital heart disease. *Disability and Health Journal*, 101778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2025.101778>

Helsel, B. C., Sherman, J. R., Bodde, A. E., Washburn, R. A., & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). A Comparison of commonly used prediction equations for estimating resting metabolic rate in adults with Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 69(5), 428-436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.13215>

Ptomey, L. T., Donnelly, J. E., Burns, J., Morris, J., Hartley, S., Martin, L. E., Choi, I., Lee, L., Li, Y., Hunt, S., Sherman, J., Danon, J., Brucks, M., Koon, L., Spaeth, K. & Sullivan, D. K. (2025). Brain outcomes with lifestyle change in adults with Down syndrome: Rationale and design for a 12-month randomized trial. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(4), e70219. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70219>

Handen, B. L., Mapstone, M., Hartley, S., Andrews, H., Christian, B., Lee, J. H., Tudorascu, D., Hom, C., Ances, B., Zaman, S., Krinsky-McHale, S., Brickman, A., Rosas, H., Cohen, A., Peterson, M., O'Bryant, S., Harp, J., Schmitt, F., **Ptomey, L.**, Burns, J., Lott, I., Lai, F., Silverman, W., Laymon, C., Head, E. & Alzheimer's Biomarker Consortium-Down Syndrome (ABC-DS). (2025). The Alzheimer's Biomarker Consortium-Down Syndrome (ABC-DS): A 10-year report. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(5), e70294. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70294>

Clina, J. G., Danon, J. C., Helsel, B. C., Lepping, R. J., Martin, L. E., Sherman, J. R., Brucks, M., Donnelly, J. & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). The association between cardiorespiratory fitness and resting-state functional connectivity in adults with Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(5), e70297. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70297>

Munn, E., Johnston, M., Hansana, D., Holden, R. J., **Ptomey, L. T.**, & Pangelinan, M. (2025). Remote Adapted Zumba®: Recommendations for Diverse Needs of Individuals with Disabilities. *PALAESTRA*, 39(2). <https://doi.org/10.18666/PALAESTRA-2025-V39-I2-13099>

Hilgenkamp, T., Bodde, A., Mann, S., Helsel, B., Sherman, J., Danon, J., & **Ptomey, L.** (2025). Successful Online Exercise Intervention Studies for Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities Including Down Syndrome: Best Practices and Recommendations. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(3), e70080. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70080>

Ptomey, L. T., Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R. A., Montgomery, R. N., Krebill, R., Danon, J. C., Sherman, J., Forsha, D., Bodde, A., Szabo-Reed, A., Gorczyca, A. & Donnelly, J. E. (2025). The promotion of physical activity for use in Alzheimer's disease prevention trials in adults with Down syndrome: Results from a 12-month randomized

trial. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(2), e70115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70115>

Fleming, V. L., Helsel, B. C., **Ptomey, L. T.**, Handen, B. L., Krinsky-McHale, S. J., Hom, C. L., Zammit, M., Minhas, D., Luo, W., Laymon, C., Lee, J., Lott, I., Cohen, A., Ances, B., Brickman, A., Pulsifer, M., Clare, I., Rosa, H., Lai, F., Harp, J., Schmitt, F., Price, J., Zaman, S., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Christian, B., Okonkwo, O., Hartley, S. & Alzheimer's Biomarkers Consortium-Down Syndrome. (2025). Longitudinal study of body mass index in relation to Alzheimer's disease pathology and symptomatology in Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(6), e70387. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70387>

Suire, K., Helsel, B., Bowling, A., Staiano, A. E., Sherman, J., Rice, A., & **Ptomey, L.** (2025). The Adoption of the GameSquad Exergaming Intervention for Young Adults with Down Syndrome: A Qualitative Analysis. *Medical Research Archives*, 13(6). <https://doi.org/10.18103/mra.v13i6.6608>

Fleming, V. L., Peven, J., Helsel, B. C., **Ptomey, L. T.**, Clina, J., Barry, A., Ances, B., Handen, B., Christian, B., Laymon, C., Zammit, M., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Okonkwo, O., Hartley, S. & Alzheimer Biomarkers Consortium-Down Syndrome. (2025). Physical activity as a resistance or resilience mechanism in Down syndrome Alzheimer's disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(3), e70127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70127>

Waugh, K. A., Wilkins, H. M., Smith, K. P., & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). Charting the future: current and future directions in translational research for individuals with down syndrome. *Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 17(1), 38. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-025-09630-8>

Munn, E. E., Montelongo, A., Patel, V. K., Fodstad, J. C., Ciccarelli, M. R., **Ptomey, L. T.**, & Pangelinan, M. M. (2025). A meta-analysis and systematic review of interventions to prevent or treat cognitive decline related to Alzheimer's disease in adults with Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(7), e70471. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70471>

Ptomey, L., Hom, C., Wilkins, H., Doran, E., Wright, S. T., Hoang, D., Delehoy, B., Lott, I., Perales-Puchalt, J., Helsel, B., Burns, J., Grill, J. & Head, E. (2025). Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Down Syndrome Cores: Experience from two sites. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(8), e70612. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70612>

Oreskovic, N. M., Austin, G., Aylward, B., Boer, P., Bricout, V. A., Cheema, N., Das, A., Fernhall, B., Fleming, R., Florez, C., Gordon, D., Spognardi, A., Hilgenkamp, T., Hillerstromm, H., Joyce, C., Keiller, D., Kelly, L., Komyerov, J., Lincoln, A., Mann, S., Murray, L., Pickard, K., **Ptomey, L.**, Reid, K., Reilly, M., Rhondeau, M., Santoro, S., Stanish, H., Tam, J., Torres, A. & Skotko, B. G. (2025). The International Summit on Health Benefits of Physical Fitness for People With Down Syndrome: Current Science, Gaps, Priorities, and Research Opportunities. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajmg.a.64256>

Bodde, A. E., Brooks, J. V., Forseth, B., Wolfe, T., Williams, K., & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). Caregiving for Adults With Down Syndrome: Caregiver Experiences and Support Needs. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(5), e70118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.70118>

Wisch, J. K., Jiao, Z., Kennedy, J. T., Cohen, A. D., Schlachetzki, Z., Petersen, M., Handen, B., Christianm B., Mapstone, M., Rosas, H., Lai, F., Lee, J., Krinsky-McHale, S., Schmitt, F., Harp, J., Hom, C., Lott, I., Hartley, S., Zaman, S., **Ptomey, L.**, Burns, J., Tudorascu, D., Ibanez, L., Rafii, M., Head, E., Ances, B. M. & the Alzheimer's Biomarker Consortium-Down Syndrome (2025). Imaging and plasma biomarkers for pathological accumulation in Down syndrome. *Brain*, awaf418. <https://doi.org/10.1093/brain/awaf418>

Ptomey, L., Morgan, K. A., Blauwet, C. A., Boudreaux, B. D., Fernhall, B., Hauck, J., Legg, D., Tow, S. & Martin Ginis, K. A. (2025). ACSM Expert Consensus Statement: Considerations and Recommendations for Prescribing Exercise and Designing Physical Activity Programs for People with Disabilities. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 57(11), 2588-2598. DOI: 10.1249/MSS.0000000000003775

Clina, J. G., Helsel, B. C., Hartley, S. L., Fleming-Batayneh, V. L., Handen, B., Christian, B., Head, E., Mapstone, M., Hom, C., Burns, J., Ances, B., **Ptomey, L.** & Alzheimer Biomarker Consortium-Down Syndrome (ABC-DS) Investigators. (2025). The joint association of obesity and physical activity on cognitive function in Down syndrome. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 108(3), 1328-1338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13872877251386474>

Foye, G., Foye, E., Walter, S., & **Ptomey, L. T.** (2025). Research should be conducted with us, not on us: Perspectives on Alzheimer's disease clinical trials for persons with Down syndrome. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Behavior & Socioeconomics of Aging*, 1(4), e70040. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsa3.70040>



KIMBERLY RANDELL, M.D., MSC, is an attending physician in pediatric emergency medicine at Children's Mercy Kansas City and professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. Her work aims to improve health across the life course by addressing childhood exposure to intimate

partner violence (IPV) and adolescent relationship abuse (ARA) through intersectional and healing-centered engagement approaches. Her primary research focus is multilevel interventions to promote healthy adolescent relationships and mitigate the negative impacts of ARA. Additionally, her work addresses survivor-centered approaches to support IPV survivors and their children within healthcare and other systems.

Ongoing Research Support

Children's Mercy ACT Scholar
Randell (PI)

07/01/2025–06/30/2028

Universal Intimate Partner Violence Education: Implementation in Pediatric Emergency Departments

PCORI EACB-38976

03/01/2025–02/28/2027

Building Capacity for Patient-Centered CER on Intimate Partner Violence Intervention in Pediatric Healthcare Settings

Role: Co-Project Lead

R21HD109627

Ragavan (PI)

02/03/2024–01/31/2026

Developing a Parent-Adolescent Relationship Abuse Prevention Program for Pediatric Primary Care

Role: Co-Investigator

KL2 (ULTR002366)

McNeill-Johnson (PI)

07/01/2023–06/30/2025

KL2 equivalent supported by Children's Mercy Hospital via in-kind support through ULTR002366–Frontiers University of Kansas Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Care in the Juvenile Detention Center

Role: Co-Mentor

1K23HD098299-01A1

Randell (PI)

03/2020–02/2025

Promoting Healthy Relationships among At-Risk Adolescents: A Feasibility Trial in the Emergency Department

Publications

Milkovich, L. M., Carlson, J. A., Chertoff, M. K., & **Randell, K. A.** (2025). How School-Related Internet Use Shapes Teens' Learning, Communication, Academic Stress, Online Behavior: A Qualitative Study. *Academic Pediatrics*, 103210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2025.103210>

McNeill-Johnson, A., Hudson, Z., Moore, B., Okocha, D., Barnert, E., Ramaswamy, M., & **Randell, K. A.** (2025). Perceived Health Care Needs Among Detained Youth. *Pediatrics*, 156(2), e2024069655. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2024-069655>

Milkovich, L. M., **Randell, K. A.**, Sherman, A. K., & Moreno, M. A. (2025). Associations Among Problematic Internet Usage in Adolescents, Parental Internet Factors, and Parent-Adolescent Communication. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 46(1), e40-e44. DOI: 10.1097/DBP.0000000000001328



BRENDA SALLEY, PH.D., is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor of pediatrics at KU Medical Center and the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. Dr. Salley is the director of the Baby Lab at KU Medical Center, which focuses on understanding developmental pathways towards adaptive and

healthy outcomes in children. She is particularly interested in the early cognitive and communication development of young children and how the social world can impact learning in these areas.

Ongoing Research Support

R56 HD119244

Salley & Grasley-Boy (MPIs)

2025–2027

Developing the Caregiver Report of Early Language Interactions (CRELI)

1R01HD112446-01A1

Salley (PI)

05/01/2024–04/30/2029

Talk With Me Baby: Leveraging Well-Child Care to Enhance the Early Home Language Environment

Pilot Grant: Frontiers: University of Kansas Medical Center Clinical and Translational Sciences

Hanson-Abromeit (PI)

2024–2026

Group parent-infant music-based intervention to support pre-linguistic language acquisition for infants at risk for language delay due to living in under resourced environments

Meredith Willson Pilot Research Program

Hanson-Abromeit (PI)

2024–2025

Group parent-infant music-based intervention to support pre-linguistic language acquisition for infants at-risk for language delay due to social determinants of health

Role: Co-Investigator

Blue KC

Kong (PI)

2024–2025

Using a music enrichment program to address health and developmental disparities during early childhood

Role: Co-Investigator

Pilot Grant: Frontiers: University of Kansas Medical Center Clinical and Translational Sciences

Kong (PI)

2023–2025

A community-based music enrichment program to address health and developmental disparities during early childhood

Role: Co-Investigator

TL1TR002368

Smith (PI)

2023–2025

CTSA grant from NCATS awarded to the University of Kansas for Frontiers: University of Kansas Clinical and Translational Science Institute

The impact of a music enrichment program on health and developmental outcomes during early childhood.

Role: Mentor

8U24OD024957-02
Snowden (PI)
2020–2025
NIH: Data Coordinating and Operations Center (DCOC)
for the IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials Network
Talk With Me Baby
Role: Co-investigator

UD5MC30792
Duggan (PI)
2021–2025
Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources
and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Home Visiting Research and Development Platform
Role: Co-investigator

5R01HD100364-06
Boyd (PI)
08/01/2020–06/30/2025
Validation of an outcome measure of early social-communication
for young children with ASD
Role: Co-Investigator

UA3MC20218
Nadler (PI)
11/2019–present
The Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources
and Services Administration
Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics Research Network
Role: Affiliated faculty

Publications

Steinbrenner, J. R., Jenkins, K., Nowell, S., Wilkinson, B., **Salley, B.**,
Buzhardt, J., & Boyd, B. (2025). Caregiver perceptions and use of
the Early Communication Indicator–Autism: Examining differences
among demographic groups. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special
Interest Groups*, 10(3), 704-718. https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_PERSP-24-00136



ROBIN SHOOK, PH.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Children’s Mercy and the director of Weighing In. His research interests include both public health and clinical approaches to understanding obesity. His clinical studies focus on every balance,

which is the interaction between an individual’s diet, their physical activity level and their body weight. From these studies, his team tries to develop strategies to prevent or reduce obesity on a population level using public health approaches.

Ongoing Research Support

Ancillary Aims–Associations between anti-obesity pharmacotherapy-induced changes in skeletal muscle function and appetite in adolescents with obesity: A pilot study
06/20/2025–09/30/2026

Shook (PI)
Funding: Children’s Mercy Research Institute

Associations between anti-obesity pharmacotherapy-induced changes in skeletal muscle function and appetite in adolescents with obesity: A pilot study

Shook (PI)
10/01/2024–09/30/2026
Funding: Kemper Healthy Lifestyles Pilot Project

Communities leading change: Advancing Black and Latino capacity to create nutrition and physical activity environmental and systems change

Shook, Lightner, Grimes (MPIs)
09/30/2023–09/30/2028
Funding: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

A comprehensive and non-invasive assessment of skeletal muscle in adolescents with single ventricle circulation

Forsha (PI)
03/01/2023–02/28/2026
Funding: Single Ventricle Research Fund
Offered by: Additional Ventures
Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Shook, R. P., Lim, S. L., Bruce, A. S., Philips, T. C., Halpin, K. L., Davis, A. M., Donnelly, J., Blundell, J. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Associations between physical activity, adiposity, appetite and metabolic health in adolescent males. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114525105370>

Cozart, J.S., Bruce, A., **Shook, R.P.**, Befort, C., Siengsukon, C., Simon, S., Lynch, S.G., Morris, J., Mahmoud, R., Drees, B., Hibbing, P.R., Robichaud, J., Huebner, J., Posson, P., Bradish, T., and Bruce, J.M. (2025). Examining changes in neurofilament light chain following a behavioral weight loss intervention for adults with multiple sclerosis and obesity. *Multiple Sclerosis and Related Disorders*, (2025), 106671, ISSN 2211-0348, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.msard.2025.106671>.

Lightner, J. S., Gardiner, K., Grimes, A., **Shook, R. P.**, Hampl, S., Prochnow, T., & Collie-Akers, V. Communities Leading Change: Using Implementation Science to Improve Physical Activity and Nutrition Among Racially Minoritized Communities in Kansas City. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15248399251343048. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399251343048>

Posson, P. M., Hibbing, P. R., Damiot, A., Carbuhn, A. F., White, D. A., Shakhnovich, V. & **Shook, R. P.** (2025). Resting energy expenditure equations have lower accuracy for adolescents with overweight/obesity versus healthy-weight adolescents. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(1), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2024.0226>



VOYTEK SLOWIK, M.D., is a pediatrics transplant hepatologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City and an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Dr. Slowik specializes in the care of pediatric patients with liver and intestinal diseases in the Liver Care Center, as well as members of the Liver

Transplant Program at Children's Mercy Kansas City. He has an additional focus in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease with a multidisciplinary clinic to manage complex cases and ongoing research projects.

Ongoing Research Support

Pro00054023

Fischer (PI)

06/2021–05/2026

Treatment for Immune Mediated Pathophysiology (TRIUMPH). A Phase 2b, Double-Blind, Three Arm, Randomized, Placebo Controlled Trial with Restricted Response Adaptive Randomization Testing the Efficacy and Safety of High Dose Methylprednisolone or Equine Anti-Thymocyte Globulin as Treatment for Acute Liver Failure in Pediatric Patients
Role: Co-investigator

GS-US-320-1092 NCT02932150

Daniel (PI)

10/2017–11/2027

A Randomized, Double-Blind Evaluation of the Pharmacokinetics, Safety, and Antiviral Efficacy of Tenofovir Alafenamide (TAF) in Adolescents with Chronic Hepatitis B Virus Infection
Role: Co-investigator

Publications

Kunam, L., Sweeney, B., Fischer, R. T., Campbell, N., Fraser, J. D., Hendrickson, R., Mullanpudi, B., Kotecha, M., Dreyer, M. & **Slowik, V.** (2025). A Case Report of a Simultaneous Pediatric Orthotopic Liver Transplant and Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy in a 10-Year-Old Male With Cirrhosis and Obesity. *Pediatric Transplantation*, 29(5), e70124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ptr.70124>

Slowik, V. (2025). Every last detail—Managing hepatic artery thrombosis and stenosis in a time of organ scarcity. *Liver Transplantation*, 31(12), 1448-1449. DOI: 10.1097/LVT.0000000000000671

Paine-Cabrera, D., Harvey, L. K., Pritchard, M. T., Thyfault, J., Artigues, A., Apte, U., & **Slowik, V.** (2025). Proteomics Used in Identifying Novel Correlates of Disease in Pediatric Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease. *Clinical and Translational Science*, 18(6), e70271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cts.70271>



JANE SOSLAND, PH.D.,

is a clinical associate professor at KU Medical Center and a member of the multidisciplinary team for the Healthy Hawks Clinic, which serves children and adolescents with obesity. Her clinical interests include evaluation and treatment of anxiety disorders,

ADHD and depression in children and adolescents.

Ongoing Research Support

P30HD106451 IU/OSU MPRINT

Stancil (PI)

8/1/2024–7/31/2025

NICHD

Safe Detect: development and optimization of 19F-MRS to detect drug disposition in the pediatric brain

Transforming KC: Health Outcomes Research Grant, BlueKC and BioNexus

Stancil, Stephani L and Masonbrink, Abbey (Co-PIs)

09/2024–09/2025

Development of a Vaping Cessation Intervention with Personalized Genetic Risk Counseling for Youth

K23MH130728

Stancil (PI)

05/2023–04/2027

Development of a Pharmacodynamic Biomarker of Opioid Antagonism in Adolescents with Eating Disorders

PTN-NICHD

08/2021–Present

Pediatric Trials Network-Pharmacokinetics of Understudied Drugs Administered to Children per Standard of Care (POPS02)

Publications

Stancil, S. L., Brewre, M. E., Tumberger, J., Bartkoski, M., Burns, A., Yeh, H. W., Brucks, M., Bartolotti, J., Voss, M., Strawn, J., Abdel-Rahmna, S., Davis, A., Brooks, W., & Martin, L. E. (2025). Development of a pharmacodynamic biomarker of opioid antagonism in adolescents with eating disorders: Study protocol for the naltrexone neuroimaging randomized controlled trial (NN-RCT). *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 152, 107874. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2025.107874>

Tumberger, J., Burns, A. E., Bartkoski, M., Brewre, M., Whittier, A., Gethers, K., Bogdon A., Peterson, E. & **Stancil, S. L.** (2025). A hybrid model for youth engagement in adolescent health studies: insights from the teen research advisors program at a Midwestern pediatric Academic Medical Center in the United States. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 13, 1668387. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1668387>

Burns, A. E., Tumberger, J., Brewre, M., Bartkoski, M., & **Stancil, S. L.** (2025). Meeting clinical recruitment milestones in an academic center: a data-driven, visual approach. *JAMIA Open*, 8(5), oofaf125. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jamiaopen/oofaf125>



STEPHANI STANCIL, PH.D., APRN,

is a clinician scientist in the Divisions of Adolescent Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology, Toxicology and Therapeutic Innovation at Children’s Mercy and an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She was

clinically trained as a family nurse practitioner at the University of Kansas, received a Ph.D. in pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and completed a NICHD T32 postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric clinical pharmacology at Children’s Mercy Kansas City. For over a decade, her clinical practice has focused on adolescents and young adults who are traditionally underserved and under-researched, including those with mental health conditions as well as those experiencing homelessness. Her interdisciplinary, translational research focuses on improving the health of youth through development of precision therapeutics for mental health. Her other research interests include improving reproductive health care in teens and reducing risks of vulnerable youth. She continues to be inspired by the remarkable resilience, tolerance and strength of her teen patients and strives to ensure they have an open, safe environment to not only receive health care but to actively participate in the research to improve it.

Bartkoski, M., Poweleit, E. A., & **Stancil, S. L.** (2025). GLP-1 Agonists for Pediatric Psychopharmacology: Opportunities and Cautions. *Clinical and Translational Science*, 18(6), e70262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cts.70262>

Bartkoski, M., Tumberger, J., Martin, L., Choi, I. Y., Lee, P., Strawn, J. R., Brooks, W. & **Stancil, S. L.** (2025). Neuroimaging as a Tool for Advancing Pediatric Psychopharmacology. *Pediatric Drugs*, 27(3), 307-330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40272-025-00683-9>



FELICIA STEGER, PH.D., M.S., RD

is Scientific Director of the Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition; and is an assistant professor in both the Department of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Clinical Pharmacology, and the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at KUMC. She earned a dual M.S./B.S. in Dietetics and

Exercise Science at Iowa State University, a Ph.D. in Medical Nutrition Science from KUMC, and was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in the Department of Nutrition Sciences from before returning to KUMC as a faculty member in 2021. Dr. Steger's research interests are centered on nutrition and exercise interventions for diabetes, weight management, and the prevention and treatment of other chronic diseases. She is currently studying the effects of intermittent fasting on glycemic control, obesity, cardiometabolic health, and circadian disruptions.

Ongoing Research Support

National Endowment for the Arts

Kong (PI)

2025–2027

Do-Re-Me-Family: Music-based parenting intervention to improve quality of parent-infant interaction among families from low socioeconomic status

KUMC Research Administration Lied Clinical Research Pilot Grant Program

Steger (PI)

2024–2025

A Randomized Clinical Pilot Trial Comparing Time-Restricted Feeding to Standard Care in Critically Ill Adults

R01DK132362

Gorczyca (PI)

09/15/2023–05/31/2028

The National Diabetes Prevention Program in Rural Communities
Role: Co-Investigator

1L30DK137346

Steger (PI)

2023–2025

NIH NIDDK Loan Repayment Program

Intermittent Fasting for the Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes

5P20GM144269

Steger & Thyfault (PI)

04/01/2022–02/28/2027

NIH NIGMS, Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity REsearch (KC-MORE)

Effects of Intermittent Fasting on Glycemic Control in Patients with Diabetes

Role: Research Project Leader

American Diabetes Association Junior Faculty Development Award

Steger (PI)

2022–2025

Intermittent Fasting for the Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes

Publications

Steger, F. L., Donnelly, J. E., Montgomery, R. N., Clark, L., Martin, C. K., Miles, J. M., Grdinovac, K., Henderson, A. & Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Rationale and protocol for a randomized parallel intervention trial of two intermittent fasting approaches in patients with type 2 diabetes. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 108118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2025.108118>

Cáceres, N. A., **Steger, F. L.,** Salvy, S. J., Jamshed, H., Warriner, A. H., Martin, C. K., & Peterson, C. M. (2025). A Qualitative Exploration of Facilitators and Barriers to Early Time-Restricted Eating: Insights From a Randomised Controlled Trial. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, 38(6), e70180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jhn.70180>

Hanick, C. J., Berg, K. J., Garvey, W. T., Goss, A. M., **Steger, F. L.,** Richman, J. S., & Peterson, C. M. (2025). Study protocol, menu design, and rationale for a study testing the effects of a whole fruit-rich diet on glycemic control, liver fat, pancreatic fat, and cardiovascular health in adults with type 2 diabetes. *Nutrition Research*, 135, 82-100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nutres.2025.01.008>



PETER STOEPKER, PH.D., is the Director of the Active Schools Lab and assistant professor of Kinesiology at Kansas State University. His research interests include school-based physical activity promotion, physical activity leadership, and data-driven decision-making in physical activity settings.

Stoepker, P., Biber, D., Dauenhauer, B., Steel, C., & Carlson, J. A. (2025). The integration of a data sharing process to address out-of-school time physical activity, locomotor skills, and program leader behavior: A pilot study. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15248399251348168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399251348168>

Hermstad, A. K., Haardörfer, R., Arriola, K. J., **Stoepker, P.**, Leung, E. L., & Kegler, M. C. (2025). Well-being inequities in eleven rural Georgia communities: A latent profile analysis. *PLoS One*, 20(4), e0320222. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0320222>

Ongoing Research Support

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Stoepker (PI)

Examining the effectiveness of a data coaching process to increase child physical activity, perceived motor competence, and staff physical activity promoting practices: A randomized controlled trial

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas

Stoepker (PI)

Providing technical assistance to support Kansas counties in implementing evidence-based physical activity promoting practices

Publications

Schwartzkopf, K., Arraiga, S., Mailey, E., Brown, D. M., & **Stoepker, P.** (2025). OST-Coach: Impact of a Data-Coaching Process on Staff Physical Activity Promoting Behavior. *Health Education & Behavior*, 10901981251399128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981251399128>

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., Chen, S., **Stoepker, P.**, Hamilton, C. N. B., Besenyi, G. M., & Mailey, E. L. (2025). Beyond the Guidelines: Exploring the Prevalence and Correlates of No-to-Low Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity Among US Adolescents. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 1(aop), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2025-0317>

Brown, D. M., Pfladderer, C. D., **Stoepker, P.**, Chong, K. H., Kracht, C. L., & Fairclough, S. J. (2025). Device-independent Physical Activity metrics and adiposity-related indicators among children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 43(21), 2551-2564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2025.2540663>

Brown, D. M., Wing, D., Pfladderer, C. D., **Stoepker, P.**, Fairclough, S. J., & Carlson, J. A. (2025). Considerations in using heart rate-based physical activity estimates from consumer wearables in individuals with varying weight status. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 22(1), 106. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-025-01801-z>



KRISTIN STREILER, M.D., is a general pediatrician who offers advanced obesity treatment through the University of Kansas Health System. She is passionate about helping families understand the numerous causes of obesity in a warm environment without shame and stigma so that they can work together to make

decisions about evaluation, treatment, and monitoring of obesity in children of all ages. She also loves teaching pediatrics residents about obesity and its treatment options as well as collaborating with other obesity specialists to advance care for all kids in the area.

Ongoing Research Support

Children's Miracle Network

Pain Optimization for Kids' Experiences (POKE)

2024–Present

Role: Co-PI



DEBRA SULLIVAN, PH.D., RD, is the chair of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at KU Medical Center and the Midwest Dairy Council Professor in Clinical Nutrition. Her research focuses on prevention and treatment of obesity and its comorbid conditions. She also maintains a nutrition assessment

laboratory in order to conduct measurement of dietary intake and body composition.

Ongoing Research Support

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Suzuki (PI)

Gut microbiota and lifestyle risk factors of colorectal cancer in younger and older adults: A case-control feasibility study

Role: Mentor

P20DK144689-01

University of Kansas Medical Center Nutrition Obesity Research Center Research Resource Center

Jakicic (PI)

2025–2030

Role: Co-Investigator

KUMC Frontiers KL2

Zhang (PI)

07/01/2024–06/30/2026

Development of Parent-Mediated Feeding Intervention for Children with ASD via Telehealth: iKanEat Autism

Role: Mentor

Impact of whey protein on frailty—A pilot study

Sullivan (PI)

07/01/2024–6/30/2026

Sullivan (PI)

07/01/2024–06/30/2025

The impact of pork consumption on brain metabolites, cognition, cardiometabolic health, and body composition in older adults

Sullivan (PI)

07/01/2024–06/30/2025

Impact of whey protein on frailty—A pilot study

1R01DK139363-01

Laroche (PI)

04/01/2024–01/31/2027

Addressing social determinants of health in child obesity treatment using community health workers: the role of parental bandwidth in treatment effectiveness—feasibility study for full-scale RCT

Role: Co-Investigator

National Cattlemen’s Beef Association

Sullivan (PI)

01/01/2024–06/30/2025

The impact of beef consumption as part of a healthy diet pattern on health benefits in aging adults

Suzuki (PI)

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Gut microbiota and lifestyle risk factors of colorectal cancer in younger and older adults: A case-control feasibility study

Role: Mentor

Kimber Richter and Christie Befort (MPI)

10/01/2023–09/30/2028

Implementation Science for Equity Center COBRE.

Mobile nutrition literacy website for parents of young Latino children”

R61/33AG078967

Sullivan & Ptomey (MPIs)

Impact of weight loss on Alzheimer’s Disease risk in adults with Down Syndrome

U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

Choi (PI)

12/01/2021–03/31/2025

The effect of blueberry consumption on brain health in older adults: in vivo measures of cerebral antioxidant and cerebral blood flow

Role: Co-Investigator

1R01 AG060733-01A1

MPI (R Swerdlow and DK Sullivan)

02/01/2019–11/30/2025

Validation and mechanistic interrogation of metabolism targeting for Alzheimer’s Disease

Weinman, Donnelly, Thyfault (MPIs)
12/01/2021–11/30/2026
National Institute of Health
Kansas center for metabolism and obesity research (KC-MORE)
Role: Co-I

1R01 CA268034-01.1
Befort (PI)
4/01/2022–03/31/2027
Rural engagement in Telemed Team for options in obesity treatment solutions (RE-TOOL)
Role: Co-I

K01AG072034
Ashley Shaw (PI)
04/15/2021–03/31/2025
Brain Healthy Soul Food Diet Intervention Among Older African Americans
Role: Mentor

Publications

Brown, A. R., Ellerbeck, E. F., **Sullivan, D. K.**, Nelson, E. L., Klemp, J. R., Gajewski, B. J., Saint Onge, J. & Befort, C. A. (2025). Protocol for the rural engagement in TelemedTeam for options in obesity treatment solutions (RE-TOOL): Cluster randomized trial investigating team-based telemedicine in rural primary care. *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications*, 101559. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2025.101559>

Sullivan, A. M., Burns, J. M., Sullivan, D. K., Taylor, M. K., Mazzotti, D. R., & Gibbs, H. D. (2025). Preimplementation of malnutrition screening in the context of outpatient memory care: A quality improvement project. *Nutrition in Clinical Practice*, 40(6), 1518-1528. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ncp.70050>

Smith, A. N., **Sullivan, D. K.**, Morris, J. K., Carbuhn, A. F., Herda, T. J., & Taylor, M. K. (2025). Eight weeks of creatine monohydrate supplementation is associated with increased muscle strength and size in Alzheimer's disease: data from a single-arm pilot study. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 12, 1670641. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2025.1670641>

Smith, A. N., Choi, I. Y., Lee, P., **Sullivan, D. K.**, Burns, J. M., Swerdlow, R. H., Kelly, E & Taylor, M. K. (2025). Creatine monohydrate pilot in Alzheimer's: Feasibility, brain creatine, and cognition. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*, 11(2), e70101. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trc2.70101>

Marchello, N. J., Camargo, J. T., Gajewski, B. J., **Sullivan, D. K.**, & Gibbs, H. D. (2025). Developing subscale threshold scores for the nutrition literacy assessment instrument (NLit). *Discover Public Health*, 22(1), 308. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-025-00677-5>

Fortin-Miller, S. A., Gajewski, B. J., Carlson, S. E., Colombo, J. A., Christifano, D. N., **Sullivan, D. K.**, & Hull, H. R. (2025). Ethnicity modifies the relationship between added sugars and fructose exposure in the first 1000 days and offspring body composition at 24 months. *Nutrition Research*, 139, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nutres.2025.04.009>

Ptomey, L. T., Donnelly, J. E., Burns, J., Morris, J., Hartley, S., Martin, L. E., Choi, I-Y., Lee, P., Li, Y., Hunt, S., Sherman, J., Danon, J., Brucks, M., Koon, L., Spaeth, K & **Sullivan, D. K.** (2025). Brain outcomes with lifestyle change in adults with Down syndrome: Rationale and design for a 12-month randomized trial. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 21(4), e70219. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.70219>

Griebel-Thompson, A. K., Sands, S., Chollet-Hinton, L., Christifano, **D., Sullivan, D. K.**, Hull, H., Camargo, J. & Carlson, S. E. (2025). Maternal urinary fluoride levels of a large pregnancy cohort in the United States: findings from the ADORE study. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 133(3-4), 047001. <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP14711>

Fortin-Miller, S. A., Gajewski, B. J., Carlson, S. E., Colombo, J. A., Christifano, D. N., **Sullivan, D. K.**, & Hull, H. R. (2025). Ethnicity modifies the relationship between added sugars and fructose exposure in the first 1000 days and offspring body composition at 24 months. *Nutrition Research*, 139, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nutres.2025.04.009>

Gibbs, H. D., Taylor, M. K., Gibson, C., Mount, R. R., Sullivan, A., Williams, K., & **Sullivan, D. K.** (2025). Uncovering nutrition needs in dyads of caregivers and persons with dementia. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 104(2), 525-536. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13872877251317737>

Hand, L. K., Taylor, M. K., **Sullivan, D. K.**, Siengsukon, C. F., Morris, J. K., Martin, L. E., & Hull, H. R. (2025). Pregnancy as a window of opportunity for dementia prevention: a narrative review. *Nutritional Neuroscience*, 28(3), 347-359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1028415X.2024.2371727>

Bodde, A. E., Helsel, B. C., **Sullivan, D. K.**, Donnelly, J. E., Lee, D., Clina, J. G., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Diet quality of Midwest adolescents and young adults with intellectual disabilities and overweight/obesity differs by diagnosis but not by weight category. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 125(3), 396-404. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2024.07.164>



BROOKE SWEENEY, M.D., FAAP, is a combined internal medicine/ pediatric physician and the medical director of Weight Management Services at Children’s Mercy Kansas City. Her clinical expertise is in prevention and treatment of chronic disease, weight management and clinical care for children with obesity. Her

research interests include improving the effectiveness of weight management clinics, transitional care and using a national registry to improve pediatric weight management.

Ongoing Research Support

Pilot grant Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition
Shook (PI)
07/2024–06/2026

Associations between anti-obesity pharmacotherapy-induced changes in skeletal muscle function and appetite in adolescents with obesity: A pilot study
Role: Co-Investigator

Subcontract University of Illinois Peoria
Christison (PI)
07/2023–06/2026
Eating Behaviors Phenotypes among Treatment Seeking Youth Living With Obesity
Role: Site PI

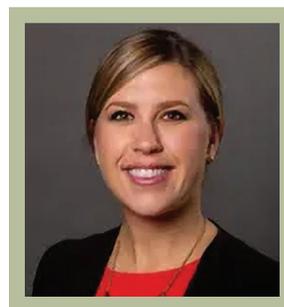
Emanate Rhythm
08/2022–06/2026
EMANATE: Phase 3 Study of Setmelanotide (RM-493-035) A Phase 3, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study: 5 Independent Sub-studies of Setmelanotide in Patients with POMC, PCSK1, LEPR, SRC1, SH2B1, and PCSK1 N221D Gene Defects in the Melanocortin-4 Receptor Pathway
Role: Site PI

RESTORE
Sweeney (PI)
12/2023–12/2025
Real-world Evidence of Setmelanotide for Hyperphagia and Chronic Weight Management (RESTORE): A Prospective Longitudinal Patient/ Caregiver Study for MC4R Diseases

Publications

Kunam, L., **Sweeney, B.**, Fischer, R. T., Campbell, N., Fraser, J. D., Hendrickson, R., Mullapudi, B., Kotecha, M., Dreyer, M. & Slowik, V. (2025). A Case Report of a Simultaneous Pediatric Orthotopic Liver Transplant and Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy in a 10-Year-Old Male With Cirrhosis and Obesity. *Pediatric Transplantation*, 29(5), e70124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ptr.70124>

Quadri, M., Ariza, A. J., Tucker, J. M., Bea, J. W., King, E. C., Kirk, S., **Sweeney, B.**, Santos, M., Silver, L., Roberts, K. & POWER Work Group. (2025). Percent Body Fat and Weight Status of Youth Participating in Pediatric Weight Management Programs in the Pediatric Obesity Weight Evaluation Registry. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(1), 50-64. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2023.0201>



LINDSEY THOMPSON ULRICH, PH.D., RD, is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at KU Medical Center. Her clinical experience includes use of the ketogenic diet in pediatric drug resistant epilepsy, pediatric malnutrition and inpatient stabilization of pediatric patients

with eating disorders. Her research focuses on pediatric patients with drug resistant epilepsy, exploring outcomes for patients utilizing the ketogenic diet for treatment, the prevalence and prevention of malnutrition in this group and how epilepsy and treatment with the ketogenic diet impacts family systems.



JOHN THYFAULT, PH.D., FACS, FTOS, is a professor in the

Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology at KU Medical Center and scientific director at CHLN, where he examines the effect of chronic physical inactivity, sedentary behavior and low aerobic fitness on the development of chronic

disease conditions including obesity, insulin resistance, fatty liver disease, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In contrast, daily physical activity and maintenance of aerobic fitness throughout the lifespan are associated with protection against chronic disease(s). The mechanism(s) underlying the development of these diseases and the role that activity and fitness status play in altering susceptibility remain largely unknown and are the focus of our research. We utilize integrative (multi-tissue and whole body), translational (cells, rodents, humans) approaches to perform studies in these areas with a focus on clinical or human relevance.

Ongoing Research Support

2101BX002567-09

Veterans Affairs Merit Review

Thyfault (PI)

07/01/2024–06/30/2028

Ovarian function and hepatic mitochondrial quality control in steatosis

T32DK1287

Thyfault and Wright (MPI)

07/2022–06/2027

Translating Obesity, Metabolic Dysfunction, and Comorbid Disease States

P20GM144269

Weinman (PI)

05/2022–04/2027

National Institute of Health

Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity REsearch (KC-MORE)

Role: MPI

1P30AG072973-01

Swerdlow (PI)

08/2021–06/2026

University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (KU ADRC)

5R01AG062548-02

Morris (PI)

09/2020–10/2025

Acute Exercise and the Cerebral Metabolic Response in Aging and Alzheimer's Disease

Role: Co-investigator

1R01AG069781

Thyfault, Crawford (MPIs)

09/2020–10/2025

Ketogenic Oscillations and Neurometabolic Health Span

Publications

Kelty, T. J., Kerr, N. R., Chou, C. H., Shryack, G. E., Taylor, C. L., Krause, A. A., Knutson, A., Bunten, J., Childs, T., Meers, G., Dashek, R., Puchalska, P., Crawford, P., **Thyfault, J.**, Booth, F. & Rector, R. S. (2025). Cognitive impairment caused by compromised hepatic ketogenesis is prevented by endurance exercise. *The Journal of Physiology*. <https://doi.org/10.1113/JP287573>

Johnson, C. N., Lysaker, C. R., Gast, E. C., McCain, C. S., Kemna, R. E., Fuller, K. N., Kugler, B., Franczak, E., Csikos, V., Allen, J., John, C., Wolf, A., Morris, E., **Thyfault, J.**, Wilkins, H., Geiger, P. & Morris, J. K. (2025). APOE4 exerts partial diet-dependent effects on energy expenditure and skeletal muscle mitochondrial pathways in a preclinical model. *Function*, 6(2), zqaf017.

Kugler, B. A., Maurer, A., Fu, X., Franczak, E., Ernst, N., Schwartz, K., Allen, J., Li, T., Crawford, P., Koch, L., Britton, S., Shankar, K., Burgess, S., & **Thyfault, J. P.** (2025). Aerobic capacity and exercise mediate protection against hepatic steatosis via enhanced bile acid metabolism. *Function*, 6(3), zqaf019.

Davis, X. C., McCain, C. S., Morris, E. M., Allen, J., Stierwalt, H. D., Franczak, E., Queathem, E., Fulghum, K., Puchalska, P. Crawford, P. & **Thyfault, J. P.** (2025). Ketone body-supported respiration in murine isolated brain mitochondria is augmented by alpha-ketoglutarate and is optimized by neuronal SCOT expression. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E822-E832. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00058.2025>

Kumar, V., Hevener, A. L., Ruby, J. G., Sebastiani, P., **Thyfault, J.**, & Kuchel, G. A. (2025). Workshop Report—Heterogeneity and Successful Aging Part II: Approaches to Investigate Heterogeneity in Aging Research. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, 80(5), glaf021.

Franczak, E., Kugler, B. A., Salathe, S. F., Allen, J. A., Sardu, M. E., McCain, C. S., Hevener, A. Morris, M. & **Thyfault, J. P.** (2025). Loss of ovarian function prevents exercise-induced activation of hepatic mitophagic flux. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E869-E884. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00107.2025>

Lysaker, C. R., Kugler, B. A., Csikos, V., Birky, C. J., Gilmore, C. A., Wenger, M., Franczak, E., Davis, X., Hauger, B., Allen, J., Troutwine, B., Gonzalez-Duran, L., McCain, C., Chauhan, M., Harris, J., Frazier, A., Winter, M., Koch, L., Britton, S., **Thyfault, J.** & Wilkins, H. M. (2025). A polygenetic rat model of divergent aerobic capacity reveals a liver-brain interaction impacting Alzheimer's disease-like phenotypes. *The Journal of Physiology*. <https://doi.org/10.1113/JP286750>

Hembruff, S., Dekonenko, A., **Thyfault, J. P.**, Sardu, M. E., Washburn, M. P., Mackintosh, S. G., Byrum, S., Jensen, R. & Harlan-Williams, L. M. (2025). BRCA1 influences whole body metabolism in humanized mice. *American Journal of Physiology-Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 328(6), E979-E993. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpendo.00222.2024>

Paine-Cabrera, D., Harvey, L. K., Pritchard, M. T., **Thyfault, J.**, Artigues, A., Apte, U., & Slowik, V. (2025). Proteomics Used in Identifying Novel Correlates of Disease in Pediatric Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease. *Clinical and Translational Science*, 18(6), e70271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cts.70271>

Apaflo, J. N., Narvaez, G., Tomy, I. J., Mossayebi, A., Fatahimeiabadi, Z., McAinch, A. J., **Thyfault, J.**, Min, K., Jung, H., Wagler, A & Bajpeyi, S. (2025). Neuromuscular electrical stimulation enhances glycemic control and carbohydrate utilization in sedentary, predominantly Hispanic overweight or obese individuals with hyperglycemia. *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00421-025-05907-x>

Thyfault, J. P. (2025). Does genetically low cardiorespiratory fitness doom your health? *The Journal of Physiology*. DOI: 10.1113/JP289317

Clapp Organski, A., Reddivari, A., Reddivari, L., Brubaker, D. K., Fuller, K. N., **Thyfault, J. P.**, & Cross, T. W. L. (2025). Oral Contraceptives Induce Time-and Intestinal Segment-Dependent Shifts in the Gut Microbiota. *Nutrients*, 17(16), 2591. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu17162591>

Banks, A. S., Allison, D. B., Alquier, T., Ansarullah, Austad, S. N., Auwerx, J., Ayala, J., Baur, J., Carobbio, S., Churchill, Dall, M., Cabo, R., Donato, J., Dragano, N., Elias, C., Ferrante, A., Finck, B., Galgani, J., Gerhart-Hines, Z., Goodyear, L., Grobe, J., Gupta, R., Habegger, K., Hartig, S., **Thyfault, J.** & International Indirect Calorimetry Consensus Committee (IICCC). (2025). A consensus guide to preclinical indirect calorimetry experiments. *Nature Metabolism*, 7(9), 1765-1780. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42255-025-01360-4>

Shook, R. P., Lim, S. L., Bruce, A. S., Philips, T. C., Halpin, K. L., Davis, A. M., Donnelly, J., Blundell, J., & **Thyfault, J. P.** (2025). Associations between physical activity, adiposity, appetite and metabolic health in adolescent males. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114525105370>

Steger, F. L., Donnelly, J. E., Montgomery, R. N., Clark, L., Martin, C. K., Miles, J. M., Grdinovac, K., Henderson, A. & **Thyfault, J. P.** (2025). Rationale and protocol for a randomized parallel intervention trial of two intermittent fasting approaches in patients with type 2 diabetes. *Contemporary Clinical Trials*, 108118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2025.108118>

Koon, L. M., Donnelly, J. E., Sherman, J. R., Rice, A. M., Clina, J. G., **Thyfault, J.**, Handlery, R, Handlery, K. & Crawford, D. A. (2025). Feasibility and Preliminary Effects of Community-Based High-Intensity Functional Training for Adults with Mobility Disabilities and Overweight/Obesity: A Pilot Study. *Sports*, 13(10), 361. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports13100361>

Ernst, N. J., Franczak, E., Allen, J., Minchew, E. C., Readyoff, A. T., Farlow, M. C., Spangenburg, E., Miller, B., Morris, J., Shankar, K., Sardu, M., Zhu, H., Stanford, J., **Thyfault, J.** & McCain, C. S. (2025). Donepezil treatment, alone or combined with exercise, enhances skeletal muscle function in healthy and advanced aging disease mouse models. *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 139(6), 1660-1675. <https://doi.org/10.1152/jappphysiol.00895.2024>



DANIEL TILDEN, M.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) in the division of endocrinology, diabetes and clinical pharmacology. My research focuses on developing and implementing interventions to improve outcomes for adolescents and young adults

with Type 1 Diabetes with a focus on outcomes among patients living in rural areas. He uses both large scale informatics and qualitative methods to identify gaps in care systems and to guide the development and adaptation of interventions to improve care delivery for young adults with type 1 diabetes in rural areas.

Ongoing Research Support

K23DK143333

08/2025–08/2028

NIDDK

Tilden (PI)

Multidisciplinary Virtual Care for Young Adults with Type 1 Diabetes Living in Rural Areas

04/2024–03/2027

Helmsley Charitable Trust: G-2405-06944

Implementation and Dissemination of Tools to Harness CGM Data to Accelerate Adoption of Population Health in T1D

Role: Co-Investigator

K12DK133995

NIDDK National Physician-Scientist Career Development Award

Tilden (PI)

08/2023–08/2025

Diabetes-Docs: Physician-Scientist Career Development Program (DiabDocs)

Publications

Tilden, D. R., Befort, C. A., Lockee, B., Wagemode, A., Williams, D., & Clements, M. A. (2025). Assessing Neighborhood Deprivation Reveals Rural-Urban Disparities in CGM Access Among Children With Type 1 Diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 48(7), e88-e90. <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc25-0077>

Lockee, B., Vandervelden, C. A., **Tilden, D. R.**, Panfil, K., Tallon, E. M., DeWit, E., Noland, K., Williams, D., Gill, H., Patton, S., Prahallad, P., Espinoza, J., Waghmode, A., Barnes, M. & Clements, M. A. (2025). Establishment of a Diabetes-Tailored Data Intelligence Platform Enhances Clinical Care, Enables Risk-Based Monitoring, and Facilitates Population-Health-Based Approaches at a Pediatric Diabetes Network. *Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology*, 19322968251367776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19322968251367776>



DUSTIN WALLACE, PH.D., is a pediatric psychologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City and professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. He is the director of behavioral health for the Rehabilitation for Amplified Pain Syndromes program, an intensive interdisciplinary pain

treatment program for youth. His research primarily focuses on behavioral and nonpharmacological treatments for chronic pain in young people, biopsychosocial factors that maintain pain and/or contribute to pain-associated impairment, treatments that work by building psychological flexibility, as well as parenting and family functioning for youth affected by medical conditions.

Publications

Black, W. R., Hart, H., Christofferson, J., Connelly, M., Goubert, L., **Wallace, D. P.**, Ellingson-Sayen, L. & Davis, A. M. (2025). Resilience Factors and Physical Activity Engagement in Adolescents with Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 14(21), 7621. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm14217621>

Scheurich, J. A., Beals-Erickson, S. E., **Wallace, D. P.**, Cramer, E., Fox, E. J., Black, W., Jones, J. & Hoffart, C. M. (2025). Safety and outcomes of intensive interdisciplinary pain treatment for patients with and without pediatric generalized joint hypermobility: a longitudinal retrospective study. *Rheumatology International*, 45(9), 202. [doi:10.1007/s00296-025-05947-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00296-025-05947-8)

Lepping, R. J., Black, L. L., Kline, K. A., Hanson-Abromeit, D., Chadwick, A. L., **Wallace, D. P.**, & Black, W. R. (2025). Adolescents' Use of Music for Pain Management. *medRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.02.04.25321472>



ANNA WALLISCH, PH.D., OTR/L, is a research assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Anna earned her Ph.D. in Therapeutic Science and her clinical degree in occupational therapy (OT) at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Anna's research is driven by her clinical

experiences as an OT and answering the concerns of families. Her research focuses on: 1) examining mechanisms underlying challenging eating behaviors in young children with autism to develop future interventions, 2) utilizing technology for advancements in intervention delivery and contextually relevant measurement, and 3) the early identification of children with neurodevelopmental diagnoses.

Ongoing Research Support

K23HD113822

Wallisch (PI)

08/01/2024–07/31/2028

Examining mechanisms of challenging eating behaviors in children with autism using a biopsychosocial approach

R324A230160

Tomcheck (PI)

07/2023–06/ 2025

ULRF (IES/US Department of Education / subaward)

High impact models of early intervention support: Accelerating child outcomes and systems recovery

Role: Co-Investigator

R01HD105036

Boyd (PI)

04/2021–03/2026

Parent-implemented treatment for repetitive behaviors in children with ASD: Using a novel telehealth approach to increase service access

Role: Co-Investigator

UG1OD024943

Davis (PI)

09/2020–08/2025

SPeCTRE 2.0: The Sunflower Pediatric Clinical Trials

Research Extension

Role: Junior Investigator

Publications

Lee, J. D., Terol, A. K., Tschida, J. E., Pomaes-Ramos, A., McEathron, S., **Wallisch, A.**, & A Boyd, B. (2025). Examining the use of implementation science in autism intervention research: A scoping review. *Autism*, 13623613251351344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613251351344>

Mulcahy, A., Batza, K., Goddard, K., McMaughan, D. J., Kurth, N. K., Streed, C. G., **Wallisch, A.** & Hall, J. P. (2025). Experiences of patients with disabilities and sexual or gender minority status during healthcare interactions. *Journal of Public Health*, 33(8), 1735-1743. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-023-02145-3>

Mulcahy, A., Schmidt, E. K., McMaughan, D. J., Goddard, K. S., Batza, K., **Wallisch, A. M.**, Streed, C., Kurth, N. & Hall, J. P. (2025). Discrimination Among Disabled Adults in the United States: Findings from the 2022 National Survey on Health and Disability. *Disabilities*, 5(4), 110. <https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities5040110>



JUDY WATTS, PH.D., M.A., MPS,

is an assistant professor in the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas. She received her doctorate from The Ohio State University School of Communication. Her research interests include narrative

persuasion, health communication, and children's understanding of media. Broadly, her research pursues the influence of media on individuals' emotional responses, attitudinal change, and knowledge across the lifespan. She has been published in the *Journal of Communication*, *Media Psychology*, *Health Communication*, *Journal of Health Communication*, and *Broadcasting of Entertainment & Media*. Before joining academia, Watts had a career in public service, working for local and regional government entities as their public information officer and outreach administrator. She began her professional career by working in development for a local public radio station. Her hobbies include completing her national park passport by visiting national parks, scuba diving, kayaking, running, and yoga. She also volunteers for her neighborhood community garden.

Publications

Watts, J., Hubner, A., Pei, J., & Barros Coelho, M. (2025). Is it safe? The effect of narrative vs. non-narrative messages on story-related knowledge of medicated abortion. *Frontiers in Communication*, 10, 1473154. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1473154>



KATHERINE WAUGH, PH.D.,

is an assistant professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Physiology at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She earned her Ph.D. in Immunology from the University of Colorado – School of Medicine at National Jewish Health and has previous experience working in large-scale,

team-based research initiatives at the Stowers Institute for Medical Research and the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome (www.trisome.org). As an independent investigator, her lab continues to capitalize on recent advances in genomics to dissect inflammatory mediators of aberrant health trajectories that are heterogeneously experienced by individuals with trisomy of human chromosome 21. Untested dogma predicts this to shed light on the broad spectrum of Down syndrome with widespread implications.

Ongoing Research Support

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute
Kitchen & Waugh (MPIs)
07/2025–06/2026

Characteristics of Individuals with Down Syndrome and Immune Dysregulation Across the Lifespan

P20GM103418

McCarthy (PI)

07/2025–05/2026

Developmental Origins of Aberrant Neurological Trajectories in Down syndrome

Role: Mentor

P20GM103418

Waugh (PI)

05/2025–04/2027

Developmental Origins of Aberrant Neurological Trajectories in Down syndrome

1U01HD116477-01

Harley, Handen, Horn, Ptomey (MPIs)

07/2024–06/2029

Metabolic Health, Lifestyle, and Risk of Co-Occurring Health Conditions in Down syndrome (MET-DS)

Role: Co-Investigator

P20GM103418

McCarthy (PI)

07/2024–05/2025

Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (KINBRE) Developmental Origins of Aberrant Neurological Trajectories in Down Syndrome

Role: Mentor

Research Equipment and Resource

McCarson (PI)

Procurement Award (RERPA) Application. San Diego Instruments Startle Response (SRI)-LABTM Apparatus

08/2010–08/2029

Role: Co-Investigator

Publications

Reeser, R. S., VeDepo, M. C., Hewawasam, R. S., **Waugh, K. A.**, Schade, K. A., Abdel-Hafiz, M., Pena, B., Mestroni, L., Sbaizero, O., Espinoza, J., Magin, C... & Jacot, J. G. (2025). Aberrant tissue mechanics and mechanotransduction during heart development in down syndrome. *Journal of Biomechanics*, 113103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbiomech.2025.113103>

Waugh, K. A., Wilkins, H. M., Smith, K. P., & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Charting the future: current and future directions in translational research for individuals with down syndrome. *Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 17(1), 38. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-025-09630-8>

Araya, P., Niemeyer, B., Schade, K., Dunn, L. N., **Waugh, K.**, Busquet, N., Brindley, C., Brown, C., Winkler, C., Lyford, H., Britton, E., Ludwig, M., Siegenthaler, J., Galbraith, M., Espinoza, J & Sullivan, K. D. (2025). Interferon signaling modulates Down syndrome-associated Alzheimer's disease pathology in a mouse model. *Science*, 28(8). doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2025.113130.

Flores-Aguilar, L., Hamlett, E. D., Araya, P., Barone, E., Bhattacharyya, A., Carmona-Iragui, M., Chan, L., Christian, B., Costa, A., Costanzo, F., Hoyo, L., Dierssen, M., Eichler, E., Fisher, E., Galbraith, M., Ghosh, S., Gimenez, S., Guedj, F., Guidi, S., Lulita, M., Mobley, W., Pelleri, M., Potier, M., Rabin, K., Rachubinski, A., Sordo, L., Strydom, A., Valle-Tamayo, N., **Waugh, K.**, Yu, E., Zeldich, E., Busciglio, J & Head, E. (2025). Imagine, discover, inspire: Proceedings of the 4th international conference of the Trisomy 21 research society. *NeuroMolecular Medicine*, 27(1), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12017-024-08824-y>



DAVID WHITE, PH.D., ACSM-CEP,

is an exercise physiologist at Children's Mercy Kansas City. His focus is clinical exercise testing and prescription in children with congenital and/or electrophysiological heart defects, neurocardiogenic syncope, dyslipidemia and abnormal cardiopulmonary responses to

exercise. Advanced methodology includes oxygen consumption, EKG, oxygen saturation, exercise blood pressure, pulmonary function testing and tilt table testing. Additional responsibilities include exercise and behavioral counseling for youth and families of children with dyslipidemia and/or obesity in the Ward Heart Center Preventive Cardiology Clinic.

Ongoing Research Support

5U01DK066143-22

Warady (PI)

2025–2028

Chronic kidney disease in children—Prospective Cohort Study (CKiD V)

Role: Collaborator

Additional Ventures—Single Ventricle Foundation (1019144)

Forsha (PI)

2023–2026

A comprehensive and non-invasive assessment of skeletal muscle in adolescents with single ventricle circulation

Role: Co-Investigator

K23HL159325

White (PI)

2022–2027

Remotely delivered cardiac rehabilitation for children and adolescents with congenital heart disease

Publications

Olson, O. J., Garver, M., Cramer, E., Gross-Toolson, J., Teson, K. M., Malloy-Walton, L., Watson, J., Walton, M., Martis, L., Watkins, D., Enneking, Black, W. & **White, D. A.** (2025). Physical Activity and Mental Health in Adolescents With Cardiac Arrhythmias, Cardiomyopathy, or Single Ventricle Heart Disease. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 1(aop), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1123/pes.2024-0066>

Goyal, A., Parthiban, A., **White, D. A.**, Forsha, D., & Aly, D. (2025). Two-dimensional speckle tracking of the ascending aorta: a novel approach to evaluate arterial stiffness in pediatric patients with repaired conotruncal anomalies using echocardiography. *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine*, 12, 1555568. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcvm.2025.1555568>

Clina, J. G., **White, D. A.**, Sherman, J. R., Danon, J. C., Forsha, D. E., Helsel, B. C., Washburn, R., Washburn, R., Donnelly, J. & Ptomey, L. T. (2025). Daily physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness in adults with Down syndrome with and without congenital heart disease. *Disability and Health Journal*, 101778. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2025.101778>

White, D. A., Black, W. R., Cramer, E., Malloy-Walton, L., Walton, M., Martis, L., Enneking, B., Teson, K., Watson, J. & Gross-Toolson, J. (2025). Validity and Reliability of the Tampa Scale for Kinesiophobia for Adolescents with Heart Disease. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 57(6), 1246. DOI: 10.1249/MSS.0000000000003642

Cifra, B., Cordina, R. L., Gauthier, N., Murphy, L. C., Pham, T. D., Veldtman, G. R., Ward, K., **White, D.**, Paridon, S. & Powell, A. W. (2025). Cardiopulmonary exercise test interpretation across the lifespan in congenital heart disease: A scientific statement from the American heart association. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 14(4), e038200. <https://doi.org/10.1161/JAHA.124.038200>

Posson, P. M., Hibbing, P. R., Damiot, A., Carbuhn, A. F., **White, D. A.**, Shakhnovich, V., Sullivan, D. & Shook, R. P. (2025). Resting energy expenditure equations have lower accuracy for adolescents with overweight/obesity versus healthy-weight adolescents. *Childhood Obesity*, 21(1), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2024.0226>



DOUGLAS WRIGHT, PH.D., is a professor and vice chair of research at the University of Kansas Medical Center Department of Anesthesiology. Dr. Wright completed his Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky and his postdoctoral training at Washington University. Dr. Wright's current research

addresses diseases and conditions that peripheral sensation and pain. His laboratory uses mouse genetic models to explore the pathogenesis of nerve dysfunction and pain and testing interventions through translational research in human patients suffering from peripheral nerve disease and pain. Dr. Wright's research is funded by R01 grants from the NIH. His work in diabetes complications has been recognized through a KUMC Faculty Research Investigator Award and a Cure Award from the American Diabetes Association. Dr. Wright has received numerous teaching and mentoring awards, including the prestigious William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence and the KUMC Excellence in Mentoring Award. Since 2010, Dr. Wright has led the Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE), which supports research training and infrastructure at 10 Universities in Kansas and Oklahoma. Dr. Wright served as Co-PI on the SHARPHub Accelerator Hub to stimulate innovation and commercialization in the Central Region IDeA states and served as the President of the National Association of IDeA Principal Investigators (NAIPI). Dr. Wright served as the Chair of the International Diabetic Neuropathy Consortium (IDNC), a special interest group within the Peripheral Nerve Society. Dr. Wright has served as Director of several graduate programs at KUMC and has been a dedicated mentor to graduate students, medical and MD/Ph.D., and postdoctoral fellows. He is the Co-Director of an NIH T32 training grant to support graduate training in obesity complications.

Ongoing Research Support

R01 NS144393-01

TLR Mediated Small Fiber Neuropathy,

Wright (PI)

08/01/2025–04/30/2030

KU Alzheimer's Disease Research Center

Wright (PI)

07/24/2024–06/30/2025

Systemic Consequences of ADRD on Peripheral Nerve Health

P20GM103418-24

Wright (PI)

05/01/2024–04/30/2026

Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) supplement Team Science

Kansas Board of Regents EPSCOR Committee

Wright (PI)

05/01/2024–04/30/2026

Kansas Board of Regents Supplement to K-INBRE

Woodyard Fellowship, KUMC

Hauser (PI)

10/13/2023–10/12/2026

Small Fiber Peripheral Neuropathy in Progressive Supranuclear Palsy

Role: Mentor

T32 DK128770-01A1

Wright & Thyfault (MPIs)

06/01/2022–05/30/2027

Translating Obesity, Metabolic Dysfunction and Comorbid Disease States

R01NS043314-19

Wright (PI)

01/01/2003–05/31/2027

Painful Versus Insensate Diabetic Neuropathy

5P20GM103418-24

Wright (PI)

09/18/2001–04/30/2029

Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE)

Publications

Heslop, L. L., & **Wright, D. E.** (2025). Modulation of pain by ketones: a mini-review. *American Journal of Physiology-Cell Physiology*, 329(1), C31-C37. <https://doi.org/10.1152/ajpcell.00305.2025>

Crowards, S., Ryals, J., Heslop, L., Hauser, W., Totta-Griese, G., Madden, T., & **Wright, D. E.** (2025). TLR4 deletion reduces small fiber sensory abnormalities and nerve degeneration in diabetic male mice. *Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroscience.2025.10.052>



YUN YAN, M.D., FAAP, is a pediatric endocrinologist and the director of the Endocrine Type 2 Diabetes Prevention program at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and a clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. Dr. Yan is a member of Pediatric Endocrine Society Special Interest Group of

Obesity, and she actively participates in the education and research activities nationally. Dr. Yan’s research interests include identifying risk factors and biomarkers that can be used for early diagnosis and intervention of insulin resistance syndrome, type 2 diabetes and comorbidities.

Ongoing Research Support

Yan (PI)
Endocrine department support: Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Repository
2018–2028

Ongoing Research Support

1R01HL178882-01A1
Manworren (PI)
09/17/2025–09/16/1030
Modeling Inter-individual Differences to Address Pain of Sickle cell disease (MIDAS).
Role:Co-Investigatior

P20GM103418
Young (PI)
05/01/2023–04/30/2025
Kansas IDeA Network for Biomedical Research Excellence
Mechanisms of visceral pain

Foundation for Anesthesia Research Education and Research (FAER)
Young (PI)
MSARF Host Site
2023–Present

Craig Neilsen Foundation
Young (PI)
2023–2025
A role for CGRP in the development and chronicity of neurogenic bowel after SCI 1001074

National Institute of General Medicine and Surgery
Young (PI)
2023–2025
Avpr1a as a novel therapeutic target for chronic visceral pain

R01DK09961106
Effect of Neonatal and Adult Stress on Pelvic Pain Disorders and Comorbidity
Dr. Julie Carlsten Christianson (PI)
02/28/2020–02/28/2025
Role: Co-investigator (1.2 calendar months)

Publications

Ewald, M., **Young, E.**, Kuehn, M., & Veatch, O. (2025). From Genetic Association to Therapeutic Target: A Pipeline for Pleiotropic Gene Prioritization. *Current Protocols*, 5(6), e70148. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpz1.70148>



ERIN E. YOUNG, PH.D., is an assistant professor at KU Medical Center in the Department of Anesthesiology, Pain and Perioperative Medicine. Her work primarily focuses on identifying the genetic variations and patterns of gene expression that contribute to chronic pain risk across a number of pain types.

Her team uses a variety of methodologies to address questions in the lab, including behavioral human subjects, human subjects pain phenotyping and whole genome methods. A critical component of the research program is translation into human subjects, so they often utilize clinical research collaborations to validate and explore genes identified in the animal and molecular lab studies. Her team works not only from the “bench-to-bedside” but also “bedside-to-bench”, where they begin with clinically relevant candidate genes and use lab-based methods for determining the mechanisms underlying these genetic effects.

Willits, A. B., Kader, L., Choudhury, S., Ewald, M., Meriano, S., Christianson, J., Baumbauer, K. & **Young, E.** (2025). Intrarectal Antagonism of Calcitonin Gene-Related Peptide Prevents Spinal Cord Injury-Associated Neurogenic Bowel Phenotypes. *Journal of Neurotrauma*, 08977151251406659. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08977151251406659>



E. ALICE ZHANG, PH.D., BCBA-D, BA, is an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy Education at KU Medical Center. She was previously a postdoctoral fellow affiliated with KS LEND, the Kansas Center for Autism Research and Training and the Telehealth ROCKS project. Dr.

Zhang's research interests focus on increasing evidence-based service access for families of children with autism spectrum disorder and other related disorders via technology. She provides clinical services including parent training and behavioral consultation through both in-person and telehealth clinics. Dr. Zhang is also passionate about advocating for health care access and disability rights.

Ongoing Research Support

Zhang & Buzhardt (MPIs)
09/1/2025–08/31/2028
NIDILRR

Increasing Access to Evidence-based Practices for Latino Families of Children with Autism: Development of the Embajadora Training and Outreach Program

NIH/NCATS Frontier CTSA (KL2)
07/2024–06/2026
Zhang (PI)

Development of A Parent-Medicated Feeding Intervention for Children with ASD via Telehealth iKanEat ASD

Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services
04/01/2023–03/31/2025

Kansas Parent Resource Center (KFRC) for Family/Caregiver Training and Education
Role: Co-Investigator

SAMHSA Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education)
Nelson (PI)
09/2022–08/2027
KanAWARE
Role: Co-investigator

Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research COBRE (KC-MORE)
04/2022–02/2027
Weinman (PI)
Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research (KC-MORE) - Administrative Core
Role: Diversity and Inclusion Director

HRSA Telehealth Technology-Enabled Learning Program
Nelson (PI)
2021–2026
Telehealth ROCKS Together
Role: Co-investigator

HRSA Evidence-Based Telehealth Network Program
Nelson (PI)
09/2021–08/2026
Telehealth ROCKS Communities: CHWs Advancing Multi-Tiered DTC Telebehavioral Health
Role: Co-investigator

5R01HD105036-03
Boyd (PI)
04/2021–03/2026
Parent implemented treatment for repetitive behaviors in children with ASD: Using a novel telehealth approach to increase service access
Role: Co-investigator

Publications

Zhang, E., & Nary, D. (2025). Evaluation of the Advocacy Training Package on Self-Advocacy Letter Writing Skills in Adults With Disabilities. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 00343552251377384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552251377384>

Swails, L., **Zhang, E.,** Bellinger, S., Danley, C. M., Adams, H., & Nelson, E. L. (2025). TeleCARE: Adapting and Piloting Child Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) Workshop for Videoconferencing Delivery During the Pandemic. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 34(9), 2487-2499. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-025-03123-x>

Zhang, E., Punt, S., Nary, D., & Summers, J. A. (2025). Health Access for Independent Living (HAIL): a Pilot Study Examining a Health Management Program for Adults with Physical Disabilities. *Prevention Science*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-025-01820-z>

Bourque, K., Buzhardt, J., Kamps, D., Heitzman-Powell, L., & **Zhang, E.** (2025). Interventions Benefitting Young Autistic Children. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43494-025-00158-z>

Zhang, E., Alduraidi, W., Snyder, M., Kaiser, E., Hunley, S., Davis, A., Nelson, E-L. & Cheak-Zamora, N. (2025). Pilot rural–urban comparison of health care experiences among autistic adolescents and young adults. *Autism*, 13623613251337506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613251337506>

Alduraidi, W., **Zhang, E.,** Foster, L., & Mische-Lawson, L. (2025). Exploring Goal Attainment Scaling Among Occupational Therapy Students: A Retrospective Descriptive Analysis. *Occupational Therapy International*, 2025(1), 6034855. <https://doi.org/10.1155/oti/6034855>

Behrens, S., Lawson, L. A. M., Bigelow, K., Dean, E., **Zhang, A.,** Foster, L. H., & Bridges, M. S. (2025). Exploring home visitors' use and perceptions of developmental monitoring: A mixed methods study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 71, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.11.011>



CHLN- AFFILIATED POST- DOCTORAL FELLOWS



LONDON DERU, PH.D., MBA, ATC/L, is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the Division of Physical Activity and Weight Management. His research focuses on nutrition, fasting, exercise, and behavioral weight loss interventions, with an emphasis on glycemic control,

insulin sensitivity, and metabolic health across diverse clinical populations. He has authored multiple peer-reviewed publications examining intermittent fasting, macronutrient composition, and lifestyle strategies to improve cardiometabolic outcomes. In addition to his research, he teaches and develops collegiate-level courses in kinesiology and health sciences and provides health coaching within federally funded weight management programs. His work integrates evidence-based nutrition, applied physiology, and translational education to support sustainable health behavior change.



SARAH BEHRENS, PH.D., LMSW, is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Kansas Medical Center whose research focuses on advancing early relational health across early childhood settings. Her work centers on implementing equitable, family-centered interventions in primary care to support early developmental

outcomes. She has a background as a school social worker and researcher in community-based early childhood programs. Sarah has contributed to NIH- and IES-funded studies on language and social-emotional development, including PC TALK, PRISM, and MIECHV initiatives. She is currently involved in the Talk With Me Baby clinical trial, with a long-term goal of leading translational research to strengthen relational health across the pediatric lifespan.

Publications

Behrens, S., Lawson, L. A. M., Bigelow, K., Dean, E., Zhang, A., Foster, L. H., & Bridges, M. S. (2025). Exploring home visitors' use and perceptions of developmental monitoring: A mixed methods study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 71, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.11.011>



SARA FORTIN-MILLER, PH.D., is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) and Children's Mercy Kansas City, supported by The Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition Kemper Fellowship and the Department of Population Health. She earned her Ph.D. in Medical Nutrition Sciences from KUMC and

holds dual master's degrees in Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Her research seeks to understand how early nutrition influences neurocognitive development and eating behaviors. She works with pregnant women, infants, and children, aiming to advance knowledge of how early-life nutrition shapes brain development and long-term health outcomes.

Publications

Fortin-Miller SA, Gajewski BJ, Carlson SE, Colombo JA, Christifano DN, Sullivan DK, Hull HR. Ethnicity modifies the relationship between added sugars and fructose exposure in the first 1000 days and offspring body composition at 24 months. *Nutr Res*. 2025 Apr 19;139:1-15. doi: 10.1016/j.nutres.2025.04.009.



BENJAMIN KUGLER, PH.D. is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology. His research interest is centered around the consequence of obesity on mitochondrial quality and function and how exercise impacts these outcomes. He is

particularly interested in understanding the role of mitochondrial dynamics in the development of obesity-related metabolic diseases.

Publications

Franczak E., **Kugler B.A.**, Salathe S.F., Allen J.A., Sardu M.E., McCoin C.S., Hevener A.L., Morris E.M., Thyfault J.P. (2025). The loss of ovarian function prevents exercise-induced activation of hepatic mitophagic flux. *Am J Physiol Endocrinol Metab.* doi: 10.1152/ajpendo.00107.2025.

Kugler B.A., Maurer A., Fu X., Franczak E., Ernst N., Schwartz K., Allen J., Li T., Crawford P.A., Koch L.G., Britton S.L., Shankar K., Burgess S.C., Thyfault J.P. (2025). Aerobic Capacity and Exercise Mediate Protection Against Hepatic Steatosis via Enhanced Bile Acid Metabolism. *Function (Oxf).* doi: 10.1093/function/zqaf019.

Lysaker C.R., **Kugler B.A.**, Csikos V., Birky C.J., Gilmore C.A., Wenger M., Franczak E., Davis X., Hauger B.M., Allen J.A., Troutwine B.R., Gonzalez-Duran L., McCoin C.S., Chauhan M., Harris J.L., Frazier A.L., Winter M.K., Koch L.G., Britton S.L., Thyfault J.P., Wilkins H.M. (2025). A polygenic rat model of divergent aerobic capacity reveals a liver-brain interaction impacting Alzheimer's disease-like phenotypes. *J Physiol.* doi: 10.1113/JP286750.

Berger N., **Kugler B.A.**, Han D., Li M., Nguyen P., Anderson M., Patalano-Salsman S., Zhang S., Macoska J., Cai C., Zou K. (2025). Voluntary Exercise Attenuates Tumor Growth in a Preclinical Model of Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer. *Med Sci Sports Exerc.* doi: 10.1249/MSS.0000000000003712.

Johnson C.N., Lysaker C.R., Gast E.C., McCoin C.S., Kemna R.E., Fuller K.N.Z., **Kugler B.A.**, Franczak E., Csikos V., Allen J., John C.S., Wolf M.A., Morris M.E., Thyfault J.P., Wilkins H.M., Gieger P.C., Morris J.K. (2025). APOE4 Exerts Partial Diet-dependent Effect on Energy Expenditure and Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Pathways in Preclinical Model. *Function (Oxf).* doi: 10.1093/function/zqaf017.



SURYEON RYU, PH.D., is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Children's Mercy Kansas City funded by the Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition. Her work focuses on reducing health disparities by preventing and managing chronic diseases through the promotion of healthy movement

behaviors. She is particularly interested in optimizing technology-based health interventions that help people adopt and sustain active lifestyles. She also applies population health and epidemiologic methods to identify determinants and benefits of movement behaviors and to inform tailored interventions.

Publications

Ryu S., Lee EY, Gao Z. Associations between adhering to 24-hour movement guidelines and anxiety among adolescents across intersectional identities: KYRBS 2020-2022. *BMC Public Health.* 2025;25(1):3103. Published 2025 Sep 24. doi:10.1186/s12889-025-24215-9

CENTER MEMBERS (AFFILIATES)



MATTHEW CHRISMAN, PH.D., is an assistant teaching professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Nursing and Health Studies. His research interests focus on the environmental determinants of physical activity in rural adults.

Ongoing Research Support

Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition; University of Kansas Medical Center; Children's Mercy Kansas City
Chrisman (PI)
2025–2026

Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Train-the-Trainer Approach for Integrating Nutrition Education into Rural Teachers' Curricula

Publications

Wickham, A., Russell, C. L., Chesnut, S. R., **Chrisman, M.**, McElroy, S. F., & Gatti, J. M. (2025). Clean intermittent catheterization determinants and caregiver adherence in pediatric patients with spinal dysraphism and spinal cord injury: A mixed methods study. *Journal of Pediatric Urology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpurol.2025.12.007>

Chrisman, M., Gardiner, K., Cullers, A., Gremaud, A., & Rodman, C. (2025). "It's Part of the College Experience": A Focus Group Assessment of US College Students' Knowledge and Use of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. *Nutrition Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbu.70014>

Endsley, P., Martinkus, H., **Chrisman, M.**, Marchello, N., & Skarbek, A. (2025). Why should you attend conference poster sessions?. *Discover Education*, 4(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-025-00462-1>

Chrisman, M., Landry, M. J., Klobodu, S., & Bailey, D. (2025). Knowledge and Perceptions of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Eligible Purchases: A Survey of US Midwestern College Students. *Nutrition Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbu.70002>

Patel, S. E., Reinkemeyer, E. A., **Chrisman, M.**, & Zimmerman, C. (2025). Unlocking Learning in Radiology Nursing: Enhancing Orientation and Emergency Response Using Escape Room Strategies. *Journal of Radiology Nursing*, 44(1), 78-80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jradnu.2024.10.006>



VERONICA VABISHCHEVICH PT, DPT, is a licensed physical therapist and doctoral student in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in 2024. Her research interests focus on developing exercise interventions for youth with chronic diseases,

with a particular emphasis on leveraging exercise prescription to improving physiologic and health-related outcomes in youth.

Publications

Vabishchevich, V., Smith, R., & Bittel, A. (2025). Mitochondrial and clinical adaptations to moderate-intensity continuous training: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Manuscript submitted for publication to *PLOS ONE*.

St. Peter, L., **Vabishchevich, V.**, Hampl, S., Gibler, RC., Noel-MacDonnell, JR., Shook, RP., Carlson, JA., & Forseth, B. Endorsement of health behaviors differs among youth with severe obesity using electronic medical records. Accepted in *Childhood Obesity*.

RESEARCH SUPPORT STAFF



ALEXIS ALMLOFF, MS, RD, is a Registered Dietitian and Research Associate at Children's Mercy Hospital. She works with Dr. Robin Shook and helps coordinate studies with a focus on energy balance, the relationship between an individual's diet and physical activity levels, provides

study coordination support for investigators at CHLN.



LEZLIE BOND COA, CCRC, AA, is a clinical trials coordinator and at Children's Mercy Kansas City. She provides study coordination support for investigators at CHLN.



SARAH BULLARD, MS, RD, LD is a dietitian at Children's Mercy Kansas City. She works with Dr. Hampl and Dr. Laroche to provide health coaching and project coordination support.



ANNIE CHUNING, BS, is a doctoral student in the Clinical Child Psychology Program at the University of Kansas. Her research is primarily guided by Dr. Ann Davis, with the support of Dr. Christopher Cushing, and it aims to understand how cognitive decision-making traits of pediatric patients and their families impact

therapy effectiveness. She is passionate about supporting rural families' healthy lifestyles and increasing wellness for families engaging with complex medical care services, especially those families whose journey began in the NICU.



KELLY CLAY, MPH, is a research associate at children’s mercy hospital. she works with dr. robin shook to coordinate programs and research that emphasize community collaboration to help children and families achieve and sustain healthy, active lives.



KRISTINA FOSTER, MS, RN, APRN-BC, CCRP is a nurse with over 30 years of experience. She is currently a senior clinical research nurse coordinator at KUMC. In her role, she helps manage the NIH funded SPeCTr grant and coordinates all aspects of the clinical trials that come through the ECHO ISPECTN (pediatric research network associated with the grant).



KELSEY DEAN, MS, RD, LD, CCRP, PMP, is a clinical trials coordinator and dietitian at Children’s Mercy Kansas City and at KU Medical Center. She provides study coordination support for investigators at CHLN.



MALLORY MOON, MPH, Is the Program Manager for the Active Kids lab at Children’s Mercy Hospital and the Technical Director of the Field-Based Physical Activity Core with Dr. Jordan Carlson. Her areas of focus include the promotion, development, and maintenance of collaborative physical activity research projects along with providing mentorship and technical resource support for students, staff, and trainees.



KATLYN EIGHMY, MPH, is a Project Coordinator at Children’s Mercy Hospital. She works with Dr. Robin Shook to coordinate programs and research initiatives that focus on community collaboration to assist children and families in achieving and maintaining healthy, active lifestyles.



PETE MUENKS, MA, ACRP-CP, is a clinical trials coordinator and dietitian at Children’s Mercy Kansas City. He provides study coordination support for investigators at CHLN.



CHELSEA FAIRBAIRN, MPH, MS, is a Data Scientist for the Active Kids lab at Children’s Mercy Hospital with Dr. Jordan Carlson. She works on projects related to activity measurement and the impact of built environment on obesity outcomes. Her primary research interests are in dissemination

and implementation science and translational research.



MEGAN (MEGGIE) OLALDE, MS, RD, CCRP, is a registered dietitian and research assistant at KU Medical Center. Her research interests include the effects of nutrition intervention and physical activity on weight status and obesity prevention among all age groups. She is currently working on a project examining a

behavioral intervention among overweight and obese children in rural areas of Kansas.



NATALIE UPDYKE, MPH, is a Research Associate at Children's Mercy Hospital. She works with Dr. Robin Shook to coordinate programs and research that emphasize community collaboration to help children and families achieve and sustain healthy, active lives.



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