



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S

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November 14, 2024

Re: John David Spencer, MD

Subject: ASPN Mid-Career Award

Dear ASPN Award Committee,

It is with great honor that we put forward Dr. John D. Spencer as a nominee for the esteemed ASPN Mid-Career Award. Dr. Spencer's impressive research credentials, his significant contributions to the ASPN, his unwavering commitment to advancing our field, and his devoted efforts in fostering the career growth of physician scientists, all make him a deserving candidate for this prestigious award.

By way of brief introduction, Dr. Spencer is a tenured Professor of Pediatrics at the Ohio State University College of Medicine and is an Endowed Chair in Clinical and Translational Research at Nationwide Children's Hospital. He graduated from Wabash College in 2001, then attended Indiana University School of Medicine from 2001-2005. He completed both his residency and chief residency in pediatrics at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and fellowship in pediatric nephrology at Nationwide Children's Hospital in 2005-2009 and 2009-2012, respectively. Upon completing his training, Dr. Spencer's first faculty appointment was at Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH). He was then appointed as the Division Chief of Pediatric Nephrology and Hypertension at NCH in 2019. He was appointed to full professor with tenure and received his endowed chair in 2023, all within 11 years of graduating from fellowship.

Research: Dr. Spencer is globally renowned for his expertise in understanding the innate immune system's role in urinary tract infections. His laboratory continues to exhibit remarkable research output. He has held the position of Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator on five NIH R or T-level research grants and has formed collaborative research partnerships with numerous other pediatric nephrologists and urologists. Dr. Spencer's research has made a substantial contribution to our field. He has written or co-written 46 peer-reviewed articles, which have been cited more than 2800 times, earning him an h-index of 47. Additionally, he has been involved in numerous study sections for the National Institutes of Health, including the NIH/NIDDK Diabetic Complications Consortium, NIH/NIDDK Kidney, Urology and Hematology (KUH) Fellowship, and the NIH/NIDDK Innovative Science Accelerator Program, to name a few.

Advocacy: Dr. Spencer's contributions to advocacy on behalf of the pediatric nephrology community of providers and patients have been meritorious. He was one of the first nephrologists to complete the ASPN John E. Lewy Foundation Advocacy Scholars Program in 2012 and has continued to recruit and support individuals to complete the program and participate regularly in "Hill Day" Capitol Hill visits. Furthermore, Dr. Spencer has served as Co-PI on NIH funded R25 and T35 Student Urinary Tract Program in Education and Research (SUPER) Summer Training Program, a multidisciplinary program for college and medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enhance their early exposure to Nephrology and Urology. In addition, Dr. Spencer is heavily involved with the Central Ohio Chapter of the National Kidney Foundation and has served as a board member since 2020.

Mentorship: Dr. Spencer's commitment to expanding the pediatric nephrology workforce is also noteworthy, with a special emphasis on promoting and recognizing the contributions of women in nephrology and science. His

continuous efforts to nurture a strong and diverse research pipeline in pediatric nephrology are commendable. The previously highlighted R25 and T35 NIH grants he has received further attest to his dedication to mentorship and advocacy for the Nephrology and Urology workforce pipeline. Dr. Spencer has mentored 8 medical students, 12 residents, 6 pediatric sub-specialty fellows, 2 PhD students, and 6 junior faculty members. He has acted as a primary mentor or co-mentor on 5 research awards, including 3 NIH Career Development Awards. Dr. Spencer has significantly impacted the careers of several junior and mid-career pediatric nephrology physician scientists and investigators, including Drs. Brian Becknell, Laura Schwartz, Tahagod Mohamed, Juan de Dios Ruiz-Rosado, Diana Zepeda-Orozco, Ashley Jackson, and Anne Dawson. Excerpts from his research protégés are detailed below:

Christina Ching: I have had the opportunity to work with John David as a pediatric urologist and principal investigator in the Kidney and Urinary Tract Center. He has significantly contributed to my career both as a urologist, being able to work together in our multidisciplinary urology-nephrology clinic, but especially as a scientist. He has provided mentorship and guidance as a young investigator trying to navigate being a surgeon scientist, mentoring my K08 award, and continuing to support my scholarly activity as I prepare to submit an R01 grant application to transition to independence. He has dedicated countless hours to meetings and emails to help guide my science and always has an open door for unscheduled stop bys. He is approachable and leads by example. I appreciate the opportunity to work with him immensely and feel he is exceptionally qualified for this award.

He is a selfless leader with a remarkably clear vision of the world around him and opportunities to make it better. He has truly championed the accomplishments of others. His devotion to trainees and junior faculty has been especially strong. He is an outstanding champion for the role of pediatric nephrologists as physician-scientists, advocates, and leaders.

Ashley Jackson: Dr. Spencer has been instrumental in shaping my scientific and academic trajectory. I was a graduate student when I first began working with Dr. Spencer. At that time, he was a pediatric nephrology fellow, embarking on his landmark discovery that antimicrobial peptides defend the kidney and urinary tract against invading pathogens, and I was helping him to localize Ribonuclease 7 throughout the urinary tract. Now, 13 years later, he is one of my strongest advocates, my NIDDK-K01 mentor, and the person I credit for all the leadership positions that I've received. I am a beneficiary of his profound leadership and his transformative vision for improving the lives of children with kidney disease by bridging the gap between basic science and clinical care. As he was developing his plans to launch our all-encompassing (nephrology, urology, basic science) Kidney and Urinary Tract Center, he heartily advocated for my promotion to faculty and outlined ways that I would both benefit and strengthen the Division of Pediatric Nephrology and Hypertension as an affiliate member. His leadership and sponsorship are second to none, his support of junior faculty and trainees is without limits, and his efforts to promote women and minorities in science and medicine are tireless. He is always available for any conversation, and I can always count on his prompt feedback on my grants or manuscripts despite his immense administrative responsibilities, clinical demands, and broad research portfolio. He leads with kindness and generosity and acknowledges the achievements of everyone at every opportunity and on every major stage. One of my favorite anecdotes is that he has sent more internal eCards thanking or celebrating members of his team than anyone. Often, this is the only way I would recognize "International Day of Women in Science," or that a postdoc in my lab helped him at the microscope. He sets a high bar, but I continue to aspire to be the type of leader and scientist that he is – squeezing in tissue culture experiments and western blots between hosting Division meetings and seeing patients.

Brian Becknell: Dr. Spencer has been a mentor and role model for me from many standpoints. As a physician-scientist, he has a keen mind and ability to focus on pivotal questions that are highly relevant to the field. As a leader, he embodies servant leadership and has leveraged his time and talents to assist me and my colleagues in our career journeys. As a human being, he leads by example. When I am faced with challenging career decisions, I often turn to Dr. Spencer for guidance. I am most grateful for his extraordinary generosity in sharing his ideas, leading by example, and imparting advice about the direction of my science and my career.

Diana Zepeda-Orozco and Tahagod Mohamed: We are constantly amazed by Dr. Spencer's vision and leadership in pediatric nephrology clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and the career development of our

team. He is an outstanding clinician, always available for advice and help. He listens to all members of the pediatric nephrology team, welcomes different perspectives, and incorporates their feedback into decisions that have shaped our division. Dr. Spencer is humble, approachable, knowledgeable and is always available to provide insightful feedback. He is always striving to connect basic and translational researchers with clinicians to advance the care of children with kidney and urinary tract diseases from all backgrounds. Dr. Spencer is a visionary pediatric nephrologist who effectively bridges the gap between basic and clinical researchers through initiatives such as the Renal Physiology and Pathology Series and Nephrology Grand Rounds. These programs bring together diverse perspectives and expertise from various regions. He is deeply committed to the career advancement of his team, offering meaningful leadership opportunities, and consistently recognizing their hard work. Dr. Spencer is instrumental in nominating team members for awards, which they frequently receive, highlighting his influence and support. His leadership is characterized by humility and kindness, and we are grateful for the opportunity to learn from him every day.

Leadership: Dr. Spencer currently serves as Division Chief of Nephrology and Hypertension at Nationwide Children's Hospital, where he leads a group of 15 pediatric nephrologists and nurse practitioners, of whom 7 are women. He is an innovative, collaborative and thoughtful leader and has supported the career growth and promotion of all faculty within our group, advocating relentlessly with academic and clinical leadership for resources which have allowed dramatic growth of both research and clinical programming within the division. Dr. Spencer has established the Kidney and Urinary Tract Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital in 2022, one of the largest Urology and Nephrology collaborative clinical and research programs in the country optimizing the care of children and paving the way for groundbreaking research. Additional comments about his leadership accomplishments are detailed below:

John D Mahan: John David Spencer's leadership accomplishments and style are particularly noteworthy, and he has served as a 'leadership' role model for many pediatric nephrologists in our institution and nationally. He has the 'vision-thing' and clearly can envision what could be and move people forward to accomplish great things. As an engaged leader he has a number of outstanding accomplishments, including his leadership of research teams that have gained multiple NIH and other externally funded grants; his development of the new, highly successful NCH Kidney Urinary Tract Center (KUTC) that combines the clinical, research, educational and advocacy efforts of pediatric nephrologists, pediatric urologists, basic scientists and psychologists into one voice and one effort to meet the needs of nephrology/urology patients; and the growth of the NCH Pediatric Nephrology Division into a highly productive, nationally ranked pediatric nephrology division now with 13 faculty and 6 fellows. Moreover, John David has the 'support-thing' and embodies all the elements of the true servant leader!

William E Smoyer: Dr. Spencer is amazing in his ability to attract talented individuals to want to work for him and with him. The evidence of success in the teams he leads is a direct result of his leadership style, his ability to relate to people and how he helps his teams work together to succeed. He has served a pivotal role in the development of many young pediatric nephrologists and scientists through his leadership and will continue to impact our field through those he influences and shapes.

Hiren Patel: Dr. Spencer's growth as a leader and as a member of the pediatric nephrology community over the first part of his career has been amazing and a privilege to observe up close. Dr. Spencer leads by example whether it's his many accomplishments as researcher, mentoring trainees at multiple levels, advocacy efforts or simply volunteering to help with patient care despite his busy schedule. At the same time, he is an innovative leader who tries to move the field forward. One example of this was establishing a virtual Nephrology Grand Rounds during COVID-19 with invited speakers from other institutions. This idea helped foster multiple collaborations across institutions. His support and ideas have led many of his faculty to develop clinical and research programs which have helped to advance their own careers. He is a prime example of not only leading the effort but also lifting others to help advance the field of pediatric nephrology together.

Service: Beyond service to his home institutions, Dr. Spencer has been an active and productive member of the ASPN ever since he joined the pediatric nephrology community as a fellow at Nationwide Children's Hospital. He has been an active member and leader of numerous committees and within the ASPN, He served as the chairperson of the pFeNa in 2010-2012 during his pediatric nephrology fellowship and as a chairperson of the

Public Policy Committee in 2014-2016 and the Chairperson of the Kidney Week Abstract Committee for Pediatric Nephrology in 2020. Furthermore, Dr. Spencer has served as member of the ASPN Workforce Committee, Public Policy Committee and Research Committee.

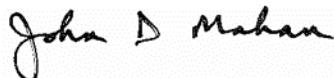
In summary, Dr. Spencer has achieved remarkable success in our field within a short time. Not only has he made significant personal contributions, but he has also opened doors for many others to enter and thrive in our field. Despite his early achievements, he remains committed to ongoing education and leadership development. We firmly believe that Dr. Spencer exemplifies the mission of the ASPN and is highly deserving of recognition for his outstanding contributions to our pediatric nephrology community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



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