
NASPGHAN
714 N Bethlehem Pike
Suite 300
Ambler, PA 19002
215-641-9800



PRESIDENT

Karen Murray, MD
Cleveland Clinic Children's
8950 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44195
216-444-2344
Murrayk5@ccf.org

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Benjamin D. Gold, MD
Pediatric GI, Hepatology and Nutrition
Children's Ctr for Digestive Healthcare
993-D Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite
440
Atlanta, GA 30342
404-503-2282
bgold@gicareforkids.com

PAST PRESIDENT

James E. Heubi, MD
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Medical Center
Division of GI & Nutrition
3333 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229-3026
513-636-8046
james.heubi@cchmc.org

SECRETARY – TREASURER

Jeannie Huang, MD, MPH
University of California San Diego
Rady Children's Hospital
3020 Children's Way MC 5030
San Diego, CA 92123
858-966-4003
jshuang@ucsd.edu

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Eric Benchimol, MD
Ottawa, ON

Melanie Greifer, MD
New York, NY

Stacy Kahn, MD
Boston, MA

Ian Leibowitz, MD
Fairfax, VA

Cara Mack, MD
Aurora, CO

Ericka Montijo Barrios, MD, PhD
Naucalpan, Mexico

John Pohl, MD
Salt Lake City, UT

Rachel Rosen, MD, MA
Boston, MA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Margaret K. Stallings
mstallings@naspgghan.org

NASPGHAN Annual Meeting
November 4-9, 2020
San Diego, CA

June 1, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue
U.S. Senate
455 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
U.S. Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
U.S. Senate
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
U.S. Senate
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Perdue, Young, Cornyn, Durbin, Coons and Leahy:

On behalf of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), I offer support of the "Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act" (S. 3599) and applaud you for your leadership to ensure our nation's health care workforce needs are immediately met during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. We ask that S. 3599 be included in the next COVID-19 stimulus legislation.

Achieving timely access to pediatric subspecialists for many children across the United States is difficult. And while there has been growth in the number of pediatric subspecialists and improvements in the geographic distribution of all pediatric subspecialists, among several subspecialties children in some geographic areas continue to have limited or no access to specialized care within a reasonable driving distance.¹

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) constitute roughly a quarter of the U.S. pediatric physician workforce.¹ Because they are more likely to practice in specialties in which a physician shortage would otherwise go unfilled and serve socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, the contributions of IMGs are vital. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fragility our health care workforce, especially in historically underserved areas where health care disparities and inequities are profound.

IMGs are serving on front lines against COVID, but visa restrictions prevent them from being redeployed to areas in most in need. Most concerning, however, is that their families are not protected from deportation if they lose their life or job due to COVID-19.

¹ Turner A, Ricketts T, Leslie LK. Comparison of Number and Geographic Distribution of Pediatric Subspecialists and Patient Proximity to Specialized Care in the US Between 2003 and 2019. *JAMA Pediatr.* Published online May 18, 2020. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.1124

¹ Jimenez-Gomez A, FitzGerald M, Leon-Astudillo C, et al. Performance of International Medical Graduates in Pediatric Residency: A Study of Peer and Faculty Perceptions. *Academic Pediatrics.* Volume 18, Number 7; September/October 2018. https://www.appd.org/pdf/APPD_ViewPages_Sept2018.pdf. Accessed online May 31, 2020.

NASPGHAN also supports reauthorization of the Conrad 30 J-1 visa waiver. The J-1 visa requires that a recipient return to their home country for at least two years at the conclusion of training unless a waiver is obtained. The Conrad 30 waiver allows IMGs to remain in the United States for an additional three years if they provide health care for rural and urban medically underserved populations.

Lastly, for nearly a decade, NASPGHAN has been advocating for policy solutions to improve access to pediatric subspecialists, including funding of the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program which was first authorized in the Affordable Care Act. The program was recently reauthorized in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and we ask that Congress provide funding for the Program this year to improve long-term pediatric subspecialist access needs.

NASPGHAN is grateful for your leadership during this time of uncertainty and need. Should you require additional information or if I can be of assistance to you on this or other health care-related matters, please contact NASPGHAN's policy consultant, Camille Bonta, at (202) 320-3658 or cbonta@summithealthconsulting.com

Sincerely,



Karen Murray, MD
President
North American Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Chair, Pediatric Institute, Physician-in-Chief
Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital