



**SUSAN B. MEISTER
CHILD HEALTH EVALUATION
AND RESEARCH CENTER**
MICHIGAN MEDICINE

Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Report

University of Michigan | Department of Pediatrics

Updated September 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This report summarizes the research, training, and operational activities of the Susan B. Meister Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Center during FY 2026. These activities are directly supported by the generous naming gift provided by Susan and Paul Meister.

CHEAR Center Metrics for FY 2026

Research publications

- 1) Number of publications: 105
- 2) Number (%) of publications that were first or senior authored: 42 (40.0%)
- 3) Number (%) of publications authored by at least 2 CHEAR faculty members: 10 (9.5%)
- 4) Number (%) of publications authored by at least 1 CHEAR staff member: 22 (21.0%)
- 5) Top 5 journals by number of publications by CHEAR faculty: *JAMA Network Open*, *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr*, *Pediatr Crit Card Med*, *Hosp Pediatr*, *J Surg Res*
- 6) Examples of articles in high-impact journals

Nguyen TD, **Chua KP**, Jiao A, Bicket MC, Bohnert A, Lagisetty P. US Trends in Long-Term Opioid Therapy. *JAMA*. May 5 2026;335(17):1529-1531. Epub 2026/04/08. doi:10.1001/jama.2026.3241. PMID: 41949842

Prosser LA, Hutton DW. When Cost-Effectiveness Crosses Borders-Nirsevimab as an Example. *JAMA Pediatr*. Apr 13 2026;Epub 2026/04/13. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2026.0823. PMID: 41973441

Hill NE, Palakshappa D, **Chua KP**. Chronic Conditions and Food Insecurity in US Children. *JAMA Netw Open*. Sep 2 2025;8(9):e2533953. Epub 2025/09/26. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.33953. PMID: 41004147

Patel MR, **Clark SJ**, Beathard E, Kirch M, Box N, Tipirneni R, Ayanian JZ, Goold SD. Employment and Health Burden Changes Among Medicaid Expansion Enrollees. *JAMA Health Forum*. Oct 3 2025;6(10):e254639. Epub 2025/10/31. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2025.4639. PMID: 41171263

Extramural research funding

- 1) Number of active grants: 78 (40 housed in the Department of Pediatrics, 38 in other departments)
- 2) Committed funding for CHEAR grants housed in the Department of Pediatrics in FY26 to date: \$6.8 million
- 3) Percent of FY26 to date committed funding for grants in the Department of Pediatrics accounted for by CHEAR: 16.7% (\$6.8/\$40.2 million)
- 4) Distribution of active grants by PI status: 46 as PI or MPI, 32 as Co-I
- 5) Distribution of active grants for which CHEAR faculty are PI, by funder type: 19 federal, 13 state, 14 other

- 6) Direct research expenditures on extramural grants during FY 2026: \$5.6 million
- 7) Indirect cost recovery on extramural grants during FY 2026: \$1.8 million
- 8) Overall indirect rate (#8 divided by #7): 32.3%
- 9) Number of extramural grants submitted by CHEAR faculty during FY 2026: 68
- 10) Distribution of extramural grants submitted during FY 2026 by PI status: 47 PI/MPI, 21 Co-I

Education

- 1) Number of publications by CHEAR Fellows: 9
- 2) Number of mentee relationships: 148 (12 undergraduate students, 18 graduate students, 15 medical students, 22 residents, 32 postdoctoral/clinical fellows, 47 faculty, 2 other)

Media coverage

- 1) Median and range of Altmetric scores for CHEAR publications in FY 2026: median 2, range 0-195
- 2) Number (%) of publications with Altmetric score > 100: 3 (3%)

National presence

- 1) Number of presentations at national conferences: 64
- 2) Number of national committees: 41
- 3) Number of national events organized by CHEAR: 3 (PAS HSR reception, CHSOR Network Business Luncheon, AcademyHealth Child Health Services Research Interest Group meeting at the AcademyHealth Research Meeting)

Awards and honors

- 1) Awards and honors for faculty

Jeremy Adler, MD, MSc

- Top Teacher in Pediatrics 2024, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (notified in 2025)
- “Reliability of Patient Reported Pain and Discharge for Predicting Perianal Lesions in Pediatric Crohn’s Disease” was the featured cover article in the July 2025 issue of J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr volume 81, number 1
- “Top Doctor”, Castle Connolly Medical Ltd, New York, NY

Kao-Ping Chua, MD, PhD

- New Member, American Society for Clinical Investigation
- New Member, American Pediatric Society

Erin Carlton, MD, MSc:

- Top Teacher in the Department of Pediatrics

Gary L. Freed, MD, MPH

- University of Michigan Provost: Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award
- State of Michigan: Special Tribute from Governor Whitmer for Academic Achievement

Joyce M. Lee, MD, MPH

- Amazon Web Services Technology Fellowship, a fellowship for rising technology health system leaders.

Folafoluwa Olutobi Odetola, MB ChB, MPH

- 2025 Unsung voice in Michigan Medicine, Black Voices Resource Group 2025
- Co-author on the Best Health Equity Research Abstract at the 35th Annual University of Michigan pediatric symposium
- 2025 Springer Nature Author Service Award
- 2025 Winner, Highlights 2025 Competition, The Lancet.

2) Awards and honors for fellows

Nina Hill, MD, MS

- AcademyHealth Child Health Services Research Outstanding Postdoctoral/Clinical Fellow Award

Zachary Rumlow, DO

- Westover Fellowship, Department of Pediatrics, University of Michigan Medical School

CHEAR FACULTY AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Faculty Highlights

New Faculty

Joseph Zickafoose, MD, MS, Clinical Associate Professor: Dr. Zickafoose is a health services and health policy researcher whose research focuses on health care services for children, public health insurance policy, and the intersections between them. The major focuses of his work include (1) improving access to and the quality of health care for children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), (2) understanding and improving health insurance policies and health care systems for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN), and (3) evaluating health care delivery and policy innovations.

Faculty departures

Courtney Streur, MD. Dr. Streur returned to clinical practice in pediatric urology in September 2026.

Joseph Kohne, MD, MS. Dr. Kohne moved to Cleveland to be closer to his family in September 2026.

Kevin J. Dombkowski, DrPH, MS, Research Professor, retired in January 2026 was granted an active emeritus appointment. He is still active in several collaborations with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), including several initiatives evaluating the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR). In addition, Dr. Dombkowski collaborates with several co-investigators on several studies related to improving health outcomes among children with chronic conditions such as sickle cell disease, inflammatory bowel disease and asthma.

David E. Sandberg, PhD, Professor, retired in January 2026 and was granted an active emeritus appointment. As a clinician, he delivered psychoeducational and behavioral health services to persons with endocrine disorders and their families, in particular, conditions affecting prenatal sex development of the body (ie, disorders/differences of sex development, DSD). His research program is closely linked to his clinical service. His research group examined the psychosocial adaptation of persons born with DSD, and their families.

Incoming Faculty

In FY 2027, we will be welcoming **Dr. Nina Hill** and **Dr. Colleen MacCallum-Bridges** to the CHEAR faculty. Dr. Hill is a current 2nd year CHEAR fellow interested in food insecurity. Dr. MacCallum-Bridges is an epidemiologist interested in maternal/child health and Medicaid policy.

Faculty Honors & Awards - see Executive Summary

Staff Highlights

New Staff

Miao Yu: Applications Programmer/Analyst Lead, Dr. Lee team

Stephanie Thompson: Project Manager Senior, Dr. Freed team

Courtney Beckwith: Project Manager Intermediate, Dr. Freed team
Dhruv Shah: Research Area Specialist Associate, Dr. Prosser team
Shagufta Sami: Project Manager Intermediate, Dr. Lee team

Departing Staff

Zoe Lapham
Elinor Artsy-Navon
Jennifer Stout
Moshiur Rahman
Anne Cowan
Melissa Gardner
Julie McCormick

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

CHEAR continues to offer multiple educational opportunities for students, fellows, faculty, and staff. The following section summarizes updates on the CHEAR Fellowship Program, CHEAR-Life Sciences Institute Child Health Policy Scholars Program, CHEAR Seminars, CHEAR Summer Internship Program, and Visiting Professor Program.

CHEAR Fellowship Program

Leadership

Sarah Reeves, PhD, MPH, continued as the Director of the Fellowship. **Erin Carlton, MD, MSc**, assumed the role of Associate Director of the Fellowship. The Fellowship Steering Committee includes **Drs. Jeremy Adler, Kao-Ping Chua, Gary Freed, Zubin Modi, and Lisa Prosser**.

2nd-year CHEAR Fellows

Nina Hill, MD, MS, began her research fellowship in the National Clinician Scholars Program in July 2024. In this second year of her fellowship, she obtained an internal Sandy Hassmiller Early Career grant for a project conducted in partnership with the Farm at Trinity Health, which aims to understand patient and clinician perspectives on produce prescription farm share programs. She also received a Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Michigan grant to evaluate statewide stakeholder readiness for a new Michigan Medicaid “food is medicine” program through surveys and interviews with community-based food organizations, health systems, community health centers, and Medicaid Health Plans. In addition, Dr. Hill is actively building relationships with collaborators and community partners. She co-founded the IHPI Food Policy Interest Group, contributed to a working group that successfully received funding for the new U-M Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health Policy, and joined the team of a new BCBS-funded quality initiative centered around nutrition, called the Nutrition Value Pathway. Dr. Hill will be joining CHEAR as a clinical assistant professor in July 2025 and will have a secondary appointment in Internal Medicine.

1st year CHEAR Fellows

Zachary Rumlow, DO, is currently a second-year fellow in Pediatric Critical Care Medicine. In July 2025, he began his two-year CHEAR Fellowship under the mentorship of Dr. Ryan Barbaro. His research focuses on the resuscitation of critically ill patients. He completed the IHPI Master’s degree in Health and Healthcare Research in May 2026 and presented his work at the Pediatric Academic Society meeting in Boston. Dr. Rumlow was named the inaugural 2026–2027 Westover Fellow through the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics Resident and Fellow Research Program. His mentorship team has transitioned with Dr. Barbaro’s departure, with Dr. Carlton assuming the role of primary mentor. The team also includes Dr. Reeves and Dr. Ladhania (HMP and Biostatistics, SPH).

Incoming CHEAR Fellows

Victoria Carr, MD: Dr. Carr is a first-year fellow in Pediatric Critical Care Medicine. She will begin her CHEAR Fellowship in July 2026. Her research focuses on health equity and opportunities to identify and test policy to improve care. Her mentorship team will include Dr. Zickefoose (primary), Dr. Carlton, and Sarah Clark.

Loren Dobkin, RN, NP: Loren Dobkin is a family nurse practitioner who will receive her PhD from the University of Michigan School of Nursing in spring 2026. Her scholarship has focused on sexual and reproductive health, including through the statewide implementation of novel initiatives to enhance sexual healthcare access, promoting clinical protocols that improve STI screening, disseminating new clinical guidance to expedite pregnancy care, and implementing interventions to enhance HIV care uptake and medication adherence. Her primary mentor will be Dr. Chua; additional mentorship committee members include Ds. Reeves, Dr. Prosser, and Dr. Hoffman (School of Nursing).

1st Year CHEAR-LSI Fellow

Nyima Danjo, joined CHEAR in September 2025 as the second CHEAR-LSI Scholar. She is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology in Dr. Roger Cone's lab. She is a member of Dr. Sarah Reeves' team during the 3-year fellowship. As part of the LSI fellowship, Nyima will be earning her MPH in the School of Public Health in Health Management and Policy.

CHEAR Seminars

The CHEAR Center continued to host our seminar series throughout the academic year. Seminars have been offered in a hybrid platform allowing participants to join both virtually and in person. There were 29 seminars during FY 2026, with an average of 29 in-person attendees and 14 Zoom attendees. This year, the CHEAR Seminar Series included a series of talks by each CHEAR faculty member focused on providing an overview of their research. The remainder of the seminars were Fellows Seminars, job talks, talks by Visiting Professors, or talks by UM faculty who are outside of CHEAR (see list below).

October 2025: "When AI is used for decision support in pediatric care" by Kayvan Najarian, Ph.D. Associate Director UMOR MIDAS, Professor of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Section Head, Emergency Medicine, Medical School, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, College of Engineering, University of Michigan; & Emily Wittrup, M.S., PhD Candidate, University of Michigan Medical School

October 2025: "Reflecting Real-World Complexity: Computational Methods to Contextualize and Improve the Way We Utilize Patient Data" by Keith Feldman, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Learning Health Sciences at the University of Michigan Medical School.

November 2026: "Health Policy in an Uncertain Environment" by Anand Parekh, MD, MPH, Chief Health Policy Officer at the University of Michigan School of Public Health

March 2026: "Preventing Eating Disorders: Public Health Approaches to Reducing Risk and Promoting Equity" by Kendrin Sonnewille, ScD, RD, Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences, Associate Chair, Nutritional Sciences, University of Michigan.

March 2026: "Rx Kids — Prenatal and Infant Cash Prescriptions" by Sumit Agarwal, MD, MPH, PHD, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine, Medical School
Assistant Professor of Health Management and Policy, School of Public Health, University of Michigan.

April 2026: "Firearm Injury Prevention among Children and teens in a Clinical Context" by Patrick Carter, MD, Co-Director of Injury Prevention Center (IPC), Co-Director of Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention (IFIP), Professor of Emergency Medicine, Medical School, Professor of Health Behavior and Health Equity, School of Public Health, University of Michigan.

April 2026: "Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV: Current Status and Opportunities for Improvement" by Kengo Inagaki MD, FAAP, FPIDS, Clinical Professor, Pediatric Infectious Disease, Department of Pediatrics, Medical School, University of Michigan.

May 2026: "Increasing Dignity in Food Assistance" by Kate Bauer, PhD MS, Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences, University of Michigan.

May 2026: "Patient financial outcomes: Using new data to describe an old problem" by Nora Becker, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine Medical School, University of Michigan.

May 2026: "Children's Food Insecurity in the United States using Data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics" by Noura Insolera , PhD, MA

CHEAR Summer Internship (CSI) Program

CSI runs annually from June-August for students with an interest in pediatric health services research. During the internship, students work closely with a CHEAR mentor and have numerous opportunities to interact and learn from faculty, both at the CHEAR Center and at the Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation (IHPI). The internship culminates with student presentations, which are attended by faculty and staff within the CHEAR Center. Interns have submitted abstracts that have been accepted for presentation at national conferences and have served as authors on manuscripts.

Our Summer 2025 Cohort included:

- Aubrey Greenfield (U-M) with CHEAR Mentor, **Erin Carlton**
- Erin McDonnell (U-M) with CHEAR Mentor, **Jeremy Adler**
- Mahima Natarajan (U-M) with CHEAR Mentor, **Joe Kohne**
- Maia Keena (Michigan State University) with CHEAR Mentor, **Susan Woolford**

CHEAR also collaborated with the Division of Pediatric Cardiology in 2025 to incorporate one Cardiology sponsored students into the CSI sessions:

- Shelby Harris (Wayne State University). Mentor, Caren Sue Goldberg

During FY 2026, we transitioned the leadership of CSI from Susan Woolford to Joseph Zickafoose. Moreover, we leveraged the infrastructure of the IHPI Summer Internship program to simplify our admissions process; applicants to the IHPI Summer Internship program can now select CHEAR as their preferred placement site.

Innovation Tournament

CHEAR is dedicated to supporting the efforts of future pediatric health service researchers across the University of Michigan. CHEAR was a central planning partner in the second Pediatric Fellowship Innovation Tournament, a structured forum for fellows to pitch and receive feedback on early-stage ideas in clinical, translational, and health services research. CHEAR faculty Drs. Reeves, Adler, Carlton, Freed, and Zickafoose participated by providing faculty feedback to fellows during the event.

CHEAR Visiting Professors

CHEAR hosted 2 Visiting Professors during FY 2026:

- **Allison King, MD, PhD, MPH** is a Professor of Pediatrics, Hematology & Oncology and the Fred M. Saigh Distinguished Chair in Pediatric Research at Washington University. Dr. King is an expert in implementation science and educational outcomes, particularly as they relate to sickle cell disease. During November 3-4, 2026, she met with faculty, staff, and fellows and presented a CHEAR seminar entitled “From Evidence to Impact: Implementing Better Health and Learning Outcomes for Children with Sickle Cell Disease.”
- **Deepak Palakshappa, MD, MSHP** is an Associate Professor, General Internal Medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. On March 17, 2026, he met with faculty, staff, and fellows, and presented a CHEAR seminar, "Food Insecurity and Health: Evidence, Challenges, and Clinical Opportunities."

Mentorship activities by CHEAR faculty

The table below lists the number of mentee relationships that faculty reported during FY 2026. Note that this is the number of relationships, not the number of unique individuals. Some individuals may receive mentorship from more than one CHEAR faculty member.

Undergraduate Students	12
Graduate Students	18
Medical Students	15
Residents	22
Postdoctoral Fellows	32
Faculty	47
Other	2 (1 staff member, 1 advanced practice sonographer)

SUSAN B. MEISTER LECTURE IN CHILD HEALTH POLICY

The 18th Annual Susan B. Meister Lecture in Child Health Policy, held in February 2026 at Rackham Auditorium, marked the 20th year since the inception of this lecture in 2006. This lecture was a testament to CHEAR's ability to collaborate across campus, as the event was co-organized by the University Musical Society. The keynote speaker was **Nicola Benedetti**, a world class, GRAMMY Award-winning violinist, Director of the Edinburgh International Festival, Founder and Artistic Director of the Benedetti Foundation, and music education advocate. She delivered an inspiring keynote address titled, "*Sound Foundations: New Approaches to Child Music Education and Appreciation.*"

Panelists were strategically selected to represent voices of students, recent graduates, and those well-established in their field. This year's panelists included **Stefan Dohr**, Principal Horn of the Berliner Philharmoniker; **Renata Rangel**, a 2025 University of Michigan School of Music Alumni in Percussion Performance; **Carlos Simon, DMA**, the Composer-in-Residence at the Kenney Center and a University of Michigan School of Music Alumni in DMA Composition; and **Katrina Stroud**, a current graduate student at the University of Michigan School of Music in Violin Performance.

We were also pleased to honor **Abigail Kappelman**, an MD/PhD Candidate at the University of Michigan, with the 2026 Best Paper in Child Health Policy Award. Her paper, "*The Influence of Maternal Life Course Exposure to Neighborhood Affluence and Disadvantage on Black/White Disparities in Adverse Birth Outcomes in South Carolina,*" was published in *Am J Epidemiology*. The paper found the greater life course exposure of Black mothers to less affluent neighborhoods explained up to 9% of racial disparities in birth outcomes.

Additional speakers at the event were **Kao-Ping Chua, MD, PhD**, who opened our lecture and moderated the panel discussion session; and **Matthew Van Besien**, President of the University Musical Society, who gave closing remarks.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Local service

CHEAR continues to showcase its dedication to giving back to the community, participating in the Michigan Medicine School Supply Drive and the Annual Holiday Toy Drive for C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital. This is also the first year that CHEAR opened our drives to the broader IHPI community,

- Michigan Medicine Annual Supply Drive: CHEAR was able to donate 11 backpacks, 13 boxes of crayons, 24 boxes of markers, 5 notebooks, 15 loose leaf paper packs, 345 pencils, 32 pairs of socks, 47 pairs of underwear, 24 sticks of deodorant, 3 bottles of shampoo, 31 bars of soap, 124 tubes of lotion, 6 boxes of period products, 49 toothbrushes, 12 tubes of toothpaste, and more.
- Annual Holiday Toy Drive for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital: CHEAR was able to donate 4 arts and craft kits, 15 infant/toddler toys, 5 lego kits, 15 hotwheel cars, 8 games, 6 stuffed animals, and more.

National service

CHEAR continues to serve as the central organizing hub for the field of pediatric health services research. At the 2026 PAS Annual Meeting in Boston, CHEAR did all of the contracting, food selection, and payment for the annual Pediatric Health Services reception and the CHSOR Network Business Luncheon, each of which was attended by approximately 100 people. The CHEAR Director helped secure co-sponsorship of these events from 12 other pediatric health services research groups across the country, an increase of 3 from previous years. In addition to organizing these key events, CHEAR also maintains the website and listserv of the CHSOR Network, a group of over 650 individuals interested in pediatric health services research across the U.S. and more broadly.

In his role as a co-lead of the CHSOR Network, the CHEAR Director moderated a panel on the challenging funding environment in pediatric HSR at the CHSOR Network Business Luncheon. Additionally, in his role as the chair of the AcademyHealth Child Health Services Research Interest Group, the CHEAR Director moderated a panel on the importance of mentorship in the current time of uncertainty at the interest group meeting at the AcademyHealth Research Meeting in Seattle. These events further highlight CHEAR's leadership role in building the field of pediatric health services research.