In a year marked by national uncertainty and international unrest, our department continues to be a steady force that is improving the lives of children, families and our learning community. I wish that we could recognize all of the providers, nurses, personnel, administrators and housestaff who contribute to the multiple missions of USF Pediatrics. We highlight a number of them here, and are grateful for many others who continue to make vital contributions. We are also thankful for USF Health, our hospital and community partners — it truly takes a village to care for children and to advance education, research and advocacy. We continue to build our voluntary faculty and alumni base, and appreciate that many of our former trainees pay it forward and help us train the next generation. Our trainees have incredible role models, including the two emeritus faculty who received honors this year. Finally, generous support from our donors, both individuals, like Pam and Les Muma, and organizations such as the Lightning, Lazydays and Suncoast Credit Union Foundation, allow us to do so much more, and for this we are grateful.

Please join us in recognizing the enduring legacy of USF Pediatrics as we continue to advance children’s health in the Tampa Bay region. I hope you have a happy and healthy year ahead. Here at USF Peds we look forward to making a difference in the lives of children in 2018 and beyond.

Patricia J. Emmanuel, MD
Chair, Department of Pediatrics
The Children’s Medical Services Building was officially re-named the John S. Curran, MD, Children’s Health Center in June. This remarkable tribute to Dr. Curran honors his career as an outstanding child health advocate who advanced public policies that have benefited many of Florida’s most vulnerable citizens. The naming of the building coincided with Dr. Curran’s retirement after 45 years of service at USF. Dr. Curran was an instrumental part of the Department since its inception.

JOHN S. CURRAN, MD

This year, we would like to highlight two exceptional emeritus faculty, both of whom retired in 2017, who have made considerable contributions to our department, as well as the local, national and international community.

EMERITUS FACULTY

JOHN S. CURRAN, MD

LYNN RINGEBERG, MD

Dr. Lynn Ringenberg founded the USF Peds Alumni Group, which is keeping alumni in touch with each other through social events and Facebook postings. Her service to the local and international communities is exemplified by her role in Physicians for Social Responsibility, for which she serves as immediate past-president. PSR is one of the two organizations that founded The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Lynn also founded USF Health’s Student Chapter of PSR, and the PSR Florida Chapter.
UNCOVERING THE NEW FACE OF IMMUNODEFICIENCIES

The Division of Allergy/Immunology had a very busy and productive year, as they continued their ground-breaking research on immunodeficiency diseases. The research of Division Chief Jolan Walter includes a global network of investigators who are studying the genetic and molecular mechanisms related to immune dysregulation in combined immunodeficiencies. Dr. Jennifer Leiding’s research is leading to a better understanding and advancements in the treatment of newly discovered immune disorders. Together with Dr. Mark Ballow and Dr. Panida Sriaroon, the Allergy/Immunology team of principal investigators promotes translational research and clinical trials that are investigating the effectiveness of drugs to treat patients with immunodeficiency diseases. Their faculty, fellow trainees and research staff presented the results of their research at numerous meetings held around the globe.

BREATHEING EASIER

Dr. Marisa Couluris from the Division of Pulmonology is busy caring for patients with respiratory diseases, and is conducting innovative research to improve their health. She is the principal investigator for a study that is evaluating the effectiveness of drugs to improve outcomes in patients with primary ciliary dyskinesia—a rare, inherited disease that can cause respiratory failure. She also led a team that developed a mobile app that helps asthma patients manage their disease. The multi-disciplinary team included investigators from the Colleges of Public Health and Engineering.

TINY BABIES, BIG QUESTIONS

Our neonatology faculty continue to take the lead with innovative clinical research. Dr. Tina Ho is investigating the development of the microbiome in preterm infants. She and her team, which includes Dr. Maureen Groer from the College of Nursing, and Neonatology’s Dr. Akhil Maheshwari, are measuring the levels of different types of bacteria in newborns’ gastrointestinal tract, with the goal of identifying factors that may increase the risk of developing bowel diseases. Dr. Jaime Flores-Torres is principal investigator for a multi-center study that is investigating a new way to deliver medication for treating respiratory distress in newborns. Dr. Akhil Maheshwari received another RO1 grant to study the mechanisms and effects of reduced platelet counts in neonates with necrotizing enterocolitis.

MICROBES AND MAN

The Division of Infectious Disease continues to be very active in clinical research. Dr. Carina Rodriguez, Division Chief, is the principal investigator for two new studies that are investigating monoclonal antibodies to prevent viral infection in infants, and novel antiviral medication for HIV-infected children. As a member of the NIH-funded Collaborative Antiviral Study Group, Dr. Rodriguez also serves as the principal investigator at USF for studies related to treatment of preterm infants infected with cytomegalovirus, and treatment of newborns infected with herpes. Other ongoing studies include vaccine trials and molecular studies that assess diagnostic tools for respiratory viruses.
EDUCATION

RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Our residency program continues to innovate and focus, not only on the medical training of our residents and learners, but on their own health and wellbeing. The USF Peds Wellness Initiative that was launched this year ensures that our residents are well cared for and supported. The program includes initiatives that foster each resident’s sense of community and well-being, including monthly dinners, teambuilding and leadership retreats, mindfulness and meditation sessions, yoga and art therapy. USF Peds is committed to fostering resiliency among our residents and continues to build on our program’s sense of community through our focus on resident wellness.

PEDIATRICS

BY THE NUMBERS

119 VOLUNTARY CLINICAL FACULTY MEMBERS

15 DIVISIONS

77 MDs

17 PhDs

109 PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

33 NUMBER OF CLINICAL TRIALS

$13.4M TOTAL CONTRACT & RESEARCH FUNDING

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

41 Pediatrics Residents

19 Med-Peds Residents

13 Fellows

6 Post-Docs

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Hospital Partners
Tampa General Hospital
John Hopkins All Children’s Hospital
St. Joseph’s Children’s Hospital

Primary Care Clinics
17 Davis
South Tampa Center
Healthpark
We strive to find community educators and opportunities for our many learners, as well as ways to better the health of some of our community’s most vulnerable. This year, the Ybor Youth Clinic saw had 2,894 patient visits and provided HIV or STI testing for over 1,900 patients. The USF Peds’ Helping Our Toddlers, Developing our Children’s Skills (HotDocs) program, led by Drs. Heather Agazzi and Kathy Armstrong, offers caregivers a problem-solving approach towards addressing behavior problems. The program was awarded a 2 year grant from The Children’s Board of Hillsborough County. Jeannette Fleischer, ARNP, from Gen Peds continues to provide medical care to Metropolitan Ministries. And, Early Steps, directed by Dr. Carol Lilly, was granted another 2 year contract to provide services to infants and toddlers in our community with developmental delays.
EXPANDING QI INITIATIVES

Quality is integrated into every aspect of our clinical work, and we continue to expand our quality improvement (QI) initiatives. Dr. Terri Ashmeade, Chief Quality Officer for USF Health, works to enhance quality at USF’s hospital partners and inpatient and outpatient facilities. Dr. Maya Balakrishnan is the QI Director for the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative, which aims to improve Florida’s maternal and infant health outcomes through the delivery of high quality perinatal care. Every resident participates in a QI project, with multiple teams working on inpatient and outpatient projects. The program, overseen by Dr. Diane Straub, culminates in a resident poster forum, with the top rated project being presented at Grand Rounds in May.

CREATING EXCEPTIONAL PATIENT EXPERIENCES

Our dedication to outstanding clinical care is exemplified by our providers who received high honors this past year. Dr. Brian Knox, Dr. Andy Brinn, and nurse practitioner Mary Mitchell, with the Division of Medicine-Pediatrics, received top care provider awards for highest ratings on the Press Ganey patient surveys. Our ability to deliver such high quality care would not be possible without our dedicated clinical staff. In an effort to recognize our outstanding staff, we established the Clinical Team Member of the Month who is nominated by faculty and peers for their exemplary performance.

TACKLING THE TOUGH CASES

Our clinicians care for some of the most challenging pediatric cases, requiring expertise and innovation. Two examples demonstrate the interface between research and clinical care and what makes our department special. The Rothman Center conducts clinical research designed to better understand and treat pediatric populations with autism, Tourette syndrome (TS) and tic disorders, trichotillomania, anxiety, OCD, and Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS). As a premier research site for the treatment of PANS/PANDAS, Dr. Tanya Murphy and her team works independently and collaboratively with NIH and other institutions to better our understanding of PANS for the development of new treatment and prevention strategies. Dr. Amaryllis Sanchez and her team are involved in 5 clinical trials for rare metabolic disorders and oversee the newborn screening program for inborn errors of metabolism. As genetic diagnoses are expanded, she has developed orphan protocols to evaluate new therapies.