Nemours Children's Health Researchers Receive More Than $10 Million in Funding from National Institutes of Health to Address Significant Threats to Pediatric Health

Federal funding rewards highly meritorious research aimed at improving children's health and well-being

WILMINGTON, Delaware (November 12, 2026) — Researchers from Nemours Children's Health have received more than $10 million in funding from the National Institutes for Health (NIH) to investigate major threats to child health. The grants will support high-impact projects across a broad range of pediatric health specialties.

This federal funding reflects the national significance of Nemours Children's research, which has the power to drive major scientific advances for the benefit of children.

"Support from the NIH accelerates research conducted by Nemours scientists who are pursuing vitally important projects to advance child health," said Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Physician-in-Chief and Chief Scientific Officer, Nemours Children's Health. "The recent awards represent the largest single wave of NIH funding over just one calendar quarter that Nemours has received in its 90-year history, signaling the increasing breadth and momentum of Nemours research. We are excited to witness how this research fuels progress against the major threats to children's health."

Grants received in the third quarter of 2026 include R01 grants awarded to:

Paul Enlow, PhD, Research Scientist, Nemours Center for Healthcare Delivery Science

Dr. Enlow and his research team have been awarded two NIH grants to investigate the role of peer mentorship in supporting youth with type 1 diabetes in the effective use of diabetes technologies. Their intervention, called Type 1 Together, is designed to promote sustained use of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) through a comprehensive approach that combines peer mentorship, community health worker support, and CGM education integrated within the electronic health record. An R01 grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases will allow the team to evaluate the effectiveness of Type 1 Together across three children's hospitals. In addition, the researchers were awarded an R21 grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities to adapt and expand the program for adolescents from Spanish-speaking families.

Aimee Hildenbrand, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, Nemours Center for Healthcare Delivery Science

Dr. Hildenbrand and her team developed a toolkit to help adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with sickle cell disease, their caregivers, and healthcare providers work together to make treatment decisions. With this new grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research, she will conduct a multisite randomized trial to determine the impact of the toolkit on AYAs' experiences of shared decision-making, knowledge of their treatment options, and clinical outcomes including use of available therapies.

Amy O'Connell, MD, PhD, Neonatology Division Chief, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley

Previous research by Dr. O'Connell's lab, the Neonatal intestinal and immune Center for Exploration (NiiCE.org), identified a gene (WNT2B) that, when it loses its function, causes severe diarrhea and intestinal disease. The research also showed that WNT2B plays a role in preventing colitis and colon cancer. Her new award from NIH will help increase understanding of the inflammatory mechanism of this gene, and will support efforts to develop an effective treatment for colitis.

Thao-Ly Phan Vo, MD, MPH, Medical Director of the Nemours Healthy Weight and Wellness Clinic and Senior Research Scientist with the Nemours Center for Healthcare Delivery Science

Dr. Phan's grant will support testing of GrowSmart, an innovative tool developed by Nemours researchers in collaboration with the University of Delaware. GrowSmart uses artificial intelligence to help primary care providers better understand a child's future growth patterns and support personalized, family-friendly conversations about healthy behaviors. With support from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, researchers led by Phan will integrate the tool into the electronic health record and evaluate its impact in a cluster randomized trial across Nemours primary care practices, with the goal of improving obesity prevention, promoting healthy growth, and advancing whole child health.

Abhishek Seth, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Urology, Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida

Dr. Seth's earlier research identified a gene called KCTD13 as a likely genetic cause of two of the most common birth defects in boys: hypospadias, in which the opening of the urethra forms in the wrong place, and undescended testes. Their new grant from NIH will support his team as they examine how KCTD13 normally guides genital development and understand how defects occur. Improved understanding of these defects may help improve surgical outcomes and potentially protect fertility.

Additional NIH grants received in the third quarter of 2026 include:

David Blauvelt, MD, Attending Physician, Critical Care, Nemours Children's Hospital, Delaware; K08 Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award

Artificial placenta technology has the potential to improve outcomes for extremely premature infants by providing gas exchange outside the body while allowing the immature lungs to continue developing. However, current oxygenators require anticoagulation to prevent blood clotting, which poses an unacceptable bleeding risk for premature infants. With support from the NIH, Dr. Blauvelt will investigate whether a novel microfluidic silicon membrane oxygenator can improve hemocompatibility and ultimately enable artificial placenta support without systemic anticoagulation.

Monique Gardner, MD, MSCE, Chief, Cardiac Critical Care Medicine and Co-Director of Nemours Cardiac Center, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley; K23 Career Development Grant

Dr. Gardner will partner with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to conduct an observational study of 200 children who have survived in- and out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. With funding from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, she will examine myocardial dysfunction and markers of systemic inflammation to determine factors influencing survival and will investigate factors that influence patients' later neurological function.

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About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of 80 primary and specialty care practices. In 2025, Nemours Children's served more than 565,000 unique patients. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also addressing children's needs well beyond medicine. In producing the highly acclaimed, award-winning pediatric medicine podcast Well Beyond Medicine, Nemours underscores that commitment by featuring the people, programs and partnerships addressing Whole Child Health. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves. For more information, visit Nemours.org.

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