

Dear NASPGHAN Members,

I am honored to be a nominee for the position of NASPGHAN Councilor. As a dedicated pediatric gastroenterologist, physician scientist and young physician leader I bring a deep commitment to advancing the mission of NASPGHAN through collaborative leadership, innovative thinking, and a strong record of service to our community.

I completed pediatric gastroenterology training in 2020 and was recruited to establish and lead a new academic pediatric gastroenterology practice at the University of South Florida in Tampa Bay. I currently serve as the inaugural Division Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition at USF and as Medical Director of the Tampa General Hospital Gastroenterology Center of Excellence. Since joining, I have grown our division from a solo practice to a thriving multidisciplinary team that now includes five physicians, three dietitians, two nurses, two secretaries, and a social worker over five years. This experience has given me:

1/ Firsthand insight into the evolving challenges and opportunities in pediatric gastroenterology, not only from the physician's perspective but also from that of our allied health professionals including dietitians, nurses, and social workers. I would bring this collaborative, systems-level understanding to the Councilor role.

2/ The privilege of mentoring and sponsoring team members to engage with NASPGHAN and the NASPGHAN Foundation. These efforts have led to three CPNP grants awarded to our dietitians, physician participation in NASPGHAN committees, and one of our dietitians being named the Research Chair for CPNP.

In addition to these local efforts, I have actively contributed to NASPGHAN's educational, clinical, and research missions through national committee work, trainee mentorship, and institutional initiatives focused on improving patient care. I am committed to using my experience and passion for multidisciplinary collaboration to further NASPGHAN's mission.

If elected, I will focus on three key priorities:

1/ Advocacy and Inclusion: Ensuring that the voices of diverse practitioners, including early-career physicians, community-based clinicians, underrepresented groups, and allied healthcare professionals (nurses, social workers, dietitians) are heard and integrated into NASPGHAN's strategic planning.

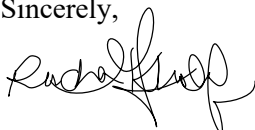
2/ Innovation and Collaboration: Supporting the growth of interdisciplinary initiatives across research, education, and clinical care—including initiatives that address emerging conditions, health disparities, and the integration of technology into practice.

3/ Mentorship and Pipeline Development: Strengthening mentorship networks within NASPGHAN and fostering new opportunities for trainees and junior faculty to grow within the organization. We have an evolving workforce pipeline problem and I would love to be a part of the solution for this.

NASPGHAN has been central to my professional development, and I would be privileged to give back to the society by serving on the Council. I am confident that my leadership experience, collaborative style, and unwavering commitment to our field will enable me to contribute meaningfully to NASPGHAN's continued success.

Thank you for considering my nomination.

Sincerely,



Racha Khalaf, MD, MS

Division Chief and Associate Professor

Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine

Medical Director

Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition Center of Excellence, Tampa General Hospital

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.

NAME: KHALAF, RACHA

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): R.KHALAF

POSITION TITLE: Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Division Chief

EDUCATION/TRAINING (*Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.*)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	END DATE MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA	BS	06/2010	Physiological Sciences
University of Central Florida College of Medicine, Orlando, FL	MD	05/2014	Medicine
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, St Petersburg, FL	Resident	06/2017	Pediatrics
University of Colorado, Aurora, CO	MS	05/2020	Masters of Science in Clinical Sciences
Children's Hospital Colorado, Aurora, CO	Fellow	07/2020	Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

A. Personal Statement

I am a physician–scientist and pediatric gastroenterologist with expertise in clinical, translational, and implementation research on gastrointestinal and nutritional disorders of childhood, particularly in the context of cystic fibrosis (CF). I currently serve as the inaugural Division Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition at the University of South Florida and as Medical Director of the Pediatric Gastroenterology Center of Excellence at Tampa General Hospital. Since completing my fellowship in 2020, I have led the development of a thriving, multidisciplinary division and built research and clinical programs that integrate physicians, dietitians, nurses, and social workers to deliver innovative, evidence-based care.

My research focuses on predictors of patient outcomes in CF and other complex pediatric gastrointestinal diseases, elucidating disease mechanisms, and identifying optimal management strategies through multicenter collaborations and use of national registries. My graduate-level training (M.S. in Clinical Sciences, University of Colorado) equipped me with strong skills in study design, longitudinal data analysis, and implementation of patient-centered outcomes research.

I have also prioritized mentorship and workforce development by fostering opportunities for trainees, junior faculty, and allied health professionals to engage in research, secure competitive funding, and assume leadership roles within our field. Through national committee service, institutional leadership, and a collaborative approach to multidisciplinary care and research, I remain committed to advancing our field through innovation, advocacy, and mentorship.

B. Positions and Honors**Positions and Employment**

2024 –	Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Morsani College of Medicine, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
2022 –	Medical Director, Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition Center of Excellence at Tampa General Hospital, Tampa, FL
2021 –	Division Chief, Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
	Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Morsani College of Medicine, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
2020 – 2024	

2018 – Committee Member, Pancreas Committee of North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
 Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition Fellowship, Aurora, CO
 2017 – 2020 Pediatric Residency, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, St Petersburg, FL
 2015 – 2017 Pediatric Gastroenterology Externship, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
 2015 Pediatric Internship, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, St Petersburg, FL
 2014 – 2015
 2006 – 2010 Research Assistant, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA

Other Experience and Professional Memberships

2025 - Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Physicians Training Program (Education and Training) Review Committee - Member
 2025 - Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Physicians Training Program (Research) Review Committee - Member
 2025 - Tampa General Hospital Surgical Services Steering Committee - Member
 2025 - Muma Children's Hospital Inpatient Best Practice Committee - Member
 2025 - Muma Children's Hospital Pediatric Day Hospital Best Practice Committee - Member
 2025 - Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Southeast Region Volunteer Leadership - Member
 2022 - 2025 NASPGHAN Endoscopy Committee - Selected Member
 2021- American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition - Member of the Button Battery and Foreign Body Committee
 2021- American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition - Member of the Policy Statements and Guidelines Committee
 2021- American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition - Member of the Advocacy/Annual Leadership Forum (ALF) Resolutions and Proposals Committee
 2020 - 2021 NASPGHAN Pancreas Committee Pancreas Prize Abstract Review and Selection Committee - Member
 2019 Children's Hospital Colorado Digestive Health Institute Fellow Selection Committee - Member
 2018- 2023 NASPGHAN Pancreas Committee - Selected Member

Honors

2021 – 2025 Voted Tampa Magazine 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 Top Doctor Winner in the specialty of Pediatric Gastroenterology
 2021 American Board of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition board certified
 2020 Young Investigator Award, Federation of International Societies for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
 2018 Manuscript selected as *Must-Read Article* by the American Academy of Pediatrics
 2017 American Board of Pediatrics board certified
 2016 Employee of the Month, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
 2014 – 2015 Scholar of the Year, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
 2013 Finalist in Oral Competition, Florida Medical Association
 2013 Second Place Winner in Basic and Translational Projects, American Medical Student Association
 2013 First Place Winner for Oral Presentation, American College of Surgeons Resident Paper Competition
 2012 First Place Winner for Poster Competition on Diabetes and Endocrinology, Cureus
 2010 – 2014 Institutional Merit Scholarship, University of Central Florida College of Medicine
 2007 – 2010 Wasserman Scholar, University of California Los Angeles
 2006 – 2010 College Honors, University of California Los Angeles
 2006 – 2010 Dean's Honor List for Academic Excellence, University of California Los Angeles
 2006 – 2010 Alumni Scholar, University of California Los Angeles

C. Contribution to Science

1. **Clinical outcomes and predictors of success in patients with Cystic Fibrosis.** During my residency and fellowship training, I identified and investigated a void in the literature addressing outcomes of patients with CF. First, I investigated outcomes following nutritional supplementation via percutaneous gastrostomy tubes. Improving the nutritional status in patients with CF has been associated with improved survival and lung status, however no prior studies have explored whether supplementation via gastrostomy tubes would improve the rate of change of pulmonary and nutritional status when compared to patients not receiving supplementation via gastrostomy. We investigated this need with a retrospective case control study. Second, I explored the effect of acid blockade treatment on the esophageal and respiratory microbiome and inflammation in patients with cystic fibrosis as there is evidence to suggest that acid blockade increases the risk of community acquired pneumonias and showed that acid blockade had no effect on the aerodigestive microbiome in CF. Using large databases, I then investigated prevalence of different gastrointestinal manifestations of CF and compared those rates to patients without CF, then determined which of these manifestations was independently associated with an increased risk of venous thromboembolism in CF. Through these projects, I acquired skills regarding study planning, literature review, database management, CF Registry inquiries, patient recruitment, statistical analyses, and manuscript preparation and submission.
 - a) Abi-Aad SJ, Trocchia C, Mosha M, Mark JA, Leung DH, **Khalaf R**. Gastrointestinal Burden in Patients with Pancreatic Insufficient Cystic Fibrosis Before and After Elexacaftor/Tezacaftor/Ivacaftor Use. *Pancreas*. 2025 Jun 23. doi: 10.1097/MPA.0000000000002522. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40540361.
 - b) Trocchia C, Mosha M, Hamner B, Goldenberg N, **Khalaf R**. Prevalence and characteristics of gastrointestinal disorders, medication use, and diagnostic interventions in pediatric patients with cystic fibrosis: a nested case–control analysis from the TriNetX EMR-derived global research network real-world dataset. *Frontiers in Gastroenterology*. 2025; 3:-. Available from: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fgstr.2024.1489876/full> DOI: 10.3389/fgstr.2024.1489876
 - c) Trocchia C, Ashour D, Mosha M, Hamner B, Betensky M, Goldenberg N, **Khalaf R**. Venous Thromboembolism Occurrence and Association with Gastrointestinal Disorders in Children with Cystic Fibrosis: An Analysis from the TriNetX Research Network Global Multicenter Real-World Dataset. *Semin Thromb Hemost*. 2025 Jan 13; PubMed PMID: 39805291.
 - d) **Khalaf R**, Furuta GT, Wagner BD, Robertson CE, Andrews R, Stevens MJ, Fillon SA, Zemanick ET, Harris JK. Influence of Acid Blockade on the Aerodigestive Tract Microbiome in Children With Cystic Fibrosis. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr*. 2021 Apr 1;72(4):520-527. PubMed Central PMCID: PMC8315410.
2. **Determination of optimal treatment metrics for complicated gastrointestinal patients.** I have developed a keen interest in outcomes research in complex gastrointestinal patients. Through studies noted below, I learned to appreciate complexities of clinical research and the importance of innovations in patient care. Our studies identified key outcomes capturing methodology and metrics that will be the basis of my future work in this population. Skills previously acquired in identifying common data elements, key clinical outcomes and in data management will help bring future projects to fruition.
 - a. **Khalaf R**, Green D, Amankwah EK, Peck J, Carr V, Goldenberg NA, Wilsey M. Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy Tubes May Be Associated With Preservation of Lung Function in Patients With Cystic Fibrosis. *Nutr Clin Pract*. 2019 Apr;34(2):290-296. PubMed PMID: 30565731
 - b. Mark JA, Zheng Y, Franco SR, **Khalaf R**, Trout AT, Nathan JD, Piester TL, Del Chiaro M, Abu El-Haija M, Wilsey MJ. Pancreatic Cystic Lesions in Children: A Comprehensive Scoping Review. *Pancreas*. 2025 Feb 1;54(2):e150-e165. Epub 2024 Nov 13. PubMed PMID: 39928893.
 - c. **Khalaf R**, Sokol RJ. New Insights into Intestinal Failure-Associated Liver Disease in Children. *Hepatology*. 2020;71(4):1486-1498. PMID: 32003009.
 - d. Young MT, Gebhart A, **Khalaf R**, Toomari N, Vu S, Smith B, Nguyen NT. One-year outcomes of laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy versus laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding for the treatment of morbid obesity. *Am Surg*. 2014 Oct;80(10):1049-53. PubMed PMID: 25264658.
3. **Development of clinical databases to assess pediatric gastrointestinal conditions.** As a pediatric gastroenterologist, I care for patients with uncommon illnesses and share data for multicenter collaborations.

Involvement in these multicenter collaborations has helped me expand my research repertoire and has allowed me to develop advantageous research connections with investigators who share a similar vision and care for a similar population of patients.

- a. Gupta R*, **Khalaf R***, Morrison J, Amankwah E, Ruan W, Fishman DS, Barth BA, Liu QY, Giefer M, Kim KM, Martinez M, Dall'oglio L, Torroni F, De Angelis P, Faraci S, Bitton S, Dua K, Werlin S, Gugig R, Huang C, Mamula P, Quiros JA, Zheng Y, Piester T, Grover A, Fox VL, Wilsey M, Troendle DM. Impact of trainee involvement on pediatric ercp procedures: results from the pediatric ercp initiative. J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr. 2023 Mar 28. doi: 10.1097/MPG.0000000000003782. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36976177. *Equal contribution.
- b. Trocchia C*, **Khalaf R***, Amankwah E, Ruan W, Fishman DS, Barth BA, Liu QY, Giefer M, Kim KM, Martinez M, Dall'oglio L, Torroni F, De Angelis P, Faraci S, Bitton S, Werlin S, Dua K, Gugig R, Huang C, Mamula P, Quiros JA, Zheng Y, Piester T, Grover A, Fox VL, Wilsey M, Troendle DM. Pediatric ERCP in the Setting of Acute Pancreatitis: A Secondary Analysis of an International Multicenter Cohort Study. J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr. 2023 Mar 14. doi: 10.1097/MPG.0000000000003762. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36913706. *Equal contribution.
- c. **Khalaf R**, Ruan W, Orkin S, Wilsey M, Fishman DS, Mallon D, Pan Z, Hazleton KZ, Kramer RE, Walker T. Gastric injury secondary to button battery ingestions: a retrospective multicenter review. Gastrointest Endosc. 2020 Aug;92(2):276-283. Epub 2020 Apr 22. PMID: 32334020; PMCID: PMC7422336.
- d. Fishman DS, Barth B, Man-Wai Tsai C, Giefer MJ, Martinez M, Wilsey M, **Khalaf R**, Liu QY, DeAngelis P, Torroni F, Faraci S, Troendle DM. A prospective multicenter analysis from the Pediatric ERCP Database Initiative: predictors of choledocholithiasis at ERCP in pediatric patients. Gastrointest Endosc. 2021 Aug;94(2):311-317.e1. Epub 2021 Feb 1. PMID: 33539907.

4. Understanding natural history and clinical features of uncommon gastrointestinal conditions. My interest in research has been fueled following the publication of my first authored manuscript investigating the role of a single genetic polymorphism in the development of a polyposis phenotype. Since then, I have had a strong interest in understanding the manifestations of uncommon gastrointestinal conditions. My prior work investigating disease presentation and clinical features will help me as I embark on this proposed study. Research methods and experience with the scholarly process will help me bring this proposed study to completion.

- a. Thompson J, Ruan W, Fishman DS, Giefer M, Kim KM, Martinez M, Dall'Oglio L, Balassone V, Torroni F, De Angelis P, Faraci S, Tsai C, Wilsey M, **Khalaf R**, Mamula P, Liu Q, Zheng Y, Barth BA, Troendle DM. Risk scores for choledocholithiasis perform poorly in patients with hemolytic diseases: a PEDI database report. Front Pediatr. 2025 Apr 8;13:1574462. doi: 10.3389/fped.2025.1574462. PMID: 40264464; PMCID: PMC12011750.
- b. Abi-Aad SJ, Lovell M, **Khalaf R**, Sokol RJ. Pathogenesis and Management of Intestinal Failure-Associated Liver Disease. Semin Liver Dis. 2025 Mar 18; PubMed PMID: 40015320.
- c. **Khalaf R**, Narkewicz M, El-Haija MA. Menstruation-Associated Acute Pancreatitis in Patients with Hereditary Pancreatitis. J Pediatr. 2021 Mar;230:248-250. PubMed Central PMCID: PMC8444632.
- d. **Khalaf R**, Jones C, Strutt W, Williamson P. Colorectal cancer in a monoallelic MYH mutation carrier. J Gastrointest Surg. 2013 Aug;17(8):1500-2. PubMed PMID: 23625202.

Complete List of Published Work in My Bibliography:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/racha.khalaf.1/bibliography/public/>