

AAP-CA2 37th Annual Symposium Reflections

By: Nirupama Madduri, MD, FAAP

Our 37th annual AAPCA2 Symposium on April 18, 2026, “Advances in Pediatrics”, provided hard facts, great hope, and comradery for pediatricians in our chapter. The Garland Hotel in North Hollywood created a lovely space for learning and sharing.

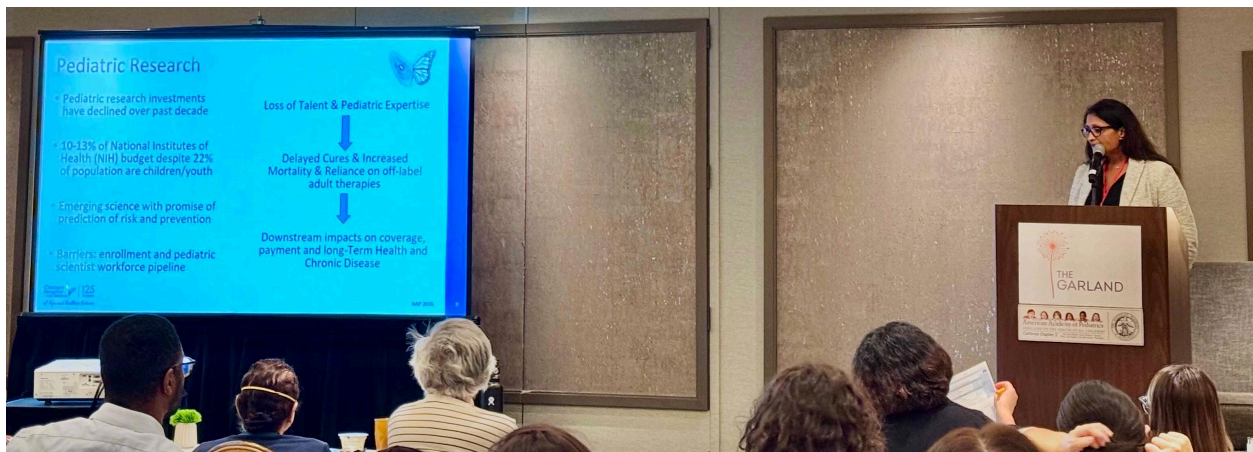


The day began with the annual S. Michael Marcy, M.D., F.A.A.P. Memorial Lecture, delivered eloquently by Dr. Sean Fitzwater, a pediatric infectious disease specialist. He addressed pediatric vaccines, their importance in preventive care, and also described the dire consequences of vaccine refusal. Pediatricians confront misinformation regarding vaccinations from parents who are inundated with untruths from various sources. After

receiving validation, this provided a nice segue into the next session delineating the research on autism from the data that is not evidence based.



Dr. Douglas Vanderbilt, developmental-behavioral pediatrician and Division Chair at CHLA, provided vital information to educate parents regarding evidence-based treatments and those which are not well studied. Pediatric vaccinations and autism diagnostic features have become a topic of popular conversation. Dr. Fitzwater and Dr. Vanderbilt shared important talking points to further educate our patients' parents.

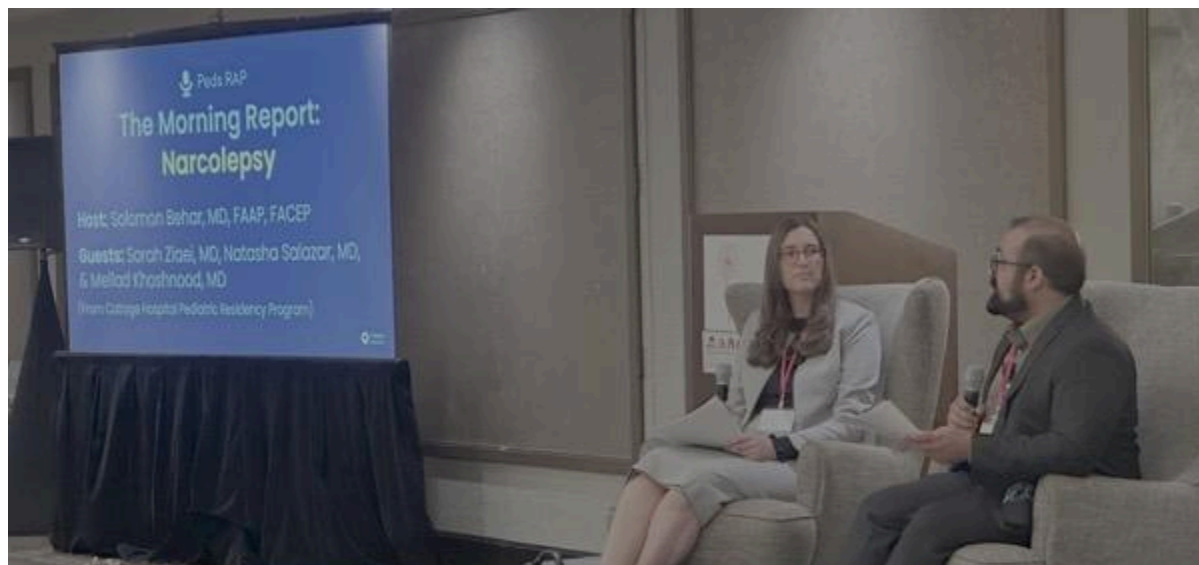


We then moved into advocacy and policy which impacts our patients and their well being. Dr. Mona Patel, Chief Integrated Delivery Systems Officer at CHLA, gave a grim outlook on the state of healthcare for our most vulnerable children who live in our region. However, she also provided us some hope, with bills in the hands of the legislature and potential streams of funding for children and their healthcare.



Dr. Rene Bravo, our regional representative from San Luis Obispo, and president of California Medical Association, informed us of the current legislation that impacts children's health that is in discussion and those which have already passed. Pediatricians are fighting a difficult battle with government officials

who do not prioritize child health and welfare. However, under the helm of Dr. Bravo and Dr. Patel, our chapter can work together to win and improve the healthcare of children in California.



An engaging Peds RAP podcast live recording discussed a fascinating case of a 15-year-old girl who, after a comprehensive diagnostic work up, received a diagnosis of narcolepsy. Attendees learned presentation and treatment recommendations, and also heard more from Dr. Bravo about what CMA can do for pediatricians.



In discussion with Peds RAP host Solomon Behar, MD, FAAP, Dr. Bravo also made a plea to the physicians to become more present in government institutions, such as congressional positions. He reminded us that the most productive members in government positions have always been physicians, as the public trusts doctors and doctors are inclined to complete a task.



Dr. Kim Petko presented Dr. Emma Burdekin with the Inaugural Dr. Marti Baum Memorial Advocacy Award, for outstanding commitment to child health equity and compassionate advocacy, honoring the enduring legacy of Marti Baum, MD, FAAP.

Our afternoon sessions were a nice variety of diagnoses we see commonly in our practices, with a sprinkle of rarity.

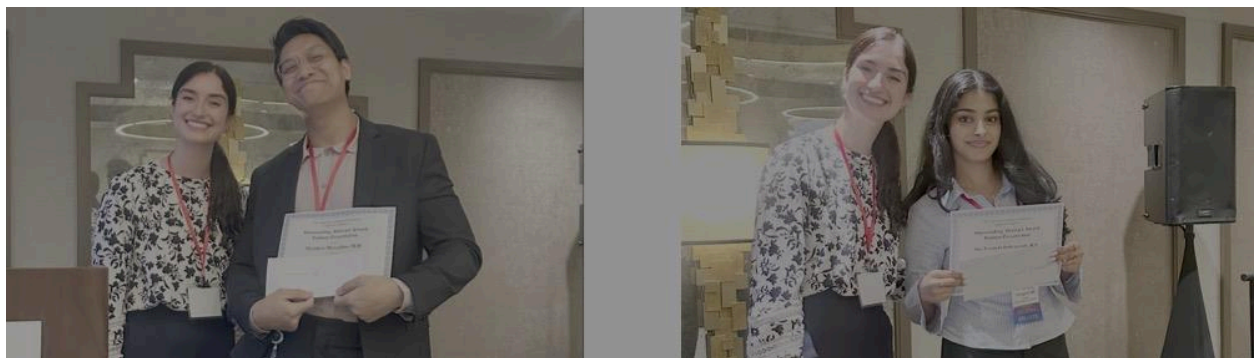


Dr. Thomas Coates, the head of the CHLA Section of Hematology provided a detailed discussion on finding the correct diagnosis of anemia. He presented several cases and helped everyone understand the diagnosis and the proper approach to care.



Dr. Michael Nguyen, a dermatologist from UCLA, also presented an engaging talk sharing the dermatologic trends on Tik-Tok. He noted that many of these trends or Tik-Tok challenges are aimed at attracting children to participate and document their experiences. Many of these challenges pose a danger to the well-being of children, and Dr. Nguyen spoke on identification and education regarding the consequences.

Finally, we had the opportunity to hear from our medical student and resident research award winners.



Dr. Matthew Marcelino, a 2nd year pediatric resident at CHLA, presented his research entitled, “Nutritional Outcomes in Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia: Identifying High-Risk

Phenotypes Beyond Disease Severity”, where he shared his findings from his work. The student winner was Sri Vennela Indraganthi, a premedical scholar with a B.S. in neuroscience from UC-Riverside. She presented her work, “Enhancing Quality, Capital, and Capacity for Equitable Newborn Screening through We R.E.A.C.H. framework: The SISHU Initiative in Rural India”, and also shared the findings of her project.



Residents and medical students presented their posters inside the ballroom and on the patio.

A beautiful reception in the courtyard of the Garland concluded this successful and engaging symposium.

