



The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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THE SPOTLIGHT

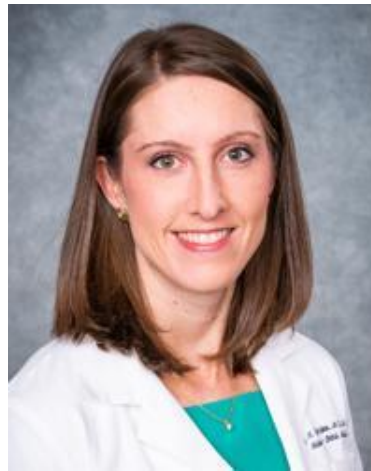
Updates from the UAB Center for Women's Reproductive Health

Summer/Fall 2022

A Message From Dr. Ashley Battarbee, Assistant Director of Ob Research, CWRH

On behalf of the CWRH leadership team, I want to welcome everyone back after summer vacations and welcome all the new additions to the UAB and CWRH families! This is one of my favorite times of the year with new residents, fellows, faculty, and staff. With new faces come new collaborations and innovative ideas.

Over the summer, the CWRH awarded 2 new pilot grants to Dr. Isuzu Meyer and Dr. Paige Porrett and was the recipient of a \$20 million award from the American Heart Association to serve as the coordinating center for the Health Equity Research Network on disparities in maternal-infant health outcomes. We look forward to the partnership with four other institutions across the U.S. to better understand and overcome the disproportionate impact of maternal morbidity and mortality on Black and Native American pregnant people.



Ashley Battarbee, M.D., MSCR

Additionally, we are excited to celebrate the new U.S. News and World Report ranking of our home department as the #5 Obstetrics and Gynecology department in the nation and look forward to another great academic year for our members, staff, and trainees!

Highlights

\$20M for P3 EQUATE Network, Pregnancy and Postpartum/ Postnatal Enhancing Access and Quality to Achieve Equitable Maternal and Infant Health, Awarded by American Heart Association

CWRH coordinates the recently funded American Heart Association multicenter Health Equity Research Network grant. The goal of the P3 EQUATE Network grant is elimination of disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. The network includes UAB investigators, along with investigators from Northwestern University, Ohio State University, University of Chapel Hill, and University of Pennsylvania and involves five projects (one per site) and 10 pre/post-doctoral trainees.

[Read More](#)

Dr. Ashley Battarbee Featured On Women's Health with Dr. Huh

Dr. Ashley Battarbee, assistant professor in the UAB Department of

CWRH Hosted Seminar, "Combating Racism and Sexism in Academic Medicine" on Friday, August 26



Dr. Dee Fenner is the chair and Bates Professor of Diseases of Women and Children at the University of Michigan. She has been a champion for the inclusion of women in medicine and leadership throughout her career.

Dr. Fenner's presentation, "Combating Racism and Sexism in Academic Medicine" can be found on the CWRH website and below.

[Learn More](#)

CWRH Member, Dr. W. Timothy Garvey, Named University Professor

CWRH member, W. Timothy Garvey, M.D., was named University Professor

Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN), was recently interviewed by Dr. Warner Huh, chair of the UAB Department of OB/GYN, on his monthly podcast, Women's Health with Dr. Huh. Dr. Battarbee, whose research expertise is diabetes in pregnancy, discusses the major concerns of diabetes and approaches for controlling it.

in the UAB School of Health Professions Department of Nutrition Sciences. Congratulations Dr. Garvey!

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UAB Joins OneFlorida+ Clinical Research Network

UAB recently joined the *OneFlorida+ Clinical Research Network*, a collaboration among researchers, clinicians and patients in Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

The collaboration is intended to create a lasting infrastructure for a wide range of health research, including pragmatic clinical trials, comparative effectiveness research, implementation science studies, observational research, and cohort discovery. Drs. Betsy Shenkman and Bill Hogan from University of Florida, along with leaders of OneFlorida+, recently provided an exciting overview to CWRH members of opportunities the network provides, including engagement in PCORI prioritized research areas of maternal-child health and health equity.

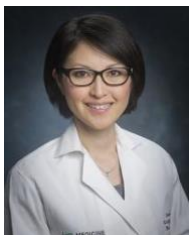
Click the 'Learn More' for additional information about OneFlorida+ Clinical Research Network.

To learn more about UAB's engagement in the network, reach out to Dr. James Willig, UAB OneFlorida+ site PI (jwillig@uab.edu), or Dr. Michael Mugavero, Director of the Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education (COERE) and OneFlorida+ Executive Committee member (mmugavero@uab.edu) or refer to the COERE website, [here](#).

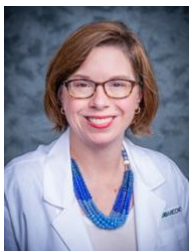
[Learn More](#)

CWRH UWIRC Pilot Grant Awards

Congratulations to our 2022 CWRH University-Wide Interdisciplinary Research Pilot Grant awardees, Dr. Isuzu Meyer and Dr. Paige Porrett!



Dr. Isuzu Meyer with the UAB Department of OB/GYN, Division of Urogynecology and Pelvic Reconstructive Surgery, was awarded \$25,000 for the project “Platelet Rich Plasma as an Adjunct Therapy at the time of Transvaginal Native Tissue Prolapse Surgery.”



Dr. Paige Porrett with the UAB Department of Surgery and collaborators—Holly E. Richter, Ph.D., M.D., UAB Department of OB/GYN; Aharon Freud, M.D., Ph.D., Ohio State University; James F. George, Ph.D., UAB Department of Surgery—were awarded \$20,000 for the project “Characterization of Immune Cell Decidualization in Human Endometrium.”

Thank you to all investigators who submitted applications and special thanks to our reviewers!

Funded/ Awarded Grants

Following are recently funded/awarded grants supported by the CWRH.



PI: Dr. Rachel Sinkey (K23)
Title: The ACHIEVE Trial: Achieving Longer Gestation in Preeclampsia via Antihypertensive Therapy
Funded By: NHLBI



PI: Dr. Rachel Sinkey (HERN)
Title: P3 Providing an Optimized and emPowered Pregnancy for You (POPPY)
Funded By: American Heart Association

PI: Dr. Alan Tita (HERN)
Title: P3 EQUATE Network or Pregnancy and Postpartum/Postnatal Enhancing Access and Quality to Achieve Equitable Maternal and Infant Health
Funded By: American Heart Association



MPI: Janet Turan (D43)
Title: Integrated Networks of Scholars in Global Health Research Training (INSIGHT)
Funded By: NIH



PI: Dr. Holly E. Richter (Pilot)
Title: Outcomes for Obstetrics Fistula Services with Social Reintegration in Burkina Faso
Funded By: UAB Sparkman Center

PI: Dr. Holly E. Richter
Title: Beta-Agonist versus Botox Trial for Urgency Urinary Incontinence (BEST Trial)
Funded By: Women and Infants Hospital-Rhode Island/PCORI

[Submit Awarded Grants to be Featured Here](#)

Grant Submissions

Drs. Alan Tita (PI) and Brian Casey

Title: Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units (MFMU) Network; NICHD

Drs. Akila Subramaniam (PI), Alan Tita, Isabel Scarinci, and Jeff Szychowski

Title: Optimal aspirin dose and initiation timing for preeclampsia prevention: a randomized factorial trial; PCORI

Funding Opportunities

Please contact CWRH at cwrh@uabmc.edu if you are interested in partnering on any of the following opportunities.

Implementing a Maternal health and PRegnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone (IMPROVE) Initiative Funding Opportunities.

- **Maternal Health Research Centers of Excellence (CoE):** The CoEs aim to generate innovative interventions to address preventable maternal mortality, decrease severe

maternal morbidity, and promote maternal health equity in partnership with one or more populations that experience maternal health disparities using an integrated multi-level approach encompassing structural, social, and biobehavioral research strategies to address the multiple contributing factors that lead to adverse maternal health outcomes and health disparities.

- [RFA-HD-23-035](#) – Maternal Health Research Centers of Excellence (U54 Clinical Trial Optional)
- [RFA-HD-23-036](#) – Maternal Health Research Centers of Excellence Data Innovation and Coordinating Hub/Resource Center (U24 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)
- [RFA-HD-23-037](#) – Maternal Health Research Centers of Excellence Implementation Science Hub/Resource Center (U24 Clinical Trial Optional)

Maternal and Pediatric Precision in Therapeutics (MPRINT) Translational Research Resource Platform (TRRP)

- [RFA-HD-23-018](#), Maternal and Pediatric Precision in Therapeutics (MPRINT) Translational Research Resource Platform (TRRP) (U24 Clinical Trial Not Allowed). This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) invites applications from organizations to establish TRRPs that will facilitate, support, and conduct therapeutic-focused research for maternal and pediatric populations. As part of the MPRINT program, awards made under this FOA will focus on resource platforms to support concerted multidisciplinary team science efforts that leverage existing and prospective resources (biobanks, biological sample repositories, omics data, tissue specific genomic/epigenomic atlases, EHRs, etc.) to develop innovative technologies and analytic tools that can advance therapeutic research for maternal and pediatric precision therapeutics.

Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Multisite Clinical Trials

- [NOT-HD-22-028](#), Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Multisite Clinical Trials: Leveraging Network Infrastructure to Advance Research and Outcomes for Women, Children, Pregnant and Lactating Individuals and/or Persons with Disabilities. The FOA will publish on/about November 18, 2022.

CWRH will help facilitate applications by matching to an eligible parent grant. Contact the team at cwrh@uabmc.edu for additional information and if interested!

Newest Members

CWRH members represent 9 UAB Schools and 33 departments engaged in promotion of women's health. The Center strives to foster collaboration and integration of research focusing on equity in women's health and the health of their offspring along three thematic areas: maternal and child,

gynecologic health across the lifespan, and global health with cross-cutting priorities and collaborations including hypertension/CVDs, infections, obesity, diabetes, genitourinary disorders and cancer prevention.

Please welcome our newest members and project partners:



Gena Dunivan, M.D., FACOG, FACS

CWRH Appointment: Senior Scientist

UAB Heersink School of Medicine, Department of OB/GYN
Professor | Director, Division of Urogynecology and Pelvic
Reconstructive Surgery



Rodney Rocconi, M.D.

CWRH Appointment: Senior Scientist

UAB Heersink School of Medicine, Department of OB/GYN
Professor, Division of Gynecologic Oncology



Vilcassim Ruzmyn, Ph.D., M.S.

CWRH Appointment: Associate Scientist

UAB School of Public Health
Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Health
Sciences



Aneja Ritu, Ph.D.

CWRH Appointment: Scientist

UAB School of Health Professions
Professor | Associate Dean of Research and Innovation,
Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences

If you know someone working in women's health, they may be eligible for CWRH membership! Please send nominations to CWRH@uabmc.edu, and the team will review and reach out.

Publications

- We are delighted to feature the latest publications of our CWRH-UWIRC members! Congratulations!

- [Click here to view publications from May 2022 to August 2022.](#)

[Submit Recent Publications to be Featured](#)

Upcoming Events

CWRH Seminar Series

The CWRH UWIRC sponsors a monthly reproductive health seminar series which supports the training of investigators interested in women's reproductive health, both locally and globally. The series includes quarterly expert invited guests.

CWRH September Seminar Series



Dr. Michal A. Elovitz,

[Learn More](#) | [Register](#)

CWRH Seminar Series Feat. Dr. Michal A. Elovitz September 23, 2022 at 12:30 p.m.

The CWRH is excited to feature Michal A. Elovitz, M.D., for September's CWRH Seminar Series. She will discuss **“From the bedside to the bench: the role of the cervicovaginal microbiome in preterm birth.”**

Dr. Elovitz is the Hilarie L. Morgan and Mitchell L. Morgan President's Distinguished Professor in Women's Health in the University of Pennsylvania Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Microbiology.

In case you missed one, [click here to view previous guests and seminars.](#)

Virtual NIH P2P Workshop

November 29 – December 1, 2022

Identifying Risks and Interventions to Optimize Postpartum Health

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Pathways to Prevention (P2P) Program will hold their next virtual workshop from Nov. 29 to Dec 1.
- The United States is experiencing a growing maternal health crisis. Approximately 700 women die each year from conditions related to pregnancy. Another 50,000 women experience severe pregnancy-related complications—like heart disease, stroke, blood clots, and depression.

- Maternal health research has generally focused on pregnancy, but the majority of maternal deaths and complications occur during the first year after the pregnancy has ended (the postpartum period). The research community must increase efforts to improve postpartum care.
- Speakers in this workshop will discuss the current scientific evidence on predicting and preventing poor postpartum health outcomes. Attendees will have opportunities to submit questions and comments. After the workshop, an independent panel will draft a report outlining evidence gaps and priorities for future research.

[Learn More](#) | [Register](#)

CWRH Community Service

UAB and CWRH continue to collaborate with LifeSouth Cord Blood Bank, offering eligible women delivering at UAB the opportunity to donate their umbilical cord blood for the purpose of clinical cures and research. Since January, CWRH staff has collected 456 units of umbilical cord blood for analysis and possible banking!

Your Gifts Make a Difference

The overall goal of the CWRH is to foster interdisciplinary collaborations across UAB to improve women's reproductive health (RH) and survival and promote equity in outcomes, particularly for minority and underserved women (including those in rural Alabama). A core goal is to facilitate collaboration between UAB researchers and developing scholars interested in women's RH.

To accomplish our goals, the CWRH must maintain and continue to foster research funding opportunities while investing in investigators and trainees and their affiliated divisions, departments, and schools. We invite you to help support our research initiatives including supporting a fund to support trainee research. With your help, we can continue to lead the way for women's RH research and make a difference in the lives of women now and in the future. Please share with potential donors.

[Give Now](#)

To submit a story, highlight, publication, or grant to be featured, please email cwrh@uabmc.edu.

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