## General and Community Pediatrics

### RESEARCH AND TRAINING DETAILS

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### CLINICAL ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING

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## Research Highlights
Divisional and Individual Honors and Awards:

Kristen Copeland, MD, received the Cincinnati Children's Place Outcomes Research Award.

Nick DeBlasio, MD, MEd, was elected to the American Academy of Pediatrics PREP Board member and completed a master's in Medical Education.

Tom DeWitt, MD, FAAP, was named the chair of the Reach Out and Read National Advisory Board.

Amy Haering, DMP, RN, MNA-DC, received the Interact for Change Nursing Excellence Award for Leadership.

John Hutton, MD, received the Arnold Strauss Fellowship Award and the APA Young Investigator Award.

Rob Kahn, MD, MPH, was named the associate chair for community health. He also received the 2014 Outstanding Achievement Award, American Academy of Pediatrics, Section on Epidemiology and Council on Community Pediatrics.

Katie Kerrey, MD, received the 2014 Ray Baker Teaching Award, Cincinnati Pediatric Society.

Jill Klein, MD, was named treasurer, Cincinnati Pediatric Society.

Mona Mansour, MD, MS, was promoted to professor of clinical pediatrics. She also received the Cincinnati Children's Faculty Award for Senior Clinical Care Achievement.

Carrie McIntyre, MD, received the Cincinnati Champion for Change Award for Safe Sleep.

Nick Newman, DO, MS, FAAP, was awarded a Next Generation Biomedical Investigator Award from the Center for Environmental Genetics at the University of Cincinnati.

Chris Peltier, MD, received the Community Preceptor Award from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Sarah Riddle, MD, IBCLC, FAAP, graduated from the I2S2 Class 21.

Denise Warrick, MD, was named the president of the Cincinnati Pediatric Society.

Stephen Warrick, MD, was promoted to assistant professor of clinical pediatrics.

Primary Care sites receive NCQA PCMH

Children's Health Care in Batesville and Greensburg, Indiana; Fairfield Primary Care Center; Hopple Street Primary Care Center; and Pediatric Primary Care Center received the Level 3 National Committee for Qualified Assurance Patient-Centered Medical Home (NCQA PCMH) certification.

Thomas DeWitt, MD, FAAP

Dr. DeWitt is the director of the Division of General and Community Pediatrics and the designated institutional official. He is primarily interested in faculty and education development; medical education and innovation linked to research and outcomes; and leadership development.

Andrew F. Beck, MD, MPH

Dr. Beck focuses on disparities in health outcomes with particular attention paid to geographic and neighborhood factors. Currently, he is exploring ways to risk-stratify children admitted to the hospital with asthma through the use of area-based social and environmental measures, and ways to use mapping and epidemiological “hot spotting” to help target interventions. He has also pursued pilot work focusing on building bridges between the hospital and community resources capable of providing our families with assistance. For example, he helped to start the CLEAR (Collaboration to Lessen Environmental Asthma Risks) program, a means of linking children with environmental risks to code enforcement visits. Dr. Beck has also helped to start the KIND (Keeping Infants Nourished and Developing) program, a partnership with The
Freestore Foodbank devoted to providing hungry infants with formula.

William Brinkman, MD MEd, MSc
Dr. Brinkman researches shared decision-making between patients, parents and clinicians to promote high value care that is evidence-based and family-centered. He collaborates to develop interventions to facilitate shared decision-making across a wide-range of clinical contexts.

Courtney M. Brown, MD, MS
Dr. Brown’s research focuses on social and emotional development in preschool aged children and on enhancing interdisciplinary efforts to connect families with services that promote healthy social-emotional development. She also has an interest in improving systems for reliable delivery of preventive services in pediatric primary care settings.

Kristen Copeland, MD
Dr. Copeland is interested in health promotion and obesity prevention in child-care settings – specifically creating healthier eating environments and helping to shape healthy eating habits among preschoolers and their families. She is also interested in physical activity promotion in child care and policies to promote physical activity. Dr. Copeland serves as principal investigator (PI) on the Study of Nutrition and Wellness Quality in Child Care Settings (SNAQCS). USDA will use the data gleaned from this study to evaluate and modify the Child and Adult Care Food Program to optimize child health outcomes related to nutrition and physical activity.

Nick DeBlasio, MD, MEd
Dr. DeBlasio’s main areas of interest include providing clinical care to underserved populations, primary care education of both residents and medical students; working on innovative ways to teach and evaluate learning; quality improvement projects within the Pediatric Primary Care Center (PPCC) to optimize flow and patient/provider/staff satisfaction.

Michelle French, MD
Dr. French is currently the interim medical director for the Complex Care Center (CCC) that serves as the primary care medical home for medically complex children. She is currently focused on an intense restructuring effort in the CCC, designed to improve preventative service delivery and chronic care management in an effort to reduce inpatient admission and emergency room visit rates for medically complex patients.

Sheela Rath Geraghty, MD, MS, IBCLC, FAAP
Dr. Geraghty is a general pediatrician and a lactation consultant. She is the medical director of the Cincinnati Children’s Center for Breastfeeding Medicine, which consists of four outpatient referral-based clinics, an inpatient consultative service, a milk bank depot, and an information line which receives approximately 1,500 phone calls annually. Dr. Geraghty’s research interests focus on the barriers to successful breastfeeding outcomes, including the prevalent practice of breast milk pumping, milk sharing, and the potential impact on the mother-infant dyad.

Camille Graham, MD
Dr. Graham is interested in strengthening the collaboration between Cincinnati Children’s and the community by creating a regionalized aligned system of care, developing community partnerships to improve population health, eliminating health disparities, improving asthma outcomes in primary care sites, and in helping develop and strengthen pediatric patient-centered medical homes.

Robert Harper, EdD
Dr. Harper’s professional interest is leadership and management in online education and professional development. This interest will be extended in an upcoming research initiative focused on determining the professional development needs of healthcare professionals who have responsibilities for curriculum development and instruction for other healthcare
professionals.

**Tzipi Horowitz-Kraus, PhD**

Dr. Horowitz-Kraus is working to define the role of executive control during reading and following reading remediation in children with reading difficulties using neuroimaging tools. She is the program director of the Reading and Literacy Discovery Center (RLDC). Together with the RLDC team, they are working on the development of the center.

**Robert Kahn, MD, MPH**

Dr. Kahn is focused on understanding and ameliorating social and racial disparities in child health. Dr. Kahn is finishing a large National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded study of children admitted with asthma to better understand what predicts time to readmission and what causes disadvantaged children to be admitted much sooner. The study examines multiple factors ranging from neighborhood to family to genetics. Dr. Kahn also leads Cincinnati Children’s Population Health initiative that addresses infant mortality, injury, obesity, and asthma in Hamilton County. This effort is in collaboration with multiple divisions and departments at the hospital. Finally, he has also developed and helps guide several innovative programs to address key causal factors. These include collaborations with the [Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati](https://www.legalaid.org), [The Freestore Foodbank](https://www.freestorefoodbank.org), [United Way of Greater Cincinnati](https://www.unitedway.org), and the [Cincinnati Health Department](https://www.cincinnatibackup.org).

**Heidi Kalkwarf, PhD, RD**

Dr. Kalkwarf's research focuses on bone health of children, adolescents and young adults. Specific themes aim to: 1) characterize bone mineral acquisition during different stages of growth and maturation in order to develop reference data that can be used to identify bone deficits in children with chronic medical conditions; 2) identify the how body composition, physical activity and dietary intake affect bone mineral accrual during growth; 3) investigate whether bone status measurements made in early childhood are stable over time; and 4) investigate whether bone characteristic in childhood predict fracture risk. Dr. Kalkwarf has transitioned to the [Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition](https://www.cincinnatichildren.org/clinical-departments/gastroenterology-hepatology-nutrition).

**Melissa D. Klein, MD, MEd**

Dr. Klein is a general pediatrician, medical educator and researcher. She is the director of the Education Section in the Division of General and Community Pediatrics and the director of the Primary Care and Community Pathway of the Pediatric Residency Program. Dr. Klein is the director of the [General Pediatrics Master Educator Fellowship](https://www.cincinnatichildren.org/education/programs/gpme-fellowship), an innovative fellowship focused on educational scholarship and leadership. Her main research interest focuses on improving resident screening and management of the social determinants of health during routine well-child care through innovative educational experiences. She serves as a physician champion for Child HeLP (Health Law Partnership) and is one the founding members of the [KIND (Keeping Infants Nourished and Developing)](https://www.kinderfund.org) partnership aimed at eliminating infant hunger.

**Colleen Kraft, MD**

Dr. Kraft’s primary interest involves health care financing and underserved populations. As medical director of the [Health Network by Cincinnati Children’s](https://www.healthnetwork.org), Dr. Kraft is designing innovative payment models that utilize community-based solutions to address social determinants of health, improving health outcomes and decreasing healthcare costs. She has been involved in projects demonstrating efficacy of integration of home visiting in the pediatric medical home, and developing medical homes for children with special healthcare needs.

**Mona E. Mansour, MD, MS**

Dr. Mansour's primary professional focus is improving health outcomes of vulnerable children and reducing disparities in health care through redesign of care delivery systems. She has led highly successful complex system re-design projects with multiple internal and external stakeholders/partners. She is leading divisional and institutional initiatives on community connected primary care. Special areas of interest include children with asthma, primary care/behavioral health...
integration, and school based health centers/ school health. Her work has focused on use of quality improvement methodology in a variety of different care environments including primary care practices, school based health centers, and within the community health care system.

Daniel McLinden, EdD
Dr. McLinden working with the Collaborative Chronic Care Network (C3N) in the James M. Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence at Cincinnati Children’s, leads a multidisciplinary team that has conceptualized and created an online learning resource to make it possible for a geographically dispersed community of clinicians, scientists, patients, and parents in 60+ care centers to pool their knowledge, learn from each other to improve outcomes (ICNExchange.org).

Continuing to develop concept mapping methodology through applied projects within the medical center, research projects and resulting publications, and through co-editing a future special issue of the journal Evaluation Program Planning.

John Morehous, MD
Dr. Morehous’ primary focus is improving care delivery systems to improve child health and well-being across the community. Using both design principles as well as quality improvement methodologies to develop and implement clinic-wide interventions focusing on delivering needed care, as efficiently as possible, and simultaneously delivering the best possible experience to the family.

Nicholas Newman, DO, MS, FAAP
Dr. Newman is focused on improving the health of children affected by exposure to environmental toxicants, particularly children with lead poisoning and asthma. He led the development of recommendations for the medical management of lead poisoning in children that was endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition, he actively works with local, state and federal health agencies as well as community groups to identify and eliminate sources of lead exposure in children. He is currently funded to research the influence of indoor air quality on respiratory symptoms in children with asthma.

Chris Peltier, MD
Dr. Peltier's academic interest is in the area of community-based teaching of pediatric residents and medical students. He also has an interest in faculty education and development.

Judith R. Ragsdale, MDiv, PhD
Dr. Ragsdale's interests include adult development in the process of supervisory clinical pastoral education; use of spirituality in coping with illness; and developing a way to identify best practices in pediatric chaplaincy.

Sarah Riddle, MD, IBCLC, FAAP
Dr. Riddle’s primary focus is breastfeeding medicine, specifically defining and improving the activities of the Breastfeeding Medicine Clinic and investigating low milk supply in the breastfeeding mother. Dr. Riddle also graduated from the I2S2 class 21. The title of her project was "Increasing Breastfeeding Duration in the Pediatric Primary Care Clinic."

Zeina Samaan, MD
Dr. Samaan is focused on primary care redesign, which includes improving preventive service delivery, ill care open access initiatives, and chronic care. She also focuses on quality improvement, specifically in the following areas: improvement of childhood immunization rate, improvement of influenza vaccination rate in high risk pediatric patients, development screening and autism initiatives, improving asthma care for underserved inner city children, improving newborn care and access to primary care medical home, and preventing medical errors in primary care setting. She also focuses on the use of Electronic Health Record (EHR) to deliver quality of care; implemented immunization and
flu alerts using EHR to improve the rate of childhood vaccinations, as well as other best practice alerts to improve the delivery of the recommended preventive services.

Gregory Szumlas, MD, FAAP
Dr. Szumlas focuses on early childhood literacy and kindergarten readiness. He is the medical director of the local and regional Reach Out and Read programs. He also participates in asthma quality improvement efforts and is interested in health literacy, particularly concerning asthma.

Denise M. Warrick, MD
Dr. Warrick's professional interests include education, advocacy and quality improvement. She is currently leading the redesign of our primary care curriculum for our residents and was recently appointed as co-director of our resident advocacy curriculum at Cincinnati Children's.

Stephen Warrick, MD
Dr. Stephen Warrick's professional interests include Global Child Health and the education and preparation of residents and students for rotations in international locations. He also has an interest in preventative health care and ill care access at our facilities. He is currently pursuing a master's of medical education.

Kimberly Yolton, PhD
Dr. Yolton is a developmental psychologist researching the effects of prenatal and postnatal exposures to environmental toxicants (e.g. tobacco smoke, pesticides, air pollution, and industrial chemicals) on neurobehavioral outcomes during infancy and childhood. She is additionally involved in research on neurobehavioral outcomes of high risk infants. She has expertise in research methodologies for assessing neurobehavior from the newborn period through adulthood.

Significant Publications
Disadvantaged households often have limited access to nutrition which can put children, and especially infants, at high risk of negative health consequences. Primary care pediatricians that care for these families have historically had little to offer to mitigate such risk. In this study, we used a clinical-community collaborative called Keeping Infants Nourished and Developing (or KIND) to address food insecurity for over 1,000 families with infants. The intervention which partnered a pediatric primary care center with the region's largest food bank was found to be associated with improved preventative care outcomes for those served. For example, those who received the intervention were significantly more likely than those who did not to receive a full set of well infant visits, have a completed lead and developmental screen, and be referred to social work and our medical-legal partnership. Success was possible because of strong collaboration between primary care staff and community partners.

Early onset of tobacco and alcohol use is a significant public health concern as use before the mid-teen years is related to subsequent dependence. This study was the first to demonstrate, using a sample representative of the U.S. population, that adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder (CD) are at increased risk for early onset substance use.

Brown CM, Perkins J, Blust A, Kahn RS. A Neighborhood-Based Approach to Population Health in the Pediatric Medical
Locally and nationally, primary care is being re-engineered to improve population health outcomes. While many population health initiatives focus on patient panels, this study was among the first to focus on population health management of a geographically-defined population of infants. This study examined local strategies for connecting every newborn in a low-income neighborhood to a medical home and other health-promoting community resources. In this study, a small network of primary care clinics, along with community partners, developed and tested interventions that led to more timely well child care, increased enrollment in home visiting programs, and improved communication between the medical home and home visitors. The study provided an example of how shared care coordination and measurement processes across multiple clinics can increase the percentage of a neighborhood population that is reached. The protocol for communication between primary care and home visitors was, to our knowledge, the first of its kind to be described in the literature. Neighborhood-based approaches in low-income areas, such as those described in this study, could represent important components of interventions to reduce child health disparities.


There is limited evidence of potential adverse health outcomes associated with exposure to polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFCs) during the prenatal period. This study, comprised of a representative sample of pregnant women living in the greater Cincinnati area between 2003 and 2006, assessed the impact of these common pollutants on early infant neurobehavior. Serum concentrations of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), a common PFC pollutant, were found to be more than twice as high as levels estimated from pregnant women nationally during the same time period. Infants of mothers with greater serum concentrations of PFOA during pregnancy were more likely to be categorized as hypotonic, as assessed by their performance on the NICU Network Neurobehavioral Scale (NNNS). It is essential that we continue to investigate the full impact of these pollutants on human health, as these pollutants are ubiquitous in our everyday environment.


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**Faculty, Staff, and Trainees**

**Faculty Members**

**Thomas DeWitt, MD**, Professor  
**Leadership** Director, Division of General & Community Pediatrics; Associate Chair for Education; Designated Institutional Official; Chair, Graduate Medical Education Committee; President, Medical Staff  
**Research Interests** Community-based research; medical education - clinical outcomes.

**Raymond Baker, MD, MEd**, Professor Emeritus

**Andrew F. Beck, MD, MPH**, Assistant Professor  
**Research Interests** Social and environmental determinants of health; health disparities; geographic variation in health outcomes, asthma.

**Paul Bellet, MD**, Professor Emeritus

**Omer Berger, MD**, Professor Emeritus

**William Brinkman, MD, MEd, MSc**, Associate Professor  
**Leadership** Director, Research Section; Methods Expert, Evidence & Measures team in the James M Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence; Research Director, Cincinnati Pediatrics Research Group (CPRG)  
**Research Interests** Shared decision making; translating evidence into practice.

**Courtney M Brown, MD, MSc**, Assistant Professor  
**Research Interests** Early childhood mental health.

**Kristen Copeland, MD**, Associate Professor  
**Leadership** Director, NRSA General Pediatric Research Fellowship in Child and Adolescent Health  
**Research Interests** Obesity prevention in child-care; nutrition and physical activity behaviors and policies; promoting healthy eating and physical activity.
Nick DeBlasio, MD, MEd, Assistant Professor
    Leadership Director, resident continuity clinic at PPC and Hopple Street Health Center; Assoc Medical Director, PPCC
    Research Interests Medical student and resident education; primary care of underserved children.

Emanuel Doyne, MD, Professor Emeritus

Michelle French, MD, Assistant Professor
    Leadership Interim Director, Complex Care Center

Sheela Rath Geraghty, MD, MS, IBCLC, Associate Professor
    Leadership Medical Director, Center for Breastfeeding Medicine
    Research Interests Barriers to successful breastfeeding.

Camille Graham, MD, Assistant Professor
    Leadership Executive Community Physician Leader; community physician liaison for the Health Network by Cincinnati Children's Hospital; PCMH Learning Collaborative Steering Committee; Medical Director, Cincinnati Pediatric Research Group
    Research Interests Influenza vaccination; health care disparities; asthma; patient-centered medical homes; community-based participatory research.

Rob Harper, EdD, Assistant Professor
    Leadership Associate Director of the Online Master's Degree and Certificate Program
    Research Interests Leadership in online medical education and professional development.

Tzipi Horowitz-Kraus, PhD, Assistant Professor
    Leadership Program Director, RLDC
    Research Interests Reading difficulties.

Robert Ingberg, MD, Professor Emeritus

Robert Kahn, MD, MPH, Professor
    Leadership Associate Director, Division of General & Community Pediatrics; Faculty Lead, Population/Community Health Initiative, Anderson Center; Associate Chair for Community Health
    Research Interests Child health disparities; population health; asthma; community-based interventions.

Heidi Kalkwarf, PhD, Professor
    Leadership Scientific Director, Bionutrition and Body Composition Core laboratory, Clinical Translational Research Center
    Research Interests Bone density; body composition; growth; physical activity; dietary intake; fracture.

Melissa Klein, MD, MEd, Associate Professor
    Leadership Director, Section of Education; Director, Primary Care and Community Pathways for Residency Program; Director, General Pediatric Master Education Fellowship
    Research Interests Medical education; health disparities.

Colleen Kraft, MD, Associate Professor
    Leadership Medical Director, Health Network by Cincinnati Children's
    Research Interests Health care financing; underserved children; children with special healthcare needs.

Mona E Mansour, MD, MS, Professor
    Leadership Director, Section of Primary Care and School Health; Associate Director, Division of General and Community Pediatrics
    Research Interests School health; asthma; underserved populations; quality improvement; health care system redesign.

Christine McHenry, MD, MATS, Professor Emerita
Daniel McLinden, EdD, Associate Professor  
Leadership Senior Director, Learning and Development  
Research Interests Learning systems; program evaluation; outcomes measurement.

John Morehous, MD, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Medical Director, Fairfield Primary Care; Outpatient Co-Leader, Patient-Family Experience Team  
Research Interests Healthcare system design and improvement.

Nicholas Newman, DO, MS, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Medical Director, Environmental Health and Lead Clinic  
Research Interests Improve child health through understanding the environmental determinants of disease and to develop interventions to mitigate or prevent illness due to environmental factors.

Christopher Peltier, MD, Adjunct  
Leadership Director, Section of Community Pediatrics  
Research Interests Medical student and resident education; community pediatrics.

Judith Ragsdale, MDiv, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Director of Research & Education, Pastoral Care  
Research Interests Research in clinical pastoral supervision; use of religion/spirituality in decision making/coping.

Sarah Riddle, MD, IBCLC, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Physician Leader of the Specialty Clinics in General Pediatrics  
Research Interests Hospital medicine and breastfeeding medicine.

Zeina Samaan, MD, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Medical Director, Pediatric Primary Care Center  
Research Interests Quality improvement.

Rosemary Schmidt, MD, Professor Emerita

Gregory Szumlas, MD, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Medical Director, Reach Out an Read  
Research Interests Quality improvement; asthma; health literacy; early literacy.

Denise Warrick, MD, Instructor  
Leadership Co-Director, Resident Advocacy Course at Cincinnati Children's  
Research Interests Education; advocacy; quality improvements.

Stephen Warrick, MD, Assistant Professor  
Leadership Team Leader for PPC Ill Care Improvement Project  
Research Interests Global health education; preventative health; ill care access and delivery; resident education in general pediatrics.

Kimberly Yolton, PhD, Associate Professor  
Leadership Assoc Program Director, NRSA Primary Care Research Fellowship in Child & Adolescent Health  
Research Interests Infant and child neurobehavior; including development and behavior; prenatal and postnatal exposures to environmental toxicants; prematurity.

Joint Appointment Faculty Members

Michael Benedict, MD, Assistant Professor (Internal Medicine)

Christine Burrows, MD, Assistant Professor (Internal Medicine)

Tiffiny Diers, MD, Assistant Professor (Internal Medicine)
Hilary Flint, DO, Assistant Professor (Anesthesia)

Mary Greiner, MD, Assistant Professor (Safe and Healthy Children)
  Research Interests Head trauma; outcomes of children in foster care.

Emily Harris, MD, MPH, (Child Psychiatry & Behavior Neuroscience)
  Research Interests General pediatrics; child and adolescent mental health issues.

Ellen Lipstein, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor (Adolescent & Transition Medicine)
  Research Interests Parents and patients in medication decision making; health services research.

Caroline Mueller, MD, Professor (Internal Medicine)

Kieren Phelan, MD, MS, Associate Professor (Anderson Center)

Stephen Wilson, MD, Assistant Professor (Internal Medicine)

Clinical Staff Members

- Jeanne Beischel, MD
- Mary Carol Burkhardt, MD, Medical Director, Hopple Street Primary Care
- Scott Callahan, MD, Medical Director, Children’s Health Care
- Kristen DeMarco, MD
- Emily Eagen, MD
- Maureen Gallagher, MD
- Jennifer Hardie, MD
- Gretchen Hartz, MD, Co-Medical Director, Children’s Health Care
- Megan Hennigan, MD
- Elisabeth Kelley, MD
- Katie Kerrey, MD
- Jill Klein, MD
- Carrie McIntyre, MD
- Mary Beth Pero, MD
- Sheldon Polonsky, MD
- Andrew Poltrack, MD, Co-Medical Director, Children’s Health Care
- Sarah Revis, MD
- Ellen Springer, MD
- Tracy Tiller, MD
- Julie Ware, MD

Trainees
- **Stephen Becker, PhD**, PGY 0, Miami University
- **Stephanie Donauer, PhD**, PGY 1, University of Cincinnati
- **Annie Garner, PhD**, PGY 2, University of Alabama at Birmingham
- **John Hutton, MD**, PGY 5, University of Cincinnati
- **Roohi Kharofa, MD**, PGY 5, University of Cincinnati
- **Joanna Thomson, MD**, PGY 6, St. Louis University

## Grants, Contracts, and Industry Agreements

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Link Between Housing Code Violations and Asthma Morbidity Informs Better Care, Improved Outcomes

Community housing code enforcement agencies collect and own critical data about the presence of mold or cockroaches that can help pediatricians identify clusters of asthma-related morbidity among children and better target care for children with asthma.

The critical role played by housing agency data is identified in a November 2014 *Health Affairs* study by Andrew Beck, MD, MPH, of the Division of General and Community Pediatrics, and the Virginia-based Project HOPE: The People-to-People Health Foundation, Inc.

Geo-mapping tools helped Beck and his team identify a link between the density of housing code violations — reports that logged the presence of mold or cockroaches, both of which are known asthma triggers — and asthma morbidity, based on asthma-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

Independent of poverty, code violation density explained 22 percent of the variation in asthma utilization rates across the areas studied. Children who had been hospitalized for asthma had an 84 percent increased chance of returning to the emergency department or being rehospitalized within 12 months if they lived in areas with the highest rates of housing code violations, compared to children living in low-density areas for violations.

Beck’s study involved 4,355 children, ages 1-16, who were hospitalized or received emergency room treatment for asthma at Cincinnati Children’s over nearly four years.

“Integrating housing and health data could highlight at-risk areas and patients for targeted interventions,” says Beck.

Housing data also could be used to study health disparities that occur in small geographic areas, identify medically at-risk areas for programs to improve housing conditions, incorporate into patients’ electronic health records for improved clinical care, or inform health systems’ strategies in support of preventive medicine and accountable care.
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This map shows an association between high rates of asthma-related Emergency Department visits and hospital admissions and the location and density of housing code violations within Greater Cincinnati census tracts. The “low” asthma utilization rate category represents census tracts with fewer than 21.3 utilizations per 1,000 children per year; “low medium” reflects 21.3-33.0; “high medium” is 33.0-47.5; and “high” areas include more than 47.5 utilizations per 1,000 children per year.