



American Heart Association and The Children's Heart Foundation invest more than \$776,000 in four research projects focused specifically on better understanding and treating congenital heart defects

Dallas, Oct. 26, 2018 – [Congenital heart defects \(CHDs\)](#) are the number one birth defect in the United States. Increasing infant survival rates and quality of life depends on innovative scientific research. Today, [The Children's Heart Foundation](#) and the [American Heart Association](#) announced four new collaborative investments in research to better understand and treat CHDs. This is the fifth round of [Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards](#), which are co-funded by CHF, the nation's leading organization solely dedicated to funding CHD research, and the AHA, the world's leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives. This announcement represents a \$776,000 investment in four research programs around the country. The program will ultimately fund more than \$22 million in CHD-specific research through 2021.

The four new grant recipients are:

- **Madhumita Basu, Ph.D. Nationwide Children's Hospital:** The research will explore the underlying mechanisms between maternal diabetes or elevated blood sugar and the occurrence of CHDs in infants.
- **Jesse Davidson, Ph.D. Children's Hospital Colorado/University of Colorado School of Medicine:** The study will find ways to improve lung development and blood flow in children with single ventricle defects.
- **Mehdi Hedjazi Moghari, Ph.D Boston Children's Hospital:** This study will examine if performing "virtual surgery" on an exact model of a patient's heart will improve outcomes in CHD-related surgery.

- **Xinxiu Xu, Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh:** This project examines what causes heart failure in people with hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS), with a goal of finding ways to prevent heart failure and treat it with an option besides a heart transplant.

"These research projects represent exciting new opportunities to better understand the development of and treatment of congenital heart defects," says Bradley S. Marino M.D., M.P.P., M.S.C.E., director of the research and academic affairs in the Heart Center at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, immediate-past-chair of the American Heart Association Council on Cardiovascular Disease in the Young, member of The Children's Heart Foundation Medical Advisory Board, and an AHA and CHF funded scientist. "As we put more resources toward CHD science, we will see fewer children born with CHDs and those that are will be more likely to survive to a healthy adulthood."

At least 40,000 infants are estimated to be affected by congenital heart defects each year in the United States. About 25 percent of infants born in the U.S. with a CHD require invasive treatment in their first year of life. Research that helps the medical community understand and treat CHDs is helping these children live longer, healthier lives. Today, it is estimated that more than 2.4 million people in the U.S. are living with a CHD.

"We are honored and excited to continue our research funding partnership with the American Heart Association," said Tamara Thomas, president of The Children's Heart Foundation. "Through this collaboration and our ongoing commitment to research focused on congenital heart defects, we strive to make a lasting impact in the lives of those with CHDs. This new research will help bring innovative solutions to survival rates and care."

Scientists who are conducting research on congenital heart defects to advance knowledge for prevention and treatment are encouraged to submit applications for the next round of funding. For more about the AHA/CHF Congenital Heart Defects Research Awards, including deadlines for submitting proposals, please visit

www.professional.heart.org/CHDResearchAwards.

Anyone can support the future works of CHD scientists by donating to the [Hope and Jack Fund](#) established and administered by the American Heart Association. Named in honor of two children fighting a complex congenital heart defect, the fund supports additional research as a part of the Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards. Individuals can contribute to the fund with a minimum donation of \$10, and their donations will directly support additional CHD research, facilitated through the AHA/CHF CHD Research Awards program. Donations can be made at heart.org/HopeandJackFund.

Additional Resources:

- To learn more about congenital heart defects, visit heart.org/CHD
- For support for parents of young children diagnosed with CHDs or adults living with the impact of a CHD, visit SupportNetwork.heart.org
- For information about CHDs and their different treatment options, order a copy of CHF's ["It's My Heart" book](#) - a resource book for patients and families affected by congenital heart defects.

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About the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association

The American Heart Association is a leading force for a world of longer, healthier lives. With nearly a century of lifesaving work, the Dallas-based association is dedicated to ensuring equitable health for all. We are a trustworthy source empowering people to improve their heart health, brain health and well-being. We collaborate with numerous organizations and millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, advocate for stronger public health policies, and share lifesaving resources and information. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About The Children's Heart Foundation

The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) was founded in 1996 and is the country's leading national organization solely committed to funding congenital heart defect (CHD)

research. The mission of CHF is to fund the most promising research to advance the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of congenital heart defects. Since its inception, CHF has funded approximately \$11 million dollars of research. For more information, please visit www.childrensheartfoundation.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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For Public Inquiries: 800-AHA-USA1 (242-8721)
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