

# Newborn Screening Advisory Committee

## Current Committee Members

Member Name	Position/Category	Term Expires
Michael E. Speer, M.D. (Chair)	Physician/Neonatal	August 2024
Melissa Frei-Jones, M.D. (Vice-Chair)	Health Care Provider for Sickle Cell Trait/Sickle Cell Disease	August 2024
Kaashif Ahmad, M.B.B.S., M.S.C.	Physician	August 2023
Beryl Pamela Andrews	Individual/Family Member Affected by a Condition	August 2024
Khrystal K. Davis, J.D.	Individual/Family Member Affected by a Condition	August 2022
Titilope Fasipe, M.D., Ph.D.	Individual/Family Member Affected by Sickle Cell Trait/Sickle Cell Disease	August 2024
Alice K. Gong, M.D.	Health Care Provider	August 2023
Charleta Guillory, M.D., M.P.H.	Physician/Neonatal	August 2022
Tiffany McKee-Garrett, M.D.	Hospital Representative	August 2023
Barbra Novak, Ph.D., C.C.C.-A.	Hospital Representative	August 2023
Fernando Scaglia, M.D.	Health Care Provider	August 2024
Joseph Schneider, M.D.	Physician	August 2023
Elizabeth Stehel, M.D.	Physician	August 2022

### Member Composition

The committee is composed of the following members appointed by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) commissioner:

- At least four physicians licensed to practice medicine in the state of Texas, including at least two physicians specializing in neonatal-perinatal medicine,
- At least two hospital representatives,
- At least two persons who have family members affected by a condition for which newborn screening is or may be required, and

- At least two health care providers (persons) who are involved in the delivery of newborn screening services, follow-up, or treatment in the state.
- A health care provider involved in the delivery of services, follow-up or treatment to people with sickle cell disease or trait in the State of Texas; and
- A person with sickle cell disease or trait or a person who has family members with sickle cell disease or trait.

## **Appointment Terms**

All members serve a term of three years. Individuals may apply to be reappointed to serve additional terms. A member may serve these terms consecutively, with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Initial terms were staggered over several years to ensure continuity of Committee work so that the terms of one-third of the members expire each year. Regardless of the term limit, a member serves until his/her replacement has been appointed. This ensures sufficient, appropriate representation. If a vacancy occurs, a person is appointed to serve the unexpired portion of that term.

## **Biographies**

**Michael E. Speer, M.D. – Harris County (Chair)**  
**Membership Position – Physician/Neonatal**  
**Term expires August 31, 2024**  
**Chair Term expires August 31, 2023**

Michael E. Speer is a board-certified physician in pediatrics and neonatal-perinatal medicine and is employed with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston as a professor of pediatrics and medical ethics. He serves on numerous committees and boards related to pediatric health and newborn screening. He is a board member of the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center and vice-chair of the executive committee of the Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies. Dr. Speer served for six years on the board of trustees of the Texas Medical Association (TMA), including serving as chair. He served for 40 years on the Texas Pediatric Society's Fetus and Newborn Committee. Dr. Speer maintains professional memberships with the TMA; the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; the Texas Perinatal Association; and the Harris County Medical Society. He has extensive experience including 39 years as a practicing neonatologist at a Level IV NICU at Texas Children's Hospital. He has written and lectured on congenital, metabolic disorders and newborn screening throughout his career. Dr. Speer has served as a very active and vocal member of the Newborn Screening Advisory Committee since 2012, providing invaluable expertise and knowledge. He was elected vice-chair of the committee in 2019 and chair in 2021.

**Melissa Frei-Jones, M.D. – Bexar County (Vice-Chair)**  
**Membership Position – Health Care Provider for Sickle Cell Trait/Sickle Cell Disease**  
**Term Expires August 31, 2024**  
**Vice-Chair Term Expires August 31, 2023**

Melissa Frei-Jones has her board certification in pediatrics, as well as pediatric hematology and oncology. She is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics with the University of Texas School of Medicine. Dr. Frei-Jones is also the Medical Director of the South Texas Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Center where she cares for children and young adults with sickle cell disease. She has over 10 years of experience including serving seven years as Medical Director of the Pediatric program in San Antonio. Her other professional experience related to sickle cell disease includes: medical director of Camp Cell-A-Bration, program director of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Fellowship program, and participant with the regional Mountain States Sickle Cell Consortium. Dr. Frei-Jones has professional memberships in: American Society of Hematology; American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology (ASPHO), Hemoglobinopathy Special Interest Group; ASPHO representative to the American Board of Pediatrics Foundation for the development of a Sickle Cell Disease Learning Network Initiative; Medical Director and physician representative/ board member of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Austin – Marc Thomas Chapter. She was an active member of the Sickle Cell Advisory Committee from 2016 to 2018. Dr. Frei-Jones was appointed to the Newborn Screening Advisory Committee in September 2018 and elected vice-chair in 2021.

**Kaashif Ahmad, M.B.B.S., M.S.C. – Bexar County**  
**Membership Position – Physician**  
**Term expires August 31, 2023**

Kaashif Ahmad is a board-certified physician in general pediatrics and neonatal perinatal medicine. He has been a practicing neonatologist with Pediatrix Medical Group of San Antonio since 2010. Dr. Ahmad has a faculty appointment with the Baylor College of Medicine, San Antonio, as Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, and he mentors pediatric residents and research fellows. Dr. Ahmad is also a clinical scientist and serves in a national role of Research Director of neonatal clinical trials. He has ongoing research in multiple areas of newborn care such as neonatal nutrition, pulmonary hypertension and neuroprotection, and contributed to several published articles. He launched a neonatal clinical research program that now spans three hospital systems and two hospital NICUs in San Antonio. Dr. Ahmad has also worked on developing policies for over 10 NICUs in the area of neonatal brain care. Dr. Ahmad is a member of the Texas Pediatric Society's

Executive Board, Committee on Fetus and Newborn, Committee on Foster Care, Committee on Medical Education and Committee on Early Childhood Development. He is also chair-elect of the Committee on Fetus and Newborn. With his involvement in clinical care, clinical research, training, and research mentoring, Dr. Ahmad shows a commitment to the health of newborns in Texas. Dr. Ahmad joined the committee in 2020.

**Beryl Pamela “Pam” Andrews – Travis County  
Membership Position – Individual/Family Member Affected by a Condition  
Term expires August 31, 2024**

Pam Andrews is a parent of two children diagnosed with a rare, neurodegenerative genetic condition. She co-founded the non-profit, The Firefly Fund, with the mission to fund and support research and education for rare neurodegenerative genetic diseases. She also oversees, manages, and coordinates The Firefly Fund’s Niemann-Pick Type C1 Newborn Screening Working Group. Ms. Andrews not only understands the impact of newborn screening as a parent, but also as a former public health official. Her federal and state-level legislative and public health policy experience includes serving as Health Policy Specialist with the Texas Department of Insurance and Committee Clerk with the Texas Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. As Committee Director of the Texas House Committee on Public Health, she worked on a study related to adding a condition to the Texas Newborn Screening Panel. Ms. Andrews works in consulting/marketing and lives in the Austin, Texas area. She joined the committee in September 2018, expanding the geographic and demographic representation of the committee to include the Central Texas region.

**Khrystal K. Davis, J.D. – Travis County  
Membership Position – Individual/Family Member Affected by a Condition  
Term expires August 31, 2022**

Khrystal K. Davis is a parent and caregiver to a child with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), a rare disorder on the national Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP) that is not currently screened in Texas. Ms. Davis is a rare disease patient advocate and consultant with the goal of improving the diagnostic process for rare disease patients. Ms. Davis is also a member of several rare disease patient advocacy groups, which include the National Organization for Rare Disorders, Rare Diseases Action Network, and Families for the Access of SMA Treatments (FAST).

Ms. Davis’s advocacy includes testifying in support of legislation for securing long-term funding for the Texas Newborn Screening Program, and she has advocated at the federal level for the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act of 2019. Ms. Davis has participated in several Newborn Screening Advisory Committee

meetings by making public comment advocating for SMA screening in Texas. Ms. Davis's has a Juris Doctorate degree from Stetson University College of Law. Ms. Davis was appointed to the committee in September 2019, and her understanding as a parent and patient advocate brings an important parental perspective to the Committee.

**Titilope Fasipe, M.D., Ph.D. – Harris County  
Membership Position – Individual/Family Member Affected by Sickle Cell  
Trait/Sickle Cell Disease  
Term expires August 31, 2024**

Titilope Fasipe has the unique perspective of relating to and understanding the need for education, community awareness, support, and medical care as she is a physician as well as an individual with sickle cell disease. Dr. Fasipe has a Bachelor of Science in biology with a minor in chemistry from the University of Texas at Arlington. She obtained her doctorate in cell biology and her medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), Galveston, Texas. In July 2016, she joined the faculty at Baylor College of Medicine as Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in Hematology/Oncology and has continued her research on sickle cell disease. She also provides care to sickle cell patients at the Texas Children's Hematology Center. Dr. Fasipe has multiple professional memberships including: American Society of Hematology; American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology; Fellow, American Academy of Pediatrics. She also is a board member of Supporting our Sicklers (SOS) Parent and Guardian Support Group and a member of Sickle Cell Disease Network-Houston. Dr. Fasipe was a member of the Sickle Cell Advisory Committee from 2016 to 2018 and joined the Newborn Screening Advisory Committee in September 2018.

**Alice K. Gong, M.D. – Bexar County  
Membership Position – Health Care Provider  
Member Term expires August 31, 2023**

Alice Gong is a board-certified physician in pediatrics and neonatal perinatal medicine. She is a professor of pediatrics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio since 1985 and a staff neonatologist at University Hospital, San Antonio. She served as co-chair of the Texas Pulse Oximetry Project (TxPOP) coalition which developed educational materials about critical congenital heart disease screening for newborns in Texas. Dr. Gong has served on numerous committees and boards related to pediatric health including March of Dimes Texas State Advocacy and Government Affairs, Texas Pediatric Society Board, Texas Medical Association Council on Science and Public Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, International Lactation Consultant

Association, and Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies Executive Board. Dr. Gong is an original member of the Texas Newborn Screening Advisory Committee. She has been an active member since the committee was established in 2010. She served as vice-chair of the committee from 2016 to 2019 and chair of the committee from 2019 to 2021.

**Charleta Guillory, M.D., M.P.H. – Harris County  
Membership Position – Physician/Neonatal  
Member Term expires August 31, 2022**

Charleta Guillory is an associate professor of pediatrics in the Neonatology Section at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Guillory also serves as the associate director of the Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and director of the Neonatal-Perinatal Public Health Program at Texas Children’s Hospital. She is a board-certified physician in pediatrics and neonatal-perinatal medicine. She received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Southwestern Louisiana and a medical degree from Louisiana State University Medical School. Dr. Guillory also has a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Texas, School of Public Health. She has extensive experience in the care of newborns, including those with genetic and metabolic disorders, and has served in leadership roles with various organizations, including the March of Dimes and the Texas Pediatric Society. Dr. Guillory has been a member of the Newborn Screening Advisory Committee since it was established in 2010. She served as committee chair from 2016 to 2019.

**Tiffany McKee-Garrett, M.D. – Harris County  
Membership Position – Hospital Representative  
Term expires August 31, 2023**

Tiffany McKee-Garrett is a physician specializing in pediatrics. She has been a newborn hospitalist for almost 20 years, specializing in neonatal and perinatal medicine. She was a lead physician involved in the implementation of newborn screening for critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) at Texas Children’s Hospital in Houston. Dr. McKee-Garrett has a leadership role at Texas Children’s and regularly reviews newborn screening data, allowing her to be familiar with barriers to screening, education of providers, and quality improvement initiatives for newborn screening. She was involved in the newborn screening initiative for universal hearing screening, and as an associate medical director, was directly involved in opening a Mother-Baby Unit (MBU) at Texas Children’s Hospital in Houston in 2012. Dr. McKee-Garrett was a team member on the Texas Pulse Oximetry Project (TxPOP) coalition that allowed her to educate students, interns, residents, and families on the importance of newborn screening. She has served as a member on the Texas Pediatric Society Fetus and Newborn Committee.

**Barbra Novak, Ph.D., C.C.C.-A. – Harris County  
Membership Position – Hospital Representative  
Term expires August 31, 2023**

Barbra Novak is a licensed audiologist in the State of Texas and has a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. Dr. Novak has been the Newborn Hearing Screening Program Manager at Texas Children's Hospital for the past 10 years. Under her management, the program has grown from screening 2000 to 7000 babies per year. She is also a clinical instructor of Audiology at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Novak is a member of American Speech Language Hearing Association and the Board of Directors of the Society for Ear, Nose and Throat Advances in Children. Dr. Novak's experience as a Hospital Program Manager makes her an ideal candidate for the hospital representative member position. Dr. Novak has also served as a Subject-Matter Expert on newborn hearing for the Texas Newborn Screening Advisory Committee and the Hearing Screening in the NICU Subcommittee. Dr. Novak was appointed to the Committee in 2020.

**Fernando Scaglia, M.D. – Harris County  
Membership Position – Health Care Provider  
Term expires August 31, 2024**

Dr. Fernando Scaglia is a board-certified physician in Pediatrics and General/Clinical Genetics. He is a tenured Professor at the Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), Department of Molecular and Human Genetics and Texas Children's Hospital, where he has been full-time faculty since 1998. He is also Director of the Joint Center for Medical Genetics at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), a collaboration between CUHK and BCM. He has been widely published, authoring more than 170 peer-reviewed manuscripts. He co-edited a book, *Inborn Errors of Metabolism: From Neonatal Screening to Metabolic Pathways*. As an educator and mentor in the field, he participates as an advisor to help implement new NBS programs internationally and mentors high school students to steer them toward scientific careers. His has been recognized on the state, national, and international level. His awards include receiving Master Clinician Lifetime Award from BCM and twice receiving the Emmanuel Shapira Award, Society for Inherited Metabolic Disorders (SIMD). He is a member of the American College of Medical Genetics, Program Committee; United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation Scientific and Medical Advisory Board; SIMD Board of Directors; SIMD Program Committee and Awards Committee; and Mitochondrial Medicine Society Board, International Councilor. Dr. Scaglia brings to the Committee an extensive level of expertise and perspective on inborn errors of metabolism and genetics.

**Joseph Schneider, M.D. – Dallas County  
Membership Position – Physician  
Term expires August 31, 2023**

Joseph Schneider is a board-certified physician in pediatrics and is a pediatrician in the newborn nursery at UT Southwestern/Parkland Hospital in Dallas since 2006. Dr. Schneider also holds a Master of Business Administration with substantial experience in clinical informatics and a focus on newborn screening. He has served on numerous committees and boards including the American Academy of Pediatrics, chair and vice-chair for the Council on Clinical Information Technology Executive Committee; Texas Medical Association, chair for the Council on Practice Management, and chair for the Committee on Health Information Technology; Texas Pediatric Society, Board of Directors, Committees on Practice, Legislation, Children with Disabilities and Hospital Practice; and Dallas County Medical Society, chair on the Council of Socioeconomics. Dr. Schneider serves as an appointee of the Follow Up and Treatment Workgroup of the Health Resources and Services Administration Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children. He was an appointee to the Texas State Medicaid Medical Advisory Committee with the Texas Pediatric Society.

**Elizabeth “Kaili” Stehel, M.D. – Dallas County  
Membership Position – Physician  
Term expires August 31, 2022**

Elizabeth “Kaili” Stehel is a board-certified physician in pediatrics and is a board-certified lactation consultant. She is employed with The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center as an associate professor of pediatrics as well as Pediatrix Medical Group. Dr. Stehel also is a professor of pediatrics at Texas A&M University. She works in the newborn nurseries at Parkland Hospital and Baylor University Medical Center Texas. Her experience working in the Dallas/Fort Worth region expands the geographical perspective of the committee. She participated in the HB411 Oversight Committee as an external stakeholder with knowledge and expertise in the statewide implementation of the parental consent in newborn screening. Dr. Stehel is a member of the Texas Medical Association Maternal and Perinatal Health Committee and a member of the Texas Pediatric Society Fetus and Newborn Committee.