

Faculty Updates



Nicholas Cost, MD, Associate Professor, was recently announced as the new **Chair of Pediatric Urology** and as the Ponzio Family Chair in Pediatric Urology. In his more than 10 years as a urologic oncology specialist at CHCO, Dr. Cost has made an immeasurable impact on kids, adolescents and young adults with kidney cancer, testicular cancer and a variety of other rare urologic cancers. Dr. Cost's area of research expertise is within surgical oncology, including clinical trials for children, adolescents, and young adults with urologic tumors and cancers,

specifically surgical and long-term outcomes in this population and understanding the background science, genetics, and developing new therapies in Wilms tumor, Renal Cell Carcinoma and Testicular Tumors.

Dr. Cost has an impressive and unique history of leadership and research success. He serves as the Co-Director of the CCS Surgical Oncology Program at CHCO and was the first surgeon ever to be named the Chair of the Renal Tumor Committee for the Children's Oncology Group (COG), the world's largest organization devoted exclusively to childhood and adolescent cancer research. He has also been awarded a CCTSI career development grant and a K23 grant from the NIH/NIDDK.

Some key tenants of Dr. Cost's vision include: supporting subspecializing and leadership development within Urology, investing in discrete programs, strengthening and expanding areas of research and continuing to build a collaborative clinical environment.

Read a Q+A with Dr. Cost [here](#)



Both CHCO and the Office of Advanced Practice welcomed **Richele Koehler, PA-C, Pediatric Surgery** in her newly appointed role as the **Associate Director of Advanced Practice Optimization- Inpatient** effective March 1. Richele joined Pediatric Surgery as an Instructor in 2014 and has been the Lead APP in Pediatric Surgery since 2018. She co-developed and co-directs the Pediatric Surgical Advanced Practice Fellowship, which started in 2023. Richele has been integral in implementing strategies across Pediatric Surgery

to maximize inpatient staffing and cross-coverage models. She is also involved in both local and cross campus service through committee and board work.

Staff Updates



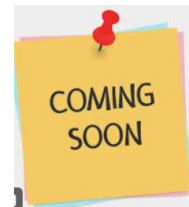
Congrats to **Merritt Sumner, Practice and Operations Manager, ENT** for being CHCO's "Difference Maker" in January. Merritt started her CHCO career in 2003 in Orthopedics as an ASC and supported that unit in several roles over 12 years. In 2015 Merritt progressed into leadership with a role as an Operations Supervisor, supporting several units including Gynecology, Ophthalmology Neurosurgery, Plastics Surgery and the scheduling team. In 2018, Merritt was promoted to a Practice and Operations Manager within the CCS having supported several

units before being assigned to ENT. Read more about Merritt's amazing contributions and accomplishments [here](#)

ROCS updates



Risha Gidwani, DrPH, Medicine- Health Care Policy Research has joined the ROCS team with .2 FTE March 1. Dr. Gidwani will collaborate with faculty and trainees in preparing grant applications/proposals, will consult in the areas of study design and methodology as well as provide education and training to CCS learners in the areas of study design, methodology, proposal writing, and manuscript preparation.



ROCS Coordinator Hub- coming soon!

ROCS is launching a SharePoint site at the end of April 2025 to serve as a centralized resource for all your pediatric surgical research needs! The site incorporates a compilation of links, CHCO and CU documents, and ROCS-made resources to provide an easy-to-navigate hub on topics like: Research News & Events, Onboarding & Training, CHCO vs CU Policies, Regulatory Guides and Templates, and Research Start-Up.

More information and updates will be included on the [ROCS website](#). Contact Samantha Wilson with any questions Samantha.wilson@cuanschutz.edu

Need help with a research project or have research related questions? Reach out to the ROCS team by submitting an intake [here](#)

CCS Newsletter

April 2025

Congratulatory Corner



The CCS hosted the **8th annual Research Symposium** in February 2025. Many thanks to all of the presenters, reviewers and to the ROCS team for coordinating another terrific event. The winners were:

Outstanding Poster Awards- Madison Crew (Peds Surg), Tyler Sullivan (Orthopedics), Maksym Goryachok, Marta Kulich (ENT)

Outstanding Podium talks- Jack Zakrzewski (CV Surgery), Emmeline Kim (Ophthalmology) Kellen Krajewski (Orthopedics), Emily Green (Plastic Surgery)

CONGRATS to all the winners!



The Twistomy Team including Devon Horton, Lily Williams (pictured here) and Steve Moulton, MD won the [American Gastroenterological Association Shark Tank Competition](#), including the fan favorite award. The team can now present at the Digestive Diseases Shark Tank event in San Diego next month. They will also be presenting at the [Emerging Medical Innovation Valuation Competition](#) in April at the University of MN.

The [Button Huggie](#), a gastrostomy button securement device developed at CU and currently being trialed at four children's hospitals in the Western US, was awarded US patent [12,220,383](#). Commercial sales will commence in May 2025 Read more [here](#)



Gregory C. Allen, MD, ENT and the entire Cleft Lip and Palate Program team, recently completed local data collection in the CORNET (Cleft Outcomes Research Network) Study. This 14-site, NIH-funded study began in 2018 and was organized by the University of Utah. Although some data is still under analysis, this study has already resulted in 24 oral presentations at national or international meetings and 11 publications, with five others under review. The study team is grateful to all those who assisted in the care of these kids and helped make this long-term project possible.



Incoming **Pediatric Dental** PGY-1 Residents, **Kaylyn Hudson** and **Kendra Domotor**, have been named 2025 Delta Dental Community Scholars for their commitment to serving the underserved and academic achievements at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine.

Congratulatory Corner Cont.



Pepe Diaz Miron, MD, Pediatric Surgery, has been named as a SPARK Fellow and SPARK Award recipient for his project, "[The Mini 3mm Laparoscopic Port](#)." The goal of SPARK is to accelerate the commercial development of promising technologies that have proven science and high potential to impact patients. Projects are awarded up to \$200,000 to develop novel therapeutics, medical devices, or diagnostics. SPARK

Fellows will work with the SPARK team to develop commercially relevant project milestones. Learn more about SPARK [here](#)



The CHCO Foundation has established an Ent Credit Union Endowed Chair in Pediatric Otolaryngology, held by **Soham Roy, MD, ENT**. This endowment will help provide life-changing care for kids by driving innovation, expanding access, and improving pediatric ear, nose and throat care across Colorado. Read more about this exciting and generous gift [here](#)

New and Notable

Matthew Stone, MD, CV Surgery, had a manuscript published following a presentation at the American Association of Thoracic Surgeons. This research was completed in part with funding from the **CCS Ponzio Research Award**. Read the article [here](#)

Clay Samples, MD, Neurosurgery, had an article published in the Journal of Pediatric Neurosurgery. Read the article [here](#)

Teren Culbertson, PA-C, and David Bliss, MD, Pediatric Surgery, had an article published in the Journal of Pediatric Surgery Case report. Read the article [here](#)

David, Howell, PhD and Julie Wilson, MD, Orthopedics, were featured on Great Day Colorado to talk about pediatric concussions. [Watch here](#)



The **CCS STARS** (Striving To Achieve Resiliency with Surgery) **Program** is aimed at promoting positive psychosocial outcomes for children undergoing surgery and their families. This innovative initiative is leading several key efforts, including developing standardized screening, establishing parent education and connection groups, creating a psychosocial dashboard and designing training and educational resources. For more information or to be involved in one of our ongoing projects, please contact [Jenny Lindwall](#) or [Cindy Buchanan](#).