

Jean M. Silvestri, MD

The Woman's Board Chair of Pediatrics

Advancement of Medicine

My mission as the Woman's Board Chair of the Department of Pediatrics aligns with the mission of the Woman's Board of Rush University Medical Center. The endowment helps me lead and partner with our faculty to provide the best health care for the individuals and diverse communities we serve by supporting our outstanding patient care, original research and community outreach initiatives.

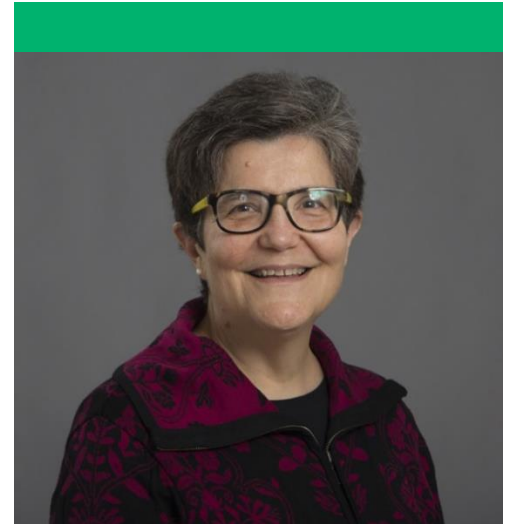
The Woman's Board endowment generously supports three specific areas in our department.

Pediatric Residency Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Track

This track for our pediatric residents is led by **Laura Meltzer, MD**, associate professor and Hospital Medicine division chief, and **Laura Seske, MD, MS**, associate professor and NICU patient safety officer. The endowment supports these two leaders in educating residents on quality principles and metrics, and in leading mortality and morbidity conferences and other educational events. Two pediatric residents are currently in this track and have presented abstracts of their quality-improvement work at national meetings, receiving excellent feedback, which will also support their academic careers during fellowships. Rush is known for being the best in quality, and our department is happy to contribute to that goal and train residents in learning how to achieve high-quality care.

Pediatric Residency Community Advocacy at Rush for Equity (KidsCARE) Track

The endowment supports **Karen Lui, MD**, and **Laura Pabalan, MD**, both assistant professors in the Division of General Pediatrics and passionate leaders of this program that trains future physician leaders in health equity and community engagement. Four pediatric residents and one internal medicine and pediatrics resident are currently enrolled, leading meaningful, community-centered initiatives such as enhancing EpiPen education in schools and daycares, delivering comprehensive sex education in a youth homeless shelter, and improving access to therapy for children in shelters.





Our faculty and residents participate in local, state and national advocacy forums. They participate in the American Academy of Pediatrics Advocacy Conference, collaborate on local projects and develop scholarly projects that promote health equity.

Department of Pediatrics Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee

This is an active group that continues its efforts to cultivate an inclusive, equitable and connected department. The endowment supports our two co-chairs, **Kyle Bersted, PhD**, associate professor, and **Janet Yarboi, PhD**, assistant professor, both in the Division of Pediatric Psychology. Their leadership and drive have sustained and expanded restorative justice efforts, which are an integral part of our annual pediatric department retreat. Retreats involve the entire department and include restorative justice learning and community-building circles. In addition, over 300 participants have attended restorative justice climate and affinity circles outside our retreat. Drs. Bersted and Yarboi are working with Rush Human Resources to see if these restorative justice practices can be incorporated into Rush employee orientation. In addition to the retreat, the committee directs programming for multiple grand rounds throughout the year to address health equity, a book club led by one of our senior faculty, and a monthly newsletter highlighting all activities and offerings at Rush and in the Chicago area. Our yearly climate survey helps us understand the impact of our activities and helps drive and focus our priorities from year to year. Drs. Bersted and Yarboi are leaders not only in the department but across Rush and nationally. Their leadership has made a great impact on our department. Looking ahead, they aim to expand our initiatives and collaborations to better understand issues within our Rush community and the neighborhoods where our patients live.

I am so grateful for the support of the Woman's Board, because these funds have allowed these talented faculty to have the time to develop programs and educate, inspire and support our residents and faculty. This work is a tall order in addition to their clinical duties, and this time enables them to follow their passions. Over the past year, with your generous support, each program has grown academically, presenting its work and publishing its findings to enrich the communities we serve.



Additional Support

The endowment has also assisted me in supporting different roles in the department. Resources are limited, and time is precious. I am grateful that this has allowed me to unburden some of our faculty and given them sufficient time, offset by the endowment. Faculty supported in this way include **Paul Severin, MD**, PICU medical director; **Cyndi Sosnowski, MD**, pediatric echocardiography lab director; **Elizabeth Portin, DO**, general pediatrician board-certified in pediatric sports medicine; and **Aloka Patel, MD**, NICU division chief and associate vice chair of research.

With Gratitude

I am deeply appreciative of this investment in the Rush Department of Pediatrics. Pediatrics is facing significant challenges nationally; pediatric residency positions and pediatric subspecialty fellowships are not being pursued as eagerly as in years past, raising real concerns about the future pediatric subspecialist workforce. **This endowment provides vital support to our faculty and demonstrates to trainees, both medical students and residents, the joy, purpose and fulfillment that come with being a pediatrician.**

We acutely feel the limitations of today's health care environment, where resources are increasingly constrained and even scarcer for our most vulnerable populations. Your support helps bridge this gap and allows us to continue meaningful, mission-driven work.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of the Woman's Board Appropriations Committee, which annually funds Woman's Board grants to support the innovative work of our pediatric faculty and advance the Woman's Board mission. It is truly a pleasure to work alongside this dedicated group of Rush Woman's Board members whose insight and commitment continue to propel our faculty's work forward.

Thank you for your generous support. Without it, we would be unable to carry out these critical initiatives that have such a profound impact on our learners, faculty, patients, families and the broader community.